

Muncie Action Plan

Vision and Action Plan
for Muncie, Indiana



FINAL REPORT
Prepared by ACP Visioning+Planning
July 2010

“What an opportunity this is to share and work together. We may not get such a chance to do this again—let’s make the most of it.”

– Muncie citizen

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A message from the Co-Chairs of the Citizen Steering Committee, George Branam and Ginny Nilles...

To the Citizens of Muncie:

The Muncie Action Plan provides a pathway to the future—a vibrant future that you, the residents of Muncie have said you want to become a reality. The Plan has taken a year to develop, utilizing the ideas and input of more than 2,000 residents—an unprecedented coming together of the community. The Plan recognizes that we are more interdependent than ever before, so more cooperation is required to find solutions to community issues and problems.

More than 100 volunteers donated hundreds of hours of their time to ensure that the Plan was an open process representing all community demographics. The Plan includes long-term goals and measurable action steps which will accomplish a realistic vision and upholds the values identified by our community. Indeed, the public has been involved every step of the way—first to generate ideas, next to articulate ‘values,’ and finally to affirm goals and actions.

Recommendations from the community, accompanied by extensive factual analysis of trends and conditions, form the basis of the Plan. The Plan is divided into five initiative areas each with specific action steps designed to realize the vision of a stronger, better Muncie. The Plan will be used by the community as public and private decisions are made concerning development, redevelopment, capital improvements, and other matters affecting the well being of the community. The Plan will be used as the Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission begins working on a Comprehensive Plan update. It will be used by Community Development as it prioritizes projects and funding.

The Plan encourages cooperation and neighborhood development. It recognizes that the whole community is responsible for education, community image and identity, economic development and for the effective use of community resources. To our knowledge it is the first city-wide strategic plan and has had unprecedented success in involving the whole community.

The Plan strongly recommends an integrated approach to land use and reuse so that decisions are not made in isolation; rather, each decision should consider its impact on other areas (neighborhoods, pedestrian movement, educating the public) and be examined through the lens of the Plan’s goals, principles, and action steps.

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The effectiveness of the Plan will be measured in the success of its implementation. To that end, the implementation process will identify recommended departments, agencies, groups, and individuals who will form task forces to pursue the action steps identified, under the umbrella of a leadership group that will monitor activities and provide a communication network.

Creating this first city-wide Action Plan has demanded the best from each of us. It is an expression of our hopes and dreams. It recognizes that we are in this together and that it is up to all of us—government, elected officials, and community groups—to turn ideas and dreams into reality.

We extend our appreciation and gratitude to the Steering Committee, Management Committee, Area Captains, Facilitators, Ball Brothers Foundation, Ivy Tech, City of Muncie, Community Development, and Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission, Minnetrista, Muncie Public Library, Muncie Community Schools, Ball State University, Ball Memorial Hospital and many others who contributed their time, passion, and resources to this project. We also thank our elected officials for their participation. Most of all, we thank every citizen who has invested their time, ideas, and energy in this amazing process!

Best of luck to us all as we pursue implementation and thank you Muncie!

Sincerely,

George Branam and Ginny Nilles

Co-Chairs

MAP Steering Committee

“Creating this first city-wide Action Plan has demanded the best from each of us. It is an expression of our hopes and dreams. It recognizes that we are in this together and that it is up to all of us... to turn ideas and dreams into reality.”

Acknowledgments

Elected Officials

Mayor of Muncie

Sharon McShurley

City Council

Mary Jo Barton

Mark Conatser

Jerry D. Dishman

Linda Gregory

Mike King

Robert (Sam) Marshall

Monte Murphy

Brad Polk

Alison Quirk

County Commissioners

Larry Bledsoe

Todd Donati

Don Dunnuck

County Council

Ted Bowman

Mary Chambers

Mike Jones

James King

Chris Matchett

Kevin Nemyer

Ronald Quakenbush

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Keith O'Neal

Kathie Onieal (committee coordinator)

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Bonita Ramirez

Acknowledgments

(continued)

Volunteers

Facilitators
Outreach Area Captains

Supporters

Backyard Broadcasting
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Ball Memorial Hospital
C S Kern
City of Muncie
Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan
Commission
Forest Park Senior Center
Hiatt Printing
Muncie Martin Luther King Day Planning
Committee, Collective Coalition
Concerned Clergy
Minnetrista Cultural Center
Muncie Community Schools
Muncie Public Library
Raymond James

Funding Sources

City of Muncie/EDIT
Community Development Block Grant
(CDBG)
Ivy Tech/Ball Brothers Foundation

Facilities

Ball Memorial Hospital
Ball State University Alumni Center
Central High School
First Baptist Church
Forest Park Senior Citizens Center
Innovation Connector
Minnetrista Cultural Center
Muncie Area Career Center
Northside Middle School
Price Hall
Ivy Tech
Southside High School
Union Chapel Ministries
Wilson Middle School

Consultants

ACP Visioning + Planning
Burgess & Niple
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Supporting documents are bound under two separate covers:

Appendix A. Conditions and Trends

Appendix B. Public Involvement

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Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

“What is needed for Muncie to be the best it can be in the coming years?”

The Muncie Action Plan (MAP) is the result of an intensive year-long, citizen-based initiative to answer that question and in so doing create a holistic, collaborative vision and Action Plan for the future of the city. MAP brought together a diverse group of citizens to chart a course toward a common future that reflects the community’s shared values and aspirations. These aspirations were integrated with technical analysis of conditions and trends to create a compelling action agenda for the future. This document presents the results of that effort.

Motivation for the Action Plan

The City of Muncie—like many communities in the Midwest—faces significant challenges in creating a prosperous and sustainable future after decades of disinvestment, population decline, changing demographics, and inefficient land development. Community leaders conceived the Muncie Action Plan as a means to take stock of the current situation, to collaboratively shape an inspired agenda for the future, and to collectively work toward that future.

The Muncie Action Plan comes at a time of increasing collaboration between local government, not-for-profits, business and community leaders, and educational institutions. The Plan seeks to capitalize on this collaboration and leverage recent successes into positive long-term trends that will benefit the entire community.

The Action Plan is a strategic guide to achieving the community’s aspirations for the future. It will serve as a foundation to support future detailed planning such as the Muncie-Delaware County Comprehensive Plan, which will be updated later this year.

“Muncie has good potential and concerned citizens but needs a good plan that more uniformly addresses our needs, yet with creativity and strength.”

– Muncie citizen

Chapter Organization

The Executive Summary is organized into the following sections:

Introduction

Motivation

The Vision for Muncie

Actions

Community Preferences

Community Aspirations

Community Values

Conceptual Development Framework

Key Issues

Action Plan Process

Public Involvement

Organizing for Implementation

THE VISION FOR MUNCIE

The Action Plan is organized into five initiatives, which emerged from the public process as critical areas of focus for the community. Addressing each of these initiatives is necessary to fully achieve the community's vision for the future. The five initiatives are:

- 1** Linking Learning, Health, and Prosperity
- 2** Fostering Collaboration
- 3** Strengthening Pride and Image
- 4** Creating Attractive and Desirable Places
- 5** Managing Community Resources

In summary, the vision for the future of Muncie is expressed by the following statement:

“We seek to be a community which respects diversity, manages resources effectively and efficiently, and works together to provide an attractive, desirable place for individuals, families, and businesses.”

Actions

Actions are programs, policies, or projects that are the specific recommendations of the Plan. They are the activities the community is going to pursue to achieve its goals. MAP includes 47 actions, which are organized into the five initiatives.

Community Preferences

Through citizen voting at the public Open House, thirteen actions were identified as the community's preferences for the most important steps to undertake. These preferences (listed on the facing page) will inform MAP's implementation agenda.

“What is needed for Muncie to be the best it can be in the coming years?”

Community Preferences

The Action Plan contains 47 actions, which are organized into five initiatives. Thirteen of these actions were identified as the community's preferences for the most important steps to undertake. These preferences will inform MAP's implementation agenda. The thirteen community preferences are listed below, ranked in order of most votes received at the public Open House.

- 1. Develop a Uniform Code of Ethics for local government.** (Action 2.4)
- 2. Develop and implement a Sidewalk and Recreational Paths Plan.** (Action 4.2)
- 3. Develop and implement a plan to coordinate with and capitalize on the relocation of Ivy Tech to downtown.** (Action 1.5)
- 4. Continue and expand the blight removal program.** (Action 4.3)
- 5. Create and implement an economic development plan to expand the number of competitive-wage jobs.** (Action 1.2)
- 6. Renovate and re-open Tuhey Pool.** (Action 5.3)
- 7. Develop a Council of Neighborhoods to build and support the capacity of neighborhood organizations.** (Action 2.1)
- 8. Develop a city brand identity and marketing campaign.** (Action 3.1)
- 9. Create and implement a Downtown Plan.** (Action 4.1)
- 10. Institute a Bike-Friendly Community Program.** (Action 5.9)
- 11. Create an awareness-building coalition to promote the importance of education.** (Action 1.1)
- 12. Promote and expand community-based neighborhood enhancement programs.** (Action 4.9)
- 13. Implement the Prairie Creek Master Plan to protect the ecological health of the reservoir and watershed.** (Action 5.2)

Community Aspirations

Goals

Ten goals, identified below, express the community's aspirations for the future and are the foundation upon which specific actions were generated. They were conceived through public input and refined by the Steering Committee to capture the consensus of ideas for the future that were generated during the first round of public workshops. The goals are an integral part of the Action Plan. Each goal describes a **desired outcome or future condition** in simple terms. They address the most critical aspects of community life: what Muncie looks like, the business and employment opportunities that exist, the services available, how people spend their leisure time, opportunities for personal growth and cultural expression, and the role of community leaders. Addressing each of these goals is critical to achieving the overall vision.

- 1. Amenities:** Programs and facilities that are affordable, accessible, and safe, and that both attract visitors and serve the recreational, cultural, entertainment, and educational needs of the community.
- 2. Community Building:** An engaged, proud community where diverse individuals and organizations live and work together to strengthen the community's vitality and promote a well-known shared identity.
- 3. Economic Development & Employment:** A strong, diverse economy that provides improved job opportunities for all people—especially entrepreneurs and young adults—and that yields a competitive wage and a stable tax base.
- 4. Education:** A well-educated community that embraces life-long learning and is supported by affordable collaborative educational institutions, parental involvement, and non-academic initiatives—extracurricular, neighborhood improvement, social service, mentorship, etc.
- 5. Energy, Environment & Sustainability:** Cost-effective alternative energy (development and use), effective environmentally sustainable practices, and careful conservation of natural habitats and resources.
- 6. Health, Safety & Social Services:** Coordinated services that promote personal wellness, ensure public safety, and support the needs of all of the community's citizens, especially those who are most vulnerable.
- 7. Identity & Marketing:** A proud community with a widely recognized reputation for its key assets—people, places, and values—that is attractive to visitors and investment.
- 8. Infrastructure & Transportation:** Well-designed and maintained transportation network that provides safe and efficient pedestrian and vehicular connections among neighborhoods and regional destinations with expanded opportunities for walking and biking.
- 9. Leadership:** Collaborative leadership that represents the diversity of the community and fosters broad citizen involvement in community deliberations and demonstrates civility in working for effective and efficient progress.
- 10. Neighborhoods, Land Use & Community Appearance:** Strong stewardship of land resources and creative use of space that emphasizes reinvestment in all neighborhoods, clean and attractive places, and expansion that is limited to strategic opportunities.

Community Principles – Physical Environment

Principles for Development

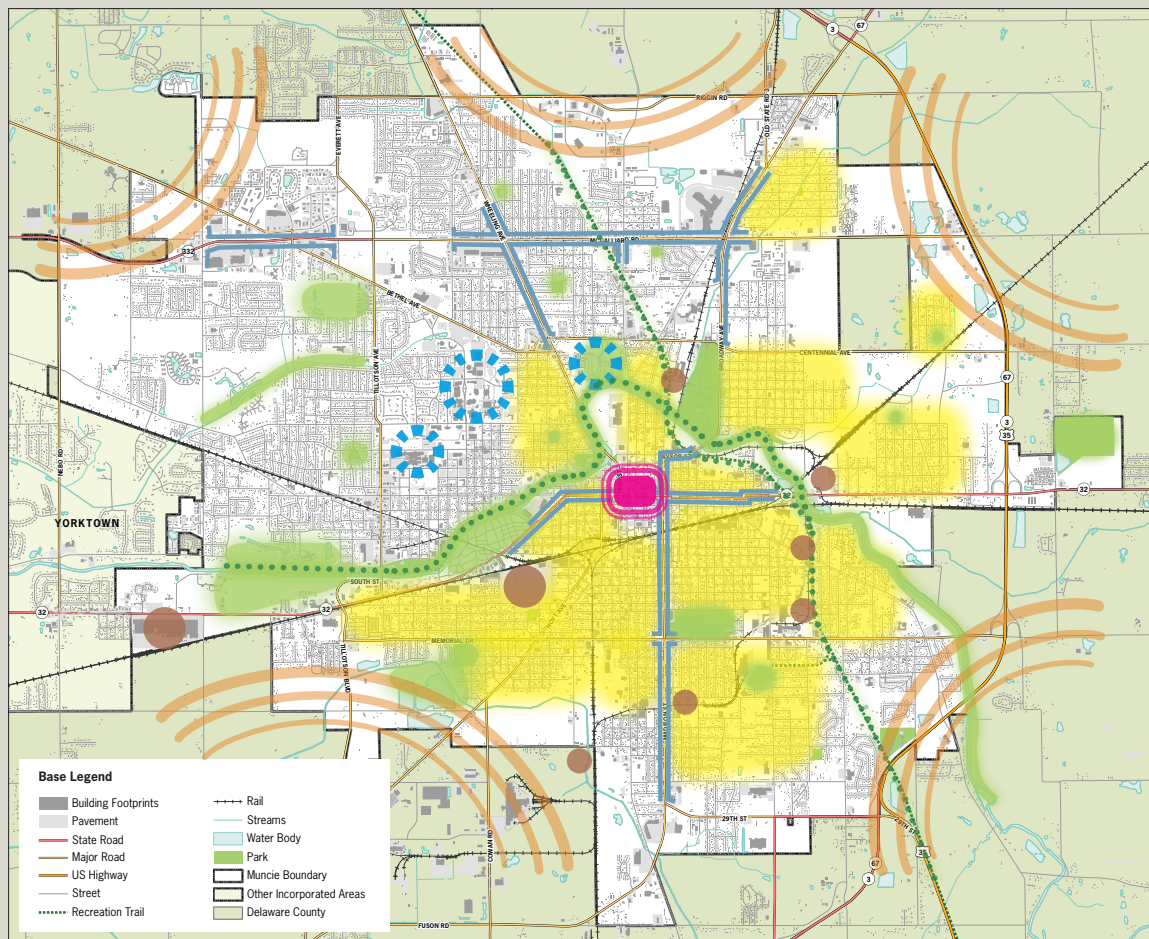
Twelve principles describe community values related to the character of the physical environment in the community. The principles describe the community’s intent about “how” (character attributes) and “where” (conceptual location) land should develop, if and when development occurs in the future. They were conceived through public input and refined by the Steering Committee to capture the consensus of the strong and weak places mapping exercise during the first round of public workshops. These principles are introduced below and explained in detail within the Conceptual Development Framework chapter:

1. Infill development and redevelopment of underutilized and/or deteriorating sites take priority over development in greenfield locations.
2. Underutilized and/or deteriorating industrial, institutional, and manufacturing districts and sites will be strategically redeveloped and integrated into the neighborhood fabric, with consideration of cost-effectiveness and community priorities.
3. Areas of the city will be reclaimed—distressed and abandoned properties will be deconstructed if necessary—and will remain undeveloped but maintained and/or creatively used until reasonable development demand materializes.
4. Downtown and new commercial developments will have an integrated mix of uses (residential, commercial, institutional, etc.) that are distinctive and contribute to enhancing the city’s overall vitality.
5. Future development, including redevelopment, will include new parks and open space that will be integrated into the community fabric.
6. The development of new residential areas and redevelopment of existing residential areas will have strong neighborhood qualities, including sidewalks, mixed housing types, parks, and easy access to basic retail needs.
7. A broad range of housing types, price levels, and ownership options—throughout the community and within neighborhoods—will strengthen community identity and improve housing choice.
8. The appearance of neighborhood and commercial districts will promote positive attitudes of safety and community pride.
9. Places will be better connected to improve the function of the street network and facilitate pedestrian activity, and more opportunities will be created to walk and bike safely between neighborhoods, commercial districts, and local/regional trails, for users of all abilities.
10. Streets will create an attractive public realm and be welcoming and comfortable places for people while safely accommodating vehicles.
11. Entryways into Muncie will be attractive and contribute to improving the city’s identity.
12. Quality design is emphasized for all uses to create an attractive, distinctive public (streets, sidewalks, parks, and street trees, etc.) and private (building faces, lawns and landscaping, parking lots and driveways, etc.) realm.


Conceptual Development Framework

Conceptual Development Framework Map

A conceptual map illustrates graphically the development principles through eight concepts and shows where these concepts generally apply throughout the city. The principles and this diagram form a conceptual framework to serve as a guide when preparing detailed land development or infrastructure plans and when evaluating formal development proposals. This framework should inform the forthcoming Muncie-Delaware County Comprehensive Plan Update, specifically by guiding the development and adoption of future land use maps and policies.



Concept Legend

-  Focusing development inward
-  Reusing underutilized industrial sites
-  Stabilizing neighborhoods
-  Improving the public realm
-  Sustaining the downtown core
-  Enhancing parks, open space and natural features
-  Supporting recreational paths and bikeways
-  Supporting key assets

KEY ISSUES FACING THE COMMUNITY

Eleven themes summarize the major issues and current conditions facing Muncie. While many of these conditions describe issues of concern for the community, there are also positive conditions and trends that provide reason to be optimistic about Muncie's potential. These themes and their specific conditions are described below.

Transitional population

Muncie is a community that has seen significant changes to its population in the past several decades. These changes include:

- A shrinking population in Muncie, while growth occurs elsewhere in Delaware County;
- An aging population, as young adults with children are leaving at a greater rate than older people (leading to significant declines in Muncie Community Schools student population);
- Ball State University's increasing enrollment having a growing influence on the community's demographics and identity;
- A shrinking household size (persons per household) which generates new demand for housing even while the population declines;
- Lower than average, but improving levels of educational attainment, along with the growing influence of Ball State University and Ivy Tech Community College; and
- A declining youth population has contributed to the closure of 25 Muncie Community Schools facilities since 1970.

Major disinvestment

Over the past few decades, Muncie has experienced significant disinvestment that has yielded employment losses, underutilized or vacant land, abandoned buildings, and insufficient maintenance of or improvements to infrastructure. This continuing pattern of disinvestment is exhibited through:

- Closures, relocations, and labor reductions across major sectors of the local economy, including losses of large employers such as Borg Warner, Westinghouse, and Ball Brothers, which have reduced employment and left numerous vacant sites;
- Decline in residential construction since 2003 in both Muncie and the County; and
- High housing vacancy rates, fueled in part by employment losses, changing demographics, and an older housing stock that does not compete well with newer construction in terms of price and quality.

KEY ISSUES and CONDITIONS

Transitional population
Major disinvestment
Inefficient use of land
Declining prosperity
Economic disparity
Distinct and disparate geographies
Fiscal stress
Notable reinvestment
Numerous assets
Intellectual capacity
Entrepreneurial legacy

Inefficient use of land

Muncie's land use patterns can be characterized as sprawling outward growth while older developed areas become increasingly underutilized. The following trends portray an inefficient use of land:

- While the population and number of households has declined, the city's area and developed land has increased;
- A large number of manufacturing facilities have closed, leaving vacant or underutilized industrial sites. These sites have varying degrees of contamination and will need to be cleaned before they can be redeveloped;
- Much of the growth that has occurred on the city's edges has been in a low-density, seemingly haphazard, automobile-oriented pattern. This growth has been driven by infrastructure investments in the form of roads and utilities, while areas near the city's core exhibit low levels of property and infrastructure upkeep; and
- Neighborhoods and commercial developments lack connectivity in the form of safe pedestrian and bicycle routes.

Declining prosperity

Like much of the Midwest "Rust Belt," Muncie and Delaware County have been undergoing an economic shift away from a heavy manufacturing economy due to changes in the global economy such as technological advances and increasing international competition. With fewer employment opportunities for a largely blue collar workforce, these cities have seen rising unemployment, declining wages, and shrinking populations. This shift has been pronounced in Muncie due to the city's relatively high reliance on manufacturing. Muncie's declining prosperity is exhibited by:

- Job losses across most sectors of the local economy since 1998, with the largest losses experienced in the manufacturing sector;
- Decreasing average wages in real terms (as employment shifts from well-paid blue collar jobs to the service sector), despite rising wages in some sectors of the economy;
- Seventy percent of Muncie Community Schools students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunch;
- "Brain drain," where the community's brightest people leave for educational and economic opportunities elsewhere; and
- Declining number of households, which has a negative impact on commercial and business activities.

Economic disparity

The economic shifts and disinvestment have impacted a majority of the Muncie population, but the impact has not been experienced equally. Some segments of the community have seen relatively little direct impact, while other people have been particularly hard-hit. This result has been an increasing divide between so-called “haves” and “have-nots.” This trend is particularly evident in:

- Blue collar workers, unprepared for a 21st century work environment, have been hit hardest as large numbers of well-paying manufacturing jobs have been lost, while there have been smaller declines and some employment increases in professional and semi-professional fields; and
- There also seems to be polarization of the economic spectrum, with a growing void in the middle income population and middle class.

Distinct and disparate geographies

Muncie lacks a strong, unified community identity, but rather has competing identities based upon the section of Muncie people live in. These different identities are rooted in differences (both perceived and real) in the physical and demographic characteristics of neighborhoods. These geographic disparities are strongest between residents of the south side and north side of the city, but also exist between various inner-city neighborhoods. They include:

- Racial segregation, where the African American minority is concentrated in two neighborhoods;
- Higher population density on the south side of Muncie, but also more property abandonment and deterioration on the south side compared to the north side; and
- Higher rates of poverty and unemployment on the south side. North side population is generally more educated and affluent.

Fiscal stress

Changing economic conditions have also impacted the city’s fiscal health. Increasing numbers of vacant and abandoned properties have led to lower property tax collection and job losses associated with commercial and industrial facility closures have reduced payroll tax revenue. One side effect of this fiscal stress has been the closure of two branches of the public library system and the layoff of dozens of municipal workers.

Muncie citizens describe the interests or concerns that brought them to the MAP workshops:

“Making Muncie a better place to live. We have a wonderful university and a very strong community volunteer effort—Muncie can be so much more.”

“I care about the future of this community as my home and workplace, and want it to thrive and grow.”

“Have lived here 40 years and have two children and their families living here. [I’m] concerned about the future of Muncie because it is my home.”

“To be part of the positive changes and to encourage the good taking place.”

“I feel a responsibility as a citizen of Muncie to help improve our community by building on its strengths.”

“Our community has potential that is not being met.”

Notable reinvestment

Despite the strong trend of disinvestment previously mentioned, Muncie has also experienced notable reinvestment in recent years. This new investment includes publicly-funded efforts and private investment such as:

- Recruitment of new employers such as Sallie Mae and IBM, which have brought or will bring an estimated 1,700 jobs to the area;
- Ball State University's investment in downtown Muncie through the Center for Media Design;
- Ivy Tech Community College's relocation to downtown Muncie, which will likely generate additional demand for development in city's core;
- Tax abatement programs, micro loans, and job training assistance provided by the Economic Development Alliance; and
- A number of redevelopment and revitalization efforts such as the downtown façade restoration, brownfields assessment, vacant housing demolition, and land bank programs.

Numerous assets

Muncie benefits from several unique amenities that should be recognized as economic development assets. These assets include:

- Ball State University, which offers educational, recreational, and cultural resources to the community, but also has the potential to drive innovation and local investment;
- Minnetrista Cultural Center and museum, which provides arts, environment, and community heritage programs, including a regular summer farmer's market; and
- Recreational and environmental amenities such as the Cardinal Greenway, a 60-mile regional rails-to-trails project which connects to the White River greenway in Muncie and to the Prairie Creek Park and reservoir, which provides Muncie and Delaware County with recreational access including boat launches, picnic areas, campgrounds, and sports and play areas.

Intellectual capacity

Despite having a large segment of the population with below average levels of education, Muncie also has intellectual capacity that can help the community through economic transition by encouraging innovation, reducing “brain-drain,” and providing job training for the existing workforce. The community’s intellectual assets include Ball State University, a nationally-recognized institution, and Ivy Tech Community College, the largest accredited statewide community college in Indiana.

Entrepreneurial legacy

Muncie and Delaware County share a proud history as a center for transportation and manufacturing in what was once one of the most dynamic and innovative economies in the country. When the area around Muncie experienced a gas boom in the 1880s the city expanded as a rail center, which in turn attracted more manufacturing and other businesses to utilize the city’s extensive transportation network. Ball Brothers helped cement the city’s role as a center for glass, and later tool and die manufacturing developed into a significant industry. Muncie supplied Detroit with equipment and, while the automobile industry has declined in the area, similar skills are required today to build wind turbines in Muncie’s new economy. The generosity of the Ball family helped establish Muncie as the home of a prestigious university, Ball State, as well as a large medical center. These entities helped diversify the local economy and today help to drive it.

“Start where you are.
Use what you have.
Do what you can.”

—Arthur Ashe

Public Participation

The Muncie Action Plan process was an unprecedented coming together of the community. It engaged people of all ages and backgrounds from all parts of the city. Over 2,000 people attended at least one MAP workshop and many others volunteered to support the process. Never before have so many Muncie citizens gathered to share their ideas, hopes, and concerns about the community's future.

Outreach

The high level of participation was the result of an intensive communication and outreach effort lead by the Steering Committee with the help of dozens of community volunteers. This effort included:

- Distributing over 10,000 flyers, 850 posters and 350 handbills;
- Sending printed notices and electronic text messages to parents of students in Muncie Community Schools;
- Radio and newspaper advertisements;
- Newspaper columns and letters to the editor;
- Email blasts to lists from large corporations;
- Social media; and
- Word of mouth

Representation

Participants represented all segments of the Muncie community, though representation was not completely proportional to the city's demographics. In most communities, certain groups are very difficult to attract to public workshops, and Muncie is no different. Participants represented all ages, races, levels of education and incomes, but there was proportionally greater representation from older people and those with higher levels of education and income.

BY THE NUMBERS

Approximate Participants

Idea Workshops:	700+
Community Choices:	300
Young Persons Meetings:	1000
Open House:	200
Volunteers:	100

Ideas Gathered

1,634 Ideas for the future collected
1,702 Strong Places identified
1,578 Weak Places identified
2,587 Characteristics of place described
1,522 strong characteristics identified
1,065 weak characteristics identified

Satisfaction

Participants expressed a very high degree of satisfaction with the public workshops. The following questions were asked on exit questionnaires collected after the Idea Workshops. Percentages indicate "yes" responses.

- 99% Did you feel the information was presented in a clear manner?
- 99% Were you comfortable working in tonight's small group?
- 95% Did you have an opportunity to fully express your ideas?
- 98% Were your ideas received and recorded appropriately?
- 99% Was the process fair to everyone in your small group?
- 83% Were you exposed to new ideas and concerns?
- 97% Will you continue to participate in the planning process?

OVERVIEW OF THE ACTION PLAN PROCESS

An effective visioning and Action Planning process requires the active participation of a broad cross section of a community. To achieve that end, the city appointed a 30-member Steering Committee to guide the process. This diverse citizen group met often to develop an outreach and communication campaign, coordinate public meetings, evaluate data and trends, review ideas generated through the public process, and draft the goals and actions of the Action Plan.

The Action Plan process included four rounds of public involvement opportunities: 1) Idea Workshops, 2) Community Choices, 3) Open House, and 4) Public Presentations. Everyone with an interest in the community's future was invited to attend the public workshops. The purpose and outcomes of each phase are described below:

Idea Workshops

The first phase involved highly interactive brainstorming workshops designed to gather ideas from a broad range of citizens about the future of the community. These ideas are the foundation of values and aspirations on which the Action Plan is based.

Between December 1-3, 2009, six Idea Workshops were conducted, attracting approximately 620 participants. Based on the characteristics of participants at these workshops (obtained from exit questionnaires), the Steering Committee decided to organize a series of “gap” workshops to gather input from specific underrepresented segments of the Muncie



Participants worked in small groups to brainstorm ideas for the future at the Idea Workshops.



population. Three of these “gap” sessions were held in January, 2010, which gathered input from 115 participants. In total, over 700 community members contributed their ideas for the future of Muncie in this first phase.

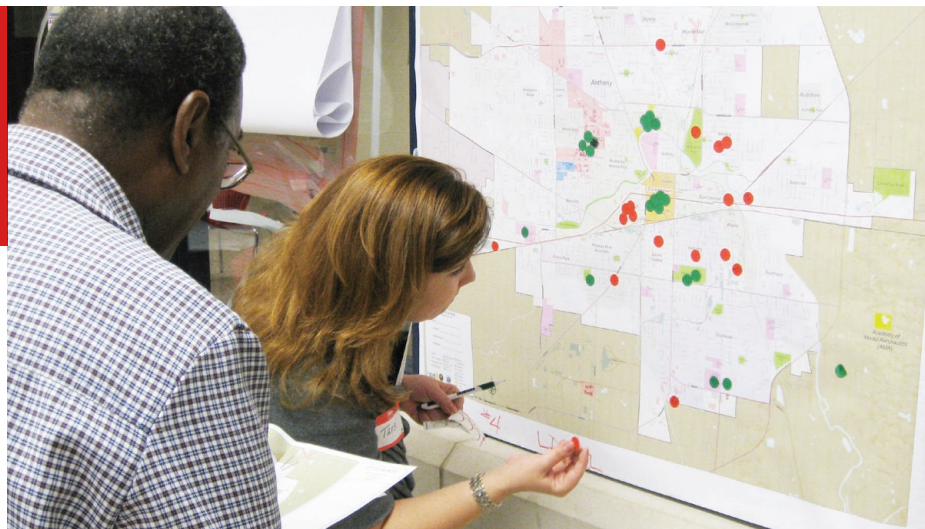
Workshop Structure

During these workshops, participants worked in small groups led by trained facilitators. They brainstormed responses to the question, “What should be done to make Muncie the best it can be in the coming years?” Participants also engaged in a map-based activity where they identified and described strong and weak places in the community. Strong places are those that are appealing and reflect well on the community, while weak places are those that represent conditions that should be improved or that do not reflect well on the community.

Workshop Outcomes

These workshops yielded 1,634 ideas for the future. These ideas were entered verbatim into a database and sorted based upon emerging topics. The topics were considered by the Steering Committee and became an organizing structure for drafting goals and actions. The mapping exercise identified specific places within the community and their descriptive characteristics that were used to develop nine principles for future growth and development.

Participants at the Idea Workshops identified strong places and weak places in the community during a mapping activity.



Community Choices

The second phase molded the community's voices into a consensus on their aspirations for the future. Community Choices was held on March 16-17, 2010, and attracted over 300 participants, many of whom participated during in the Idea Workshops. On March 16 a public workshop engaged the community in evaluating the draft goals and principles and brainstorming ideas for actions to achieve these goals. The goals and principles developed and refined during this phase of the process form the foundation of the Action Plan and are the basis for implementation actions. On the following day, an Open House was held to invite further input and observation as the staff and consultants analyzed the results of the public workshop and met with key stakeholders to discuss MAP.

Workshop Agenda

The March 16 public workshop consisted of two parts: a general assembly and small group work. During the general assembly participants were introduced to the draft goals. Goals are the broadest way to express the

The Community Choices workshop engaged the public in evaluating draft goals for the community's future and identifying action steps for these goals.





Participants worked in small groups to brainstorm and prioritize possible actions to support one of the draft goals during the Community Choices Workshop.

aspirations of the community, and they are the basis for preparing more specific recommendations (actions). Ten goals were drafted based on the “Ideas for the Future” offered by the community at the Idea Workshops in December 2009 and January 2010. In a worksheet-based activity, participants were asked to indicate their level of support for each goal and provide written comments to refine them. Following the goal rating activity, participants were introduced to the draft principles. The principles are statements that broadly describe the intent for how the physical environment should be treated in the future. They were drafted based upon the results of the “Strong Places, Weak Places” activity from the first round of Workshops. In another worksheet-based activity, participants were asked to indicate their level of support for each principle and provide written comments to refine them.

During the second part of the program, participants worked in small groups to develop actions for assigned topics. Each group focused on one of the ten goal topics. Participants were randomly assigned to groups as no particular topical expertise was expected.

Additional input was collected during the Open House work session on March 17. Based on the public ratings and comments, a refined set of goals and principles emerged.

Workshop Outcomes

Following the Community Choices workshop, the Steering Committee organized action groups to propose projects, policies, or programs to address each of the ten goal topics. The actions drafted during the public workshop were considered by these action groups along with the “Ideas for the Future” and other information gathered during the process.

Young Persons Meetings

Following the Community Choices workshop, a series of meetings were held to engage the youth/student population in Muncie. The meetings involved an overview of the MAP process, a goal rating exercise, and a series of critical questions that would provide a richer perspective to the MAP process. Groups of students from Muncie Community Schools and Ball State University were asked what they value about Muncie, whether they plan on staying in Muncie when they complete their education (and why), and what would make Muncie more attractive to them as a place to live.

Open House

The third phase of public involvement brought the results back to the community for deliberation and prioritization. A public Open House asked the community to review and comment on the Plan’s goals, principles, and actions. The Open House was held between June 15-20.

Large displays presented the goals, principles, conceptual development framework, and actions. Each participant was given five sticky dots to place on the displays to indicate the actions that they felt were most important. They were also asked to submit written comments on the goals, principles, and actions, and to sign up to become involved in implementing any specific action.

The Steering Committee considered the input from the public Open House in refining MAP’s recommendations. The result is a framework for implementation described in the Implementation Plan. Approximately 200 people attended the Open House over its six-day duration.

Public Presentations

MAP will present the Action Plan at a series of public presentations to the Muncie City Council and the Delaware County Commissioners and County Council during July, 2010, followed by presentations to other stakeholder groups. The Action Plan’s implementation phase will follow.

Participant praise for the MAP workshops:

“Its good to see so many people taking Muncie's problems seriously.”

“Today’s meeting was really valuable. It spurred a lot of new ideas of how to help the community.”

“[The workshop] was a chance to share my ideas and hear what other people had to say. It was encouraging to know we all want to make Muncie a better place.”



Participants identified the actions they felt are most important during the public Open House.

ORGANIZING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Muncie Action Plan represents the community's aspirations for the future and strategies for achieving them. MAP's success depends on the committed, ongoing implementation of those recommendations. The Implementation Plan (which begins on page 43) presents a suggested approach to implementation. It explains how to use the Action Plan, describes possible structures for organizing implementation, and contains a summary table of actions that identifies recommended stakeholders and time frames for implementation.

Initiative 1

Linking Learning, Health and Prosperity

OVERVIEW

No factor is more important to the success of a community than the health of its economy. Jobs must be available locally to attract and retain residents and to generate a sufficient government revenue stream. The economy must be diverse enough to serve the basic needs of both visitors and the local population and business community. Local educational institutions must supply the knowledge, assistance, and human capital that cultivate a talented and adaptive economy. Finally, people must be healthy enough that they can be productive and re-circulate their income through the local economy (rather than spending substantial amounts on healthcare).

This initiative area seeks to strengthen the local economy by creating more employment opportunities and innovative collaboration efforts; developing a comprehensive, career-oriented, life-long educational system; and promoting a community-based approach to health and wellness. This initiative contains 11 actions.

“Education is the basis for social mobility and the ability to direct your life and the community's direction.”

– Muncie citizen

ACTIONS

1. **Create an awareness-building coalition to promote the importance of education. ***

Bring about awareness in the community of the direct relationship between educational attainment levels and local economic prosperity and of the benefits that can come to every citizen as the result of a better-educated community. This would be accomplished in part through youth-oriented promotional materials and a publicized catalog of post-secondary, trade/apprenticeship, and life-long learning opportunities.

An asterisk (*) indicates that a particular action was selected as a “community preference” by participants at the public Open House. Refer to page 17 for a description of the Open House and action voting process.

2. Create and implement an economic development plan to expand the number of competitive-wage jobs. *

Work collaboratively with all existing economic development agencies and major employers to develop an economic development plan that assesses the current level of economic diversification, increases the number of competitive-wage and knowledge-based jobs, adopts policies that support and encourage microenterprises and entrepreneurship, and helps low-income people engage in productive self-employment.

3. Augment school curriculums to address both basic and career-oriented skills.

Ensure that students are well-rounded and well-prepared for the future by designing initiatives focused on reading readiness, providing instruction in interpersonal communication and citizenship, and integrating career-oriented skills such as post-high school advanced manufacturing training and 21st century science and technology education.

4. Develop a community-based mentoring program.

Form a collaborative effort between educational institutions and the business community to create opportunities for students, young professionals, and emerging entrepreneurs to connect with mentors.

5. Develop and implement a plan to coordinate with and capitalize on the relocation of Ivy Tech to downtown. *

Leverage the relocation of Ivy Tech to downtown by embracing supportive planning efforts. Seek businesses to relocate nearby to provide services that would benefit from being near Ivy Tech, creating an interdependent economic cluster.

6. Create a Muncie Delaware Economic Development Council (MDEDC).

Develop an expanded organization to serve as coordinator of all economic development efforts. This will include existing economic development organizations (Muncie-Delaware County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Alliance), local government entities, scholars and leaders from BSU and Ivy Tech, and others.

7. Develop an initiative to promote community-based learning for early childhood development.

Design a set of age-sensitive evaluations to be implemented at various stages of a child's development, ensuring that every child is ready to learn before they reach kindergarten.

8. Conduct a community-wide poverty awareness campaign.

Educate the entire community about the current conditions and impacts of poverty in Muncie. Mobilize social service providers, faith-based organizations, and others to showcase the services they offer in order to facilitate a community-wide effort to alleviate poverty in Muncie.

9. Conduct a campaign to raise awareness about community services offered through 211.

Create a complete and up-to-date catalog of all agencies and services available in Muncie, including a new interactive website for 211 and a promotional campaign informing citizens of the 211 program and website.

10. Create a healthy community initiative.

Create a healthy community initiative to share information about health services and the specific health problems faced by the Muncie community. Promote healthy lifestyles and celebrate the organizations and individuals who are working to create a healthier community.

Other potential actions

The following actions were also identified by the Steering Committee to support this initiative but were not considered high priorities:

- Use neighborhood schools during non-school hours as youth programming hubs.
- Re-institute “required” high school diploma for local employment.

11. Create a prisoner re-entry program with support from local businesses.

In collaboration with the Weed and Seed program, Muncie Alliance for the Prevention of Substance Abuse, and local businesses, create an extensive prisoner re-entry program that provides stability to ex-offenders by assisting in the provision of housing and employment.

Initiative 2

Fostering Collaboration

OVERVIEW

Working together would seem to be the most basic characteristic of a community. However, many communities struggle with this issue, and Muncie is no different. An increasingly polarized and contentious political environment has fueled tensions between political parties and elected officials as well as between the City of Muncie and Delaware County. Muncie is composed of a set of distinct and disparate neighborhoods that are characterized by racial segregation and concentrated areas of disinvestment, deterioration, and poverty.

Also, the students and faculty of Ball State University, who comprise an undeniably significant portion of the community, are not effectively acknowledged, included, and engaged. Ball State's Building Better Communities initiative, which connects people and organizations across Indiana to the university's expertise and resources, could be better leveraged in Muncie. The university's Strategic Plan establishes a strong precedent for improving this relationship, including a strategy that entails "embracing and supporting partnership and collaborations ... with the greater external community" and a goal to "address local ... needs through activities that foster collaboration and mutually beneficial relationships."

This initiative addresses efforts to work together, promoting inclusion, engagement, and participation, and utilizing certain assets to build up the capacity of the greater community. Five actions support this initiative.

ACTIONS

1. **Develop a Council of Neighborhoods to build and support the capacity of neighborhood organizations. ***

Create a Council of Neighborhoods that would act as a central organization and communication network for all neighborhood organizations. The Council would coordinate efforts to share funding and create educational opportunities, develop new organizations in

"Muncie has many talented people blessed with leadership quality, they just need to work better together and help promote leadership opportunities."

"We are all part of the solution. [Do not] expect others to do it for us. Work together."

"Government, business, and citizens need to work together"

"Our community must learn to work together."

– Citizen comments collected during public workshops

An asterisk (*) indicates that a particular action was selected as a "community preference" by participants at the public Open House. Refer to page 17 for a description of the Open House and action voting process.

“I strongly hope that the ‘campaign to increase civic participation and civil discourse’ will be a sustained commitment. That action touches on the very process which has brought the MAP to its present stage, and it will be valuable to residents to have continued opportunity for reflection, input, and dialogue—particularly as it relates to holding public forums.”

– Muncie citizen

Other potential actions

The following actions were also identified by the Steering Committee to support this initiative but were not considered high priorities:

- Provide incentives for volunteering at all ages.
- Develop a sustainable animal control program with an affiliated, professionally managed animal shelter to serve Muncie, Delaware County, and other incorporated municipalities within Delaware County.
- Conduct a public awareness effort regarding the pending proposal to reorganize and consolidate components of city and county government; go before the public for a vote if current governments attempt to table it.
- Establish an annual “Town to Gown” event.
- Create and publicize opportunities for youth to be involved and encourage participation.

neighborhoods that have none, and communicate with a single unified voice to local media and governmental entities.

2. Conduct a campaign to increase civic participation and to foster civil discourse.

Conduct a campaign that instills a sense of community responsibility and an expectation of civic involvement and respectful discourse in order to increase voter turnout and overall participation in the political process. Initiate ongoing discussions and meetings between City and County government and leaders of major institutions as well as regular public forums (similar to those used for MAP) to provide more opportunities for citizen engagement and involvement.

3. Create a robust volunteer program.

Establish a central database of volunteer opportunities, designate community days when all community members are called to action for a specific purpose, establish neighborhood crime watches, and create youth positions on existing organizational boards and committees.

4. Develop a Uniform Code of Ethics for local government. *

Develop a Code of Ethics that is followed by all government employees—including public officeholders—and provides guidance in the loyalty, service, and integrity expected of them. Require a registered parliamentarian to be part of City Council meetings and other decision-making processes.

5. Initiate a campaign to recognize and promote higher education’s partnerships in community endeavors.

Reinforce a message of inclusion throughout the community by publicly recognizing student, faculty, and institutional contributions to the community and expanding the involvement and impact of higher education. For example, Ball State University and Ball Memorial Hospital may partner to form a local purchasing cooperative that sustains local businesses rather than importing goods and services from elsewhere; the university could form a job-matching program that helps family members of new employees find work in Muncie, increasing the likelihood that they will choose to locate their home in Muncie.

Initiative 3

Strengthening Pride and Image

OVERVIEW

Muncie has a rich historical legacy as a vibrant place—a leader among Midwest cities. In the recent past, that legacy has been somewhat forgotten by both residents and outsiders as many of the city’s defining industries have closed or relocated and the neighborhoods that they supported have deteriorated. Muncie also lacks a unified community identity, instead having competing identities based upon geographic areas of the city. However, Muncie still has a strong set of assets—most notably its institutions and its people—which can be leveraged to “redefine” Muncie and generate the excitement necessary to raise optimism in the community and change some of the negative perceptions that exist.

This initiative area contains creative solutions to improve Muncie’s image, develop a unified “brand” to promote tourism, increase awareness and participation in community events, and encourage more positive attitudes in the community. Seven actions support this initiative.

“Its all about self-respect and pride in ourselves and our collective selves (community). One feeds the other and together create the momentum and sustainability ... to attract jobs and to attract people to live here.”

– Muncie citizen

ACTIONS

1. **Develop a city brand identity and marketing campaign. ***

Develop a promotional campaign to “redefine” Muncie (patterned after Ball State’s “Education Redefined” campaign) for distribution to the community. The campaign would highlight Muncie’s assets, define its role in the region, create a logo and multimedia advertisements, and hold promotional events.

An asterisk (*) indicates that a particular action was selected as a “community preference” by participants at the public Open House. Refer to page 17 for a description of the Open House and action voting process.

2. **Create a comprehensive and centralized event guide to increase awareness of community events for residents and visitors.**

Create a guide that features web-based, thematic, and multimedia resources for Muncie residents and visitors in order to increase public

awareness of community events and festivals as well as arts and culture venues. Muncie is fortunate to have a number of events throughout the year, but no single website or resource lists all of them.

3. Complete the installation of wayfinding signs as detailed in the *Wayfinding Signage Plan*.

Complete the installation of wayfinding signs throughout the city and on state routes and highways and develop a long-term program to maintain the signs. Guidelines for this task were set forth in the *Wayfinding Signage Plan* established several years ago by a partnership of the City of Muncie, Community Enhancement Project (CEP), Ball State, Ball Memorial Hospital, Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission (DMMPC), and Delaware County.

4. Create additional community events that build on existing events.

Encourage various attraction/destination organizations to join together to coordinate existing events and/or create new events that would occur during major well-established events (for example, the Endurathon) to maximize attendance and improve community pride.

5. Continue to pursue a Cultural District designation from the Indiana Arts Commission (IAC).

The Muncie Arts and Culture District is a well-defined, yet broad, area that extends from Ball State University to Minnetrista, through downtown, to Heekin Park and the southeastern gateway of the city. Although the official designation from IAC does not carry any funding with it, it would add to promotional opportunities—particularly those utilized by the Visitors Bureau—and may add status to funding proposals to foundations and government agencies.

6. Link primary websites for Muncie.

Develop a means of coordinating and linking all local websites using a common image, voice, and identity. This would include the City of Muncie, Delaware County, the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Alliance, the Downtown Development Partnership, and the Visitors Bureau.

7. Establish a City-wide Positivity Challenge.

Create a program to promote positive attitudes and actions in Muncie, for example, “Stop the Trash Talk Day,” positivity pledges, good news blogs, etc. Thinking and speaking positively and infusing a can-do attitude into the community can improve first impressions of visitors and the overall attractiveness of the community, make people more productive, and ultimately enhance the ability to achieve Muncie’s vision for the future.

Other potential actions

The following actions were also identified by the Steering Committee to support this initiative but were not considered high priorities:

- Reinstigate and maintain a Public Access Channel on subscription television.
- Establish an annual city-wide neighborhood mixer event.
- Create “Odd Couples” promotions to encourage a “One Muncie” sense of unity.

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Initiative 4

Creating Attractive and Desirable Places

OVERVIEW

Land use and urban form within the City of Muncie exemplifies that of the Midwestern American city. Generally inefficient growth and development patterns have resulted in significant loss of farmland and a high rate of housing vacancy, while a post-industrial economy has left the city with the difficult task of dealing with large swaths of underutilized land on which development cannot occur without environmental remediation. Improving the quality of place throughout the city is an essential task in moving forward which must include the following: creating a vibrant downtown with a mix of amenities, attractions, and gathering places; improving infrastructure quality and connectivity; providing parks and recreational opportunities; and managing the redevelopment of underutilized land.

This initiative seeks to better manage the physical environment of the city in order to guide future land development, improve accessibility, and create a place that people can be proud of—a place in which people want to live, work, play, and visit. Fourteen actions support this initiative.

ACTIONS

1. Create and implement a Downtown Plan. *

Create a plan for downtown Muncie that is informed by best practices that have been implemented in other cities' downtowns. The plan would include elements that address beautification, riverfront development, traffic, parking, and railroad noise mitigation, and would result in a downtown design manual, incentives for mixed-use development, and improved development standards.

“I am concerned about the blight and attractiveness of our city, especially downtown, about limited recreation options and about education and economic growth.”

“If we do not have an attractive, well-maintained community we can neither retain nor draw people to our community.”

– Citizen comments collected during public workshops

An asterisk (*) indicates that a particular action was selected as a “community preference” by participants at the public Open House. Refer to page 17 for a description of the Open House and action voting process.

“There are three key attributes that make people happy in their communities and cause them to develop a solid emotional attachment to the place they live in. The first is the physical beauty and the level of maintenance of the place itself—great open spaces and parks, historic buildings, and an attention to community aesthetics.”

– Richard Florida, *The Great Reset*

2. Develop and implement a Sidewalk and Recreational Paths Plan. *

Identify sidewalk priority areas that would be incorporated into the DMMPC Transportation Plan and used by the city’s Public Works Department to develop a five-year capital improvement program for sidewalks. This plan will be supported by an ordinance requiring sidewalk construction and repair and ADA compliance for all new construction as well as adoption of a Complete Streets Policy that would provide guidance for the City and developers as new and retrofit development occurs and should incorporate consideration of existing multi-modal plans (bike/pedestrian/transit).

3. Continue and expand the blight removal program. *

Continue to prioritize and target concentrated removal of blighted structures in neighborhoods and provide incentives for re-purposing or re-using vacant (but not blighted) buildings. Vacant and/or re-claimed lots could be converted into “pocket parks” or small public gardens, utilizing neighborhood resources for maintenance.

4. Adopt and enforce updated corridor development standards.

Adopt corridor development standards, similar to the 29th and Madison Street Standards, for other major arterial roads in Muncie. These standards will include enhanced landscaping regulations to increase plantings and green space, allowing for green infrastructure options (green roofs, rain gardens, etc.) and requiring green space and plantings in new parking lot areas. They would also include new outdoor advertising regulations for signs, including billboard reductions and stronger code enforcement and removal of illegal, deteriorated, and inactive signs.

5. Create a brownfield redevelopment program.

Create a Brownfield Redevelopment Program utilizing information from the existing Brownfield Inventory Project. This program would seek additional grant funding for the removal of structures and clean-up of designated brownfield sites, and would develop re-use plans and provide marketing for cleaned-up sites.

6. Implement City of Muncie's 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Seek and commit funds annually to complete projects defined in the current and future City of Muncie *5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan*. The *Master Plan* provides direction for improving the park system and the services that Muncie's Parks Department provides for the residents of Muncie and to help recommend sources for alternative funding so that the park system can thrive even during these hard economic times.

7. Improve the appearance of city Gateways.

Improve and enhance gateways as described in the current *Wayfinding Signage Plan* being implemented by the City of Muncie. In addition, implement the South Gateway transportation enhancement project, which includes intersection restructuring, landscaping and streetscape treatments, and monument enhancements that would improve the entrance to several of Muncie's south side neighborhoods.

"If our public spaces feel and look like they're worth something, and appear to be beneficial for the average citizen, people will feel like they're in a worthwhile community."

– Muncie citizen

8. Strengthen code enforcement.

Strengthen City code regulations for weeds, trash, and litter, and intensify enforcement to improve and maintain cleanliness and attractive appearances in neighborhoods.

9. Promote and expand community-based neighborhood enhancement programs. *

Create several volunteer groups and programs such as a "Clean Team," patterned after Habitat for Humanity, to help the Sanitary District with neighborhood clean-ups throughout the community; a "Curb Appeal" program to provide landscaping and design services and matching funds to property owners, particularly for historic structures and along major corridors; a "Paint the Town" program (perhaps a competition) to utilize volunteers and corporate sponsors to assist property owners in painting homes and other structures; and an Adopt-a-Block program.

10. Develop and maintain a Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan.

Develop and maintain a Five-Year Capital Improvement Program for roadways for the Department of Public Works, and continue the implementation of the Three-Year Striping Plan to replace existing pavement markings for crosswalks, lane marking, and channelization.

11. Explore the feasibility of an event space for year-round activities in or near downtown.

Create an event space for year-round activities such as arts education and exhibition. For example, one proposal recommended the re-use of the former Maring Library into a space for showcasing glass sculptures.

12. Promote and support the land bank program.

Promote and support the land bank program through marketing, a website, usage guidelines and related restrictions, and site maintenance, etc. The goal of the land bank is to transfer abandoned and tax foreclosed properties to individuals and organizations that will develop and maintain them in order to return them to the tax rolls.

13. Create incentives to achieve development priorities.

Develop incentives that will enhance the desirability of increasing development density in identified priority areas in order to create more vibrant and lively neighborhoods and districts that can support more local business.

14. Create Development Plans for each neighborhood.

Create 5-Year Development Plans for each neighborhood, beginning with Community Development’s “Target Neighborhoods.” These plans will provide frameworks that provide guidance and confidence to the real estate market to generate timely and appropriate redevelopment while preserving assets in targeted areas.

Other potential actions

The following actions were also identified by the Steering Committee to support this initiative but were not considered high priorities:

- Form a task force to define and rate neighborhood safety.
- Enhance and increase public art installations.
- Create a community gardens program.

Initiative 5

Managing Community Resources

OVERVIEW

There is a growing recognition, particularly in difficult economic times, that achieving and maintaining a prosperous future requires responsible management of resources. Simply stated, this means making the most of what you have. This resource management must go beyond government fiscal restraint to include conservation and reuse of existing resources and coordination to minimize duplicate efforts. A community with a positive outlook to the future will invest in itself to ensure the health of its assets.

This initiative addresses the protection of valuable natural and cultural resources, improving the community's essential facilities and infrastructure, and promoting environmentally sustainable practices. Ten actions support this initiative.

“Prosperity doesn’t happen on it’s own. It happens through knowing what your town’s strengths and resources are and how to leverage those strengths and resources.”

– Jack Schultz, *Boomtown USA*

ACTIONS

1. Create an infrastructure design manual.

Create a design manual to be used by public entities, private developers, and home owners for green streets and infrastructure, including maintenance procedures, materials, and design requirements.

2. Implement the Prairie Creek Master Plan to protect the ecological health of the reservoir and watershed. *

Implement recommendations such as vegetated buffers, restoration of eroded areas, and alternative sewage and water treatment systems. Improve the awareness and recreational usage of Prairie Creek through enhanced wayfinding and marketing devices, including signage, maps, brochures, and websites, and educating the public about available recreational opportunities.

An asterisk (*) indicates that a particular action was selected as a “community preference” by participants at the public Open House. Refer to page 17 for a description of the Open House and action voting process.

3. Renovate and re-open Tuhey Pool. *

Tuhey Pool is the only public pool in Muncie. It has been closed since the 2009 summer season, requiring significant renovation and rehabilitation. All renovations should ensure full ADA compliance and access.

4. Hire a Recreational Director.

Hire a Recreational Director, to be housed in the Parks Department, who will coordinate programming in public and private parks and recreational facilities, including playgrounds, sports, and special events, with emphasis on activities for youth. This position could also assist with coordinating city programs with existing programs and activities at other venues such as the Craddock Wetlands Nature Preserve, Minnetrista, and Ball State.

5. Create a Muncie Energy Office and Advisory Committee.

Establish a local energy office and advisory committee to serve as a clearinghouse and resource for residents and businesses in implementing green practices and energy efficiency. It also would be charged with acquiring grant funds, developing the Energy Star program, and promoting and educating about sustainability practices.

6. Implement models of sustainable design around the city.

Create downtown parks and other projects using sustainable design methods to improve community amenities and to educate community members about water quality and stormwater run-off, eco-balance, and climate-appropriate and native plant selection.

7. Adopt a carbon footprint reduction goal and supporting policies.

Investigate and identify an appropriate, attainable carbon reduction goal for Muncie, identify policies and other means of obtaining the goal, and promote the achievement of the goal by informing and educating the community about the adopted policies and their benefits.

8. Contribute funding to support Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA) membership.

Delaware County has joined the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority. The City of Muncie supports regional transportation and could emphasize that by contributing to Delaware County's annual fee for membership.

9. Institute a Bike-Friendly Community Program. *

Create and implement a Bike-Friendly Community Program by evaluating the current bike-friendliness of Muncie, planning a strategy for bike-friendly improvements, and gathering support throughout the community.

10. Conduct public workshops throughout the city to encourage walking and healthy living.

Conduct Walkable Community Workshops with civic organizations, churches, neighborhood associations, and schools to encourage and promote walking and bring attention to places in the city that make it difficult to walk.

Other potential actions

The following actions were also identified by the Steering Committee to support this initiative but were not considered high priorities:

- Develop public transportation service to Prairie Creek Reservoir.
- Develop a One-Stop Information Shop for public transportation users.

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Conceptual Development Framework

OVERVIEW

The Conceptual Development Framework of the Action Plan describes the community's intent for where and how future growth and development should occur in the city of Muncie. It consists of principle statements that describe that intent in words and a map that illustrates where these concepts apply geographically. This framework should be considered when preparing detailed land development or infrastructure plans and when evaluating formal development proposals. It is the foundation on which to align the future Muncie-Delaware County Comprehensive Plan Update.

The Conceptual Development Framework expresses the community's desire for improved management of both the built and natural environments with a clear preference toward inward growth over greenfield development. Inherent in these principles is an understanding that not all development benefits the community. Different types of development in different locations yield varying economic, environmental, and social impacts as well as short-term and long-term fiscal costs and benefits. A holistic, long-term perspective should guide all decisions about where and how future development occurs in the community.

PRINCIPLES

Twelve principles convey the community's values about land development. These value statements address "how" (character attributes) and "where" (conceptual location) the community's land should develop, if and when development occurs in the future. These principles are described on the following pages.

1. Infill development and redevelopment of underutilized and/or deteriorating sites take priority over development in greenfield locations.

To the extent growth—such as population increase and business growth—takes place in the future, it is preferable to accommodate this investment in locations that are underutilized and/or already have needed infrastructure. This will take place in a deliberate and careful manner that considers other community needs like quantity and proximity to greenspace and parks. Development in greenfield areas will be the exception, not the rule, and will be the result of very careful and strategic decision-making.

2. Underutilized and/or deteriorating industrial, institutional, and manufacturing districts and sites will be strategically redeveloped and integrated into the neighborhood fabric, with consideration of cost-effectiveness and community priorities.

To the extent redevelopment takes place in the future, it will be carried out in a manner that respects and reflects the surrounding community. Strategies will focus on financially feasible solutions that enhance the existing neighborhoods that are most in need of revitalization.

3. Areas of the city will be reclaimed—distressed and abandoned properties will be deconstructed if necessary—and will remain undeveloped but maintained and/or creatively used until reasonable development demand materializes.

Where the condition of the property requires demolition, deconstruction and recycling of materials is preferable to wholesale demolition. Where redevelopment is not immediately feasible, reclaimed properties will be maintained, conceptual future development plans will be designed, and proposals for interim uses will be considered.

4. Downtown and new commercial developments will have an integrated mix of uses (residential, commercial, institutional, etc.) that are distinctive and contribute to enhancing the city's overall vitality.

To the extent that future development and redevelopment occur, places are created with multiple uses—residential, commercial, and institutional, among others—in close proximity to each other, perhaps on the same parcel and/or in the same structure. Close attention is given to the compatibility of those uses as well as efficiency in the use of space. Uses are arranged in a manner that maximizes pedestrian activity and supports community viability.

5. Future development, including redevelopment, will include new parks and open space that will be integrated into the community fabric.

Parks and recreational opportunities protect sensitive natural resources, including wildlife habitat. Muncie currently lacks adequate park space but enjoys an extensive greenway system. New parks and open space will create a more equitable geographic distribution of these spaces while also building on existing assets and connecting networks such as the greenways.

6. The development of new residential areas and redevelopment of existing residential areas will have strong neighborhood qualities, including sidewalks, mixed housing types, parks, and easy access to basic retail needs.

To the extent that new development and redevelopment of residential areas occur, they will not simply be residential subdivisions; rather, they will strengthen the city's urban character. Neighborhoods exist to meet both short- and long-term needs, and must support a variety of lifestyles. Complete neighborhoods include a wide variety of land uses, building types, and housing types; have an identifiable center that offers basic retail and services such as grocery stores and specialty shops; support a variety of travel choices throughout and are well-connected to adjacent neighborhoods and districts; and provide opportunities for people to interact with each other and with nature.

7. A broad range of housing types, price levels, and ownership options—throughout the community and within neighborhoods—will strengthen community identity and improve housing choice.

New residential development is diverse in type (single-family and multi-family, detached and attached, etc.) as well as diverse in cost and ownership options, with special emphasis on affordability. The existing housing stock in Muncie is primarily single-family detached dwellings. Enhanced diversity will include relatively higher densities that will be consistent with physical design attributes consistent with city character (as opposed to suburban or rural character), so as to be integrated as seamlessly as possible into the existing community fabric. The housing choices are physically organized to strengthen neighborhood qualities such as diverse, multi-generational residents living in close proximity to one another.

8. The appearance of neighborhood and commercial districts will promote positive attitudes of safety and community pride.

Neighborhoods and commercial districts will be well-maintained and litter-free in order to reinforce a sense of community pride. They will also be well-lit and feature strategies of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) in order to instill a sense of safety among residents and visitors and to deter potential acts of crime.

9. Places will be better connected to improve the function of the street network and facilitate pedestrian activity; and more opportunities will be created to walk and bike safely between neighborhoods, commercial districts, and local/regional trails, for users of all abilities.

Destinations throughout the city are safely and attractively connected for pedestrians and bicyclists. The general development pattern within the city is not always conducive to this intent and should be redesigned where necessary with future development and redevelopment. Overall, a network of non-automobile choices will connect the community, for all levels of ability.

10. Streets will create an attractive public realm and be welcoming and comfortable places for people while safely accommodating vehicles.

Streets provide not only a means for moving vehicles, but also for moving people. Thus, they will be designed for both people and vehicles, with an emphasis on the former. “Complete Streets” accommodate a full range of multi-modal travel options, including public transit. Attractive and comfortable streetscapes feature trees and awnings for shade, street furniture such as benches and trash cans, suitable buffers between vehicle and pedestrian lanes, and buildings that are close to the street which provide a sense of safety and enclosure.

11. Entryways into Muncie will be attractive and contribute to improving the city’s identity.

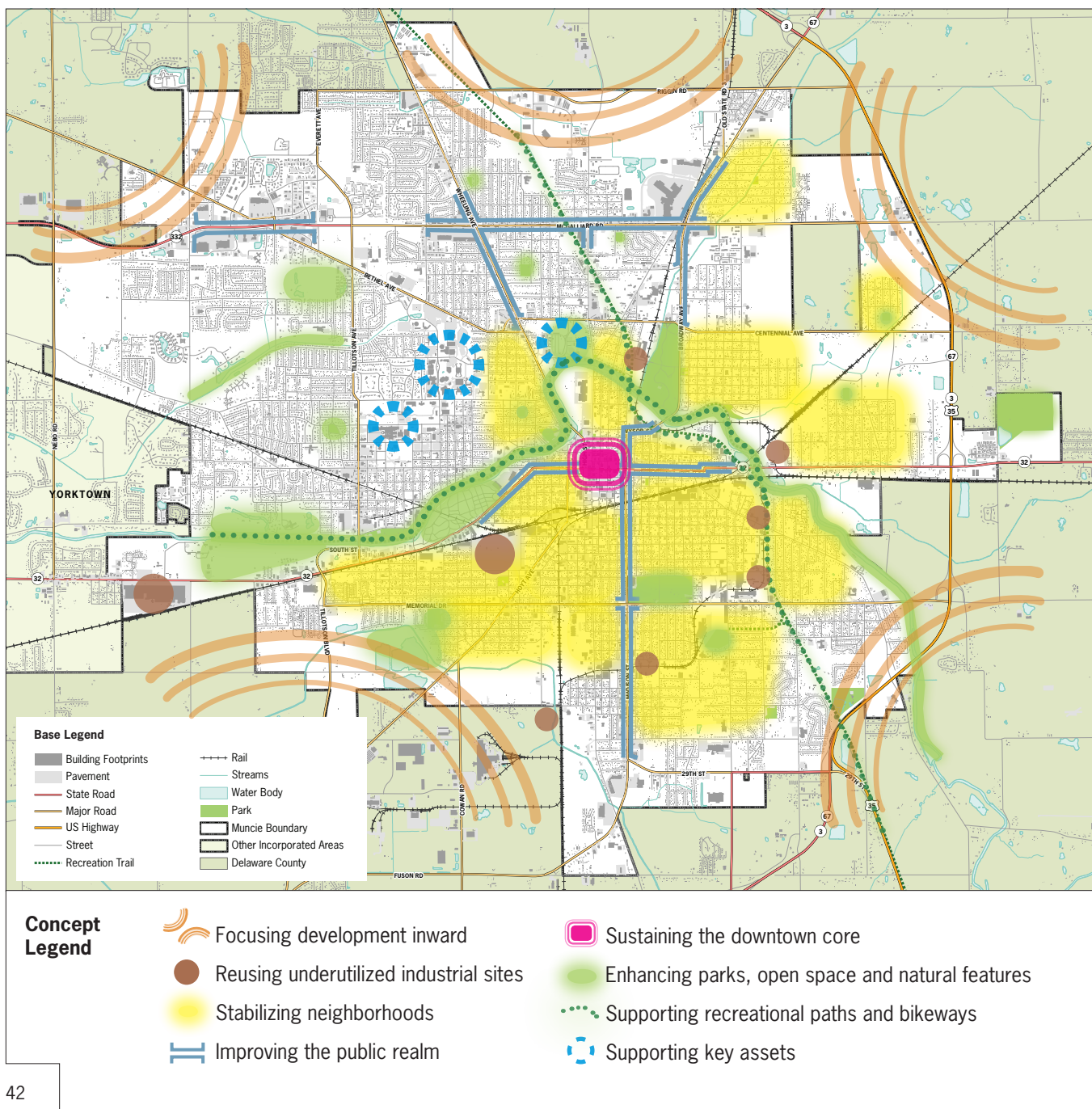
Entryways or gateways along major corridors create a positive first impression for visitors and inspire pride among residents. These areas will feature components such as striking landmark buildings, eye-catching public art installations, and/or other identifiable elements (arches, signage, unique paving etc.) that contribute to improving the identity of the city or a specific neighborhood or district.

12. Quality design is emphasized for all uses to create an attractive, distinctive public (streets, sidewalks, parks, and street trees, etc.) and private (building faces, lawns and landscaping, parking lots and driveways, etc.) realm.

The aesthetics of private and public developments strengthen the uniqueness and appeal of the community. This includes areas under control of government entities (e.g. streetscapes, community facilities, etc.) and private development. Areas are planned and designed in a way that preserves their overall usability, affordability, and sustainability. Similarly, these areas also should be attractive in a way that contributes to a common identity in the community, while allowing for creative differences, innovation, and freedom and diversity of design.

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK MAP

The land use principles are represented graphically in the Conceptual Development Framework Map. This diagram summarizes the principles into eight concepts and identifies general locations where they apply. The framework should inform the forthcoming Muncie-Delaware County Comprehensive Plan Update, specifically to guide the development and adoption of future land use maps and policies.



Implementation Plan

OVERVIEW

The Muncie Action Plan (MAP) presents an action agenda for realizing the community's shared vision for the future. The success of MAP will not be determined by the quality of this document, but rather by the committed, ongoing implementation of its actions. The all-encompassing nature of the Action Plan means that it can only be achieved through the collaborative efforts of the community.

These individuals and organizations have already begun to work together during the preparation of MAP. Over 2,000 community members representing a wide range of backgrounds and interests served on committees, facilitated, or attended meetings to guide the process. There is widespread awareness of MAP. It is time now to harness that energy to work towards achieving the vision.

This section of the report outlines the issues that may affect implementation and describes the suggested approach for carrying out the Action Plan.

STRUCTURE FOR INITIATING IMPLEMENTATION

MAP is not intended to be solely implemented by government. Commitment to the Plan and commitment to implementation will require the coordinated efforts of individuals and organizations representing the public, private, and civic sectors of the community. Even those actions that require public sector involvement need an active citizenry to place them on the agendas of government agencies and ensure that the agencies follow through.

The Management Committee for MAP, in consultation with the Steering Committee, has recommended a structure for managing the implementation effort. This implementation structure is described on the following pages along with guidance on using and managing the Action Plan.

Chapter Organization

The Implementation Plan is organized into the following sections:

Overview

Structure for initiating implementation

Proposed Implementation Structure

Key Issues

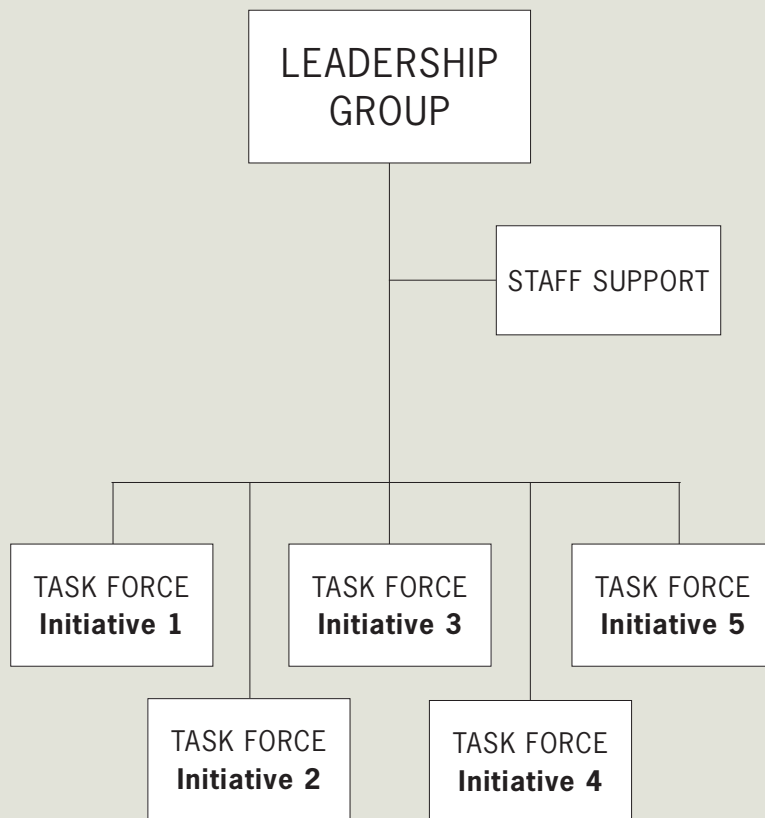
Managing the Action Plan

How to use the Plan

Summary table of all actions

Proposed Implementation Structure

The following is a proposed structure for implementation based on five task forces under a central leadership group.



Leadership Group

The leadership group would be composed of two MAP Management Committee members, five task force champions (leaders) and between two and four other community members. The leadership group will oversee five task forces that each pursue one of the MAP initiative areas.

Staff

A paid staff person will coordinate the effort and maintain momentum, communication, and accountability.

Task Forces

The MAP Management Committee will identify task force champions (leaders) with skills, passion, and institutional support. These champions will recruit volunteers to work on their initiative's actions and will communicate progress to the leadership group. The task forces will be responsible for determining the specific implementation agenda for their initiative, with strong consideration of the community preferences of the action agenda, and for determining measurable benchmarks for each action.

Implementation will kickoff no later than September, 2010, but will likely proceed as a rolling start with a targeted action agenda determined by the leadership group. The leadership group will develop and deliver guidelines for task force responsibilities by September 1, 2010. Task forces will be responsible for determining the specific implementation agenda for their initiative with consideration given to community preferences, ongoing or related activities, and logistics.

This structure should guide implementation over a four- to five-year timeframe. Task force champions will be expected to make a two-year leadership commitment to their initiative, which can be renewed with individual intent and support from the leadership group.

MANAGING THE ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan should be monitored on a regular basis, and, when necessary, it should be revised or updated. This section outlines the guidance for monitoring the Plan's effectiveness and maintaining its relevancy.

1. Monitoring the Plan

MAP should be monitored for implementation effectiveness and relevancy. This review should happen on a formal basis no less than once per year. A MAP status report should accompany this review and be promoted throughout the community, such as through a permanent MAP website.

2. Updating the Plan

A major update of the Action Plan should be considered every ten years to incorporate new decennial Census data. In the interim, key milestones may be reached which necessitate an update sooner than a ten-year cycle.

USING THE ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan is intended to be used on a daily basis as public and private decisions are made concerning the community's future, including development, redevelopment, capital improvements, economic incentives and other matters affecting the community. The following is a summary of how decisions and processes should align with the goals, values, and actions of MAP.

1. Annual Work Programs and Budgets

Individual city and county staff and administrators should be cognizant of the recommendations of MAP when preparing annual work programs and budgets. Local institutions might also consider the Action Plan when making important policy and financial decisions that impact the community.

2. Community Planning

Community planning efforts, particularly the Muncie-Delaware County Comprehensive Plan, which will be updated later in 2010 and 2011, should be aligned with the conceptual development framework, principles for development, and other MAP recommendations.

3. Development Approvals

Administrative and legislative approvals of development proposals, including rezoning and subdivision plats, should be a central means of implementing many of MAP's actions. Decisions by the Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, City Council, and County Commissioners should reference relevant MAP recommendations and policies.

4. Capital Improvement Plan

The city's capital improvement plan (CIP) should be updated annually and be consistent with MAP's land use principles, conceptual development framework map, and actions. Delaware County should also consider the Action Plan when planning capital expenditures.

5. Economic Incentives

Economic incentives should be reviewed to ensure consistency with the recommendations of the Action Plan.

6. Private Investment Decisions

Property owners, developers, and other private entities should consider MAP's goals and actions in their planning and investment decisions. Public decision-makers will be using the Action Plan as a guide in their deliberations about development proposals, zoning updates, infrastructure projects, and funding requests. Property owners and developers should be cognizant of and complement the Action Plan's recommendations.

7. Educational Initiatives

Leadership should collaborate to create a cultural shift toward valuing education and a clearly articulated "cradle-to-career" educational path from early childhood through a vibrant retirement.

8. Civic and Social Engagement

All civic and community groups should create opportunities to explore solutions to issues and problems of concern to the community. They should seek alignment with the recommendations of MAP and collaborate across interests, missions, and constituencies.

9. Consistent Interpretation

MAP's implementation leadership should collaborate with city and county staff and other critical decision-making entities to ensure clear and consistent interpretation of the Action Plan.

SUMMARY TABLE OF ALL ACTIONS

The following tables summarize the recommended actions of the Plan. They include the recommended stakeholders for each action and the time frame in which the action should be implemented. Outlined below are the specific timeframes recommended in the summary table:

- Immediate: 2010-2011
- Short-term: 2011-2015
- Mid-term: 2015-2020
- Long-term 2020-2030
- Ongoing: Currently in progress and/or to be continued once initiated.

An asterisk (*) indicates that a particular action was selected as a “community preference” by participants at the public Open House. Refer to page 17 for a description of the Open House and action voting process.

Where actions have both “Immediate” and, for example, “Short-term” timeframes for implementation, this indicates that the action will be initiated in 2010 but may not be completed until the 2011-2015 timeframe.

Initiative 1. Linking Learning, Health & Prosperity	Recommended Stakeholders	Recommended Timeframe
1.1. * Create an awareness-building coalition to promote the importance of education	Muncie Community Schools, parents, neighborhood associations, local foundations, churches, service clubs, libraries, business leaders including Chamber of Commerce, Ball State University, Ivy Tech, etc.	Short-term and ongoing; Long-term for generational stability.
1.2. * Create and implement an economic development plan to expand the number of competitive-wage jobs	City of Muncie, Muncie-Delaware County Economic Development Alliance, Energize ECI, Chamber of Commerce, Ball State University, Ivy Tech, Downtown Development, and Muncie Visitors Bureau	Immediate and short-term
1.3. Augment school curriculums to address both basic and career-oriented skills	Muncie Community Schools, Ivy Tech, Ball State University, Muncie Area Career Center, 21st Century Community Learning Centers	Immediate and ongoing
1.4. Develop a community-based mentoring program	Ball State University, Ivy Tech, Ball Memorial Hospital, Guardian Scholars, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, community centers, churches, etc.	Immediate and ongoing
1.5. * Develop and implement plan to coordinate with and capitalize on the relocation of Ivy Tech to downtown	Ivy Tech, City of Muncie, Downtown Development	Immediate and short-term

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1.6. Create a Muncie Delaware Economic Development Council (MDEDC)	Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development, Small Business Bureau, City of Muncie, Delaware County	Immediate and ongoing
1.7. Develop an initiative to promote community-based learning for early childhood development	Selected daycare facilities, an organization of early childhood experts, Muncie Public Library, Ball Memorial Hospital, parents, and community leaders	Immediate
1.8. Conduct a community-wide poverty awareness campaign	TEAMwork for Quality Living would mobilize social service providers, churches, and others to showcase their services and would facilitate the work of a community-wide group	Immediate and short-term
1.9. Conduct a campaign to raise awareness about community services offered through 211	United Way, LifeStream Services	Immediate and ongoing
1.10. Create a healthy community initiative	Ball Memorial Hospital, Mayor's Advisory Committee for Health Education, Gateway Clinic, Community Center for Vital Aging, Little Red Door, YWCA, Delaware County Health Department	Immediate and short-term
1.11. Create a prisoner re-entry program with support from local businesses	Muncie Alliance for the Prevention of Substance Abuse (MAPSA), Weed and Seed, Community Foundation, Community Development, Meridian Services, BSU Criminology and Counseling Psychology faculties	Short-term

Initiative 2. Fostering Collaboration	Recommended Stakeholders	Recommended Timeframe
2.1. * Develop a Council of Neighborhoods to build and support the capacity of neighborhood organizations	Neighborhood Presidents Association, Community Development	Short-term
2.2. Conduct a campaign to increase civic participation and to foster civil discourse	Church organizations, Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters	Short-term
2.3. Create a robust volunteer program	Muncie Clean and Beautiful, Rebuilding Together, Cardinal Greenway, Sanitary District, United Way, neighborhood associations	Immediate and ongoing
2.4. * Develop a Uniform Code of Ethics for local government	Muncie Bar Association	Immediate
2.5. Initiate a campaign to recognize and promote higher education's partnerships in community endeavors	Ball State University, Ivy Tech, City of Muncie, and various community organizations	Short-term and ongoing

Initiative 3. Strengthening Pride and Image	Recommended Stakeholders	Recommended Timeframe
3.1. * Develop a city brand identity and marketing campaign	Muncie-Delaware County Economic Development Alliance, Chamber of Commerce, City of Muncie, Muncie Visitors Bureau	Immediate and short-term
3.2. Create a comprehensive and centralized event guide to increase awareness of community events for residents and visitors	Muncie Visitors Bureau, Downtown Development, Minnetrista Cultural Center, Cornerstone Center for the Arts, <i>Muncie Star-Press</i>	Immediate and ongoing
3.3. Complete the installation of wayfinding signs as detailed in the <i>Wayfinding Signage Plan</i>	City of Muncie Public Works Department, Community Enhancement Project (CEP), Ball State University, Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission (DMMPC), Delaware County	Short-term
3.4. Create additional community events that build on existing events	City of Muncie, Muncie Visitors Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Ball State University	Short-term and ongoing
3.5. Continue to pursue Cultural District designation from Indiana Arts Commission	Muncie Arts and Culture Council (MACC), City of Muncie	Immediate and ongoing
3.6. Link primary websites for Muncie	City of Muncie, Muncie-Delaware County Economic Development Alliance, Energize ECI, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development, Muncie Visitors Bureau	Immediate and short-term
3.7. Establish a City-wide Positivity Challenge	MAP Implementation Leadership Group	Immediate and ongoing

Initiative 4. Creating Attractive and Desirable Places	Recommended Stakeholders	Recommended Timeframe
4.1. * Create and implement a Downtown Plan	Community Development, Muncie Redevelopment Commission (MRC), City Council, Downtown Development, Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission (DMMPC)	Immediate and ongoing
4.2. * Develop and implement a Sidewalk and Recreational Paths Plan	City of Muncie, Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission (DMMPC), Cardinal Greenway	Immediate and ongoing
4.3. * Continue and expand the blight removal program	Community Development, Unsafe Buildings Commission	Immediate and ongoing
4.4. Adopt and enforce updated corridor development standards	Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission (DMMPC), City Council	Short-term

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4.5. Create a brownfield redevelopment program	Community Development, Muncie Redevelopment Commission (MRC), Muncie-Delaware County Economic Development Alliance	Short-term and ongoing
4.6. Implement City of Muncie's <i>5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan</i>	City of Muncie, Parks Department	Immediate and ongoing
4.7. Improve the appearance of city Gateways	City of Muncie, Board of Works, Community Enhancement Projects (CEP)	Short-term
4.8. Strengthen code enforcement	City of Muncie	Immediate and ongoing
4.9. * Promote and expand community-based neighborhood enhancement programs	Community Development, Weed and Seed, neighborhood associations, future Neighborhood Council	Short-term and ongoing
4.10. Develop and maintain a Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan	City of Muncie Public Works Department, Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission (DMMPC), Muncie Indiana Transit System (MITS)	Immediate and ongoing
4.11. Explore the feasibility of an event space for year-round activities in downtown	Parks Department, Community Enhancement Projects (CEP), Mayor's office, Downtown Development, Muncie Arts and Cultural Council (MACC)	Immediate and ongoing
4.12. Promote and support the land bank program	Muncie Redevelopment Commission (MRC), City of Muncie, Community Development, Unsafe Buildings Commission	Ongoing
4.13. Create incentives to achieve development priorities	City of Muncie, Community Development's Neighborhood Stabilization Program, Banks, City Council, Redevelopment Commission (MRC), HOME program	Immediate and short term
4.14. Create Development Plans for each neighborhood	Community Development, Ball State University	Immediate and short-term

Initiative 5. Managing Community Resources	Recommended Stakeholders	Recommended Timeframe
5.1. Create an infrastructure design manual	City of Muncie Public Works Department, Ball State University College of Architecture and Planning, ecoRehab, Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Planning Commission (DMMPC)	Mid-term
5.2. * Implement the Prairie Creek Master Plan to protect the ecological health of the reservoir and watershed	Parks Board, Cooper Audubon Society, Indiana American Water, White River Watershed Project	Mid-term

5.3. Renovate and re-open Tuhey Pool *	City of Muncie, Parks Board	Immediate
5.4. Hire a Recreational Director	City of Muncie, Parks Board	Immediate and ongoing
5.5. Create a Muncie Energy Office and Advisory Committee	City of Muncie, Sanitary District, Stormwater Management Department, Green Group	Immediate and short-term
5.6. Implement models of sustainable design around the city	Ball State University, Green Group, Minnetrista Cultural Center, Parks Department and Board, Community Enhancement Project (CEP), Downtown Development, Stormwater Management, Muncie Sanitary District, future Muncie Energy Office, neighborhood associations, future Neighborhood Council	Short-term and ongoing
5.7. Adopt a carbon footprint reduction goal and supporting policies	Green Group, Ball State University, future Muncie Energy Office, neighborhood associations, future Neighborhood Council, Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission (DMMPC)	Immediate and short-term
5.8. Contribute funding to support Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA) membership	Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission (DMMPC), City of Muncie	Immediate and ongoing
5.9. Institute a Bike-Friendly Community Program *	Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission (DMMPC), City of Muncie Public Works Department, Cardinal Greenway, Health Department	Short-term
5.10. Conduct public workshops throughout the city to encourage walking and healthy living	Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission (DMMPC), TEAMwork for Quality Living, Ball Memorial Hospital	Short-term and ongoing

