

06

Connecting It Together

INTRODUCTION

In general, Chapter 2's Vision and Values and Chapter 3's Themes and Goals set the direction for Westfield's future. Chapter 4's placetypes show a new method for the community to think about how to utilize land in the future. This approach integrates land use with mobility, economic activity, and development character to direct future land use growth. Chapter 6, "Connecting It All Together," is about the policy and recommendations that help create and define the many parts of the city. These are the most important aspects or building blocks of how the city evolves, how different sorts of places feel and work, and how different portions of the city are linked and related to each other. In essence, these chapters together form the overall connective fiber for the future development of Westfield.

There are many levels of connectivity that forms the physical city. Streets, sidewalks, open space, drainage systems, and utilities connect all of the various places of the city. People who live and work in Westfield need a safe and easy way to get around. Businesses also need a good transportation system to move people and goods. Shared resources such as parks, public safety, recreation facilities, libraries, public art, events, and programs, help strengthen the city's sense of connection.

The local economy connects to all of Westfield's neighborhoods throughout the city and to the rest of the region. When private companies invest, they often look at many factors beyond the property itself. When deciding where to put their operations, employers consider such factors as the availability of a skilled workforce in the area, easy access to the region's transportation network, nice neighborhoods for their employees to live, and active mixed-use areas where they may put their facilities. While no single placetype can achieve all of these objectives, together they form a cohesive and resilient local economy.

Overview of Past Planning Efforts

This section provides a high-level analysis of foundational plans, studies, and initiatives that inform Westfield's development strategy. This review synthesizes insights from previously adopted documents, comprehensive plans, thoroughfare plan, downtown plan, parks and recreation plan and stormwater strategy, to establish a framework for understanding current opportunities and challenges.

By evaluating the alignment of key projects, such as trail and roadway expansions and the Grand Park development, with overarching community goals, this section identifies how past planning efforts and policies continue to shape Westfield's landscape. The analysis aims to ensure continuity, avoid duplication, and prioritize strategic investments that resonate with the city's growth and quality-of-life aspirations.

For a full summary of the plans and their addendums, please see the Appendix.



Comprehensive Plan (1999 – 2024)

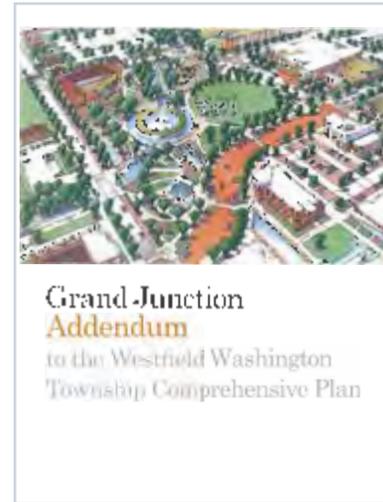
While the overall planning jurisdiction of Westfield-Washington Township hasn't changed, the City has grown not only in population, but also geographically, annexing additional property from Hamilton County.

The land use pattern has changed significantly over the years. This requires specialized subarea plans due to the transformative change based on some of these initiatives. These specialized subarea plans have led to several amendments to the existing comprehensive plan, resulting in subarea plans completed for

many different areas within Westfield including Family Sports Capital, Grand Junction, Family Sports Capital 2, Grand Junction Implementation Plan, Spring Mill Station, Grand Junction Sub-district, and Village Farms. Each of these subarea plans support the development of different aspects of the city and provide more depth and detail than is normally found in a comprehensive plan.

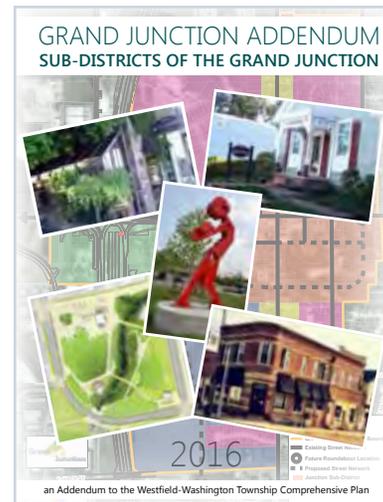
The comprehensive plan is a strategic document aimed at guiding growth and development while maintaining the area's character and livability. It highlights themes such as promoting contiguous development, preserving rural and small-town atmospheres, and encouraging connectivity through enhanced transportation and pedestrian networks. The plan emphasizes land use diversity, balancing residential, commercial, and recreational spaces to meet the needs of a growing population. Key objectives include preserving natural areas, ensuring fiscal responsibility in new developments, and using innovative planning tools like conservation subdivisions to blend growth with environmental preservation.

The plan comprises four chapters: an introduction framing the vision and themes, a detailed land-use strategy, a specific focus on revitalizing the downtown area, and an implementation framework. Policies are aimed at managing growth sustainably, fostering connectivity between neighborhoods, and ensuring development aligns with the township's infrastructure capacity. The document incorporates extensive public input and serves as a guide for zoning, subdivision regulations, and infrastructure planning to support a thriving, balanced community.



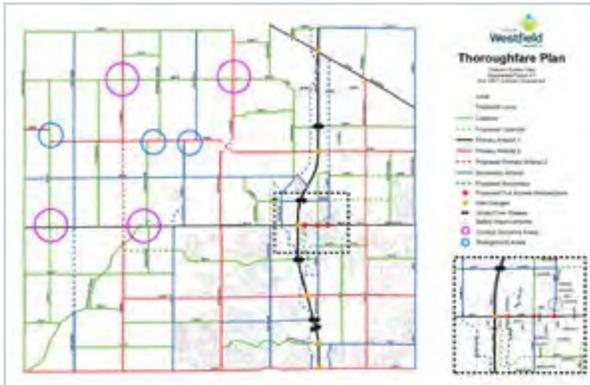
Grand Junction Addendum to the Comprehensive Plan (2009)

This addendum establishes a long-term vision for the Grand Junction project including Grand Junction Plaza, landmark-quality civic facilities, an extended trail system, an extended street network, enhanced stormwater facilities, signature gateway development, and sustainable design and development. It is structured for short-term improvements, intermediate-term improvements, and long-term improvements. These addendums provided the foundation to help redevelop Grand Junction into what it is today.



Grand Junction Addendum Sub-Districts of the Grand Junction (2016)

This plat establishes sub-districts including the Gateway, Junction, Union, Kendall, and Neighborhood sub-districts. Each sub-district includes a distinct vision, land uses, and development standards. This addendum established the foundation for coordinated city-wide decision-making.



Thoroughfare Plan (2006, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013)

The road network in Westfield has changed significantly over the years to support the development pattern. The greatest impact came from the upgrade of US 31 into a limited access freeway

which also contributed to additional growth in the jurisdiction. Amendments were made to further enhance connectivity between developments and to accommodate the amount of traffic generated from large land uses such as Grand Park. The amendments also take a more complete streets approach to transportation and accommodate bicycle and pedestrian facilities within City-led and developer-led projects.

The 2006 Thoroughfare Plan for Westfield-Washington Township establishes a strategic framework for managing transportation infrastructure to support anticipated growth and regional connectivity. It emphasizes a functional classification system for roadways, which includes primary and secondary arterials, collectors, and local roads, aimed at balancing mobility with accessibility. The plan identifies critical projects such as:

- upgrading to US 31 to freeway standards
- enhancing east-west traffic flow
- incorporating alternative transportation routes like trails and bicycle paths to improve multi-modal connectivity

The plan also integrates right-of-way preservation standards to accommodate future infrastructure needs and emphasizes collaboration with regional stakeholders, including INDOT and neighboring jurisdictions, to ensure cohesive development. Bicycle and pedestrian enhancements, including the Monon Trail and Midland Trace Trail extensions, align with broader regional initiatives to promote walkability and recreational opportunities. The recommendations aim to ensure sustainable, efficient, and safe transportation solutions that align with the area’s land-use patterns and growth projections.



Westfield Parks and Recreation 5-Year Comprehensive Plan (2025)

The 5-Year Parks and Recreation plan is a guide for the Parks Board and Parks Department established in 2024. Prior to then the parks operated under Public Works. The purpose of the plan is to chart a path forward for the department and the board, document the initial state of Westfield Parks,

and set a near-term plan. The mission is to enhance the quality of life by connecting residents and visitors of Westfield to each other, the natural environment, and unique recreation amenities. Maintenance of the parks has historically been contracted to vendors and 70 percent of the parks operating budget is for maintenance. The budget of \$3.44 million in 2025 was funded through the general fund, local income tax, and one-time impact fees. The impact fee is \$3,458.34 per new residential unit. There are nine parks departments in Hamilton County and three have overlapping jurisdiction in Westfield: the city, the township, and the county. The survey found residents aren’t concerned with “ownership” of the parks and consider jurisdictional boundaries, even with other communities, to be permeable when it comes to park access. Priorities established in the plan were: land acquisition (identified as the most significant challenge), completing Simon Moon Park, developing Armstrong and Osborne Parks, completing Grand Park, accommodating increased demand for splash pads and shelters, and stewardship of tax dollars. An observation was made that the department’s staffing is low relative to other similar jurisdictions.

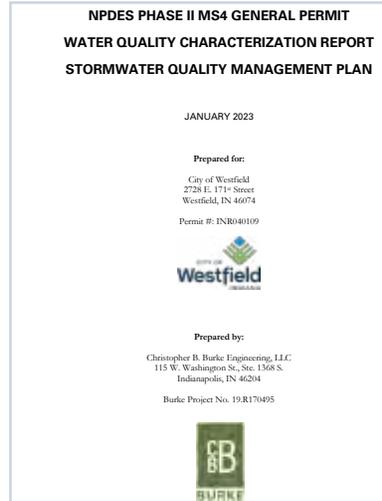


City of Westfield Downtown Redevelopment Plan (2025)

The downtown redevelopment plan is a vision for the growth of downtown Westfield over the next two decades. It establishes a vision that downtown will...

- Be a walkable community that connects memorable places
- Capitalize on the green investments and amenities
- Shift the center of development to create identity, places, and experiences.

The plan creates core opportunities from challenges that include a walkable community, attachment to place, a unique downtown identity, capitalizing on the green investment, connecting 'here' to 'there,' and shifting the center of development. It addresses walkability, in part, through a downtown loop of linked multi-use trails that act as a bicycle and pedestrian ring road around downtown. Development plan areas include the downtown core, State Road 32/Main Street, residential/general infill, Creekside residential, and the legacy and historic core. The plan proposes catalyst projects of the Carnegie Plaza block, the bank block, parking garage integration, and public space enhancements. It establishes design guidelines for downtown development.



Water Quality Characterization Report Storm Water Quality Management Plan (2023)

The Water Quality Characterization Report (WQCR) and Stormwater Quality Management Plan (SWQMP) were developed for the City of Westfield as part of compliance with the NPDES Phase II MS4 General Permit requirements. The purpose of the study is to assess water quality and potential pollutant sources, develop management plans for reducing stormwater pollution, and to align with regulatory updates under the MS4 general permit. The report documents existing conditions, land use and watersheds, water quality findings, identifies sensitive areas and potential pollution sources, and identifies potential stormwater management measures. The plan is designed to:

- mitigate development impacts
- improve water quality in impaired streams
- ensure compliance with state and federal standards.

Strategies include increased inspections, targeted education, and systematic updates to infrastructure and policies.



Grand Park Area-Wide Master Plan & District Analysis (2024)

Hamilton County Tourism and the City of Westfield partnered to complete an area-wide master plan for future destination development in Westfield. The study included a market supply and demand analysis that revealed there is strong demand for residential/multifamily

housing, hotels, unique retail, traditional retail and restaurants, corporate flex/research and development space, and parks, trails, and natural/destination assets in the area. There were three phases of work presented, Phase 1 being years 1-3, Phase 2 being years 3-7, and Phase 3 being years 7-10. It indicated full build out of retail at 250,000 sq.ft., office at 224,000 sq.ft., residential at 920 units, and 200-300 keys of hotel rooms. These concepts will be incorporated into the placetypes within this updated comprehensive plan.

City Form

Westfield began as a small agricultural community in Hamilton County, distinct from nearby Noblesville, Carmel, Fishers, and Sheridan.

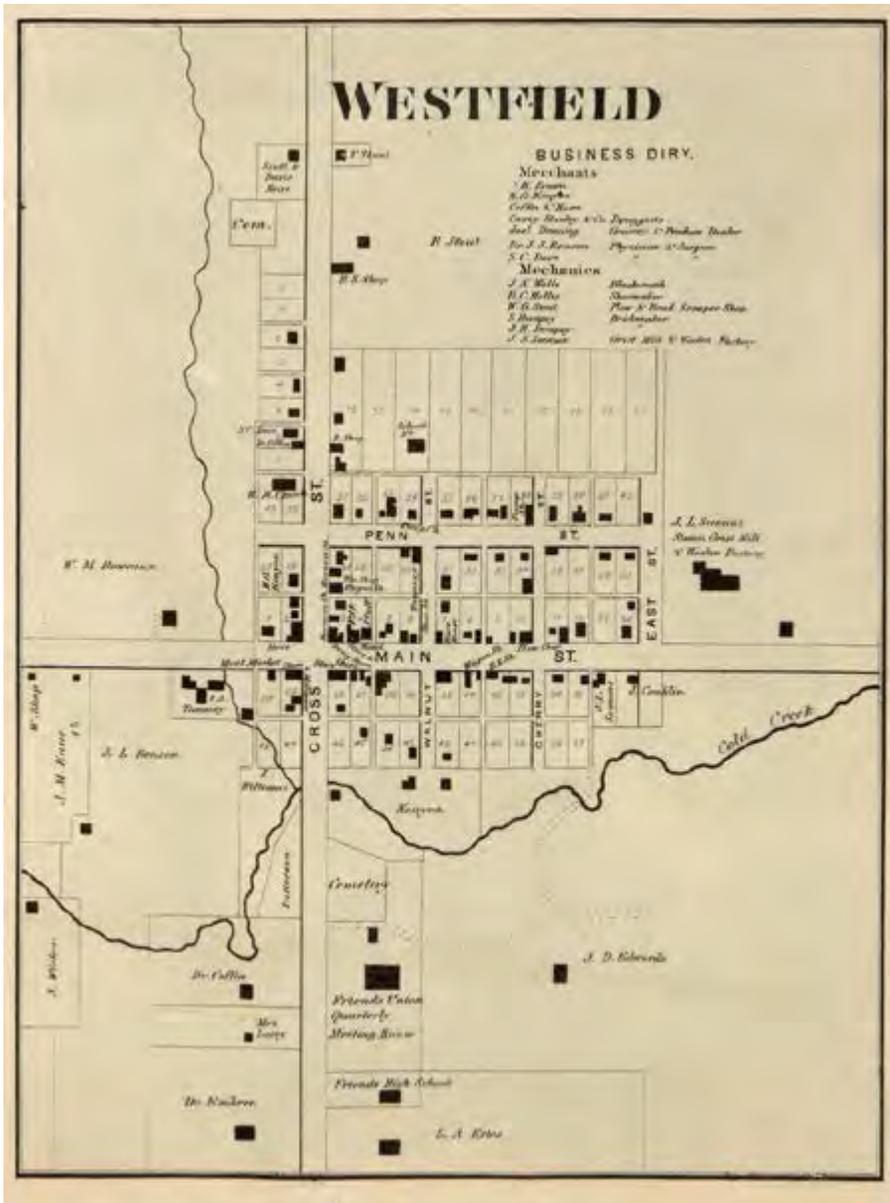
Westfield had a small downtown located at State Road 32 and Union Street with a few businesses and a post office. Growth began at a significant rate in the late 1990s. The city had 2.4 square miles of land with a total population of 3,304 (1,337 people per square mile). By 2000, the land area had grown to 7.6 square miles with a population that had close to tripled with 9,293 residents (1,220 people per square mile). This growth was primarily residential growth as families were looking for newer and larger homes in a desirable school district and convenient access to Indianapolis. Westfield's growth started later than Carmel and Fishers as they were closer to Indianapolis and I-465.

In reviewing the historic annexation of the city, the growth started south of the city, down US 31, and to the west along State Road 32. In the next decade, Westfield annexed over 19 square miles, to the west, south, and east. Unlike other communities where subdivisions are built under traditional zoning classifications, developers in Westfield were encouraged to use the Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning to increase the quality of housing, develop amenities for residents, along with much needed infrastructure improvements. Each PUD was approved with its own set of governing regulations as the city aimed to promote development that reflected unique character rather than uniformity. This is what shaped Westfield today.

Westfield geographically expanded through annexation and changed the form of government from a town to a city in 2008.

Economic Diversification

Knowing that the city needed to diversify its economy to support its growing residential base, the mid 2000s brought the vision of the youth sports capital that became Grand Park. The focus of the community and the city's investment was the development of the Grand Park Sports Campus. Grand Park shifted some of the development pressure westward across US 31 with a significant node developing along State Road 32 at the southern edge of Grand Park. The investment brought millions of visitors to the community



for sports league play and tournaments. Partnerships with the Indiana Pacers, Indy Eleven, and Indianapolis Colts created another set of visitors to the area. This new vision and facilities necessitated the development of hotels and restaurants, and the Westfield economic development strategy became linked to tourism. As housing growth continued and regional demographics shifted there was a need for multi-family housing and housing for older adults who wanted to be close to their grandchildren and participate in their sports activities.

Grand Junction Plaza

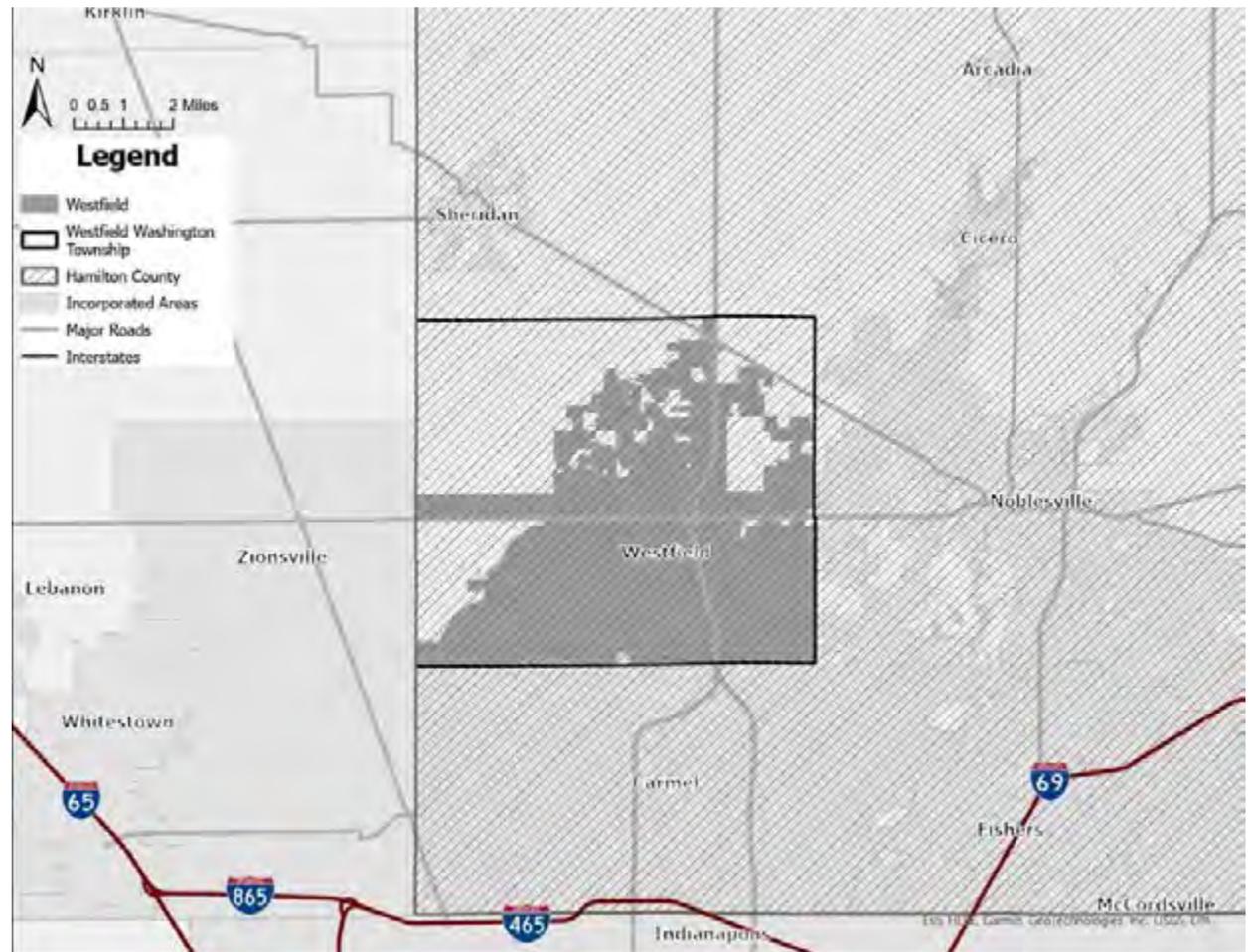
With the investment of the Grand Plaza area, and that vision continuously evolving, Westfield strategically prioritized investment in its downtown area, beginning with Grand Junction Plaza. Park Street became restaurant row, the expansion of the Westfield Washington Public Library, street and pedestrian improvements, and private investment (e.g. the Union at Grand Junction, Ambrose on Main, The Grand on Main, and Park + Poplar) are reinventing downtown. It is also shifting the area to a mixed-use walkable community that emphasizes urban design and increased density and intensity of uses.

Washington Township Villages

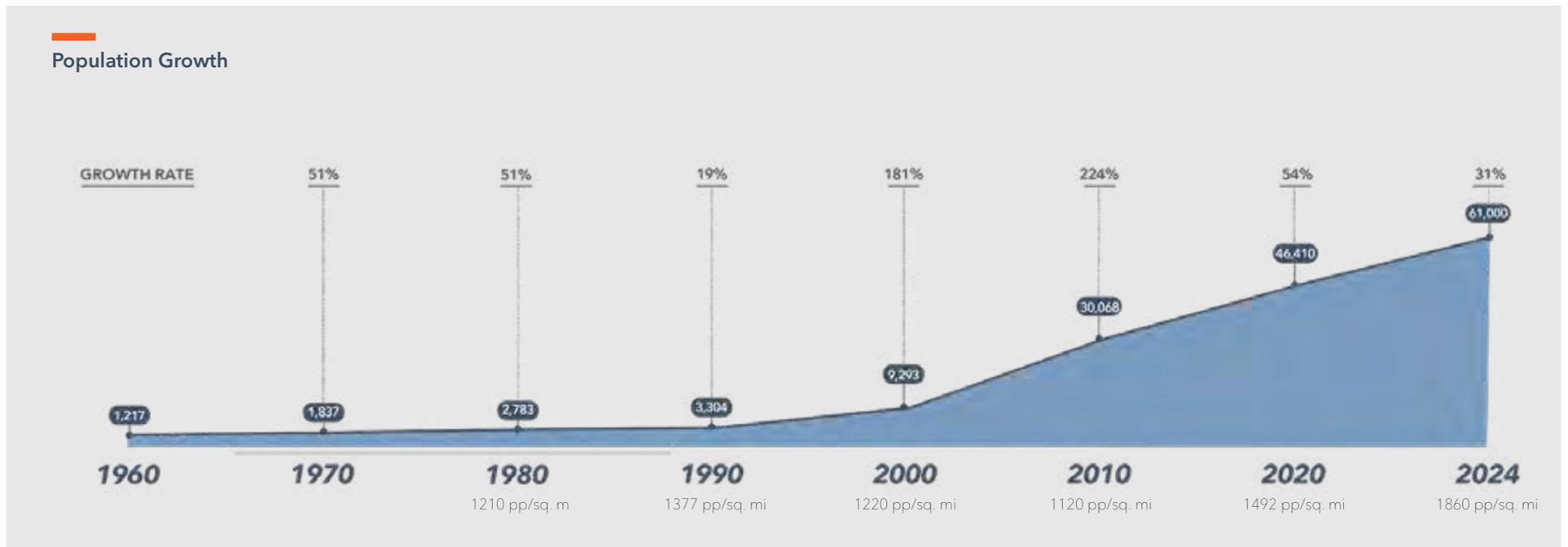
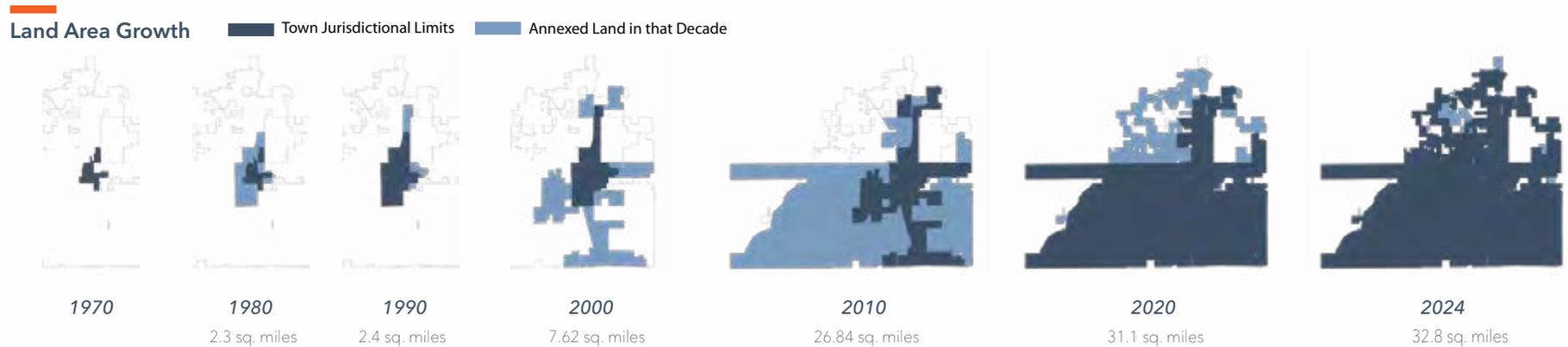
In the township, there are existing unincorporated villages in Washington Township – Eagletown, Hortonville, Jolietville, and Lamong which have histories of their own and are facing development pressure as Westfield grows. Over the years, there has been little growth and

development in these areas. However, with the continued expansion of the city westward, these communities need to be carefully planned to preserve the history that remains and ensure that new development blends with the old.

Westfield has an opportunity to be different than its neighbors with thoughtful decisions about the character of the development, its intensity, and how neighborhood develop. This includes how neighborhoods develop and connect. Where and how business and services growth occurs in the community is also an opportunity.



Planning and Annexation Boundaries



Regional Growth and Development

Over the past 50 years, Westfield has grown in land area and population from a small town in the 1960's to the second class city it is today. Growth was slow and steady between 1960 and 1990, but in the 1990's, the city began rapidly expanding along major transportation corridors US 31, State Road 32, State Road 38, and 146th Street, nearly tripling in size and population by year 2000. Continued annexation in the 2000's and 2010's tripled the population again, expanding city limits southwest and along State Road 32 up to Boone County. Though city boundary growth slowed in the early 2020's, the population continued to increase by another 15,000 residents for a total of 57,065 residents in 2024.

In 1977, Westfield took charge of planning and zoning activities in Washington Township through a joinder agreement that provides Westfield will have jurisdiction over planning and zoning in the township until such time that the community has annexed the entirety of the township or the agreement is terminated. This was done to be proactive about managing growth. There are still parts of Washington Township that are surrounded by the City of Westfield but not part of the city. Changes to Indiana's annexation statute over the past few decades have limited annexation to voluntary annexation that occurs primarily with proposed development, excluding the ability to annex land in which the property owner does not want to be annexed.

The city has long maintained a sense of cooperation and coordination as regional growth and development has evolved over the decades including strong participation in the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (IMPO), the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA), and, more recently, the Central Indiana Regional Development Authority (CIRDA). Many of the adjacent communities have experienced similar growth. Each has approached growth management and land developments bit differently.

While rapid population growth can impact local services, transportation and non-transportation infrastructure, and housing, it also presents opportunities for collaboration and choice regarding a diversity of jobs, neighborhoods, and shopping experiences for residents and visitors. Westfield's planning perspective has been one that examines the larger picture to determine what improvements are needed that would not only benefit Westfield but the region. Most of this strategic thinking has occurred with transportation and trail systems, utility systems, recreation systems, and economic initiatives. Through this plan, Westfield will continue to add to the region, achieving regional goals, and being rewarded with the benefits. Additionally, compared to its adjacent communities, Westfield's opportunities lie in the fact that it still has a lot of land area to be developed. Westfield has shifted to building density at its core and creating more urbanized, mixed-use village centers to meet the needs of its residents and future population growth.

Westfield has committed to creating more compact development footprints to enhance walkability of areas within its community. This means vertical mixed use development to efficiently use public infrastructure and support walkability. It also means ensuring that trails and sidewalks are connected to a larger system and providing other mobility opportunities than just the car. Westfield will need to rely on private development that creatively and appropriately increases density to support parking garage facilities within a development mix, while the city finds ways that residents and visitors can park once and navigate certain areas of the city like the Grand Park Sports Campus and Downtown among other areas within the city.

INTRODUCTION

Economic development is a shared endeavor between the City of Westfield and key partnerships with organizations and businesses to create and maintain jobs, increase the tax base, and provide an overall standard of living. Economic development focuses on more than just economic output—it also focuses on qualitative improvements for better social, governmental, and environmental conditions.

Economic Development

Key Market Factors

Westfield demonstrates exceptional growth momentum with \$1.5 billion in economic development investment (GrandPark.org) from 2007-2025, and population growth to 57,065 residents (2025, westfielddecdev.com), creating a strong foundation for continued development success. The community's unique competitive advantages include Grand Park Sports Campus, educational excellence (98.59% graduation rate), pro-business climate, and strategic location providing access to Indianapolis while maintaining a distinct community character. Westfield represents one of the most compelling market development opportunities in the Indianapolis metropolitan region, with exceptional potential for continued growth and development success.

Major Development Opportunities

Westfield's major development opportunities are in mixed-use development, tourism, healthcare, technology, manufacturing, biotechnology, commercial and retail development, and residential diversification. The expansion of Grand Park Sports Campus provides sports and recreation tourism with a regional and national impact. Community Health Network has expanded their campus and specialty medical services. Westfield is becoming a technology and innovation hub, leveraging the educated workforce and pro-business climate to attract emerging high-value market sectors. Westfield is expanding manufacturing uses, building upon the success of Abbott Labs, Aptiv, IMMI, and

Isotopia, and similar businesses. New retail and commercial growth are supported by a robust consumer base. There are also opportunities for residential development and diversification to expand the housing supply to include multiple price points and housing types.

Market Gaps & Challenges

Westfield has some development challenges that should be addressed in the comprehensive plan. Workforce development is important to ensure that workers have the skills for variety of industries, including manufacturing, healthcare, technology, and other service sectors. Home values are rapidly appreciating, but this creates challenges in the market for workforce and affordable housing. Westfield is also largely car-dependent and has very few public transportation options, which also affects cost of living and commuting for essential workers and young professionals. Westfield has recently had several simultaneous construction projects, which can create challenges with road access, parking limitations, and business disruptions. There is also limited land available for non-residential development, which can create cost pressures that affect project feasibility. Challenges should be managed through strategic planning and proactive management with infrastructure investment, public-private partnerships, and regional coordination, providing pathways for sustainable growth. The City must be thoughtful in their decisionmaking in how they use the remaining non-residential land as developments come before the elected and appointed bodies.



**“A Place for
People who
love sports.”**

Grand Park District Vision & Regulating Plan (Speck Dempsey, Perkins & Will)



A Vision for Downtown Development: Master Plan (Browning Day)

Strategic Development Areas

Five strategic development areas have been identified. Some, like the Grand Park Sports Campus & District and downtown, have plans that have been developed prior or concurrent to the comprehensive plan. Others are placetypes that are for planning and implementation of new development types to support the city's vision.

Grand Park Sports Campus & District

The Grand Park Sports Campus is the most visited youth sports destination in the United States as well as the 16th most visited stadium, arena, convention center, or sports complex nationally according to Placer.ai in 2023. The popularity of Grand Park has increased demand for a range of development opportunities, such as new residential, hospitality, retail, office, and recreation use. The comprehensive plan identifies this area as a strategic development area that needs a more detailed subarea plan to guide growth and development. A detailed subarea plan was created in 2024 entitled Grand Park District Master Plan. The master plan recommends office, mixed-use with retail and apartments, hotels, and entertainment development, including a three-sheet ice rink facility with the option to add a 4th. Over a 30-year period, phase one is expected to generate \$4.7 billion in net new spending, \$2.9 billion in net new earnings, 1,600 or more net new jobs, and \$109.9 million in local taxes (food and beverage taxes and property taxes). While the placetypes map identifies the large areas for the Grand Park Sports Campus and Grand Park District, this detailed subarea master plan should be used to make future land use and development decisions.

Downtown Redevelopment

The downtown area is the second strategic area for development and redevelopment. The Downtown Redevelopment Plan identifies three key elements for the future of Westfield's historic city center: transportation, open space and connectivity, and development. Several road extensions and improvements are recommended to reduce traffic congestion on State Road 32/Main Street and provide more north-south connectivity. Recommended upgrades to State Road 32/Main Street should include enhanced streetscapes, medians for fewer four-way intersections, and improved pedestrian safety. The open space and connectivity element recommends a trail and linear park following the Grassy Branch stream. This park and greenway would pass through Grand Junction Plaza and provide a connection to the Midland Trace Trail.

The development recommendations for the Downtown Redevelopment Plan suggest sub-districts within the downtown area that focus on different design and land use characteristics. The primary focus areas of this plan are the Junction sub-district, which includes the Grand Junction Plaza, the State Road 32/Main Street corridor, and other character areas, the Gateway sub-district at the US 31 & State Road 32/Main Street intersection, and the Kendall sub-district south of Park Street and Westfield Boulevard. This plan envisions increased residential density with new apartments, townhomes, and mixed-use buildings, and new office and retail developments. Revenue estimations based on the proposed development would result in an estimated \$418 million to \$477 million in assessed value and TIF increment revenue of \$9.9 million to \$11.6 million for reinvestment into the downtown.

Like the Grand Park Sports Campus & District, the city recently completed a detailed downtown subarea plan in late 2025. While the placetypes map identify the downtown area limits, the Downtown Redevelopment Plan should be used to guide decisions about land use, development form and character, and other transportation and non-transportation improvements.

Innovation District Placetype

The Innovation Districts are another strategic area of focus for the city. The parcels identified are geographically concentrated areas where leading companies, research institutions, startups, and entrepreneurs cluster together in a compact, mixed-use environment. These districts are characterized by dense networks of collaboration, state-of-the-art infrastructure, and a vibrant live-work-learn-play culture. They serve as powerful engines of economic growth, job creation, and community vitality. Successful examples include Kendall Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts; the MaRS Discovery District in Toronto; and 39 North AgTech Innovation District in St. Louis.

Westfield possesses a rare combination of assets that position it to attract global industries to the city:

- Grand Park Sports Campus is the most visited youth sports campus in the nation. This provides an unparalleled “living laboratory” for sports technology innovation and a built-in customer base that no other innovation district can match.

- Indianapolis Executive Airport offers direct executive access for corporate leaders, investors, and partners—a critical advantage for attracting and retaining high-value companies operating on a national or global scale.
- US 31 Corridor provides exceptional logistics and transportation connectivity, essential for advanced manufacturing and life sciences companies that rely on efficient supply chains.
- Westfield-Washington Community School Corporation consistently ranks among the best in the state and nation, providing a pipeline of STEM-educated talent and making Westfield highly attractive to knowledge workers and their families.
- Grand Park District Master Plan provides 152+ acres of developable land already designated for mixed-use development, offering the physical canvas upon which the innovation district can be built.

To be strategic in its approach, Westfield should focus on six interconnected industry clusters where it has demonstrated competitive advantages:

1. **Sports Technology** – Leveraging Grand Park as a testing ground and showcase venue
2. **Agri-Tech** – Building on Indiana’s agricultural heritage and central US location
3. **Bio-Tech & Life Sciences** – Capitalizing on recent wins (Portal Diabetes, Isotopia NA) and the region’s insulin manufacturing legacy
4. **Healthcare** – Proximity to Indianapolis medical corridor, Community and IU Health systems
5. **Advanced Manufacturing** – US 31 corridor logistics and Industry 4.0 focus. Industry 4.0 is reshaping industries by merging physical and digital worlds, leading to smarter operations and enhanced decision-making capabilities. This includes industries, such as aerospace, machinery, artificial intelligence, smart manufacturing, and food and beverage manufacturing.

6. **Technology & Information Services** – Horizontal enabler supporting all other sectors

The convergence of these industries—such as sports tech and healthcare creating “performance medicine,” or ag-tech and biotech enabling precision agriculture—will generate powerful synergies and sustainable competitive advantages.

Westfield should focus on two key areas within the placetypes map. One is in close proximity to Indianapolis Airport, right off State Road 32 and the Hamilton County/Boone County line. With the creation of the LEAP District in Lebanon, opportunities exist for key businesses to be located closer to an airport and still within a few miles of a major logistics corridor (US 31).

The second area is along US 31 North of E 191st Street. The area is adjacent to Northpoint and Northpoint II as well as the new Community Health Network Hospital being constructed at 193rd Street. The synergy created by the clustering of these uses provides a prime location that can be developed as a mixed-use campus.

The innovation district placetypes directly supports key objectives of the plan and economic development strategy:

- **Economic Diversification:** Reduces reliance on residential property taxes by creating a robust commercial tax base
- **Job Creation:** Generates thousands of high-wage, high-skill employment opportunities
- **Quality of Life:** Creates vibrant mixed-use environment with amenities benefiting all residents
- **Regional Leadership:** Positions Westfield as an innovation leader in Central Indiana
- **Sustainable Growth:** Accommodates growth in compact, mixed use and walkable form

The innovation district concept is a natural evolution from the Grand Park District Master Plan, providing the economic development strategy to guide tenant selection, design standards, and programming.

Flex Industrial Placetype

Flex industrial space is dynamic and adaptable and integrates various business functions (e.g. office, conference rooms, and laboratory space) within a single facility. Typically housed in single-story buildings, these spaces offer a combination of office or showroom areas with attached warehouse, distribution, or light manufacturing components. Key characteristics include high ceilings (14-24 feet), grade-level or dock-high loading doors, and customizable floor plans that can be configured to meet the specific needs of diverse tenants. This inherent versatility makes flex industrial a highly attractive option for a wide range of businesses, from e-commerce startups and logistics companies to advanced manufacturing and biotechnology firms.

As the modern economy evolves, the demand for adaptable, multi-functional commercial space is rapidly increasing. The rise of e-commerce, the decentralization of work, and the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises have created a perfect storm of demand for flex industrial properties. For Westfield, which is strategically located and experiencing rapid growth, embracing the flex industrial placetype is not just an opportunity but a necessity for sustainable economic prosperity.

Westfield has identified six strategic target sectors for economic development. Flex industrial development provides the ideal physical environment for several of these key industries:

- **Medical Device Manufacturing:** Flex spaces provide the clean, controlled environments necessary for medical device assembly, with integrated office space for administrative and R&D functions.
- **Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing:** The combination of lab, office, and light manufacturing space in a single facility is ideal for biotechnology research, development, and small-scale production.
- **Information Technology:** Flex buildings can accommodate a range of IT uses, from hardware development and assembly to data centers and hybrid office/technical support centers.

- **Agribusiness:** Modern agribusinesses require space for processing, packaging, and distribution, often with attached administrative offices, making flex space a perfect fit.
- **Sports Technology:** Development of sensors, safety equipment, and software to support sport performance requires office space and space to develop and test innovations.
- **Professional Services:** Services like environmental consulting, landscape architecture, and physical therapy (among others) require office space and large work spaces.

Westfield's significant commitment to infrastructure, including an \$186 million 8-year investment program, creates a highly attractive environment for industrial development. These investments in road reconstruction (such as the \$21.7 million State Road 32 project), trail expansion, and utility upgrades provide the necessary foundation for successful industrial parks and business campuses. Flex industrial development allows the city to capitalize on these investments by attracting businesses that rely on efficient transportation and robust utility services.

A strategic focus on the flex industrial placetype offers a multitude of benefits for the City of Westfield, ranging from significant fiscal advantages to the creation of a robust and diverse employment base.

Fiscal Benefits

One of the most compelling arguments for prioritizing flex industrial development is its overwhelmingly positive fiscal impact. Unlike residential development, which often consumes more in public services than it generates in tax revenue, industrial and commercial properties are net fiscal positives for a community.

Enhanced Property Tax Revenue

Flex industrial properties generate significantly more property tax revenue per acre than single-family residential or large-format retail developments. The dense and productive use of land, combined with the high value of commercial buildings and equipment, results in a more efficient and sustainable tax base. Studies have shown that mixed-use and smart growth

developments, which share characteristics with well-planned flex industrial parks, can generate 5 to 10 times more tax revenue per acre than conventional suburban development.

Diversified and Stable Revenue Streams

By attracting a mix of tenants across various industries, flex industrial development diversifies the city's revenue sources, making it more resilient to economic shifts. The typical long-term leases associated with industrial tenants (often 5-10 years or more) provide a stable and predictable stream of property tax revenue, which can be used to fund essential public services and amenities.

Reduced Service Costs

Flex industrial development places significantly lower demands on municipal services compared to residential development. These properties do not require schools, and their demand for services like parks, libraries, and social programs is minimal. While they do require police and fire protection, the cost of these services is spread across a much higher tax base, resulting in a more efficient use of public resources.

Job Creation and Workforce Development

Flex industrial development is a powerful engine for job creation, providing a wide range of employment opportunities for residents of Westfield and the surrounding region. The jobs created in flex industrial facilities are often higher-paying and offer better benefits than those in the retail or service sectors.

A Spectrum of Employment Opportunities

Flex industrial facilities house a diverse array of businesses, creating jobs across the skills spectrum. From entry-level positions in logistics and light assembly to highly skilled roles in engineering, research and development, and management, these developments provide career pathways for individuals with varying levels of education and experience. This diversity of employment strengthens the local labor market and provides opportunities for upward economic mobility.

Supporting High-Wage Industries

The target sectors that are well-suited for flex industrial spaces, such as medical device manufacturing, biotechnology, and advanced manufacturing, are known for paying competitive wages. By providing the necessary facilities for these industries to thrive, Westfield can attract and retain high-quality employers, boosting the average income of its residents and strengthening the local economy.

Workforce Training and Partnerships

The presence of a growing industrial base creates opportunities for collaboration between employers, educational institutions, and workforce development organizations. This can lead to the creation of customized training programs, apprenticeships, and internships that align with the needs of local businesses, ensuring a steady pipeline of skilled talent for years to come.

Targeted Sector Opportunities

Flex industrial development can be tailored to attract specific types of businesses, allowing Westfield to strategically target light/clean industrial sectors. By understanding the unique needs of these sectors, the city can create specialized development zones and incentive packages to maximize its economic development success.

Light/clean industrial uses are characterized by their minimal environmental impact, low noise levels, and professional appearance. These businesses are often compatible with mixed-use environments and can be in closer proximity to residential areas without causing significant conflicts. For Westfield, target light/clean industrial sectors include:

- Medical Device Assembly and Packaging
- Biotechnology Research and Labs
- Electronics Assembly and Testing
- 3D Printing and Additive Manufacturing
- Research and Development (R&D) Facilities
- E-commerce Fulfillment Centers

By strategically zoning land for both light/clean industrial uses, Westfield can create a balanced and diversified industrial base that capitalizes on its location and infrastructure advantages.

Destination Development Placetype

The Destination development placetype offers a strategic framework to capitalize on Westfield's assets and successes by creating specialized districts designed to attract shoppers and visitors from a broad geographic area. These districts serve as major economic anchors, contributing significantly to local tax revenue, job creation, and tourism. By combining high-quality, experiential-driven retail with entertainment, dining, hospitality, and residential uses, destination development districts can transform Westfield from a fast-growing suburb into a balanced and thriving city.

The adoption of a destination development strategy is the next strategic step for the City of Westfield. The city has already demonstrated its capacity for creating a major destination with the phenomenal success of the Grand Park Sports Campus. Grand Park serves as a powerful proof-of-concept for Westfield's ability to execute large-scale, destination-focused projects that drive tourism and economic growth. The Grand Park District Master Plan, with its vision to blend sports, recreation, business, and community, provides a natural springboard for the creation of complementary destination development districts.

Furthermore, Westfield's demographic and economic profile make it an ideal location for such developments. The city boasts a high median household income, a highly educated population, and a strategic location within a day's drive of 50% of the US population. These factors, combined with the city's rapid population growth, create a strong market for the high-quality retail, dining, and entertainment experiences that characterize destination development districts. By leveraging its existing assets and strong market fundamentals, Westfield can create unique, experiential-driven environments that capture a significant share of the regional retail and tourism market, further diversifying its economy and solidifying its reputation as a premier place to live, work, shop, recreate, and visit.



Public Open Space is a Critical Part of the Success of Destination Development.

Best Practices in Destination Development

To ensure the success of its destination development districts, the City of Westfield should adopt a set of best practices that have been proven effective in similar developments across the country. These best practices, drawn from the Urban Land Institute’s “Ten Principles for Rebuilding Neighborhood Retail” and other leading sources, provide a comprehensive framework for creating vibrant, economically successful, and sustainable destinations.

The Ten Principles for Successful Retail Districts

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) has identified ten key principles that are critical for the success of neighborhood retail districts. These principles are directly applicable to the development of destination development district in Westfield:

1

Great Streets Need Great Champions:

Successful districts require dedicated leadership from both the public and private sectors to champion the vision and drive implementation.

2

It Takes a Vision: A clear, compelling, and shared vision for the district's future is essential to guide development and attract investment.

3

Think Residential: The integration of residential uses is crucial for creating a 24/7 environment and providing a built-in customer base for retail and dining establishments.

4

Honor the Pedestrian: A focus on pedestrian-oriented design, with wide sidewalks, safe street crossings, and engaging storefronts, is paramount for creating a comfortable and enjoyable experience.

5

Parking is Power: Easy accessibility, high visibility, a sense of personal security, and convenient parking are all conditions for successful retail. Without them retail likely will fail, regardless of the shopping environment or the quality of the tenants.

6

Merchandise and Lease Proactively: The city and its partners should actively recruit a diverse mix of tenants that align with the district's vision, rather than passively waiting for tenants to come to them.

7

Make It Happen: An action-oriented approach is necessary to overcome obstacles and ensure that the vision is translated into reality.

8

Be Clean, Safe, and Friendly: A clean, safe, and welcoming environment is fundamental to attracting and retaining visitors.

9

Extend Day into Night: The district should be programmed with a mix of uses that attract visitors throughout the day and into the evening.

10

Manage for Change: The district should be managed in a way that is adaptable and responsive to changing market conditions and consumer preferences.

Key Elements of Destination Development

In today's competitive retail landscape, creating a compelling experience is essential for attracting and retaining customers. Experiential retail, as defined by McKinsey & Company, is a key component of successful destination development districts. It involves creating immersive environments that allow customers to interact with products and brands in a meaningful way. Key elements of experiential retail include:

The Ten Principles for Experiential Retail

McKinsey & Company has identified four key principles that are necessary for Experiential Retail. These principles are directly applicable to development within the Destination Development placetype in Westfield:

Interactive and Engaging Storefronts: Retailers should be encouraged to create storefronts that are not just places to display merchandise, but also places for customers to engage with the brand through interactive displays, in-store events, and product demonstrations.

A Curated Mix of Tenants: The tenant mix should be carefully curated to create a unique and compelling shopping and dining experience. This includes a mix of national brands, local boutiques, and innovative new concepts.

High-Quality Public Spaces: The design of public spaces, including plazas, parks, and streetscapes, is critical for creating a sense of place and providing opportunities for community gathering and events.

Seamless Integration of Uses: The integration of retail, dining, entertainment, hospitality, and residential uses should be seamless, creating a vibrant and walkable environment where people can live, work, and play.

By incorporating these best practices into the planning and development of its destination development district, the City of Westfield can create unique and successful destinations that will enhance the city's economic vitality and quality of life for years to come.

1

Create a robust, diversified economic base that can withstand market fluctuations and provide sustainable growth opportunities.

- **Target specific sectors for economic diversification ensuring that not one single industry is more than 25% of the employment.**
 - Targeted Industries:
 - Advanced manufacturing (aerospace, machinery, and food and beverage manufacturing)
 - Healthcare and biotechnology
 - Technology and information services
 - Professional and financial services
 - Sports technology
 - Agri-tech and biopharmaceutical manufacturing
 - Align economic placetypes map with related zoning districts throughout the city to implement the plan.
 - Identify and reserve ideal locations for significant and strategic commercial and employment uses.
 - Capitalize on Westfield's strategic location adjacent to Indianapolis Executive Airport for new economic opportunities. Focus on job creation and clean manufacturing and research and development
- **Foster a culture where Westfield has a comprehensive business ecosystem.**
 - Focus on the development of business incubation and acceleration
 - Assist small businesses with regulatory and administrative support
 - Assist with developing market access and networking
- **Focus on economic resilience building to withstand market fluctuations.**
 - Complete an industry concentration analysis
 - Maintain a healthy mix of large anchors and small businesses
 - Develop supply chain resilience
 - Focus on economic shock preparedness
- **Ensure the city provides opportunities for Class A office space.**
- **Ensure existing businesses have the support they need to expand.**

2

Cultivate a thriving innovation ecosystem that supports startup creation, business scaling, and technology adoption across all sectors.

- **Increase power and fiber infrastructure to strategically drive economic development in key areas of the city.**
 - Designate specific geographic areas for innovation activities
 - Develop mixed-use spaces combining office, retail, and residential
 - Ensure high-speed broadband and advance telecommunications
 - Create flexible spaces that can adapt to changing business needs
 - Remove land use and zoning barriers that hinder small business development.
- **Support private and nonprofit organizations in the creation of maker spaces and fabrication labs.**
 - Support the development of community maker spaces with 3D printing and prototyping equipment
 - Provide access to advanced manufacturing tools for entrepreneurs
 - Connect talent and businesses to training programs on new technologies and fabrication methods
 - Support product development and rapid prototyping capabilities
- **Collaborate with partners to support entrepreneurship programs and business technology advancements.**
 - Collaborate with educational institutions to develop entrepreneurship education and training.
 - Connect existing businesses with digital transformation consulting
 - Identify technology adoption incentives for major anchors
 - Support cybersecurity training and support
 - Support the creative economy
- **Connect entrepreneurs with angel and mezzanine financing.**

3

Build a skilled, adaptable workforce that meets current and future business needs while attracting and retaining top talent.

- **Continue to develop a comprehensive workforce development system in partnership with regional and local organizations**
 - Identify industry aligned training programs
 - Promote continuous learning infrastructure
 - Foster education-industry partnerships
- **Ensure talent attraction and retention strategies align with targeted industries but also have a greater focus on attracting young professionals.**
 - Continue to build quality of life enhancements in Westfield
 - Identify professional development and networking opportunities to connect young professionals
 - Continue to expand Westfield Welcome as the community engagement platform in Westfield
 - Support, expand, and align efforts with Westfield-Washington School's Life Ready pathways.
- **Increase workforce resilience and adaptability as new technology emerges and changes**
 - Identify resources to set businesses up for AI adaptation
 - Connect businesses to training programs focusing on soft skills development

4

Create world-class infrastructure and quality of place amenities that support business operations and attract residents and visitors.

- **Identify strategic infrastructure investments that support economic development projects through the Capital Improvement Plan**
 - Identify the key productivity-enhancing infrastructure that will drive business growth.
 - Develop financing strategy for infrastructure projects.
 - Focus on infrastructure investment priorities such as shovel-ready project development, network effect maximization, long-term maintenance planning, and regional coordination.
 - Create TrOD (Trail Oriented Development) area to provide greater access to neighborhoods, commercial areas, and destinations.
 - Support quality urban design through capital improvement projects and special districts to create stronger and more attractive business environments.
- **Implement a quality of place strategy that enhances traditional economic development initiatives.**
 - Ensure the basic needs for health and safety are more than adequately provided.
 - Ensure the city has jobs that will foster wealth creation
 - Bring housing to market faster to support all levels of the workforce.
 - Create a multi-modal and safe transportation system
 - Using natural terrain and buffering to minimize impacts of business and industrial uses located directly adjacent to residential.
 - Ensure a healthy environment with public space and green space
 - Ensure Westfield offers life-long opportunities
 - Promote civic engagement
- **Focus on development and redevelopment in strategic areas of the city to create robust community centers.**
 - Encourage construction of high-quality office space in innovation district, flex industrial, and Grand Park District.
 - Initiate detailed subarea planning/master planning of commercial corridors and centers identified through Looking to the Horizon
 - Develop and redevelop village nodes, neighborhood nodes, and commercial corridors as mixed use places that offer retail, services, offices, and entertainment.
 - Continue to focus on downtown revitalization
 - Implement the Grand Park Development District
 - Continue to support Westfield Welcome to focus on event programming
 - Incorporate Westfield's history in placemaking and programming
- **Incorporate streetscape enhancements and amenities throughout Grand Park.**

5

Maximize economic development impact through strategic partnerships, regional collaboration, and multi-sector engagement.

- Focus on public-private partnership relationships with existing and future investors
- Foster regional collaborations on key economic development initiatives that help Westfield reach its economic objectives.
 - Identify what economic development initiatives should be coordinated
 - Support resource sharing and efficiency
 - Document competitive advantages
- Create a multi-sector partnership engagement strategy nationally and globally around key business sectors.
 - Continue to work with local businesses and the state to foster national and international relationships that lead to the location of new businesses in Westfield.
 - Work with strategic partners to continue to engage with the private sector to support supply chain business development.
 - Continue to develop relationships with multiple educational institutions to foster local partnerships with businesses and schools to support the development of talent and targeted industries.
 - Ensure there is nonprofit and community organization integration to help implement the plan.

Housing

Relationship to Placetypes

Housing is the primary use for the residential-oriented placetypes and a secondary use for several of the economic-oriented placetypes, especially where mixed uses are recommended, such as downtown and village center placetypes. The placetypes descriptions and map recommend locations for differing housing densities and their built forms. Housing policies and placetypes should balance preserving established character areas and promoting new and infill developments that support positive change. Approaches like form-based elements in zoning can support missing middle and infill housing in a manner that is compatible with existing neighborhoods.



Typical Single-Family Detached Dwelling.

INTRODUCTION

Housing variety is important for attracting and retaining a diverse, resilient workforce. The availability of housing for a wide range of incomes helps to attract and retain workers for the city's businesses. The ability to live and work in Westfield helps to increase the tax base through income and property taxes. Residents also patronize local businesses and services. Housing development in downtown and the villages with newer housing types can create opportunity for young workers to afford to choose Westfield.

Housing policies and developments shape a city's environment. Housing locations and density determine infrastructure needs; compact developments help to reduce urban sprawl, making utilities more efficient and preserving natural habitats. Compact developments also reduce car dependency, thereby reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality. Compact housing and transportation options will influence Westfield's sustainability.

Existing Housing Stock

Housing Types and Occupancy

Westfield-Washington Township’s housing stock is largely made up of detached single-family homes - nearly 80 percent of housing, per the 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. However, newer developments have increased the number of single-family attached houses, duplexes, and multi-family housing. Around 80 percent of housing is owner-occupied, meaning there are limited rental units available for residents who prefer or need rental housing, such as young professionals, temporary residents, or those unable to afford homeownership in the current market. Higher interest rates and housing costs have also constrained mobility in the housing market with few homeowners moving along the housing ladder.

Westfield’s overall (owner and renter) vacancy rate in 2022 was only 4.6 percent. A vacancy rate of 8-10 percent is generally considered healthy for market flexibility. This means that Westfield has a smaller supply of available housing for new residents or for existing residents to move within the community, which also contributes to a highly competitive housing market.

Housing Age and Costs

Around 65 percent of housing in Westfield-Washington Township was built after 2000, which coincides with a large increase in the number of residents and annexation of nearly 20 square miles between 2000 and 2010. This also means that home values tend to be higher. The Westfield median home value in 2022 was \$365,700 compared to the median home value of \$223,300 for the Indianapolis Metropolitan Area where only 25.5 percent of housing was built after 2000.

Housing affordability relative to income in Westfield has the following distribution:

INCOME DISTRIBUTION	HOUSING TYPE	AREA MEDIAN INCOME	WESTFIELD AREA MEDIAN INCOME
Extremely Low Income	Supportive Services	<30%	<\$34,960
Very Low Income	Affordable Housing	30%-50%	\$34,961-\$58,268
Low Income	Affordable Housing (Target for Tax Credit Units)	50%-80%	\$58,269-\$93,229
Middle-Income	Workforce Housing	80%-120%	\$93,230-\$139,843
Upper Income	Market-Rate Housing	>120%	>\$139,844

Since Westfield generally has higher home prices, this limits the number of essential workers and young professionals who can afford to purchase or rent in Westfield, who are important contributors to the local economy. This also means that what is considered “affordable housing” has a much higher income threshold than may be expected in less affluent communities.

Housing Characteristics

Around 79 percent of housing units have four or more bedrooms despite only 26 percent of households having four or more people. Around 58 percent of households are one or two people, meaning many dwellings are larger than needed. According to TalkToTucker.com, the average home for sale in Westfield in 2025 was around 3,000 square feet, the largest being around 12,000 square feet and the smallest being around 1,100 square feet. Around 15 percent of housing units are multi-unit dwellings or apartments. According to RentCafe.com, the average apartment is around 960 square feet.

Planned Housing

The City of Westfield prepared a housing stock analysis in July of 2024, including all existing, under construction, and approved to be built housing.

- 4,262 single-unit dwellings were under construction and another 1,204 had received approvals but had not yet started construction.
- This brings the anticipated total of single-unit dwellings in the City of Westfield to 24,171 units.
- 1,040 apartment/multi-unit developments were under construction, and another 2,681 apartment units were approved but had not yet started construction.
- This brings the anticipated total apartments/multi-unit developments for the City of Westfield to 9,138 units.
- With a total of 33,309 dwelling units, the city could support around 83,272 people based on an occupancy of 2.5 people per unit.

Future Housing Development

Housing Tenure Best Practices

Owner-occupied housing accounts for 80 percent of housing units in Westfield. Research by the American Planning Association suggest housing tenure ratios around 65 to 70 percent owner-occupied and 30 to 35 percent rentals for established suburban communities. The rental housing stock should be even larger for communities with urban, mixed-use development—around 50 to 60 percent owner-occupied and 40 to 50 percent rental housing units. These ratios provide more housing flexibility and opportunities to attract young professionals and essential workers, who are less likely to be able to afford homeownership in the current market. Permitting and incentivizing housing types that are intended for rental and increasing development of rental housing shifts the balance and reduces pressure on rents because of adequate supply.

Housing Attainability

Young adults and essential workers, such as teachers, construction workers, food service workers, and healthcare workers, are less likely to have the income needed to afford home ownership. In 2022, the median home value in Westfield-Washington Township was \$365,700. Assuming a five percent down payment and a 30-year mortgage at 7.5 percent interest, not including taxes and other expenses, one would need an income of at least \$110,000 to afford to buy a home at that price. Around 61 percent of households under 25 years of age had incomes less than \$75,000. Many essential workers had median individual income of less than \$80,000 (the median individual income for all industries in Westfield). This data shows that Westfield should support policies that allow for less expensive types of housing, which may include expanding rental options and supporting more affordable construction methods.

Housing Variety

The zoning ordinance should be updated to allow for greater housing variety by allowing greater density in certain zoning districts. Missing middle housing options, such as duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and small apartment buildings should be allowed in certain zoning districts to reflect the placetype recommendations. This could be achieved by reducing the minimum floor area or lot size requirements or adopting form-based standards (e.g. setbacks or build to lines, lot coverage, building height, and parking maximums) based on the type of housing. Westfield should also consider expanding their options for affordable housing by partnering with community organizations and developers for innovative solutions.

HOUSING ACTION STEPS

1

Focus on regulatory and zoning modernization to provide housing opportunities in Westfield.

- Allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as special exceptions in appropriate residential zones in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).
- Review and redefine the planned unit development (PUD) process.
- Collect and analyze local housing data on an annual basis, including building forms, lot sizes, and architectural styles.
- Develop a comprehensive system of development incentives that align private sector activity with community housing goals while maintaining fiscal responsibility and development quality.

2

Develop village master plans for Lamong, Eagletown, Jolietville, Hortonville, and other applicable neighborhoods.

- Identify villages and other neighborhoods that require master plans and develop a process for creation of those master plans.
- Conduct baseline studies for each village, including land use, infrastructure, transportation, and community amenities.
- Incentivize the preservation of existing historic or community identifying structures, where possible.
- Emphasize the unique character or theme of focus of each place while also keeping the scale of development consistent with the village node.

3

Align the placetypes map with regulatory standards to reflect the development patterns in the residential placetypes.

- Revise residential zoning districts to align with the placetypes map to allow the targeted densities, lot sizes, and building forms.
- Eliminate zoning barriers that prevent missing middle housing types and mixed-use development formats.
- Incorporate form-based elements into regulatory standards to ensure compatibility in scale, setbacks, and streetscape design.
- Promote compact, multi-modal oriented, connected, and walkable neighborhoods that maximize infrastructure, preserves open space, and reduces per-capita municipal service costs.
- Embrace innovative housing types, construction methods, and financing mechanisms that respond to changing demographics, climate considerations, and technological advances while maintaining community character and supporting aging in place.

4

Plan for mixed-use trail-oriented development (TrOD) nodes along the Monon and Midland Trace Trails.

- Integrate missing middle housing types into the TrOD nodes around named trails.
- Prioritize development projects that include more traditional urban form features into development such as front-facing pedestrian entrances, short setbacks, rear or side loaded garages, access to bike amenities, etc..
- Require new developments within a certain distance of a trail to have bike and pedestrian infrastructure to support trail access and use.
- TrOD Nodes should be spaced to encourage walkable connectivity between them and to preserve natural areas.
- Ensure housing development is closely coordinated with infrastructure planning to ensure the growth is supported by adequate public facilities while maximizing efficiency and minimizing per-capita costs.

5

Focus on regulatory and zoning modernization to provide housing opportunities in Westfield.

- Partner with and support Hamilton County as they develop the land trust to advance housing supply.
- Coordinate housing strategies with regional partners, employers, and neighboring communities to address housing needs on a metropolitan scale while supporting local economic development, workforce retention, and fiscal sustainability.

6

Support diversification of the housing types and integration of neighborhood supporting uses into neighborhoods.

- Allow daily living uses in residential areas, particularly at key intersections. Daily living uses include grocery, gas, institutional uses, coffee shops, services, etc.
- Encourage integration and ensure the UDO supports multiple housing types, densities, and price points in a single development.
- Encourage smaller scale, creative and innovative developments, not just large scale traditional subdivisions.

Quality of Place

Quality of place answers the questions “Why Westfield?” and “What is there to do in Westfield?”

Trails, Parks, and Recreation

According to AARP, “people need public places to gather — indoors and out. Green spaces, seating and accessible buildings (elevators, zero-step entrances, staircases with railings) can be used and enjoyed by people of all ages. Nearly three-quarters of adults (73%) [in their 2021 survey] say it is important to have safe, well-lit parks that give residents places to gather and interact with friends.”

The named trails in Westfield are the Monon, Midland Trace, Cool Creek, and Natalie Wheeler. Monon and Midland Trace are part of the regional trail system as they connect to other communities in Central Indiana. The Cool Creek Trail connects Cool Creek Park south to the city limits at 146th Street and can be easily navigated to the Hagan Burke Trail in Carmel. The Natalie Wheeler Trail runs north from Cool Creek Park parallel to Westfield Boulevard and connects to downtown at Grand Junction Plaza.

Generally, “well-marked, extensive bike lanes help create an environment in which people find it safe and easy to bicycle to work or school” and “there is some understanding that policies aimed at reducing environmental barriers may have the potential to increase physical activity more than policies aimed at influencing individual behavior.” The benefits of both recreational and utilitarian physical activity benefit particularly the young and older adults in building and maintaining muscle strength, bone mass, and joint function in addition to supporting mental health. (Health and Community Design)

The City of Westfield has 13 parks and acquired land for a 14th park in 2025. Some of the parks have internal trail networks that extend the city’s total distance of trails, along with the perimeter paths in and adjacent to development areas. The parks also have amenities like shelters (available for rent), picnic tables, benches, playground equipment, disc golf, sports fields, skate parks, basketball courts, and similar features.

INTRODUCTION

Quality of Place is a broad term to describe the amenities, destinations, and experiences that make people enjoy being in the community and feel positive about it, sharing their experiences with their family, friends, and networks. Common elements of quality of place are parks, trails, and recreation; schools, childcare, and youth activities; shopping, dining, arts, cultural resources, and tourism; and social support. Other elements are related to how well the community serves people of all ages and abilities. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has resources on age-friendly communities and describes eight domains:

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Transportation

Civic Participation and Employment

Communication and Information

Respect and Social Inclusion

Social Participation

Health Services and Community Supports

Housing

Outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, civic participation, social inclusion, social participation, and health services and community supports are directly related to quality of place.

Schools, Child Care, and Youth Activities

Westfield is served by Westfield Washington Township Schools and has an early learning center, six elementary schools, an intermediate school, a middle school, and a high school. Fifth and sixth grade students attend the intermediate school, while seventh and eighth grade students attend the middle school. There are more than 10,000 students in the district. In the 2026–2027 school year, the district will open two new elementary schools and a new middle school. These new facilities will help serve students and families as the district grows in population.

The high school Career Pathways program connects what students learn in class to real-world jobs, with options in fields like manufacturing, engineering, finance, and health sciences. In the intermediate and middle school there are clubs and programs for almost every interest—choir, band, theater, STEM, robotics, student council, and more—so students can explore and discover new passions alongside strong academics. These clubs and programs, and more, are available at the high school level to allow students to continue to grow and learn.

School-age children are one of the primary beneficiary groups of investments in parks and recreation. According to Heath and Community Design, “because recreational exercise occurs in or on parks, playgrounds, baseball diamonds, basketball courts, and biking trails...the spatial allocation of these facilities is important.” Further, “there appear to be two primary barriers facing children in the contemporary environment: distance between destinations and traffic safety.” Compact neighborhood development, connected neighborhoods, and schools connected to neighborhoods provide opportunities for recreation and utilitarian movement that can improve physical and mental health outcomes for children.

The Virginia F. Wood Early Learning Center offers a place for families with little ones for childcare, developmental preschool, and speech services. The district is growing here too, with more classrooms opening to support over 570 children with a team ready to help children grow and learn.

There are 11 licensed childcare centers in Westfield, more are adjacent to the community in Carmel and Noblesville. These centers provide care to infants through a maximum age of 12. The centers have a capacity between 130 and 300 children at different ages like toddlers, and age two and above. There is a total of 1,879 child care spaces available in Westfield that are in licensed childcare centers. Some are open 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Friday. Others open at 6:30 or 7:00 AM and close at 6:00 or 6:30 PM. Only three of the centers are qualified for On My Way Pre-K. In the State of Indiana Paths to Quality program there are four levels: Level 1 meets health and safety standards, Level 2 also includes learning environments, Level 3 adds a planned curriculum, and Level 4 has national accreditation. Of the licensed childcare centers in Westfield the Paths to Quality levels are:

Level 1: 3

Level 2: 1

Level 3: 2

Level 4: 3

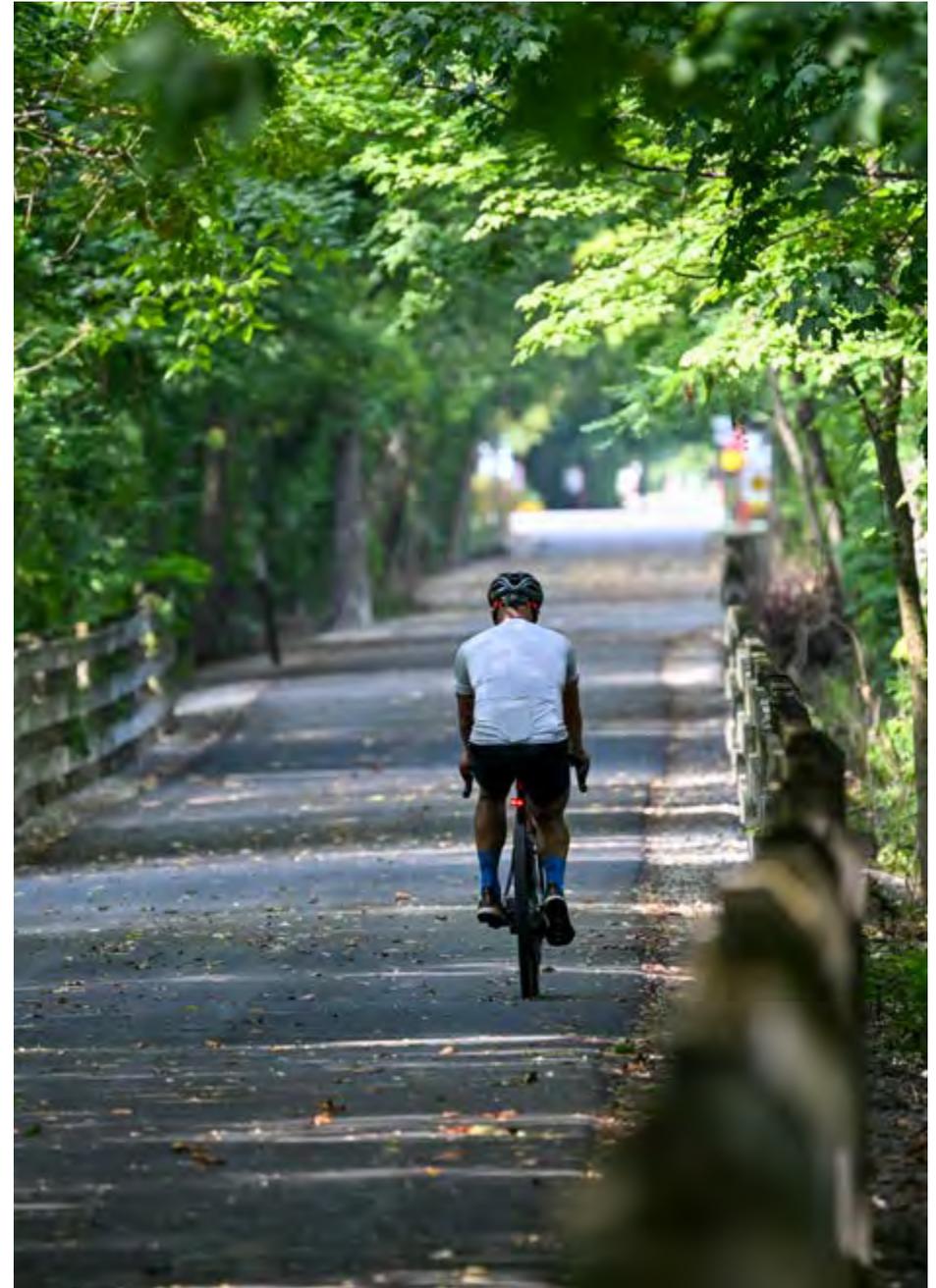
There is other child care options available including licensed childcare homes, unlicensed centers, schools, and homes, and unlicensed childcare ministries. The state has a childcare finder tool available to assist in choosing an appropriate type of care and location.

Westfield Youth Sports offers basketball, field hockey, tennis, baseball, football, volleyball, cheer, lacrosse, track and field, cross country, and softball to youth. Baseball, football, cheer, and softball have both in-house and travel programs. The programs are based at Grand Park and supported by a board of directors, sponsors, and volunteers.

Twelve local sports organizations have a presence in Westfield in addition to Westfield Youth Sports:

- Pacers Athletic Center
- Bullpen Tournaments is the contact for the ball diamonds at Grand Park
- Indiana Mustangs is a baseball and softball league
- Indiana Prospects helps create exposure for high school and college baseball
- Indiana Soccer Academy is for youth soccer
- Indy Eleven Academy is a soccer club for all ages
- Pro X Athletic Development is a multi-sport training and rehabilitation center
- Roundtripper Baseball Academy is a baseball training facility that covers all year play
- The Academy Monon Select is volleyball for all ages
- The Jungle Fitness has a collegiate size basketball court and practice turf
- Westfield Aquatics is the USA Swimming competitive swim team based at the YMCA of Westfield
- Wrights 360* Movement Academy is a gymnastics and ninja training academy for ages 1-12
- White River Rugby Club has a rugby partnership at Freedom Trail

The Westfield Washington Schools and the YMCA of Central Indiana partnered to build an aquatic center as a shared facility and has recently completed the build out of the YMCA. The Ascension St. Vincent YMCA at Westfield is a member of the YMCA of Central Indiana with memberships available in addition to the pool for the high school and Westfield Aquatics.



Shared-Use Trail.

Shopping, Dining, Arts, Cultural Resources, and Tourism

Suburbs have been “a continuous experiment, evolving in response to the interplay of fundamental demographic, economic, and technological changes” and Westfield is at the cusp of their next evolution as a suburban community (Suburban Remix). The next evolution of suburbs will be more urban, but less “gritty” than traditional urban cities. They will have downtowns and expand their demographic as the “traditional suburban demographic base – households with children – continues to represent a declining share of suburban housing markets” nationally. The process of creating these downtowns requires civic leadership, planning, and in-depth community-wide engagement.” The core principles for this type of development are: walkability, connected communities, a multi-layered public realm, diverse housing choices, and being authentic. These principles are embedded in the comprehensive plan.

Evolving in this way is important because while drivable suburbanism in high income areas will do fine, it will foster weaker economic growth than urbanizing suburbs (Suburban Remix).

Shopping and dining options are increasing in Westfield, both downtown and in the State Road 32 corridor near Grand Park. The suburban shopping center located on the northwest quadrant of 146th Street and adjacent to US 31 has a mix of uses including a theater, restaurants, big box retailers, and smaller outlot and strip center mostly national brand restaurants and shops. The visibility of this area from US 31 changed with the reconstruction of US 31, but it continues to have high occupancy. The changed shopping patterns with online shopping, food delivery for both fast food and fast casual dining, and grocery delivery service as well as a host of mobile services emerging will change the viability of this drivable suburban development. Assets like the Cool Creek Trail and Hamilton County Parks Cool Creek Park are adjacent to the development and there are apartments and other more intense housing choices adjacent to the commercial development. This area could be well-suited for mixed-used redevelopment over time as the market viability of the existing development decreases.



Restaurant With Outdoor Seating.

Art is a component of a viable community – visual and performing arts contribute to social connections, engagement in the lives of the community, and a sense of place that is unique to the area. Visual arts can be incorporated in the community through building murals, sculpture in public places, trail murals and shelters, and playgrounds. Performing arts can be integrated into events like the farmers’ market, community events, downtown life, and as part of events at Grand Park, city parks, or along the named trails. Music, dance, spoken word performance, and similar forms of performing art bring a richness to places that encourage people to gather and socialize.

As Westfield continues to grow, maintaining and celebrating the history and culture of the original town has become an important community conversation. This has been done in other communities by “drawing freely on local history, geography, ecology, culture, and values through placemaking seeks to reinforce a sense of character and to give a building or the public spaces of new development.” Westfield will continue to incorporate local history in Grand Park, in the community gateway on US 31, along the Midland Trace at the Union Street trail head. The Quaker cemeteries, agricultural landmarks, and storytelling of the Underground Railroad are important elements of local history and culture to incorporate as the community grows and evolves.

Most of Westfield’s tourism is firmly grounded in youth sports. Grand Park was a vision to make Westfield a national destination for youth sports, and that vision has generated success for the community. Building out the housing, hotels, restaurants, shopping, family entertainment, and related commercial development is underway to increase the ongoing tourism draw of Grand Park and the city’s investments.

Social Support

Social support is something that becomes more of a community’s life as the community grows. It pertains to people of all ages, from young children to older adults, and across demographic groups. Children and adults may require support for a range of mental health issues, which may be school counseling or private counseling. With changes in the economy during recessions, people may find themselves in need of temporary support for food, medical needs, or housing. Non-profits organizations, places of worship, community members, and at times government programs help fill their needs. People may struggle with substance abuse disorder and need treatment for themselves and support for their family members. While they are in crisis they may require intervention of services like EMS, police, and hospitals. People experiencing domestic violence may require police intervention and emergency shelter as well as longer term social supports to rebuild their lives. People who have lost their housing, or for whom housing has become unattainable, may be staying with friends or looking for very short-term low-cost housing to stay off the streets. Older adults may need in-house hospice care, care workers, or social workers to assist with daily lives and end of life.

Social services affect budgets on the personnel side and the capital side as different training and resources are needed or simply more qualified staff are needed to serve the area appropriately. Many of the “last resort” options for people in crisis fall to government and public funding.

Public safety and firefighting/emergency services are priorities for the City of Westfield. Two fire stations are being added to the community presently, with an understood need for at least three more. The city and the Westfield-Washington Township Schools are co-investing in school resource officers for each school.

Several non-profits serve Westfield and Hamilton County in a variety of social services capacities.

QUALITY OF PLACE ACTION STEPS

1

Communicate and celebrate local history by continually developing public art and placemaking initiatives

- Develop a public art program aligned with the arts master plan
- Continue to support public art at Grand Park that communicates local sports history in outdoor installations.
- Coordinate the work of local organizations and the schools for youth engagement in agriculture and underground railroad history.
- Feature the local history in interactive public art along a named trail.
- Integrate the celebration of Westfield history and assets (food, art, sports) into city celebrations (e.g. Founding Day, Culture Fest, Rock the 4th).
- Develop music and performing arts programming aligned with the arts master plan.

2

Invest in local recreation facilities and programming for residents of all ages, abilities, and interests.

- Plan, fund, and open a community recreation center.
- Build out programming for each of the local parks.
- Add additional park land in developing areas.
- Include accessible play structures in park development.
- Develop programming related to natural resources.
- Connect existing perimeter trails and parks into a bicycle and pedestrian network.

3

Encourage developments and industries that integrate agriculture, including agri-tourism, and agri-neighborhoods and parks.

- Establish development standards for agri-neighborhoods.
- Work with large landowners west of Little Eagle Creek to plan development that includes agricultural elements.
- Support continued operation and expansion of agri-businesses (e.g. Urban Apples, Urban Vines, Stuckey's) in the community.
- Develop and support farm-inspired activities for all seasons.

4

Establish quality tree standards and natural riparian corridors to preserve, maintain, and enhance the natural environment.

- Require riparian corridor preservation in development standards.
- Encourage preservation and maintain high-quality tree stands in development standards.
- Create a position of urban forester within the city administration.
- Encourage planting new tree stands for future generations of Westfield residents.

5

Maintain and improve passive green spaces that provide valuable connections to nature.

- Include passive spaces in park design.
- Support development of a rural historic district where there are Indiana State Department of Agriculture Hoosier Homesteads.
- Adopt a local right-to-farm ordinance to protect existing farmers (crop and livestock) from complaints related to urbanization.
- Develop a natural trail or equestrian trail network in the rural southwestern and western portions of Washington Township.

Utilities

INTRODUCTION

Drinking Water and Wastewater systems are essential for preserving public health in a community. Customers rely on the delivery of safe and reliable drinking water. Collection and treatment of wastewater protects the environment and prevents the release of contaminants into local waterways. It is vital that these systems expand with the community to ensure growth is supported.

Action Steps

The drinking water and wastewater systems in Westfield are owned by Citizens Energy Group (Citizens). Developers may apply to Citizens to expand the systems through water main extension, service line construction, sanitary main extension, or sewer lateral construction. Citizens may also spearhead their own projects to expand, modify, or improve the systems. In any case, it is crucial for the City of Westfield to keep Citizens apprised of all growth plans and projections during the planning process.

Objective 1: Work closely with Citizens on expansions, modifications, and improvements to the water and wastewater systems necessary to support development.

As Westfield grows, the drinking water distribution system and wastewater collection system must expand to reach new customers. Water demand will increase as the number of customers increases, and additional flows will be sent to the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). The existing infrastructure may need to be upsized to handle higher flow rates. Regular communication between the City of Westfield and Citizens to discuss drinking water and wastewater infrastructure conditions and capacities, demand projections, and potential improvement projects is critical.

Citizens should be consulted when any industrial or potential high consumption users express interest in moving to Westfield. Industrial customers must comply with pretreatment standards. Even if supply is available, existing watermains are limited in the demands they can meet. Accommodation of a high consumption user may require substantial system modifications.

For developers, Citizens has fact sheets available regarding the process for plan review and permitting for water main extensions, water service lines, sanitary main extensions, and sanitary sewer laterals. Developers should follow the procedures and requirements outlined in the most recent version of the Citizens Energy Group Water Standards Manual for water main and service line design and construction, as well as the most recent version of the Citizens Energy Group Sanitary Standards Manual for sanitary main and sewer lateral design and construction.

Key Action Steps:

- Coordinate with Citizens on the following items:
 - Ensure there is sufficient drinking water storage within the distribution system, typically equal to the average daily consumption.
 - Ensure existing force mains have capacity to supply areas of new development.
 - Verify new development complies with Citizens' Wellhead Protection Plan.
 - Discuss proactive expansion of the WWTP to accommodate increased flows from future development prior to reaching 90% capacity (4.5 MGD).
 - Ensure existing trunklines have capacity to accept flows from areas of new development.
 - Verify drinking water needs of potential high consumption users can be met while maintaining sufficient pressure and quality throughout the rest of the system.
 - Establish whether potential industrial users will be subject to pretreatment requirements.
- Highlight and amplify water conservation tips and practices published by Citizens to preserve capacity within the treatment and distribution systems.
- Direct developers to Citizens' fact sheets:
<https://info.citizensenergygroup.com/permits-and-forms>

Objective 2: Maximize the useful life of existing infrastructure through regular inspection and maintenance.

A close partnership between the City of Westfield and Citizens is important to ensure customers' needs are met. Citizens is responsible for the maintenance of the drinking water and wastewater systems in Westfield. Maintenance of older infrastructure where right-of-way or easements are not established can be difficult and, potentially, neglected. Citizens' Real Estate office should be made aware of any such cases where a maintenance easement may be required.

Key Action Steps:

- Notify Citizens of water and wastewater infrastructure maintenance needs. Contact the Real Estate office if a maintenance easement is required.

Water Conservation.

A culture of water conservation promotes sustainability while saving both the customers and utility money. Conserving water helps customers reduce their water and electricity bills. Water conservation also preserves capacity in the drinking water and wastewater systems by reducing per capita water demand and wastewater contributions. This allows for the delay of some capital projects such as treatment plant expansion or upsizing mains or sewers due to a slower increase in demand, even as a community continues to grow. Citizens has conservation tips available at <https://info.citizensenergygroup.com/conservation>.

Stormwater

Action Steps

Westfield's stormwater management strategy emphasizes the need for maintenance of existing infrastructure to ensure continued, successful operation and implementation of innovative and sustainable solutions for new development and areas of need.

Objective 1: Maximize the useful life of existing infrastructure through regular inspection and maintenance.

The City of Westfield is responsible for maintenance of its stormwater infrastructure. SWMP section 5.1 describes the need for improved long-term maintenance procedures for stormwater BMPs, especially when privately-owned. BMP inspection and maintenance costs are incorporated in the City of Westfield Stormwater program costs through 2027. Based on inspection results and maintenance needs, the program may need to be adapted to include more frequent checks. It is important that privately-owned BMPs are also inspected to ensure private owners comply with their maintenance agreements.

In areas where maintenance of older infrastructure is difficult or impossible due to a lack of right-of-way or easements, coordination with the city attorney may be needed to establish maintenance easements.

Key Action Steps:

- Continue development and implementation of a long-term maintenance plan for stormwater infrastructure including regular inspections to confirm condition and performance are adequate.
- Coordinate with the city attorney to establish any necessary maintenance easements for existing stormwater infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION

Effective stormwater management protects infrastructure, improves water quality, and recharges groundwater supply. Stormwater management is crucial to protect city infrastructure such as Grand Junction Plaza, a favorite place of the community, as well as roadways and building foundations which can be damaged by flooding. Innovative stormwater management systems promote infiltration of stormwater to recharge groundwater supply, Westfield's source of drinking water. Treatment of runoff protects waterways from pollutants which can have detrimental effects on aquatic life.

The City of Westfield updated their Stormwater Ordinance and Technical Standards Manual in 2019 establishing policies relating to stormwater management, stormwater quality practices, flood control, submittal requirements and procedures for issuance of a stormwater permit, and procedures for inspection, testing and final acceptance of stormwater facilities. Updates to the Stormwater Master Plan (SWMP) and Stormwater Quality Management Plan (SWQMP) were completed in 2022 and 2023, respectively. The SWMP and SWQMP identify problem areas and evaluate potential solutions including both capital project and policy-based solutions.

Stormwater BMPs.

Stormwater best management practices (BMPs) refer to the devices, practices, or methods that are used to manage stormwater runoff by controlling peak runoff rate, improving water quality, and managing runoff volume. BMPs can be structural or non-structural.

Structural BMPs are physical structures that control and treat stormwater. Examples of structural BMPs include:

- Constructed wetland
- Planter boxes (pictured)
- Water quality device

Nonstructural BMPs are policies and strategies that aim to preserve natural features and reduce runoff. Examples of non-structural BMPs include:

- Riparian/vegetative buffer (pictured)
- Minimization of total disturbed area
- Protection of natural flow paths



Source: <https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/types-green-infrastructure#tns1-item0>



Source: <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-11/bmp-riparian-forested-buffer.pdf>

Objective 2: Eliminate illicit discharges and address problem areas identified in the SWMP and SWQMP to reduce flooding and improve water quality.

The City of Westfield is implementing an Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) program as is required for MS4s. Signs are posted along the road near major waterways, informing the public of what number to call to Report-A-Polluter. Stream sampling can further help to identify pollutant sources. A potential pollutant source is failing septic systems. While there are few septic systems in Westfield, it is important that customers on septic are aware of the maintenance requirements and potential signs of malfunction.

The SWMP identifies specific areas of known drainage, flooding, and water quality issues. As Westfield grows, it is vital for the community that attention is paid to longer-established neighborhoods as well as new developments. Drainage and flooding complaints should be addressed in a timely manner. Repeat complaints should trigger a discussion of potential infrastructure improvements or modifications to prevent future issues. The SWMP also identifies strategies for addressing these issues including swales and culverts, additional storm inlets, and rain gardens.

Key Action Steps:

- Continue implementation of IDDE program, utilizing Westfield City Code 54.13 to access facilities and verify compliance.
- Where sewer is not available for new or existing development, ensure customers are informed of septic system maintenance requirements and potential signs of malfunction.
- Address flooding and drainage problems in older neighborhoods utilizing strategies identified in the SWMP.

Objective 3: Prioritize sustainable stormwater management in future development.

The popularity of Westfield's trails and parks indicate that residents appreciate the natural features of the area. Preservation of these features during development also reduces stormwater runoff and improves stormwater quality. This is a design approach known as low impact development (LID). The LID approach to stormwater management is described in the city's Utility and Infrastructure Construction Standards and Specifications Manual. Currently, stormwater fees are based on impervious area which incentivizes development that minimizes conversion of pervious surfaces, such as grass and soil, to impervious surfaces, such as concrete or asphalt. Additional incentives could be provided to encourage developers to utilize the LID approach such as:

- Additional stormwater fee discounts or credits,
- Expedited permit processing,
- Waiving or reducing permitting fees,
- Awards or recognition programs.

Where construction of impervious surfaces is unavoidable, such as roadway projects, green infrastructure may be incorporated to capture and treat runoff at the source. When stormwater runoff flows over streets or parking lots, it picks up pollutants that have been deposited on these surfaces. Green infrastructure is a subset of stormwater BMPs that uses plants, soils, and other media to capture and treat stormwater and promote infiltration and evapotranspiration. This results in a smaller volume of stormwater that is sent to storm sewers and surrounding waterways during and after rain events, reducing the risk of surcharging or flooding the system. The use of native plants and trees for green infrastructure systems benefits environmental sustainability and local wildlife.



Source: <https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/about-green-infrastructure#:~:text=As%20defined%20by%20the%20Clean,is%20overlap%20between%20these%20concepts.>

Note that an INDOT permit must be obtained for any work within INDOT right-of-way, such as US 31 and State Road 32, including work outside of the roadway. Right-of-way limits vary by location. Generally, within city limits INDOT right-of-way is full width of sidewalk to full width of sidewalk. INDOT is also an MS4, and they are required to manage stormwater within their right-of-way accordingly. Close coordination with INDOT will be required for any projects that convey stormwater into or out of INDOT right-of-way.

Key Action Steps:

- Incentivize LID stormwater management design approaches and incorporation of green infrastructure in new development.
- Incorporate green infrastructure into roadway and other public works projects to capture and treat runoff at the source.
- Utilize stormwater BMPs to preserve a natural aesthetic in new development and increase flood resilience.
- Prioritize native plants and trees.
- Coordinate with INDOT during the planning, design, and construction of any project that conveys stormwater into or out of INDOT right-of-way.

UTILITIES AND STORMWATER ACTION STEPS

1

Promote safe and reliable water service by fostering strong partnerships with Citizens Energy Group, ensuring that infrastructure investments, service delivery, and long-term planning align with the city's growth.

- Maintain and modernize the street network to provide for current and future transportation needs that ensure safety for all modes of transportation.
- Follow the application procedures outlined in the most recent version of the Citizens Energy Group Water Standards Manual for water main and service line construction.
- Coordinate with Citizens Westfield to ensure there is sufficient drinking water storage within the distribution system, typically equal to the average daily consumption.
- Verify new development complies with Citizens Westfield's Wellhead Protection Plan.
- Highlight and amplify water conservation tips and practices published by Citizens.
- Work with Citizens to establish maintenance easements for existing infrastructure with clear stipulations on allowable development to allow access for repairs and rehabilitation.

2

Ensure reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible wastewater treatment services through proactive coordination with Citizens Energy Group, safeguarding public health and water quality while aligning infrastructure investments with the city's long-term growth.

- Follow the requirements and procedures outlined in the most recent version of the Citizens Energy Group Sanitary Standards Manual for issuance of approvals and permits and acceptance of sanitary sewer facilities.
- Where sewer is not available for new or existing development, ensure customers are informed of septic system maintenance requirements and potential signs of malfunction.
- Coordinate with Citizens Westfield to proactively upgrade the wastewater treatment plant to accommodate increased flows from future development prior to reaching 90% capacity.
- Coordinate with Citizens Westfield to ensure existing trunklines have capacity to accept flows from areas of new development.
- Work with Citizens to establish maintenance easements for existing infrastructure with clear stipulations on allowable development to allow access for repairs and rehabilitation.

3

Develop and maintain a resilient, efficient, and sustainable stormwater infrastructure system that protects public safety, improves water quality, reduces flooding risks, and supports community growth while enhancing natural ecosystems.

- Utilize stormwater BMPs as landscaping, prioritizing native plants and trees, to provide a natural aesthetic in new development and increase flood resilience.
- Establish a long-term maintenance plan for stormwater infrastructure.
- Incentivize incorporation of green infrastructure in new development.
- Address flooding and drainage problems in older neighborhoods utilizing strategies identified in the Stormwater Master Plan.
- Establish maintenance easements for existing infrastructure with clear stipulations on allowable development to allow access for repairs and rehabilitation.

INTRODUCTION

Certain changes in the economy and the built environment are driven by technological change. In many ways the global pandemic of 2020 accelerated these trends and, or of necessity at the time, made them common practice. How we shop, eat, move, and work were all transformed by technology during the pandemic and many of these changes are here to stay. Other changes may be needed in the next twenty years to be resilient as we experience further changes in the global economy, climate and weather, and political environment.

Innovative & Emerging Trends and Technologies

Shared Systems

Shared mobility started tentatively and primarily in large cities, but uptake was slow in places like Central Indiana. Car share programs didn't last more than a few years here, while thriving in places where people only use a car to escape the city for vacation. Bike and scooter share programs had varying levels of success in the region, with relatively high demand and growth in the Indianapolis Pacers Bikeshare system, while other communities had limited success early on including Westfield and Carmel. Carmel has re-launched their bike share program and other suburban communities are launching programs as their trail network becomes more connected. Most of the bike share programs are docked bikeshares, where the bikes need to be returned to a specific location with a hard dock. The private scooter shares in Indianapolis are not docked systems. The companies pay independent contractors to charge and distribute the scooters. Other cities have used geofencing to manage where bikes and scooters are returned. These programs create transportation opportunities for people who are unable to drive (especially younger people) and who can't afford a car.

Another type of shared system is co-working locations. These may be operated by public, private, or non-profit entities and offer shared office essentials and equipment as well as conference rooms and workspaces for a membership fee or day use fee. These locations offer collaboration efforts for small business owners and the opportunity for remote workers to have an "office" space that is in a professional setting and can be quiet for focused work. Makerspaces are a type of co-working location where there is equipment like laser engraving, 3-D printing, sewing machines available for start-up businesses to make their products without investing in the means of production. Some have member fees. They may be public or non-profit spaces like in libraries. Westfield has a small makerspace in the Westfield Washington Township Public Library. Carmel Clay Township built a sound studio into their library, and it is available to residents for recording high-quality podcasts and other audio products.

Shared commercial kitchens are used by small businesses to have commercial health and safety graded cooking spaces available to produce food for sale to the public. Several small bakeries and specialty food businesses use this type of space on a rental basis to produce their food for sale. Churches and non-profits are typically the owners/managers of shared commercial kitchens.

Smart City

Smart City is connecting technology to infrastructure for better informed management and maintenance. On highways this can include Intelligent Transportation Systems like message boards that alert drivers to lane or road closures, or truckers to the number of parking spaces available at a rest area. In cities it can include connected infrastructure and applications to alert drivers when there is a train, how long the train is and will take to clear an intersection, and available detour routes for at-grade railroad crossings. It can also be light fixtures that send an alert when a lightbulb dies or a fixture is broken, sensors that report full trash cans, and similar situations.

Some communities have been investigating autonomous vehicles for certain municipal services, using drones for law enforcement, emergency services, and code enforcement, and similar applications. There are still legal and ethical issues surrounding this technology and its use by government, and the applications will evolve over time.

Impact of Delivery of Service and Growth of E-Commerce

Delivery services of all types accelerated their market absorption quickly during the COVID 19 Pandemic. Amazon was already delivering packages to many homes and businesses daily, but they expanded, and other services became used on a regular basis. Grocery ordering and delivery has become standard in many households. Door Dash, Uber Eats, and similar services have changed carry out food service. These services increase vehicle miles traveled for the delivery drivers but increase accessibility to choices for people who can't drive or don't have access to a car. Drive thru, rather than dining in, has also become more common.

These changes in how we do business have implications for the built environment, specifically:

- Parking/standing space for delivery vehicles during the transactional steps (pick up, drop off)
- Vehicle idle in drive-thru lines and when standing during deliveries
- Long drive through lines that spill into adjacent parking lots and streets
- Smaller building footprints for chain restaurants as fewer people drive in
- Delivery vehicles blocking turn lanes or travel lanes when making deliveries to homes or businesses in walkable areas
- Delivery vehicles blocking sidewalks, curb ramps, bike lanes, or other similar facilities during pick up/drop off
- Fewer businesses need or want a brick and sticks presence in the community, can lead to high retail vacancy rates and reduces property tax opportunities for communities
- Security issues for package drop-offs, particularly where homes don't have individual porches
- Policy decisions regarding autonomous delivery vehicles (cooler robots) on public infrastructure
- National level policy choices for commercial drones doing delivery, especially adjacent to airports or sensitive land uses
- Increased need for warehousing, distribution, and logistics centers
- Increased truck traffic

Autonomous Vehicles

Autonomous vehicles are under development and have a wide range of applications from the aforementioned cooler delivery robots to transit to trucking to passenger vehicles. The technology, legal framework, and insurance standards are still being developed and tested. Some vehicles have a degree of autonomous driving capability but require a legal driver in the vehicle. Some imagine a future with autonomous transit service and shuttles around employment centers and campuses, autonomous trash and recycling vehicles, driverless delivery services, and the availability for people who are unable to drive themselves to have or rent car services that can drive them without having to be able to intervene with the vehicle.

While early plans for an autonomous transportation network depending on in-road technology that has shifted to the Internet of Things and communication between integrated computers in vehicles and in phones. Many of the crash avoidance technologies in newer cars are the early stages of technologies needed for autonomous vehicles to share the road safely without human intervention. There are challenges to overcome as the technology is still not as good as humans at identifying children, people with darker skin tones or darker clothes, and people using bicycles, scooters, or walking.

As fully autonomous vehicles become reality there will be increased demand for curb space for pickup and drop-off and standby parking for the vehicles while waiting for a request from an owner or a user of an application-based car share. There may be reduced need for on-site parking at retail and entertainment venues, hotels, restaurants, and offices as the cars leave the premises between rides. This can allow for more dense and intense development patterns and increased land value.

Electric Vehicles

Electric vehicles will reach market absorption ahead of autonomous vehicles. Homes will need vehicle capacity electric service in garages for overnight charging, parking garages for apartment buildings and workplaces will need the same. Municipal lots, private commercial parking lots, and similar places will need vehicle charging infrastructure. Conventional gas stations may convert to rapid charging stations.

Transit Future

The Central Indiana Transit Plan is a multi-county, multi-year vision for transit throughout the region, informed by more than a decade of planning and public input. More than a decade ago, a group of Central Indiana elected officials and business leaders called the Central Indiana Transit Task Force (CITTF) recognized that transit investment would provide more economic return for the region than any other type of transportation improvement. The task force recommended a significant expansion of the regional transit system and the adoption of new transit funding sources. The Central Indiana Transit Plan recommends establishing new local transit services in counties and townships adjacent to Marion County that have studied their needs. This means providing the right services to fit the goals and the needs of each individual area and community.

Indiana state law requires that transit be funded locally, but best practices indicate that transit investments are most effective and efficient when coordinated regionally. In 2014, the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation (IC 8-25) to enable a stable, dedicated funding source for transit investments, provided via a public referendum process. It allows certain Central Indiana counties and townships to ask for voter approval of a local income tax to fund transit within the community. These funds would supplement, not replace, existing local, state, and federal funding sources. Marion County voters authorized a local option income tax for transit in 2016, and IndyGo now receives approximately \$60 million per year to improve local transit service and implement new rapid transit lines. Other surrounding counties and townships are now eligible to add

dedicated income tax funding for transit through their own referenda. State code allows an eligible township or county to implement a local option income tax to fund transit at a rate of up to 0.25 percent, if approved by referendum. A proposed tax rate of 0.25 percent of a resident's income equates to 25 cents for every \$100 earned. Hamilton County is eligible for a referendum at this time, Washington Township, without the entire county, would need Clay Township to pass a referendum.

The Central Indiana Transportation Authority (CIRTA) is a regional governmental organization focused on improving transportation options within Marion and surrounding counties. Hamilton County Express operates a response public transit system with more than 50,000 trips annually. Prime Life Enrichment offers human service transportation in Hamilton County. CIRTA operates a registered vanpool/carpool program in Hamilton County.

BRT is recommended on all proposed rapid transit routes in the Central Indiana Transit Plan because of its high level of service, reliability, comfort, convenience, its ability to generate transit-oriented development (TOD) where markets are ripe because of affordability compared to vehicle types that require more expensive infrastructure, like light or commuter rail systems.

A complete and fully automated transit system is still years in the future, but numerous tests and pilot projects are currently in progress throughout the US, including in Central Indiana.

There are opportunities for transit studies to connect to the regional transit system as well as opportunities to develop partnerships with other providers or develop local circulator programs.

Fiscal Changes for Government

Public Law 68, more commonly known as Senate Enrolled Act 1 or Senate Bill 1 in 2025), changes the funding mechanisms for local government in Indiana.

Residential property taxes, a mainstay of local government finance, are reduced under the law. The reductions will be limited or modest for most homeowners, and largest for the wealthiest homeowners but still relatively small. The collective losses from residential property taxes to units of government will be significant. The property tax deductions are phased in over a period of six years. It also phases out the standard homestead deduction and phases in an increase in the supplemental homestead deduction to two-thirds of the assessed value.

The maximum growth levy is restricted to four percent in 2026 under the law. This affects communities that have been growing at greater than four percent as their levy will not be able to reflect the same growth rate as growth in assessed value.

The law changes the structure of Local Income Tax (LIT) beginning in 2028 with communities having a population of more than 3,500 being permitted to adopt a local income tax of up to 1.2 percent for municipal services. The county may adopt a LIT of up to 1.2 percent for county services and allocation to non-qualifying municipalities, but those entities must petition the county for funds each year beginning in 2027 for distribution the following year.

The law also raises the minimum threshold for businesses filing personal property taxes from \$80,000 to \$2 million. This will exempt many businesses from personal property tax and reduce the tax liability of the businesses with over \$2 million in personal property. It further eliminates the 30 percent depreciation floor. Businesses used to have to pay taxes on a minimum of 30 percent of the value of personal property as long as it was owned even after the 30-year depreciation. The 30 percent floor is eliminated for personal property purchases made after the beginning of 2025. Oil refineries, petrochemical plants, and property in tax increment finance (TIF) districts or connected to municipal bonds are exempt.

Resilience and Sustainability

There are weather and climate events that affect communities, sometimes as disasters that are devastating to communities. Planning for resilience and sustainability can lessen the impacts of these events like tornadoes, flooding, fires, ice storms, and high winds by designing to minimize the impact to people and property. Some of the other ways to plan for resilience aren't about disaster mitigation as much as making places more comfortable for people with changes in weather extremes. These measures include building shade into the environment through trees or shade structures (or shade sails), ensuring people have access to potable water for outdoor activities, especially in parks, along trails, and at outdoor venues or downtown. The spacing and maturity of trees along corridors can significantly lower the ground and human height temperature. Ground temperature reduction also benefits pets, whose paws can burn quickly on hot pavement.

Policy can also impact design choices that can promote more sustainable and resilient places. The Unified Development Ordinance and homeowner association covenants can allow for ground cover that is drought resistant and doesn't require watering. These landscapes also require fewer chemicals to maintain their appearance and can reduce contamination in runoff, improving local water quality.

Beyond the recreation and quality of life benefits that sidewalks, perimeter trails, and named trails there are sustainability reasons for this infrastructure. When people feel comfortable walking and biking and there is infrastructure connecting them to destinations, they are more likely to replace short car trips with biking or walking. This reduces the need for fuel (including electricity) and on-site parking at destinations, creating less impervious surface.

Some public entities have prioritized using the US Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design criteria in their site planning and buildings, as have some significant businesses as they make new investment. These standards support reduced energy consumption, reduction of reliance on non-renewable materials, and efficiency in building systems.

Newer homes are generally built with energy efficiency in mind, but older homes may be past the lifecycle of some efficiency measures or need upgrades. Some homeowners may need assistance to modernize their windows, heating/cooling systems, roofing, insulation, or plumbing to be efficient, which increases affordability in the long run through lower utility costs. Homeowner improvement grants are tools communities use to assist lower income people in older homes. Reducing energy consumption for homeowners with inefficient systems maintains capacity in the network for the whole community.

Development density and intensity are also sustainability measures because they limit the land consumed for development and the distance that utilities like streets and water/sewer lines need to be extended to support the same amount of development that is lower density or intensity.

Utility infrastructure can play a significant role in resilience for disasters and non-disaster situations. Buried electrical lines are less vulnerable to ice and high winds. This results in fewer power outages and mitigates multi-day outages that affect travel, emergency response, food security, and care for vulnerable populations. Buried communication lines (phone, cable, internet) provide the same resilience for communication, a critical component of disaster response and coordination.



Public Plaza Example.

