

PLAN ADOPTION  
TOWN COUNCIL: JANUARY 10, 2023  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: MARCH 6, 2023

# TOWN OF NEW MIDDLETOWN

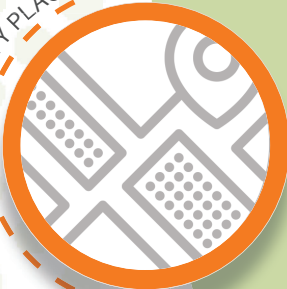
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## Comprehensive Plan

CELEBRATING OUR ASSETS



BUILDING QUALITY PLACES



EXPANDING OUR OFFERINGS



TOWN PLANNING  
INITIATIVE  
HARRISON COUNTY  
The Town of New Middletown



**TOWN OF NEW MIDDLETOWN, INDIANA  
RESOLUTION NO. 2023- 1**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL  
OF NEW MIDDLETOWN APPROVING THE  
NEW MIDDLETOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, Indiana Code 36-7-4-500, *et. seq.* empowers the Harrison County Plan Commission and Harrison County Board of Commissioners to prepare a Comprehensive Plan for the promotion of public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, or the general welfare and for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of development and to make periodic updates thereto; and

WHEREAS, Indiana Code 36-7-4-500, *et. seq.* authorizes a Comprehensive Plan to include a variety of elements, including but not limited to a statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction; a statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction; a statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities; and any factors that are part of the physical, economic, and social characteristics of the town; and

WHEREAS, the Harrison County Plan Commission, in conjunction with the Harrison County Community Foundation, Taylor Siefker Williams Design Group, and The Wheately Group, has undertaken a study to develop the New Middletown Comprehensive Plan for the town; and


WHEREAS, the New Middletown Town Council did certify the New Middletown Comprehensive Plan with a 3/3 vote and forwarded the Comprehensive Plan to the Harrison County Plan Commission with favorable support for adoption.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF NEW MIDDLETOWN, INDIANA that town council is in support of the New Middletown Comprehensive Plan and desires for the Harrison County Plan Commission and Harrison County Board of Commissioners to proceed with the official public hearing in accordance with Indiana Code 36-7-4-500, *et. seq.* and all other required adoption processes in order to adopt the New Middletown Comprehensive Plan.

**PASSED AND SUPPORTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF NEW MIDDLETOWN, INDIANA**

ON THIS 10 DAY OF January, 2023.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Judy Ward

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Fred Lawson

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jordan Morris



# Acknowledgments

## NEW MIDDLETOWN TOWN COUNCIL

Judy Ward

Fred Lawson

Jordan Morris

## SPECIAL THANKS

To the New Middletown community members that participated in the community engagement efforts.

## PLAN ADOPTION

The New Middletown Town Council approved this plan on January 10, 2023. Following the town's approval, the *New Middletown Comprehensive Plan* went through the formal adoption process starting with a favorable recommendation from the Harrison County Plan Commission on March 2, 2023 and then went to the Harrison County Commissioners on March 6, 2023. (Resolution No. 2023-1)

FUNDED BY:



PREPARED BY:



*It is a small town and everyone is so friendly and helpful, as far as buildings the gazebo is amazing.*

*- Community Survey Participant*



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# CHAPTER 1

## About the Plan

Serving as the introduction to the plan, this chapter explains the relationship between the the *Harrison County Town Planning Initiative* and *New Middletown Comprehensive Plan*. Following the plan overview, the planning process is documented with highlights of the key findings from data collection and public input.

Planning efforts should always be rooted in a fundamental understanding of a community's existing demographic, market, and physical conditions which provide guidance for community leaders when making decisions for the future. While this chapter only hits on a few key findings from the existing conditions inventory and analysis, and the public engagement process, the complete summaries can be found in the appendix.

# PLAN OVERVIEW

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*The Harrison County Town Planning Initiative, funded by both HCCF and Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Giving Indiana Funds for Tomorrow (GIFT) VII Implementation Grant, assisted each of the county's ten incorporated towns to complete a Comprehensive Plan and an Asset Management Plan, as required by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT).*

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## **What is the Harrison County Town Planning Initiative?**

Planning for the future often begins as a grassroots effort within a community- meaning the issues that need to be solved and the big ideas for the future MUST come from the people, workers, and businesses of the town. Individuals and groups working together provide a base for the policies and development-related decisions, helping identify the projects and programs needed to help achieve the vision and goals for the future.

The *Harrison County Town Planning Initiative* was first introduced in the *2020 Harrison County Community Leadership Planning Initiative*, a plan that brought together the multiple governmental bodies, non-profits, and community organizations within Harrison County to provide a strategic and aligned direction related to the quality of life for those living and working in Harrison County. In response to this plan, the Harrison County Community Foundation (HCCF) recognized the importance and impact of providing the resources to each town for them to dream big and solve community issues. This initiative, funded by both HCCF and Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Giving Indiana Funds for Tomorrow (GIFT) VII Implementation Grant, provided assistance to the county's ten incorporated towns to complete a comprehensive plan and an asset management plan to provide a foundation for each community to make the positive changes they felt were most critical to the town's future.

The *New Middletown Comprehensive Plan* encourages the community to maintain its rural quality of life, vibrant unique laces, and strong sense of community pride. A comprehensive plan works to identify a community's goals and aspirations for the future based on community needs, data-driven trends, and public perceptions. At the end of the process, the plan should be used to guide decisions related to growth and development and also help prioritize projects and programs identified for the short, mid, and long-term.



## PLANNING PROCESS

The development of this comprehensive plan was guided by the ideas and feedback shared by the community. The *New Middletown Comprehensive Plan* took place over ten months, starting in November 2021 and ending in December 2022. The process consisted of three key phases:

### PHASE 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS (NOVEMBER 2021 – FEBRUARY 2022)

The beginning phase consisted of data collection and analysis in addition to identifying the community's major assets and challenges through existing demographics and socio-economic conditions, mapping analysis, and the first public engagement event. This phase acted as the starting point for defining the big ideas for the future and big issues to solve.

**Public Engagement Round 1** – On January 18, 2022, the project team hosted a community block party at town hall. Nearly 30 people stopped by the public event to help the project team identify opportunities, challenges, and big ideas for the future. Jimmy Johns sandwiches and bottled waters were provided to participants. In addition to the in-person public event, an online survey was available for individuals that couldn't attend the block party.

### PHASE 2: STRATEGIC PLANNING (MARCH 2022 – MAY 2022)

The second phase included the development of strategies, including crafting and refining the vision statement, goals, and big ideas, as well as using previous analysis and public input to develop the draft plan. This phase included a public engagement event allowing participants to review and provide feedback on the plan's draft plan content.

**Public Engagement Round 2** – On March 24, 2022, the project team hosted the second public engagement opportunity for the Town of New Middletown at town hall. Four people stopped by the open house to help the project team review the draft vision statement, goal statements, and big ideas of the plan. In addition to the in-person public event, an online survey was available for individuals that couldn't attend the block party.

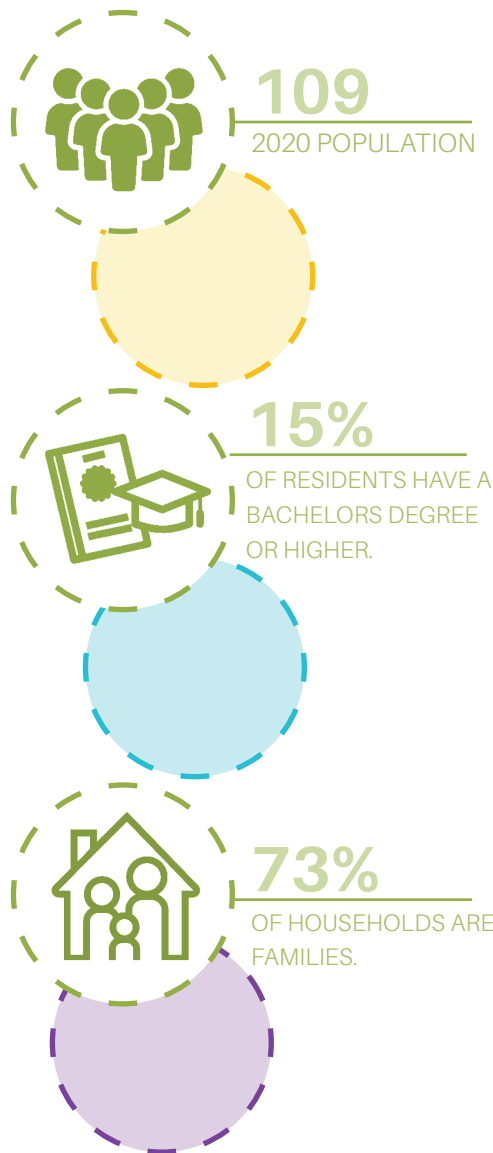
### PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES (JUNE 2022 – OCTOBER 2022)

The final phase of the planning process focused primarily on implementation, including finalizing the prioritization of strategies and identifying supporting action steps for completing each strategy. This phase also included the final public engagement event, the public release of the draft plan, and the adoption process for the comprehensive plan.

**Public Engagement Round 3** – On October 6, 2022, the project team hosted the final public engagement opportunity. The community was encouraged to stop by the town hall to review the draft plan recommendations which included interactive stations for each of the ten catalyst initiatives. Nearly 15 people attended the meeting and provided feedback on the draft recommendations. In addition to the in-person public event, an online survey was available for individuals that couldn't attend the block party.

## WHERE WE ARE TODAY?

# DATA-DRIVEN OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES



### NEW MIDDLETOWN'S OPPORTUNITIES

- **Close-knit Community** - In small communities like New Middletown, people are usually one of the greatest strengths. Everyone knows each other, watches out for one another, and is willing to lend a helping hand when needed. This creates an environment and a place that people want to call home.
- **Increasing educational attainment levels** - Nearly 96.6% of residents over the age of 25 have received a high school diploma or higher. Furthermore, just over 15% of total residents over the age of 25 have earned a bachelor's degree or higher which is a significant increase compared to 2010 (1.9%). As more jobs across the region require some level of education, this increase makes residents more qualified to accept new positions or advance in their career.
- **Town Hall Renovation** - Acquired in 2020, New Middletown is in the process of renovating a building along Main Street to be the new town Hall. This space provides an opportunity to create a space for gathering and collaboration, both indoor and outdoor.
- **Sidewalk infrastructure** - New Middletown has invested in its sidewalks along Main Street. The high-quality sidewalks and streetlights not only improve pedestrian connectivity but also add to the charm of the community. New Middletown has an opportunity to continue expanding this on other key roads to increase walkability.
- **Shifting household size** - The number of single-person households is increasing in New Middletown even though the average household size is also increasing. This may mean that immediate family members are continuing to live together or are moving back in with each other instead of living alone. Family households benefit from income pooling, economies of scale, and higher rates of saving.
- **Churches** - Local religious institutions serve as anchors to the community. Not only do they provide faith-based services, but they also contribute to the community by offering a large network of people for volunteering, a place for events, and programming and services that range from youth to elderly programs.

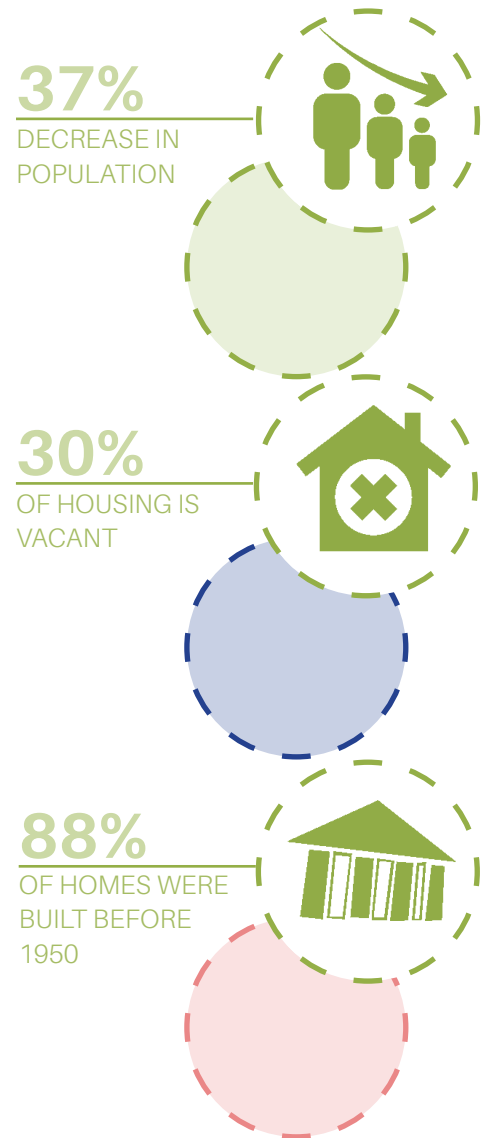
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During the planning process, a variety of demographic conditions were collected and assessed in addition to comments gathered directly from the public. The following pages show a high-level overview of New Middletown today. A more in-depth assessment can be found in the appendix on page 59.

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## NEW MIDDLETOWN'S CHALLENGES

- **Decreasing population** - Data trends revealed that the town's population had decreased between 2010 and 2020. With just over 100 residents, the community will continue to struggle to attract and retain businesses, and worry about the elementary school closing. The primary solution to reversing this negative trend is likely dependent on overcoming utility challenges. Without adequate wastewater infrastructure in place, New Middletown will continue to struggle with population growth.
- **High Vacancy Rate & Aging Structures** - A combination of vacancy and aging housing structures can create a series of housing challenges. Without the proper care and maintenance, aging structures can deteriorate very quickly. As structures become dilapidated beyond repair, it can impact the surrounding area by causing property values to decrease and also detracts from the character of the area. New Middletown has several structures that may not be structurally sound and could present a public safety issue. In addition to the challenges related to the existing housing stock, new construction is limited because of the lack of wastewater infrastructure.
- **Failing septic tanks** - Currently, the town does not have a centralized sewer system in place to support existing or future growth. Existing development is operating on septic systems which eventually lead to larger challenges for the property owner and for the environment. The town will have limited capacity to support additional growth without the necessary infrastructure in place.
- **Broadband Connectivity** - Internet access is a utility service that has received a lot of attention during the COVID-19 pandemic. As children and adults were forced to do schoolwork and continue their jobs from home, the importance of broadband was heightened. The community has expressed concerns about children having to sit outside the elementary school to do their schoolwork on E-learning days. Whether this is an infrastructure problem or an affordability/equity problem, the town should coordinate with the county and local providers to enhance internet access and provide public wifi spots within New Middletown.





## WHAT DID WE HEAR?

# COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

*New Middletown is a community that has the ability to accept growth and change as long as the small town charm is not lost.*

*There are several homes along Main Street that are in disrepair and create unsafe situations.*

*New Middletown Elementary School is a valued community asset.*

*Residents would like to improve sidewalk connectivity and have access to more park facilities and amenities.*

*Limited population and problematic landlords create challenges for businesses to succeed.*

*Lack of reliable broadband connectivity creates challenges for children and adults.*

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The planning process included three public engagement opportunities which provided community members several ways to share ideas and feedback either in person at a scheduled event or through an online survey. A few of the big ideas that were shared during the process are highlighted below. A more detailed summary of each public engagement event can be found on the project website ([harrisoncountytownplanning.org](http://harrisoncountytownplanning.org)).

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*New Middletown will struggle to grow until there is adequate sewer infrastructure in place.*

*Residents would love to be able to get high speed Internet.*

*Residents have a strong desire to enhance the recreational facilities at the elementary school.*

*The Harrison County Public Library provides high quality programming for kids and adults but the commute makes it difficult for some individuals.*

*Residents would like to see more activities geared towards children such as sports, learning, and playground access.*

*Residents feel the community would benefit from bringing back the community dumpster day for annual clean-up events.*

# HOW IS THE PLAN ORGANIZED?

*A comprehensive plan serves many functions including but not limited to identifying a collective vision for the future, providing justification for growth and development-related decisions, shaping the appearance of the community, promoting economic development, balancing competing interests, and prioritizing strategic investments.*

The *New Middletown Comprehensive Plan* is organized into three chapters. Each chapter is outlined below.

## **Chapter 1: About the Plan**

Serving as the introduction to the plan, this chapter includes a plan overview, an overview of the process used to complete the plan, highlights of key findings, and an outline of the plan's organization.

## **Chapter 2: The Path Forward**

Utilizing community feedback and data-driven facts as the foundation, chapter two outlines the vision for the future and several supporting big ideas. This chapter is organized into three themes. Each theme covers a variety of topics and big ideas crucial to guiding growth and enhancing the quality of life in New Middletown. The project and program recommendations within these big ideas should be utilized by town staff, elected officials, and community leaders when determining how to allocate resources within the community.

- Theme 1: Celebrate Our Assets – The first theme focuses on building upon the existing assets and resources in New Middletown to create new opportunities based on placemaking, historic and natural assets, parks, recreation, and trails. Expanding New Middletown's existing assets not only widens entertainment options and activities for current residents but can draw new visitors and residents to the community.
- Theme 2: Build Quality Places – The topics within this theme cover the physical aspects of New Middletown including land uses, roads and sidewalks, utilities and broadband, and housing. These planning elements are critical components to supporting growth within the community because they provide the foundation needed for development to occur.
- Theme 3: Collaborate to Expand Our Offerings – The final theme addresses the additional programs and facilities which contribute to the quality of place and ensure the town is adequately addressing health and wellness, education, workforce, and economic development. These planning elements support a growing population and ensure current and future residents remain healthy and stay competitive within the workforce.

## **Chapter 3: Our Next Steps**

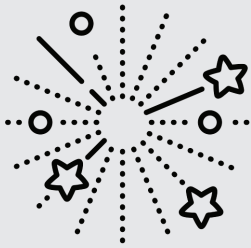
Building on the highest priority strategies, chapter three provides additional details on the eight catalytic initiatives that were identified as the most critical strategies to implement. This chapter is intended to assist the town in implementing each one of these projects, programs, or policies. Each catalyst initiative highlights specific information including a description, action steps, partners, resources, and tools.



# PLAN ORGANIZATION

THEMES, GOALS, AND TOPICS

## THEME 1 CELEBRATE OUR ASSETS



### THE **CELEBRATE** GOAL

Provide diverse and engaging parks, places, and experiences for residents and visitors.

### TOPICS EXPLORED

PLACEMAKING

PARKS & RECREATION



### THE **BUILD** GOAL

Retain the unique rural character and community atmosphere as the town becomes a vibrant walkable community.

### TOPICS EXPLORED

LAND USE

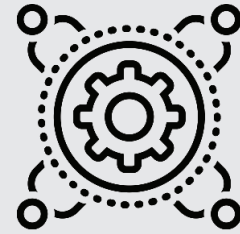
TRANSPORTATION

UTILITIES

HOUSING

## THEME 2 BUILD QUALITY PLACES

## THEME 3 COLLABORATE TO EXPAND OUR OFFERINGS



### THE **COLLABORATE** GOAL

Build strong partnerships to encourage personal wellness, lifelong learning, and community development.

### TOPICS EXPLORED

HEALTH & WELLNESS

ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT





*New Middletown is striving to maintain its rural quality of life, vibrant and unique places, and strong sense of community pride.*





## CHAPTER 2

# The Path Forward

Chapter Two was created with the future in mind. This chapter starts by identifying the vision for the next 10 to 20 years. Following the vision, the chapter uses three themes to organize the goals, big ideas, and strategy statements. The strategies serve as the primary plan recommendations that should be implemented over time. Each strategy is ranked as a low, medium, or high priority. The high priority strategies are then carried forward to Chapter Three as catalyst initiatives.



# DEFINING THE PLAN COMPONENTS

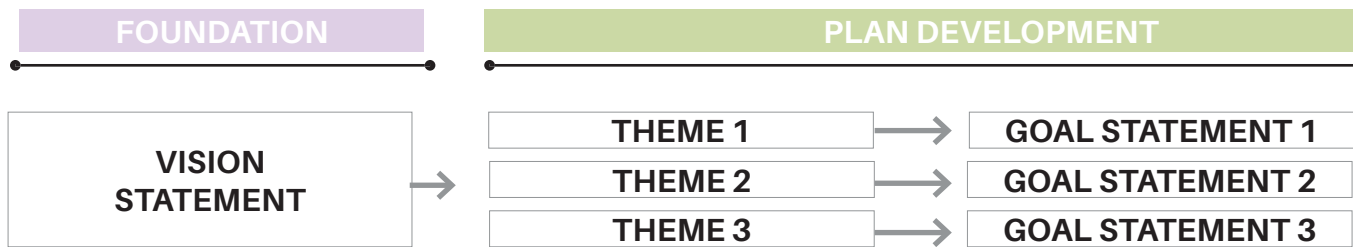
While the composition of every comprehensive plan may vary slightly, there are a series of common planning components that work together to create the guidance document. These components represent a hierarchy of detail starting with the broadest elements, the vision statement, at the top and working downward. With each step down (or in this case, moving right across the bottom of the page), the planning components get slightly more specific. The graphic below defines each of the components and illustrates how the components are used to build upon one another.

Before making a plan, it is important to know where you want to go first. A vision statement is an overarching and forward-thinking idea that captures the values of the community and outlines what the community wants to do or become in the future. After establishing a clear understanding of the town’s aspirations, the vision statement serves as the foundation for the goals, big ideas, and strategies.

The plan themes provide the organizational framework to ensure the comprehensive plan is addressing all the necessary topics. The goals, big ideas, and strategies transform the desired outcomes into an attainable, community-driven action plan. The plan recommendations are identified within the strategy statements. In essence, the strategies are the specific things the community needs to do in order to achieve the vision and goals.

By nature, a comprehensive plan covers a vast range of topics. Because of this, the number of strategy recommendations can quickly become overwhelming for plan users. **The Catalyst Initiatives help to narrow the focus by identifying the top priorities for the community.** The following chapter outlines the vision, themes, goals, big ideas, and strategies. The catalyst initiatives are outlined in Chapter Three: Our Next Steps.

## Composition of Planning Components



The **vision statement** is a broad statement that highlights what the town wants to do or become in the future. The statement captures the values of the community and outlines what residents wish New Middletown to strive for in the future.

The three **themes** are used as organizational elements to provide a consistent framework for all of the comprehensive plans completed as part of the Harrison County Town Planning Initiative. Within each theme, there are a number of topics explored.

The **goal statements** define what the town is striving to accomplish in order to achieve the vision over the next 10 to 20 years.



# SETTING THE STAGE

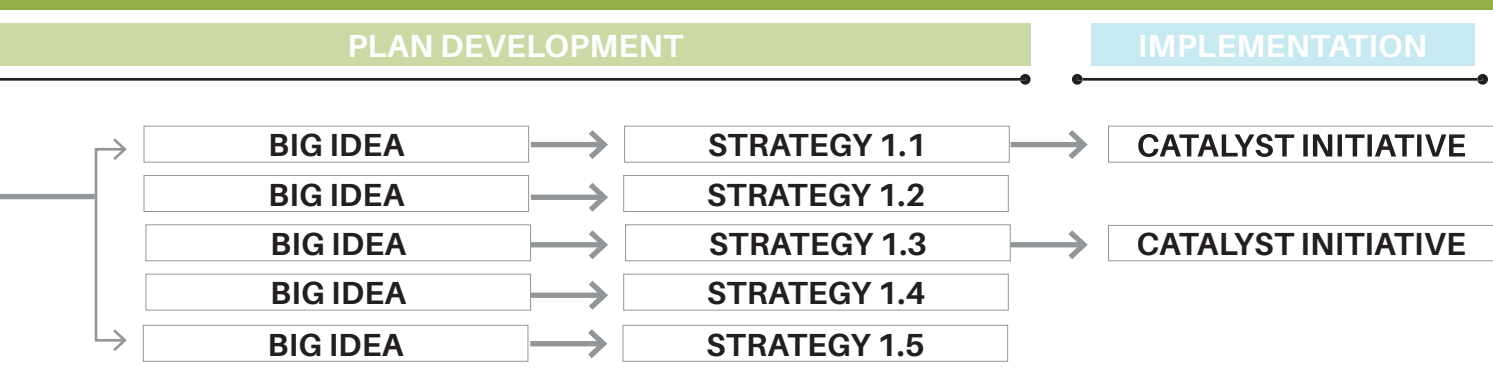
The vision statement represents a blend of community values, aspirations, and commitments from local residents, staff and officials, business owners, and neighbors. It is a reflection of the community values and identifies the places, things, or characteristics that should be preserved. It documents the hopes and dreams for the future and demonstrates dedication to working towards the desired outcome. For New Middletown, the town is striving to maintain its rural quality of life, vibrant and unique places, and strong sense of community pride.

This vision statement was developed based on the ideas and input that were collected throughout the public engagement process. The first round of engagement encouraged participants to dream big while sharing their ideas for the future. The second and third rounds of engagement were used to refine the statement and confirm the vision resonated with the community.

## OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

*A vision statement is not about what the community is today but instead about what it want to do or become in the future.*

*New Middletown will continue to be a place that is loved by everyone. Residents and visitors will be greeted by **welcoming people, well-maintained places, and quaint neighborhoods**. New Middletown will thrive by leveraging what makes it special and unique - **our residents and local history**. The town will rally together to preserve New Middletown’s **rural living and neighborly charm** that will spark **incremental growth** and foster **community pride** for the future of the town.*



*The **big ideas** are a collection of opportunities identified by the community or within a previous planning effort. These ideas link the desired outcome with a specific strategy for addressing a challenge or leveraging an asset or opportunity.*

*The **strategy statements** identify a specific project, program, or policy that can be used or implemented to achieve the vision and goals. The strategies are prioritized to help narrow the focus of the community.*

*The **catalyst initiatives** are the top priority strategies for the town. Additional information such as a initiative description, action steps, partners, and resources is identified to assist the town in implementation.*



THEME #1

# CELEBRATE OUR ASSETS

## GOAL STATEMENT

Provide diverse and engaging parks, places, and experiences for residents and visitors.

## 1. PLACEMAKING

*What does this mean for New Middletown?*

Placemaking is more than public art and creative spaces — it is an approach that actively drives economic development. It has become a tool for encouraging growth and development that reflects the needs and interests of communities. Placemaking refers to a collaborative, community-led approach to the planning and design of public places. Small towns with limited resources can make larger economic impacts by using placemaking strategies that engage all community members, which can be a successful alternative to taking on larger economic development projects that require a higher level of coordination and resources. Main Street America, which is a national non-profit, helps communities with placemaking and revitalization of commercial areas. Many communities across the nation are using the Main Street Approach to strengthen downtown or commercial areas by focusing on the four key points: economic vitality, design, promotion, and organization. New Middletown can adopt this approach to increase capacity, enhance the built environment, and promote the community.



### PLACEMAKING BIG IDEAS

*What do we want to achieve?*

#### *Big Idea: Community Events*

**Increase resources and volunteers to facilitate community events by partnering with the school, fire department, and local churches.**

Volunteers are necessary and extremely helpful for a healthy community. People from all walks of life donate their time and effort to various causes every day. The more connected to a community people feel, the more likely they are to take responsibility and feel a sense of commitment to getting involved. Currently, New Middletown does not have any annual events, partially due to capacity limitations. By partnering with the elementary school, fire department, and local churches, the town can increase its resources and volunteers, making it easier to facilitate events. During the planning process, the community expressed the desire for a town festival to honor the history and establishment of the town as well as block parties and holiday events, such as a Trunk or Treat. One event or festival could be initially selected to plan and hold as a starting point to build excitement and a volunteer base.

### *Big Idea: Gateways*

#### **Provide well-marked, inviting entrances into the town.**

New Middletown has two primary entry points. Corydon New Middletown Road SE serves as the main entry point into New Middletown from the northwest and has the opportunity to make a positive first impression for travelers entering the town. New Middletown Road SE serves as the main entry point into town coming from the northeast.

Currently, New Middletown Road SE has a small welcome sign to greet people. In the future, the town should maintain this sign and ensure well-kept landscaping surrounds the sign. The Corydon New Middletown Road SE gateway could benefit from a well-marked sign and landscaping to welcome people and increase awareness of when they are entering or exiting the town. In addition to signage, the town can explore other improvements to enhance the overall appearance of these entrances such as sidewalks, landscaping, art installations, and lighting that add to and complement the rural character of the town.

### *Big Idea: Volunteerism*

#### **Initiate a recognition program to celebrate people's contribution to New Middletown.**

In smaller communities like New Middletown, volunteers and community leaders play a vital role in getting things done. In some instances, it is always the same, few individuals that are consistently volunteering and always showing up when someone needs a hand. To prevent burnout and encourage others to get involved, the town can initiate a recognition program to celebrate people's contributions or those who help a neighbor in need. Community member recognition programs can become a crucial part of great community culture. Common examples include incentive programs, citizen of the month programs, years of service awards, and/or gift card programs that reward a community member with treats, lunches, or small personal gifts to say thank you. This type of recognition can help create a culture where celebrating community triumphs is an everyday way of life. It helps a community bond over shared accomplishments and deepens their connection to the organizational purpose and goals.



THEME #1

# CELEBRATE OUR ASSETS

## GOAL STATEMENT

Provide diverse and engaging parks, places, and experiences for residents and visitors.

### *Big Idea: Newsletter*

**Establish a seasonal newsletter that educates and informs residents about the local history and events.**

As the community hosts new events and recognizes volunteers in the future, a community newsletter can help to make residents aware of the exciting things going on in the near future. A seasonal community newsletter can provide the times and dates of upcoming events scheduled for the coming months, and it can give community members an easy way to stay up to date on the happening in the town. In addition to events and general updates, the newsletter can be a tool for educating the community on the history of the town and celebrating historic events or milestones. The community newsletter can be delivered in print or provided through email or another online outlet.

### *Big Idea: Community Beautification*

**Organize a seasonal community cleanup day.**

Cleaning up the town can be accomplished through local regulations as well as volunteer efforts. One approach to addressing beautification challenges is for the town to develop a seasonal clean-up day. While this serves as a day to clean up trash accumulated in the area, it also establishes pride and ownership that can serve as an incentive to keep the town clean all year long. Through community engagement, citizens expressed the desire to have access to a dumpster for the disposal of larger items. The town could partner with a local dumpster or trash provider to donate or provide these services at a reduced costs on the day of the cleanup event.



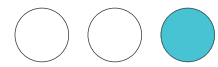
## STRATEGIES

*How will we achieve it?*

PRIORITY RANKING

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

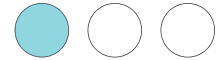
STRATEGY 1.1 - Establish a community event committee with representation from the town, fire department, and/or local churches to host events throughout the year. (See page 48)



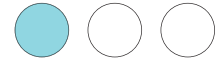
STRATEGY 1.2 - Seek grants to provide enhanced welcoming entrances into New Middletown.



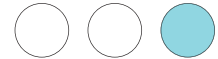
STRATEGY 1.3 - Survey residents to determine what type of recognition program or award would provide the most incentive for residents.



STRATEGY 1.4 - Determine how to implement a seasonal newsletter, including who will develop it, how it will be distributed, what should be included.



STRATEGY 1.5 - Continue to organize a seasonal community clean-up day that includes access to a free dumpster for residents. (See page 49)





THEME #1

# CELEBRATE OUR ASSETS

## GOAL STATEMENT

Provide diverse and engaging parks, places, and experiences for residents and visitors.

## 2. PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS

*What does this mean for New Middletown?*

Parks and trails can work to preserve high-quality natural resources and provide residents of all ages and capabilities with a range of recreational opportunities. The inclusion of parks and recreation facilities in a community promotes health, social interaction, and a general sense of well-being. Parks and open space can also serve as green space within a community, providing natural space for people, and foster healthy habitats for the local environment. These efforts may include recreation facility and/or trail improvements as well as ensuring that residents, especially children, have access to active and organized recreational programs.



### PARKS AND RECREATION BIG IDEAS

*What do we want to achieve?*

#### *Big Idea: Recreational Facilities*

**Explore the creation of a public park for town residents that includes a playground, splashpad, and full-sized basketball court.**

New Middletown currently has only one small park, Memorial Park, offering green space, a small gathering pavilion, and seating. While this facility is a fantastic addition to the town, it does not provide specific activities or amenities for recreation that are desired by residents. A new public park could provide additional amenities available for residents and visitors. Specific facilities for a new park identified by the public included a playground and splashpad for younger children and a full-sized basketball court for older kids and adults. Throughout Indiana, many communities have elected to build a spray ground or splash pad in lieu of municipal pools that have significantly higher maintenance and operational costs. Facilities that require less maintenance, like a splashpad or full-sized basketball court, will increase healthy recreational opportunities for youth and adults while also keeping yearly operational costs lower for New Middletown.

#### *Big Idea: Facility Programming*

**Partner with the South Harrison Community School Corporation to utilize the New Middletown Elementary school gym and outdoor recreational facilities for programming for all ages.**

New Middletown does not currently have the resources to develop an indoor sports and recreational facility. Existing outdoor sports fields exist directly behind the New Middletown Elementary School but are not currently in use. The YMCA of Harrison

County in Corydon offers a wellness center, gym, track, pool, and various programs for all ages. To increase accessibility and lower travel time to programming and facilities further away, the town could assist with revitalizing the outdoor facilities and developing indoor and outdoor recreation programs for all ages. The first step for this big idea would include collaboration with the school corporation to evaluate the feasibility of the types of improvements needed to re-open sport facilities and determine who would manage the various programs. Expanding the use of the New Middletown Elementary School gymnasium and fields for programming and activities similar to those offered at the YMCA can provide more convenient access to recreation and sports. Many new programs could be offered at this location that do not necessarily increase operation costs or require new construction.

*Big Idea: Expand Amenities*

**Secure funding for additional park features such as picnic tables and seasonal lawn games and activities (corn hole, chess, etc.).**

Opportunities for additional park features within the town can provide options for recreation, create social gathering opportunities, and create a positive identity. The initial capital costs for construction or installation of features are important, but on-going maintenance costs should also be considered. New Middletown has very limited resources and staffing available for long-term operations and maintenance of park facilities. New Middletown’s community center offers outdoor space that could be enhanced through additional park features, such as picnic tables and seasonal lawn games and activities. These amenities can expand options for residents and require lower on-going maintenance. The town can apply for various grants to add features to the community center.

PRIORITY RANKING

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

**STRATEGIES**

*How will we achieve it?*

STRATEGY 2.1 - Determine the feasibility of purchasing the empty lot at the corner of Main Street and Kraft Way to design and construct a new park facility that would include a basketball court and splashpad. If feasible, apply for grants and complete design and construction of the park.



STRATEGY 2.2 - Work with South Harrison County Community School Corporation to evaluate the feasibility of making improvements to the existing sports fields.



STRATEGY 2.3 - Identify desired improvements and apply for grant funding to provide additional park amenities at the community center. (See page 50)





THEME #2

## **BUILD QUALITY PLACES**

### **GOAL STATEMENT**

Retain the unique rural character and community atmosphere as the town becomes a vibrant walkable community.

### **3. LAND USE**

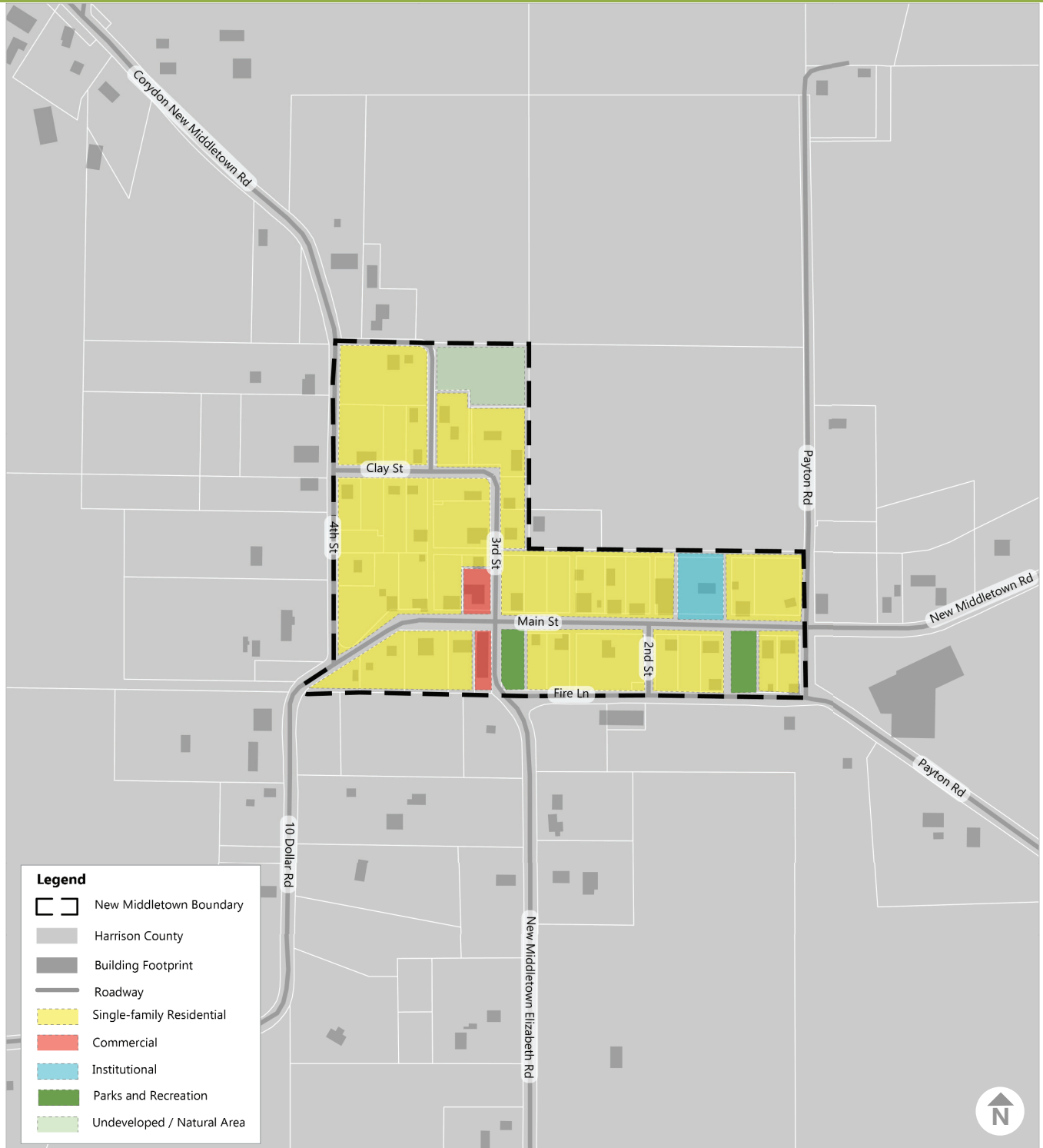
*What does this mean for New Middletown?*

More than two centuries have brought about many changes in New Middletown's landscape. At one time, this area was home to thousands of acres of working farmland and homesteads. Today, New Middletown's main street is lined with homes and support services and facilities, such as the elementary school, Memorial Park, and town hall. This evolution of how land is used reflects the history of the community and impacts the future of New Middletown.

The following land use analysis and recommendations are intended to guide future development in a manner that respects the desire of the community to preserve its rural character and quality of life while identifying areas for additional residential development and neighborhood services for current residents and future generations. The term land use is used to describe the types of activities and uses taking place on a parcel of land or within a structure. The town's future land use plan considers the current uses of the land and determines how the land should be used ten to 20 years into the future. A future land use plan does not change the current zoning or use of a property, it only guides decisions on how that land should be used if the land use does change. The following big ideas summarize the policies, programs, and projects that are needed to support and implement the recommendations shown on the map. The map and big ideas below work together to create the future land use plan.



# FUTURE LAND USE MAP





THEME #2

## BUILD QUALITY PLACES

### GOAL STATEMENT

Retain the unique rural character and community atmosphere as the town becomes a vibrant walkable community.



### LAND USE BIG IDEAS

*What do we want to achieve?*

#### *Big Idea: Agriculture Preservation*

**Encourage and foster development that minimizes impact on existing agricultural areas outside of town limits.**

New Middletown's residents value the town's natural and rural character of the community. The town's natural and agricultural resources contribute to the quality of life offered in New Middletown. Key components of the town's small-town character and identity are the surrounding rural residential areas, working farms, and tree coverage. Protecting this land use can mutually benefit both the property owner and surrounding neighbors. As the town evolves, maintaining the rural natural atmosphere of New Middletown should remain a priority.

In some instances, agriculture uses can have more intensive impacts with large machinery, possible odors, and environmental constraints. Working to prevent conflicting uses from locating next to each other protects the farmer from unfriendly complaints and adjacent property owners from undesirable impacts. One approach is to provide appropriate buffers or transitions in scale between working farms and other uses. For example, single-family dwellings on large lots provide additional open space between active agricultural land and residential structures. This can be done with encouraging larger lots or increased setbacks. Another approach to maintaining the rural character is to incorporate visual elements of the area's rural character into new developments. When new development is considered in town, natural elements like landscape buffers or open space should be included to minimize impacts and reinforce the rural character.

#### *Big Idea: Variety of Housing Options*

**Advocate for the development of additional single-family, multi-family, and senior-living housing options.**

With many older homes in the town, New Middletown needs new additional housing units. This could include single-family houses, duplexes/apartments, and senior-living options with a focus on creating affordable starter homes. The size, type, and price-point of new housing should also respond to the needs of current and future residents. However, one of the largest factors limiting new residential growth is the lack of sewers. Without sewer utilities, new development (in particular higher density such as apartments) is hindered since it must occur on larger lots and be served by septic systems.

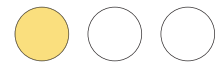
## STRATEGIES

*How will we achieve it?*

PRIORITY RANKING

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

STRATEGY 3.1 - Communicate Future Land Use map changes to the County Plan Commission when deemed necessary that ensure compatible uses and appropriate transitions in scale and setback.



STRATEGY 3.2 - Propose additional standards be adopted by the county to reduce conflicts between new development and existing land uses, such as additional plantings, fences, or additional setbacks.



STRATEGY 3.3 - Evaluate the town's big ideas and strategies as projects are completed, preferences change within town, or every ten to fifteen years.





THEME #2

## BUILD QUALITY PLACES

### GOAL STATEMENT

Retain the unique rural character and community atmosphere as the town becomes a vibrant walkable community.

## 4. UTILITIES

*What does this mean for New Middletown?*

Many cities, towns, and counties are responsible for providing and maintaining adequate public facilities and services, such as water, wastewater, stormwater, street maintenance, and solid waste disposal. New Middletown does not currently offer any public utilities or services. Trash removal is available from private companies and purchased by individual property owners. Water and stormwater services are provided and managed by South Harrison Water Corporation. New Middletown can strive to increase the public utilities and services available in the town through partnerships with the county and private utility providers.



### UTILITIES BIG IDEAS

*What do we want to achieve?*

*Big Idea: Septic Maintenance:*

#### **Protect groundwater and surface water quality from inadequate or failing septic systems.**

The South Harrison Water Corporation provides water service to the town and relies on aquifers as their source of water. Ground water percolates through the soils into the aquifers, which include sand and gravel areas that naturally filter contaminants out of the ground water. Water is pumped from the aquifers through deep wells and treated before being reaching customers.

Property owners in New Middletown rely on septic systems for the safe and effective treatment of their wastewater. These systems are an important role in protecting the community's water quality where sewer is not available. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicates that one of the biggest causes of pollution to water systems, including private wells, is septic systems that are not working correctly. When a septic system is not properly maintained or fails, untreated wastewater can reach water sources and introduce bacteria and harmful viruses.

Septic systems may fail despite proper maintenance, design, and construction, but the primary reasons septic tanks fail is because of improper maintenance, age of the system, or the site conditions (such as poor soils). The average lifespan of a septic tank varies based on the tank material, surrounding soils, risk of flooding, and adequate maintenance. Typically, a septic tank made today of concrete may last 50 years or more, although older tanks may not be as well constructed as newer tanks. Tanks made from other materials, such as plastic, can also last a similar timeframe depending on site conditions.



Regular septic tank treatment and pumping can break down and eliminate the sludge that builds up over time to extend the life of a septic system. Routine maintenance is the responsibility of the home or property owner. Septic maintenance includes inspecting the entire system every one to three years and pumping the tank every three to five years depending on the tank size, number of people in the household, the water habits and use, use of a garbage disposal, and the amount of solids already in the tank.

### *Big Idea: Sewer System*

#### **Determine the feasibility of providing sewer utilities to existing and future development areas.**

Currently, there is no municipal sewer service in New Middletown. The need for this has been considered several times in the past, but sewer service has not been established due to high costs, staffing capacity, and maintenance. As discussed previously, failing septic tanks can lead to water quality issues and create financial challenges for residents. The lack of sewer infrastructure also creates barriers for new development. While residential properties that are on lots larger than one acre and have soils that will drain can use septic systems fairly easily, more intensive development, such as commercial or industrial uses, are more limited with the use of septic systems.

It will be difficult for New Middletown to provide sewer service to its residents and businesses. The town should inventory the parcels that have failing septic systems as well as the any issues with septic systems for the existing commercial or public uses, such as the school. This inventory as well as an inventory of the properties willing to connect to sewer (if available) can be discussed with potential providers, such as the Regional Sewer District, to determine the feasibility of providing or extending service to the area.



## THEME #2

# BUILD QUALITY PLACES

### GOAL STATEMENT

Retain the unique rural character and community atmosphere as the town becomes a vibrant walkable community.

#### *Big Idea: Broadband Development*

##### **Work with the county to provide high-speed and high-quality internet access.**

Cell phone service and high-speed internet access have become a necessary utility, just as electricity and the telephone were in the early part of the last century. Due to natural features and the limited number of towers, broadband wireless internet in New Middletown is spotty and, in some areas of town, nonexistent. Although parts of town have access to broadband internet service of 25 Mbps download and six Mbps upload speeds over cable, DSL (digital subscriber line), or wireless providers, many areas away from the town center and main roads cannot obtain high-speed internet. These areas of town are limited to slow dial-up or expensive satellite service. Harrison County's Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan identifies strategies for providing service to the entire county (including the towns) at speeds substantially faster than current speeds. According to the Plan, New Middletown and the surrounding area is targeted for build-out under the Rural Digital opportunities Fund partially through Spectrum and partially through Mercury Wireless. Providing broadband services to all areas of town is also an important factor in attracting individuals and families that require internet access for work or school in New Middletown and potentially increase the school-age population.

#### *Big Idea: Broadband Access*

##### **Provide free public access to WIFI hotspots around the elementary school, Memorial Park, or town hall.**

Today technology is an integrated part of everyday life, and access to high-quality internet has become a basic necessity. With a limited number of providers and limited speeds, E-Learning programs that require students to send homework or schoolwork electronically is difficult for students who do not have access to reliable internet at home. Additionally, adults who may need internet to work from home, may not have access to internet as well due challenges related to rural broadband. Free public access to WIFI is typically set up in public facilities such as the town hall, public libraries, or community gathering spaces. During the pandemic, New Middletown students would still congregate outside of the elementary school to do or submit assignments because of internet connectivity. New Middletown can expand access to free public WIFI by deploying hotspots at town hall or Memorial Park.

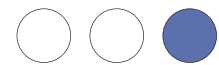
*PRIORITY RANKING*

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

**STRATEGIES**

*How will we achieve it?*

STRATEGY 4.1 - Partner with Harrison County Public Health Department to educate community members about the benefits of septic system maintenance, like regularly pumping and inspection. (See page 51)



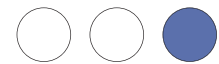
STRATEGY 4.2 - Complete an inventory of the parcels that have failing septic systems as well as the any issues with septic systems for the existing commercial or public uses, such as the school.



STRATEGY 4.3 - Work with Harrison County, the Regional Sewer District, and Health Department to determine a long-term strategy for providing sewer infrastructure.



STRATEGY 4.4 - Apply for grants to assist in the purchase and installation of WIFI equipment in one or two public spaces. (See page 52)



STRATEGY 4.5 - Partner with Harrison County to assist implement the broadband infrastructure improvements identified in the *Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan*.





THEME #2

## **BUILD QUALITY PLACES**

### **GOAL STATEMENT**

Retain the unique rural character and community atmosphere as the town becomes a vibrant walkable community.

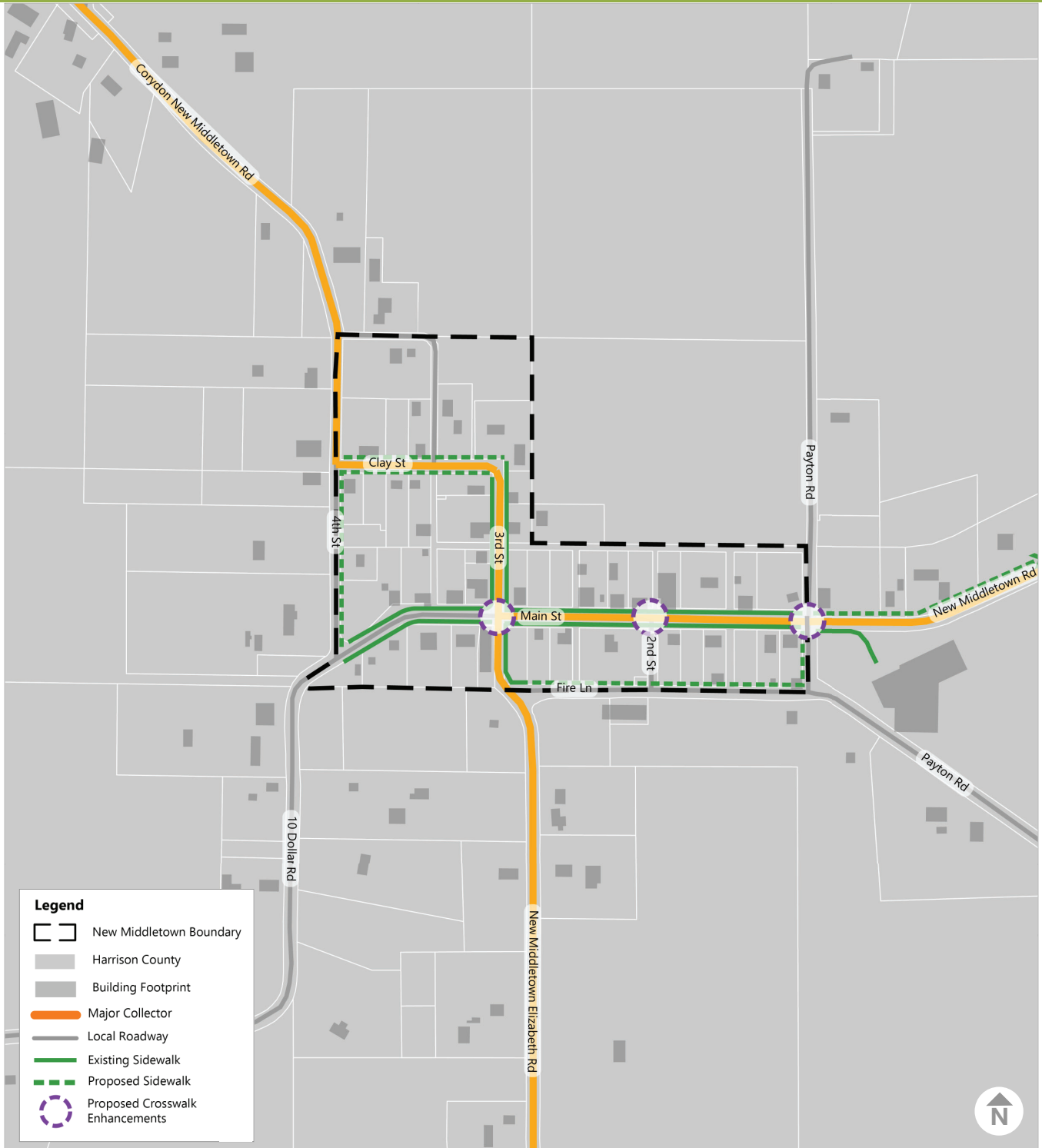
## **5. TRANSPORTATION**

*What does this mean for New Middletown?*

Transportation facilities in New Middletown include state roads, local roads, and sidewalks. These facilities provide connections between homes, businesses, recreational facilities, and workplaces in the community, the region, and beyond. There is an important link that should be considered between how land is used and the transportation facilities that serve it. Better roads may promote higher densities and more intense land uses if zoning regulations allow it, and poor roads discourage many types of development due to poor access. This section not only focuses on the most common form of transportation – the car – but will also consider how people move around town. Currently, New Middletown does not have a road department to maintain local roadways. If maintenance or improvements are needed, the town contacts with local companies for each specific need.



# FUTURE TRANSPORTATION MAP





THEME #2

# BUILD QUALITY PLACES

## GOAL STATEMENT

Retain the unique rural character and community atmosphere as the town becomes a vibrant walkable community.



## TRANSPORTATION BIG IDEAS

*What do we want to achieve?*

### *Big Idea: Sidewalk Connectivity*

#### **Extend the sidewalk network along New Middletown Road SE and Fire Lane SE.**

The existing sidewalk network in New Middletown is concentrated to Main Street and around Memorial Park on 3rd Street. The town should extend the current sidewalk network to the northern residential area and south along Fire Lane SE within the town to promote safe options for walking and biking. The town should also work with the county to provide sidewalks along New Middletown Road SE to better connect the Elementary School and the houses just outside of the town limits. Funding for sidewalks can come from a variety of sources. INDOT’s Local Public Agency (LPA) program provides funds for sidewalks that require a 20% match locally. Other state and local non-profit or community organizations also provide funding for sidewalks. Other communities have also created a local grant matching program where a property owner can apply for matching funds (dollar for dollar up to a maximum amount) to install new sidewalks on their property. The town match could be funded through the general fund, a local grant, or other similar sources. A small annual budget of even \$10,000 - \$20,000 could result in a complete network in a few years. As development occurs, the town should require the construction of new sidewalks to further connect the sidewalk network.

### *Big Idea: Crosswalks*

#### **Improve crosswalk visibility to increase safety.**

Poor lighting conditions, obstructions (such as parked cars), and curvy roads can reduce visibility of crosswalks and contribute to safety issues. Sometimes, a marked crosswalk alone is not sufficient enough to alert drivers that people may be crossing the road. The visibility of crosswalks can be improved with additional lighting, signs, and pavement markings. These improvements reinforce where to safely cross the road and make it more noticeable for motorists. The town can implement these improvements at a single intersection or multiple locations.

### *Big Idea: Street Trees*

#### **Expand the street tree program along Main Street and other key roads within town limits.**

Street trees soften the visual character of a street, provide separation between cars and people, and also reinforce character. Using appropriate tree species and size when it is installed ensures the health, growth, and longevity of the trees. Additionally, the form

and color of street trees should be considered as part of the street design, and the maturity size and root system of the trees should be considered to minimize the impact to utilities, lights, curbs, and sidewalks. Currently, New Middletown has a street tree maintenance and planting program along Main Street, but it only spans a few blocks starting at town hall and ending at Third Street. Expanding the program to other sections of Main Street and other larger roads can extend this character and visual appeal throughout the town.

*Big Idea: Streetscape*

**Provide adequate streetlights and signs to increase pedestrian safety.**

Streetlights accomplish more than simply making it easier for a pedestrian to see where they are going. Adequate streetlights also provide critical reassurance of safety. Traffic and pedestrian signs provide valuable information to drivers and other road and sidewalk users. These signs represent rules that are in place to keep the community safe, and help to communicate messages to drivers and pedestrians that can reduce accidents and provide additional local information. Installing adequate lighting and signs can increase individuals comfort level but also adds value to the aesthetic of a community.

*PRIORITY RANKING*

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

**STRATEGIES**

*How will we achieve it?*

STRATEGY 5.1 - Develop a town sidewalk repair and construction grant program that provides a 50% match (up to a set amount) to help repair and complete the sidewalk network. (See page 53)	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>
STRATEGY 5.2 - Apply for Local Public Agency (LPA) funding for new sidewalks along New Middletown Road SE and Fire Lane SE.	<input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
STRATEGY 5.3 - Incorporate crosswalk improvements into roadway maintenance projects.	<input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
STRATEGY 5.4 - Create a tree planting and maintenance plan along Fire Lane SE, Clay Street SE, New Middletown Elizabeth Road SE, and 4th Street connecting to Main Street.	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
STRATEGY 5.5 - Apply for local and state grants to install pedestrian crosswalk signs and also install streetlights along Main Street.	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>



THEME #2

## BUILD QUALITY PLACES

### GOAL STATEMENT

Retain the unique rural character and community atmosphere as the town becomes a vibrant walkable community.

## 6. HOUSING

*What does this mean for New Middletown?*

Housing markets and related issues change over time, along with the economy and other external factors. However, people will always need an adequate place to live. It is important to consider the housing needs of residents of all ages, financial situations, and life-styles. Utility availability as well as economic forces, such as unemployment, interest rates, housing supply, and competitive mortgage rates may continue to influence the housing market in New Middletown. However, the town can be an active partner in reversing housing trends and challenges by recognizing local and regional housing needs and striving to provide an adequate housing stock for a variety of people who want to live in a rural community.



### HOUSING BIG IDEAS

*What do we want to achieve?*

*Big Idea: Housing Support*

**Provide opportunities for new housing to sustain the local school and support business needs.**

A diverse housing stock includes various housing types, styles, and sizes intended to meet the needs of residents of all ages, financial situations, and lifestyles. Providing various housing options requires flexibility in land use and zoning regulations to allow more than just single-family homes. This could include duplexes, multi-unit buildings, and mother-in-law suites (accessory dwellings). Providing opportunities for new housing can be done through redeveloping vacant or underutilized lots within the town or through new subdivisions in areas on the outskirts of town that are currently undeveloped. New Middletown can utilize a combination of approaches to ensure the town is continuously offering new housing opportunities. However, a large obstacle for new housing developments is the lack of sewer utilities. Housing is realistically limited to large-lot, single-family housing that is served by septic systems unless a sewer system is constructed as a municipal utility.

*Big Idea: Grant Programs*

**Utilize state grants to establish a housing repair program.**

The Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) currently offers grants for housing repairs through the Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation (OOR) Program. This program's purpose is to preserve affordable housing stock by providing funding for the rehabilitation of owner-occupied housing for low to moderate-income households. This program offers up to \$25,000 per qualifying homeowner to make minor but critical



repairs (such as faulty furnace, leaking roof, unsafe plumbing, etc.) or major repairs that are needed to meet building codes (lead abatement, unsafe electrical wiring, etc.). The town should consider pursuing funding from the OCRA Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program to support and preserve an affordable housing stock in New Middletown as well as improve quality of life for residents.

*Big Idea: Blight Removal*

**Rehabilitate or demolish poorly maintained and neglected properties.**

Properties along Main Street and the surrounding area should be prioritized for redevelopment. Currently, there are several vacant and dilapidated residential structures in town that need to be either demolished or rehabilitated. The town can partner with local property owners and other interested parties to explore how the property could be redeveloped for additional housing opportunities and also the opportunity for grant funding. These conversations can often lead to interest in the area and identification of potential barriers that can be removed to improve the likelihood of investment. If rehabilitating a property, the septic system will need to be inspected to see if the system is still functioning properly. If the system is deemed too close to failure and unsalable, the system will have to either be replaced or the property may be considered for demolition.

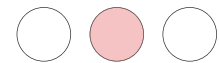
PRIORITY RANKING

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

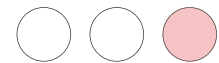
**STRATEGIES**

*How will we achieve it?*

STRATEGY 6.1 - Pursue partnerships with property owners and public organizations, such as Blue Ridge Services, Inc. and Blue River Housing, to attract new affordable housing for individuals, families, and seniors.

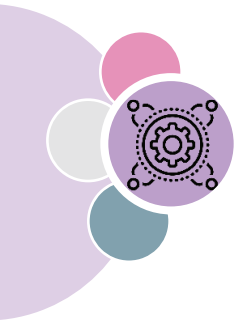


STRATEGY 6.2 - Apply for grant funding through the Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation program to establish a housing repair program. (See page 54)



STRATEGY 6.3 - Adopt a property maintenance ordinance and enforcement procedure that encompasses lawns, trash, and other physical maintenance to private properties.





THEME #3

# COLLABORATE TO EXPAND OUR OFFERINGS

## GOAL STATEMENT

Build strong partnerships to encourage personal wellness, lifelong learning, and community development.

## 7. HEALTH AND WELLNESS

*What does this mean for New Middletown?*

Public health, or strategies to promote wellness, are becoming more important in communities across the nation. As mental and physical health issues become more complex and integrated into how a community functions, wellness has trended to the forefront of planning efforts for many cities and towns. While there are many ways to address public health, this plan focuses on providing recreational facilities and programming to encourage physical activity.



### HEALTH AND WELLNESS BIG IDEAS

*What do we want to achieve?*

#### *Big Idea: Fitness Programming Partnership*

**Partner with the school corporation and/or other organizations to provide a walking program for all ages in the community.**

Currently, New Middletown residents have access to limited recreation and health facilities and/or programs within town limits. However, there are multiple programs in neighboring communities. Developing fitness and wellness programs hosted in town can be accomplished through partnering with the South Harrison Community School Corporation, Harrison County Health Department, and/or YMCA of Harrison County. These programs could range from daily, weekly, or monthly activities that can provide activities for all ages. As part of this programming opportunity, the town can also partner with healthcare providers to develop programming for residents (such as “Walk with a Doc” or nutritional programs) and also share information about healthcare options for New Middletown residents.

## STRATEGIES

*How will we achieve it?*

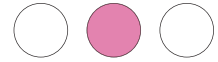
PRIORITY RANKING

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

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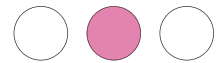
STRATEGY 7.1 - Form a programming committee made up of members from the school administration, town staff, and local volunteers to determine the feasibility of expanding programs for all ages, specifically activities that could occur at the school's facility.

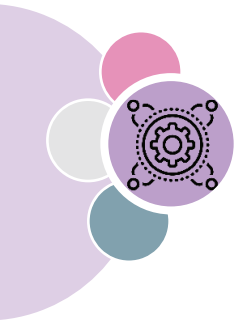
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STRATEGY 7.2 - Coordinate with New Middletown Elementary, to gauge interest in partnering to provide a walking program and identify a program leader.

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THEME #3

# COLLABORATE TO EXPAND OUR OFFERINGS

## GOAL STATEMENT

Build strong partnerships to encourage personal wellness, lifelong learning, and community development.

## 8. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*What does this mean for New Middletown?*

Economic development can mean a variety of different things. Typically, economic development focuses on attracting new development and new jobs in a community that allow it to grow, foster businesses, and support the local workforce. Due to the close location to multiple regional employment centers and lack of public utilities, the town doesn't have any industries that employ a large segment of the population. New Middletown is a rural bedroom community where people live for the rural lifestyle but typically commute outside of the community for employment. Because of this, economic development efforts should always focus on providing a high quality of life, placemaking, housing, and education that can keep current residents and their kids in the town. Continuing to provide and enhance these elements will assist in the retention and attraction of residents for New Middletown.



### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BIG IDEAS

*What do we want to achieve?*

*Big Idea: Redevelopment*

**Redevelop the commercial building on the corner of Main Street and Third Street to encourage small-scale development that preserves and enhances the town character.**

Lack of population and market demand has pulled commercial uses from this area to the surrounding communities. Several years ago, the town had a gas station, small convenient store, and a coffee shop along Main Street that have since closed their doors. To increase interest on Main Street, the town can organize a planning workshop of neighbors, local organizations, and other interested parties, such as developers, to discuss potential ideas for the corridor, specifically the vacant property on the corner of Main Street and Third Street. Ideas from this should keep in mind the overall character of New Middletown as a rural community and should therefore be comparable in scale to previous businesses. From there, the town could begin to identify any zoning or infrastructure conflicts that may need to be addressed to make these ideas become reality.

One potential reuse of the vacant building is to establish a new daycare facility to fulfill the need for this service in the area and reuse this building. As stated in previous sections, the lack of sewer infrastructure creates challenges for attracting new businesses, however, this property already has a functioning septic system on site therefore lowering redevelopment costs.



### *Big Idea: Financial Incentives*

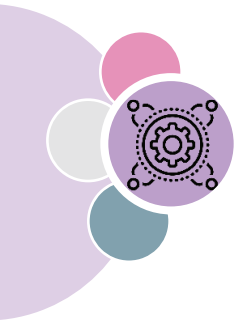
**Promote the existing programs offered through the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to encourage building improvements and business development, such as the Small Business Loan Program, Commercial Rent Subsidy Program, and low-interest loans.**

Harrison County EDC offers a variety of programs that property or landlords can take advantage of to make property improvements or offset financial costs. The Commercial Rent Subsidy Program focuses on economic growth to help fill vacancies in existing commercial buildings. Qualifying participants receive up to 50% of commercial rents based on a \$1,000 maximum monthly rent with a \$12,000 maximum aggregates over two years. The Small Business Loan Program is a long-term financial tool that can be used for land and buildings, equipment, and working capital. These incentives can be used to lower the costs of redevelopment projects with financial assistance to help fill the empty commercial building and gas station along Main Street.

### *Big Idea: Childcare Services*

**Publicize local and state financial programs to parents and potential providers that supports the creation of new in-home and traditional childcare programs.**

Most New Middletown parents are employed and may depend on childcare services for preschool-age and older children after school, during holidays, and over summer break. Childcare becomes a barrier to parents working, particularly mothers with children under six years old. Along with high cost of childcare, widespread school and facility closures have also had ramifications for the workforce, forcing parents to choose between staying home with their children or leaving for work. Promoting childcare as a career and assisting existing and new providers will increase in the diversification of facilities and number of providers in the region. Aid can also be provided to parents and providers through financial programs, streamlining local zoning regulation approvals, and other governmental initiatives. The town can publicize local and state financial programs, like the Indiana Child Care & Development Fund (CCDF), to parents and providers that support in-home and traditional child care program assistance. The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is a federal program that helps low-income families get child care so that they may work, attend training or continue their education. In Indiana, CCDF is managed by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) in the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning. Providing new, quality childcare facilities in the area is not a singular effort, but it is most successful through government and organizational support.



THEME #3

## COLLABORATE TO EXPAND OUR OFFERINGS

### GOAL STATEMENT

Build strong partnerships to encourage personal wellness, lifelong learning, and community development.

#### *Big Idea: Early Childhood Education*

**Work with the Harrison County Public Library, Boys and Girls Club, Harrison County Community Foundation, and New Middletown Elementary School to expand and publicize early childhood educational programs.**

Access to early learning opportunities is a critical component of ensuring educational attainment and growth for children during their formative years. Ensuring that young children are prepared for kindergarten is key to the town achieving long-term educational outcomes for all its residents. Additionally, early learning programs allow for increased labor force participation from parents that may be forced to stay at home without the availability of childcare and early education programs. The Harrison County Public Library, located in Corydon, currently offers a variety of programs that widen youth exposure to literature, educational game computers, and other activities that promote educational growth. Harrison County Community Foundation also provides funding for multiple early education programs including Jump Start Preschool Program (subsidized high-quality pre-K) and On My Way Pre-K that awards grants to four-year-old children from low-income families so that they may have access to a high-quality pre-K program the year before they begin kindergarten for Harrison County families. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Harrison-Crawford Counties offers a variety of programs focusing on art, mentoring, health and fitness, leadership, and other youth development programs. Publicizing the existing programs offered by these facilities and organizations to existing residents will help to identify any unmet demand for additional options and programs that could be provided in New Middletown.

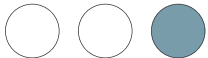
**STRATEGIES**

*How will we achieve it?*

*PRIORITY RANKING*

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

STRATEGY 8.1 - Coordinate with the county to help educate small businesses and potential startups about existing funding programs for businesses and redevelopment. (See page 55)



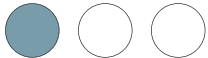
STRATEGY 8.2 - Work with the property owners of the commercial building at Main Street and Third Street to understand the condition of the structure and their desire to sell and/or lease to a potential business owner.



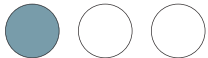
STRATEGY 8.3 - Identify and address zoning regulations or barriers for redevelopment of vacant properties that may create hardships on potential developers and investors.



STRATEGY 8.4 - Promote available local and state financial programs for childcare services and early education programs.



STRATEGY 8.5 - Assist individuals or groups that are establishing new quality childcare facilities and early childhood education program with financial and administrative support.



STRATEGY 8.6 - Work with Harrison County Community Foundation to create an informational pamphlet or platform to publicize the existing programs offered by Harrison County Public Library, Harrison County Community Foundation, Boys & Girls Club of Harrison-Crawford Counties, and New Middletown Elementary School to residents for childcare services and early education options.





*The ten catalyst initiatives are projects or programs that were identified as top priorities based on their ability to achieve the community-wide vision and/or address a specific challenge the community is facing.*





## CHAPTER 3

# Our Next Steps

Building on the highest priority strategies, chapter three provides additional details on the ten catalytic initiatives that were identified as the most critical strategies to implement. This chapter is intended to assist the town in implementing each one of these projects, programs, or policies. Each catalyst initiative highlights specific information including a description, action steps, partners, resources, and tools.

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 1

Supports the *Community Events Big Idea* (See Page 20)

## PLACEMAKING STRATEGY 1.1

**Establish a community event committee with representation from the town, fire department, and/or local churches to host events throughout the year.**

### DESCRIPTION

Enlisting a group of volunteers to assist the town with hosting various events throughout the calendar year will not only ensure the events success but can also be a rewarding experience for all involved. When requesting for a community member to participate in the committee, the town has to be specific in what is expected from committee members. This includes the goals of the committee, the amount of time members would like will spend planning an event, and any important events or dates that have already been planned.

It is important to be realistic with the number of events or size of events that can be planned based on the number of people who volunteer. Initially starting with a smaller event or series of events can help build momentum and excitement. The key strategy is to not burn out or overwork volunteers to where they quit. Volunteers tend to fall into one of two categories: key volunteers, who envision and plan the event, and occasional volunteers, who do the day-of work or smaller tasks that require shorter commitments. Roles can also vary in level of effort required and may not be a one-person job. Spreading the word about an event, for example, can be a small group or even a team effort to create advertising materials and spread the word.

### ACTION STEPS

- Identify one town staff and one community member to lead the committee.
- Identify a location, like Town Hall, and a reoccurring time for committee meetings.
- Draft a committee member invite letter that includes potential roles and responsibilities for potential members.
- Setup an easily accessible line of communication and place to store files (ex: Google Drive) for committee materials.
- Set up and manage an event calendar that includes committee meetings and local and regional events.
- Identify, plan, and hold one event or series of events as an initial trial event.

### PARTNERS

- New Middletown Fire Department
- Local Churches
- Town Staff
- Local Volunteers

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Indiana Office of Tourism Development
- Marketing Asset Grant, IOTD
- Indiana Arts Commission (Art Events or Performances)
- Non-Profit Grants



# CATALYST INITIATIVE 2

Supports the *Beautification Big Idea* (See Page 22)

## PLACEMAKING STRATEGY 1.5

**Continue to organize a seasonal community clean-up day that includes access to a free dumpster for residents.**

### DESCRIPTION

Cleanups are a great way to increase engagement and improve the appearance of New Middletown. Managing areas that accumulate trash, debris, and junk helps keep the community looking clean and inviting. The event should be advertised with important details such as time, disposal locations, accepted disposal items, and how to further get involved. The event can also incorporate recycling and education about waste reduction and recycling. Sponsors can also be a way to help offset costs of the event. For example, a local trash collection company might even be willing to provide dumpsters in exchange for free advertising during the event.

During the community cleanup, volunteers are needed to assist with community-wide cleanup of public spaces or to assist neighbors who cannot do the work themselves (such as elderly). Volunteers should have a written outline of their task, the required supplies, and a map of the locations of the sites to clean and disposal sites (if applicable), along with the locations of bathrooms, refreshments, and other necessities if any are provided. After the town cleanup is complete, the volunteers could be rewarded with a post-cleanup party or other way to thank them. This could include providing snacks, a t-shirt, or simply sending handwritten thank-you notes. Showing the volunteers how important they are will encourage them to attend the next event.

### ACTION STEPS

- Work with the New Middletown Community Event Committee (if created) to make a detailed event plan.
- Negotiate with a local dumpster or trash provider to donate or provide a dumpster that is accessible to residents and business owners on the day of the event.
- Create a flyer highlighting the details of the cleanup and distribute it to residents and post online.
- Coordinate with New Middletown Elementary to post event details to the school's website and newsletter.
- Supply any additional materials and supplies needed such as litter grabbers gloves, and trash bags.
- Create and assign specific tasks during the cleanup event.
- Organize a thank you gift, note, or other form of gratitude for volunteers.

### PARTNERS

- Private local dumpster or trash provider
- Harrison County Solid Waste Authority
- Local Property Owners
- Town Council/Town Staff
- Local Volunteers
- New Middletown Elementary School
- New Middletown Fire Department

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- [How to Organize a Neighborhood Cleanup](#)

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 3

Supports the *Expand Amenities Big Idea* (See Page 25)

## PARKS AND RECREATION STRATEGY 2.3

**Identify desired improvements and apply for grant funding to provide additional park amenities at the Community Center.**

### DESCRIPTION

The town's community center has some passive open space that could provide opportunities for gathering and recreation. Park amenities, like seasonal lawn games and activities or picnic tables, can be provided at community center for residents use to provide for more activities. These activities can be stored on-property in a locked facility that needs to be accessed with a key.

### ACTION STEPS

- Conduct a survey of residents to gauge interest in a variety of seasonal lawn games and activities that may be purchased and managed by the town.
- Identify where to store the new park equipment.
- Purchase and install outdoor picnic tables.
- Organize a "check-out" system for residents and visitors to utilize the available lawn games and activities.

### PARTNERS

- Town Staff

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Non-Profit Grants
- Private Donations
- Inspiring Sports Grant (Indiana Sports Corp)



# CATALYST INITIATIVE 4

Supports the *Septic Maintenance Big Idea* (See Page 30)

## UTILITIES STRATEGY 4.1

**Partner with Harrison County Public Health Department to educate community members about the benefits of septic system maintenance, such as regular pumping and inspection.**

### DESCRIPTION

With no form of sewer available in New Middletown, it is critical for property owners to maintain the existing septic systems. Many lots within the town are limited on a backup location if their system fails or if the system needs to be expanded due to increased use. The county health department also can be a key partner in helping to educate residents about the benefits of maintaining their septic systems. The health department is also a critical link to the property owners since each residential septic system must be permitted by their department.

The EPA has created educational materials, SepticSmart, that can be promoted and disbursed throughout town. These materials provide residents with educational resources regarding the essential maintenance of a septic system to safeguard the health of their families, the environment, and their investments in their septic systems. These online resources may be downloaded, printed, and shared as needed. This educational initiative also could educate property owners about correcting septic system issues and failures.

### ACTION STEPS

- Work with the Harrison County Health Department to identify effective ways to reach and educate property owners about septic systems.
- Advertise the local health department and EPA informational videos, pamphlets, and brochures that demonstrates first-hand importance of properly using and maintaining septic systems, learning how a septic system works, what not to put down the drain, the importance of getting your well water tested, and more

### PARTNERS

- Harrison County Public Health Department
- Local Property Owners
- Harrison County Regional Sewer District
- Town Council/Town Staff

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Great Lakes Community Action Partnership (GLCAP) Loan Program
- USDA Rural Development Loans
- EPA [Septic Smart Program](#)

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 5

Supports the *Broadband Access Big Idea* (See Page 32)

## UTILITIES STRATEGY 4.4

**Apply for grants to assist in the purchase and installation of Wi-Fi equipment in one or two public spaces.**

### DESCRIPTION

Creating public Wi-Fi zones in New Middletown can support economic development and support education, including the opportunity for those who might otherwise not be able to have the internet at home to access the internet. Grants can provide financial assistance to eligible communities that will provide broadband service in rural, economically-challenged communities where service does not exist. New Middletown currently has one public Wi-Fi location at the elementary school. There are a number of different options that the town can use to create an outdoor internet access point, but most equipment will be installed outside and withstand rain and both high and low temperatures. One advantage of a public Wi-Fi zone is that users will first be directed to a landing page that can also advertise local attractions and events. This initiative can also be coordinated with efforts from *Harrison County's Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan*.

### ACTION STEPS

- Designate a point person to maintain the Wi-Fi zone to ensure there is no abuse of the free internet and serve as the point of contact for community members with questions once the hotspot is active.
- Work with the county apply for various grant programs to cover the cost of installing WIFI equipment in Memorial Park or other public areas that are identified and install the equipment.

### PARTNERS

- Harrison County Community Foundation & Harrison County Chamber of Commerce (Implementation of the county's broadband plan)
- Harrison County Commissioners/County Council
- Local Broadband Providers
- New Middletown Elementary
- Town Council/Town Staff

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funds
- US Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grants
- USDA - ReConnect Loan and Grant Program
- USDA - Community Connect Grants
- Harrison County Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan
- Local Internet Providers

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 6

Supports the *Sidewalk Connectivity Big Idea* (See Page 36)

## TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY 5.1

**Develop a town sidewalk repair and construction grant program that provides a 50% match (up to a set amount) to help repair and complete the sidewalk network.**

### DESCRIPTION

Sidewalks provide a safe way for people to walk and exercise, and they also contribute to the overall image of the town. To improve and fill in the gaps of the current sidewalk network, New Middletown could partner with property owners to establish a sidewalk program. This program assists property owners in paying for the cost to replace all or portions of the sidewalk in front of their property or install new sidewalks. The town can budget a set amount each year, even just \$10,000 per year, or seek grant funds that would be used to match dollar for dollar up to a set amount (such as \$1,000) for any property owners who want to repair the sidewalk on or adjacent to their property. The property owner would be required to contract with an approved contractor and build the sidewalk to specific standards. Over time, this program could help improve the sidewalks within town.

### ACTION STEPS

- Allocate funding in the town's annual budget for the sidewalk program.
- Create a sidewalk program application form.
- Identify qualified contractors and establish minimum requirements and design standards.

### PARTNERS

- Town Staff
- Harrison County Highway Department

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- New Middletown General Fund
- Non-Profit Grants
- Example of a [Program Application](#)

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 7

Supports the *Housing Grant Programs Big Idea* (See Page 38)

## HOUSING STRATEGY 6.2

**Apply for grant funding through the Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation program to establish a housing repair program.**

### DESCRIPTION

The CDBG Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation (OOR) program is funded by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) and allows local governments and not-for-profit organizations to apply for grant funding for repairs on owner-occupied houses. Individual homeowners cannot directly apply for the grants from OCRA. Rather, the town would receive grant funding and then establish an application process for individual property owners to apply locally. This funding aims to empower Indiana communities to directly fund homeowners of low-moderate income to make needed repairs on their homes. The grant-based program is competitive, and applications are accepted once a year. To meet grant requirements, New Middletown will likely need to partner with an organization such as River Hills or another organization who can administer the grant to manage the grant application and program, if awarded.

### ACTION STEPS

- Partner with River Hills or another organization who can administer the grant to apply and manage an application to the OCRA OOR program.
- Collaborating with River Hills or another organization who can administer the grant, determine how the program will be publicized and how local funds will be distributed.

### • PARTNERS

- River Hills (or another organization who can administer the grant)
- Local Property Owners
- Town Council/Town Staff

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- OCRA OOR Grant
- Regional Communities who have administered the program previously (such as Corydon)



# CATALYST INITIATIVE 8

Supports the *Financial Incentives Big Idea* (See Page 43)

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 8.1

**Coordinate with the county to help educate small businesses and potential startups about existing funding programs for businesses and redevelopment.**

### DESCRIPTION

There are many non-profit and corporate entities offering grants and other assistance to small businesses. Some small business grant programs are confined to a specific type of businesses, minority ownership, or business profile, and they often have an application process that is not easy to navigate. New Middletown can collaborate with Harrison County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to promote the existing funding programs offered within the county. These local programs include the Small Business Loan Program, Commercial Rent Subsidy Program, and other low-interest loans offered by the Harrison County EDC. The town could also partner with the chamber of commerce to promote the programs if any members are located in New Middletown. Advertising efforts can include distributing marketing materials, providing a point of contact for questions and assistance, and other means to further educate local businesses and interested parties in the resources available to them.

### ACTION STEPS

- Consider strategically offering economic development tools, such as tax abatements, along with promoting the existing Harrison County EDC funding programs to fill commercial spaces within the town.
- Promote the Harrison County Economic Development Corporation and Chamber of Commerce as resources for small businesses and potential startups.

### PARTNERS

- Harrison County Economic Development Corporation
- Local Business Owners
- Town Council/Town Staff

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Harrison County EDC Grants and Loans
- Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC)
- Accelerate Indiana Municipalities (AIM)
- Tax Abatement
- Harrison County Chamber of Commerce



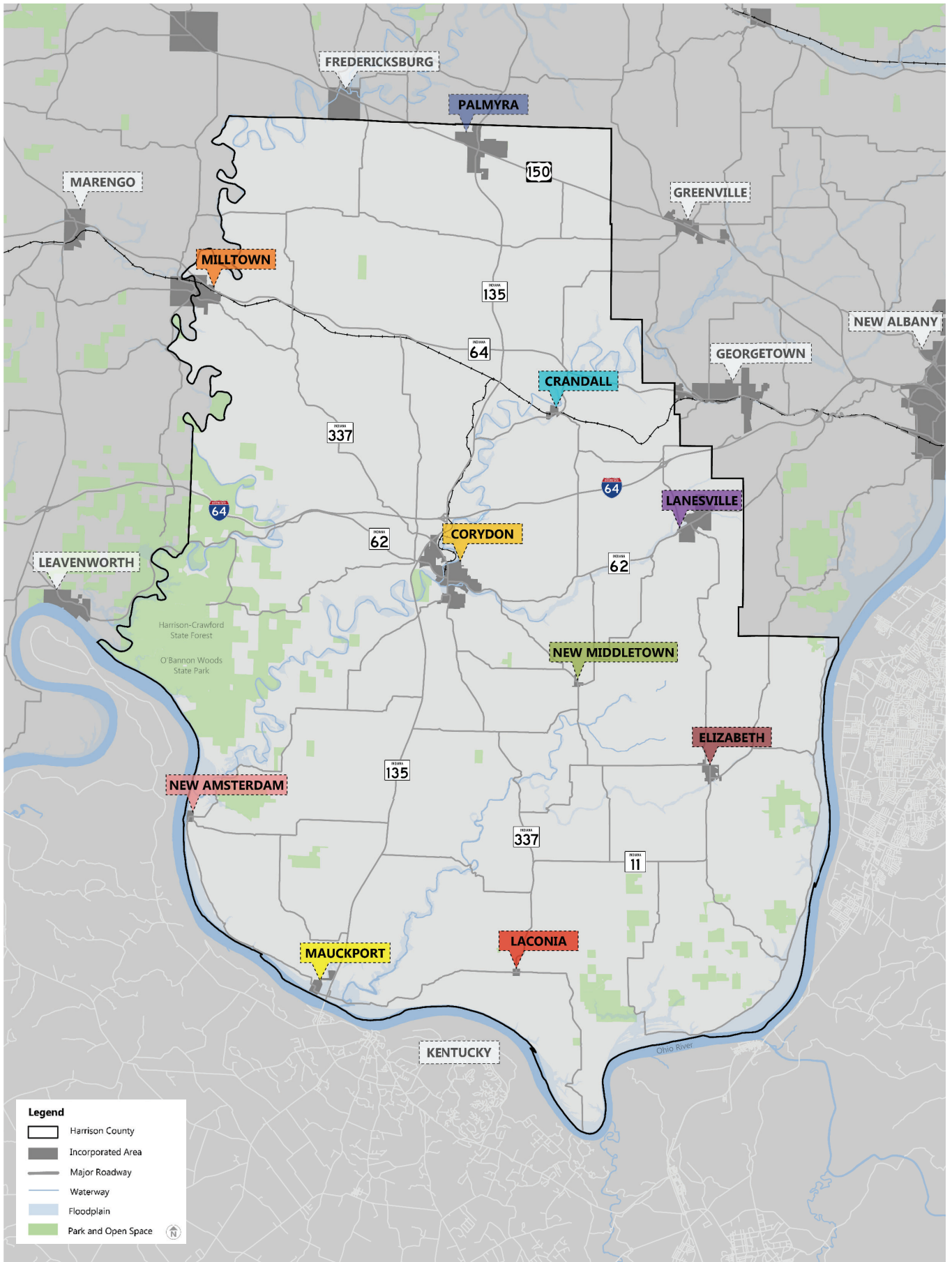
*Preliminary data released in 2020 Census shows that New Middletown's 2020 population was 109 residents, a 36% decrease since 2010.*

# Appendix

## Existing Conditions Summary

Existing conditions analysis is the beginning of all parts of the planning process. Understanding the demographic and socioeconomic status and inventory of the built environment is an important step in the development and implementation of programs and policies that serve the local community. Information concerning the structure and dynamics of a community is key to identifying and anticipating problems and community needs, establishing short- and long-range goals, developing action plans, identifying fiscal and human resources, and evaluating the impact of the given effort. The *New Middletown Comprehensive Plan* will outline a community-wide vision with associated goals and recommendations for how to achieve the town's future wants and needs.





## REGIONAL CONTEXT

Located in Southern Indiana along the Ohio River, Harrison County is perfectly situated near a large metropolitan area (Louisville, KY) amongst rural landscapes. Harrison County neighbors several natural features including Cave Country and the State Parks that offer spelunking and hiking, and the Ohio River which offers all canoeing, boating, and other water activities.

Harrison County is fortunate to have I-64 running through the center of the County with interchanges near Corydon and Lanesville. Several primary state routes provide connectivity between towns and the interstate. New Middletown is also just 21 miles from Louisville, Kentucky via the Sherman Minton Bridge located in New Albany.

New Middletown is located in southern Harrison County between Corydon and Lanesville. New Middletown is very small with less than 0.05 square miles of land, or about 32 acres, within the town limits. The primary ways to get to the town are Corydon New Middletown Road from Corydon and New Middletown Road SE from Lanesville.

## PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

Crafting a comprehensive plan is an opportunity to build upon past planning efforts. New Middletown was established in 1860, and since then, the town has continued to evolve. With an understanding of past planning efforts and current conditions, a planning effort can better respond to residents' needs, and better account for the impacts and opportunities of growth and redevelopment. While New Middletown does not have any town-specific past planning documents, Harrison County has completed plans that include New Middletown. The following plans were considered as part of the planning process:



### Harrison County Comprehensive Plan - 2009

The county's current comprehensive plan establishes a vision that emphasizes the value of the small towns and rural lifestyle and balances development opportunities with good stewardship of the land. The plan outlines eight key goals that range from providing responsible development and preserving the rural character to responding to lifelong educational needs and supporting the expansion and enhancement of services, programs, and facilities. Additionally, the implementation chapter focuses on updating policies, establishing new regulations, and conducting further plan-related studies.

### Harrison County Community Leadership Planning Initiative - 2020

This initiative focused on five areas that were identified as the highest priorities for the county's future that should be addressed through the combined efforts of the county's leadership. The five priorities included:

- A shared vision for Infrastructure and Land Use Planning
- Workforce and Education
- Diverse Housing Options
- Business Development and Support
- Substance Abuse, Health, and Wellness

This initiative identified the need to create comprehensive plans for each of the ten incorporated towns as well as the county as a whole. The *New Middletown Comprehensive Plan* is one of ten town plans being completed as part of the *Harrison County Town Planning Initiative*.





# DEMOGRAPHICS

## PEOPLE | HOUSING | ECONOMICS

Demographic data is information on the size, growth, or distribution of the population but it can reveal more about a community than its size and whether it is growing or declining. Demographic and socioeconomic data can also identify the characteristics of who lives and works there including but not limited to age, race, household size, employment status, etc.

The Census Bureau makes data available at different geographic levels including blocks, block groups, census tracts and counties. As a general rule, the smaller the unit of analysis, the less data are available. The data included in this analysis is taken from the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles made available through the U.S. Census Bureau’s website. This demographic analysis will provide detailed information on the social, economic, and housing characteristics of New Middletown.

### PEOPLE

**The town’s total population may be declining after previous growth.**

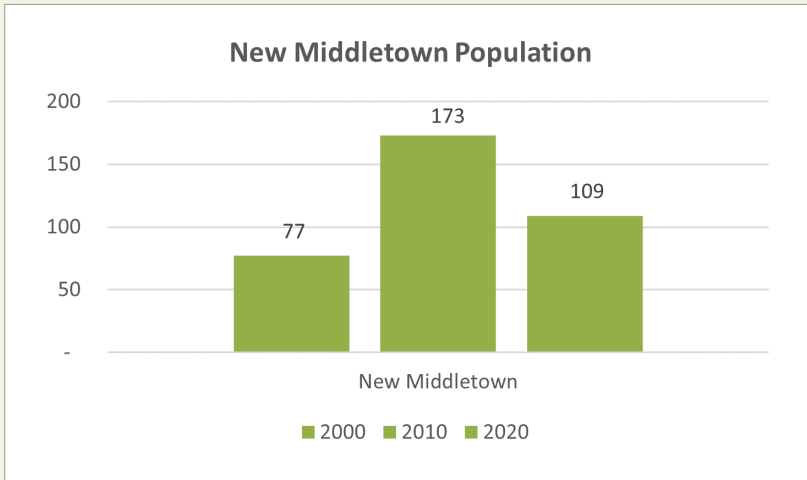
New Middletown’s population in 2010 was 173 people, an increase of 96 people (124.7%) since 2000.

However, the population decreased in 2020 to 109 people. Due to the town having a small population, any minor fluctuation of U.S. Census participation may drastically change the estimates and projections. Decision-makers should continue to analyze multiple data points when planning for the future of New Middletown to provide insight as well as a more complete inventory of the population.

**The total number of households is decreasing.**

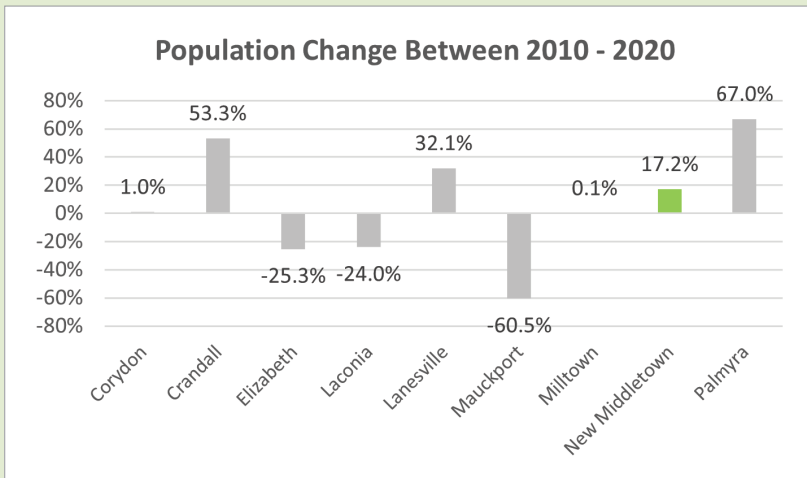
As of 2020, New Middletown was home to 30 households, which reflects a 43.4% decrease from 2010. New Middletown has seen the largest decrease in the number of households in Harrison County. A household consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit. A house, an apartment or other group of rooms, or a single room is regarded as a housing unit when it is occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters.

TOTAL POPULATION



As of 2020, New Middletown was home to 109 residents which reflects a 37% decrease in total population since 2010.

POPULATION CHANGE



New Middletown is one of five towns to experience population decline between 2010 and 2020.

HOUSEHOLDS

Household Size	2010	2020	Percent Change
Corydon	2.56	2.3	-10.2%
Crandall	2.03	2.39	17.7%
Elizabeth	2.18	2.69	23.4%
Laconia	2.7	3.22	19.3%
Lanesville	2.34	2.55	9.0%
Mauckport	2.94	2	-32.0%
Milltown	2.85	2.81	-1.4%
New Amsterdam	2	3.81	90.5%
New Middletown	3.26	4.04	23.9%
Palmyra	2.81	2.82	0.4%

New Middletown has the largest household size (owner-occupied homes) of all the towns in Harrison County.

A household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, foster children, wards, or employees who share the housing unit. About 73.3% of households in New Middletown are family households. A family household is a household maintained by a householder who is in a family, and includes any unrelated people who may be residing there. In 2010, there were no reported single-person households, but in 2020 there were a reported 8 total single-person households. The average household size has slightly increased between 2010 (3.3 people per household) and 2020 (4.04 people per household). New Middletown has the largest household size (owner-occupied homes) of all the towns in Harrison County.

### **New Middletown is becoming slightly more diverse.**

Race and ethnicity are considered two separate and distinct characteristics. Race refers to a person's physical characteristics, and ethnicity describes a person's origin or cultural identity. Regarding race, New Middletown is not very diverse with 94.5% of the population being Caucasian and 5.5% being Black or African American. While minor, the percentage of the population identifying as white-only decreased from 100% in 2010 to 94.5% in 2020 in New Middletown. Comparably, New Middletown has the lowest percentage of Caucasian population to the other towns in the county but significantly higher than the state and country. In terms of Ethnicity, New Middletown does not have any residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino in origin.

### **New Middletown has a fairly young population.**

As of 2020, the median age in New Middletown is 26.6 years old. This is the youngest median ages in Harrison County. Because New Middletown has such a small population, the population breakdown by age doesn't necessarily provide insight into if the town will grow or decline in population. A community with stable population growth generally has a similar number of people in all age groups, except the oldest, and appears as a rectangle shape. However, a population pyramid with a narrow top and wide base typically indicates high birthrates (or growing population), while an inverted pyramid (wide top and narrow base) generally represents low birthrates (naturally declining population).

Nearly 34% of the town's population is under the age of 20. This is significant when thinking about the future of New Middletown. As these children grow up, they have a choice to continue living in town or move elsewhere. Additionally, 9.2% of the population is over the age of 60, which is a just over a 3% increase from 2010. As residents age, their preferences and needs change, including housing types and healthcare needs that made not be directly available in New Middletown.

### **The household income has drastically increased.**

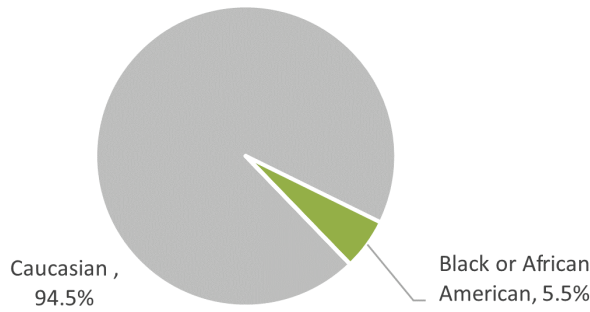
The median household income for the town was \$56,000 in 2020. This is a 60.7% increase from 2010 (\$34,850). Median household income includes all available incomes within a household. New Middletown experienced the largest increase in median household income in the county from 2010 to 2020 with an increase of 60.7%, which is more than twice the rate of inflation during the same time (27%). Comparably, Harrison County only experienced a 12.6% increase from 2010 to 2020 while Indiana had an 18% increase.

### **New Middletown residents are expanding their educational attainment.**

Approximately 96.6% of New Middletown's population over 25 years of age have a high school diploma or higher. Similarly, Laconia, Lanesville, and Palmyra also have a 90% or higher population over the age of 25 with a high school degree. About 15.5% of New Middletown residents over the age of 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to only 1.9% in 2010. Harrison County (18.4%), Lanesville (20.5%), Corydon (20.9%), and Elizabeth (22.6%) have slightly higher percentages with a Bachelor's degree.

RACE & ETHNICITY

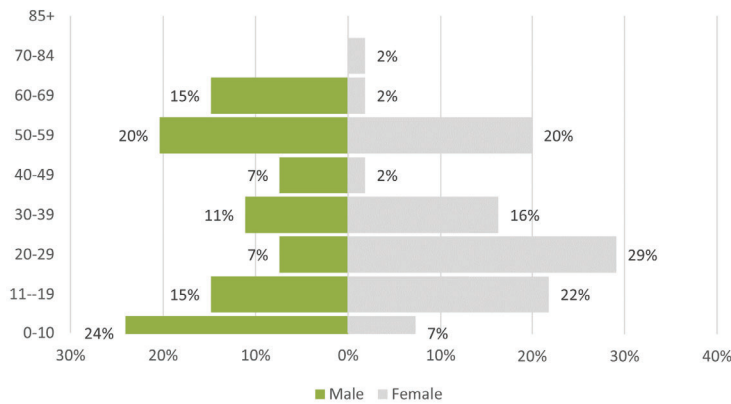
2020 New Middletown Racial Makeup



*New Middletown has the lowest percentage of Caucasian population to the other towns in the county but significantly higher than the state and country.*

AGE STRUCTURE

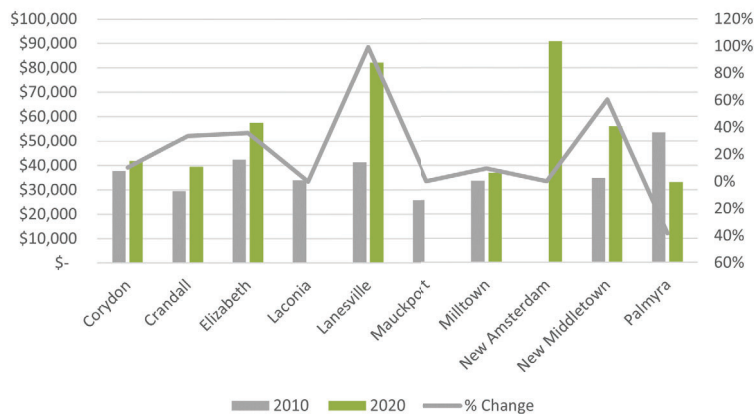
2020 New Middletown Population Pyramid



*Nearly 34% of the town's population is under the age of 20. This is significant when thinking about the future of New Middletown.*

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Change in Household Median Income



*The median household income for the town was \$56,000 in 2020. This is a 60.7% increase from 2010 (\$34,850).*



## PEOPLE - KEY CONCLUSIONS

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR NEW MIDDLETOWN?

- **New Middletown's total population slightly declined after previously increasing at a steady rate.** Since 2010, the town has lost 64 residents which represents a 40% decrease in the total population. This type of decrease, especially for a small town, makes it difficult to provide and maintain services such as public schools and local establishments. Without the necessary demand, New Middletown businesses will struggle to keep their doors open and the town will likely lack the ability to attract new businesses. The same is true for New Middletown Elementary. Without the necessary student enrollment, the town could be at risk of losing one of its only anchor institutions.
- **New Middletown's household size is diversifying.** The number of single-person households is increasing in New Middletown even though the average household size is also increasing. This may mean that immediate family members are continuing to live together or are moving back in with each other instead of living alone. Family households benefit from income pooling, economies of scale, and higher rates of saving than do single-person households.
- **New Middletown is younger but slightly aging.** The median age in New Middletown (26.6 years) is younger than the county (34.1 years). More than 12% of county residents are over the age of 60 compared to New Middletown's 9.2%. Furthermore, just over 9% of New Middletown's residents are over the age of 60. While this percentage is lower compared to the county (12%), special consideration should be given to segments of the population that may need additional resources and amenities. Of particular interest is the high percentage of individuals under the age of 20. Special consideration should be given to providing and maintaining youth programs and high-quality education for this age group. The growth or decline of the town's population can be largely impacted as these individuals get older.
- **New Middletown's population has an increased household income.** The town's median income was \$56,000 in 2020 which represents a 60.7% increase from 2010 (\$34,850). With an increase in wages and a low cost of living compared to neighboring communities, the population may have a larger disposable income that could be spent in town if there are more businesses.
- **Residents are expanding their educational attainment.** Nearly 96.6% of residents over the age of 25 have received a high school diploma or higher but only 15.5% of total residents over the age of 25 have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. To maintain this high level of educational attainment, the town should continue encouraging post-secondary education and/or skill trade development for the younger generation entering the workforce.

## HOUSING

### **The number of renter-occupied and vacant units is significantly increasing.**

New Middletown includes just 0.3% of Harrison County's total housing units; the majority of housing units in the county are located in unincorporated areas (19.2%) and Corydon (10.2%). As of 2020, New Middletown had just over 40 housing units. This number indicates a loss of 16 housing units (27.1%) since 2010. A similar trend was seen in Laconia (14.3% decrease) and Mauckport (19.6% decrease) whereas Harrison County as a whole has experienced an increase of total housing units by 6.2%.

The town's housing units include 53.5% that are owner-occupied, 16.3% that are renter-occupied, and 30.2% that are vacant. This vacancy rate is much higher than in several towns in Harrison County with the exception of Elizabeth (34.3%), Laconia (38.9%), and Mauckport (57.8%). Between 2010 and 2020, New Middletown decreased from 90% owner-occupied units to only 53.5%. It is important to note that data was not available for renter-occupied units in 2010. This missing data could be making the owner-occupied percentage look larger than it really was in 2010. While it's likely there was still a decrease in owner-occupied units, the percentage is probably not as drastic.

### **New Middletown lacks housing type diversity.**

New Middletown had an estimated 43 housing units in 2020, a decrease of 16 units from 2010. Of the housing units available within New Middletown, 100% are single-family detached homes, which did not change from 2010. This lack of diversity can be a hindrance to individuals that do not want, can't afford, or are unable to live in a single-family detached home. Other housing types such as detached units or apartments are typically smaller and require less maintenance, making it easier and more desirable for some individuals.

### **Home values in New Middletown are decreasing while Harrison County's values are increasing.**

With no new housing units being built after 1979, the value of the housing stock in New Middletown is declining. In 2010, the median home value was \$150,500 but declined by 39.1% in 2020 to \$91,700. New Middletown was one of the few towns within the county that have a declining home value while Harrison County's home value has increased 28.4% since 2010.

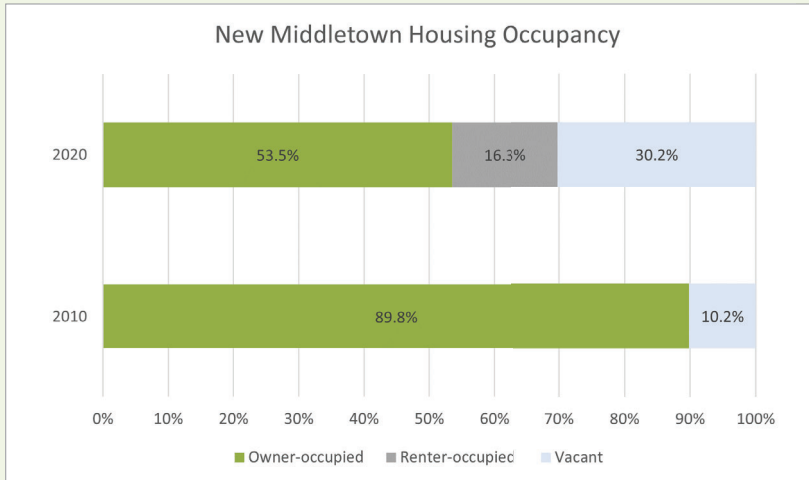
### **Rent is comparable to other towns within Harrison County.**

With limited Community Survey participation, a gross rent estimate could not be calculated by the 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Data Profile; however, all of the reported rental units were categorized within the \$500 to \$999 range. Due to the limited response rate, the median rent was also not reported in the 2010 US Census or Community Survey for the town. The median rent for Harrison County has continued to decrease while the United States experienced a 30.3% increase in rent between 2010 to 2020.

### **New Middletown does not have new housing development.**

No additional housing units have been built after 1979 and about 88.4% of the housing units in New Middletown were built before 1950. The median year that the homes were built is 1939 or earlier. An increased cost in home maintenance and repair can be a concern with many aging homes in the community. Limitations of the existing water and sewage utility infrastructure is also a barrier to attracting additional residential development.

HOUSING UNITS



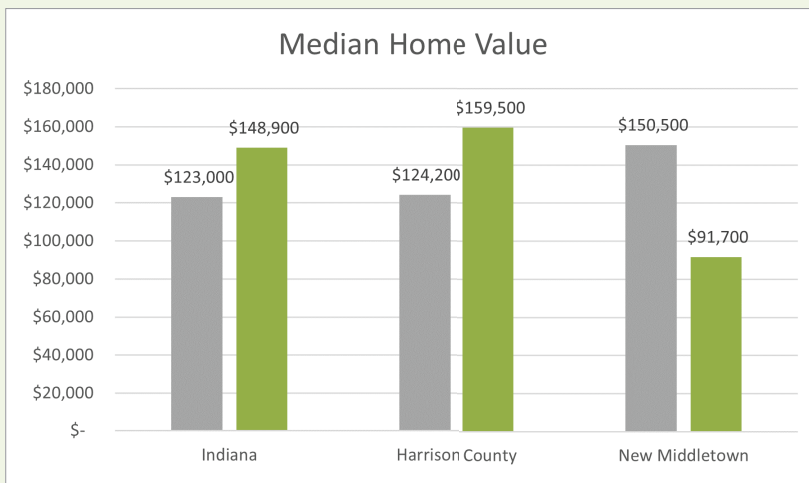
*As of 2020, New Middletown had just over 40 housing units. This number indicates a loss of 16 housing units (27%) since 2010.*

HOUSING TYPES



*Of the housing units available within New Middletown, 100% are single-family detached homes, which did not change from 2010. This lack of diversity can be a hindrance to individuals that do not want, can't afford, or are unable to live in a single-family detached home.*

HOME VALUES



*New Middletown was one of the few towns within the county that have a declining home value while Harrison County's home value has increased 28.4% since 2010.*





## HOUSING - KEY CONCLUSIONS

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR NEW MIDDLETOWN?

- **New Middletown is experiencing an increase in renter and vacancy rates.** Not only has the number of housing units decreased by about 27% (2010-2020), but New Middletown is also experiencing a shift in occupancy. Between 2010 and 2020, about 36.3% of owner-occupied units shifted to either renter-occupied or vacant units. These factors reinforce a population decline but also could pose maintenance and safety issues if houses are vacant.
- **New Middletown needs more housing options but is limited due to a lack of sewer.** With only single-family houses, the type of housing available in New Middletown is not diverse. This could force residents, in particular aging residents, to relocate elsewhere because they aren't able to find desired housing within New Middletown. However, the construction of new housing options is challenging because the town does not have access to sewer and some existing houses have failing septic systems.
- **Aging homes have increased maintenance and repair costs.** With the older age of structures and lack of new housing in New Middletown, home maintenance costs can become more burdensome for residents. Nearly 90% of the housing units in New Middletown were built before 1950. Home of this age can become very costly to maintain and update. There are state and federal programs available that could aid homeowners in making repairs or updates to their homes. Furthermore, additional assistance may also be needed for property upkeep for elderly residents as well.



## EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE

### The workforce has almost quadrupled in size.

About 64.0% of the New Middletown population (over the age of 16) is part of the workforce, which is 53 people. The workforce participation rate is higher than Harrison County (58.6%) and relatively similar to the State (63.8%). Data from 2010 reveals that only 16.3% of the town population (over the age of 16) was part of the workforce. If this number is accurate, this would indicate a 47.6% increase in the number of workers since 2010. There is a possibility that the response rate for the 2010 Community Survey impacted this data point, making it look lower than it actually was. A misrepresented number in 2010 could be making the percentage change between 2010 and 2020 look larger than reality.

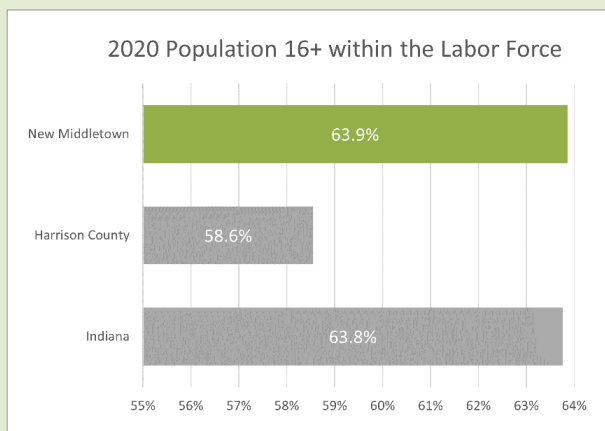
In comparison, 2020 data reveals that Harrison County experienced only a slight decline in participation in the workforce while Crandall, Lanesville, and New Amsterdam have experienced varied increases in workforce participation. If the trend continues, it is likely the town will continue to see an increase in the labor force over the next decade as the younger populations start to enter the workforce. However, with the population aging and declining, there is a risk of the younger generation not being able to replace the current workforce.

### All New Middletown workers commute to their job.

Approximately 70.6% of the workforce in New Middletown lives and works in Indiana, with 35.3% working in Harrison County and 35.3% working in another Indiana county. This means that 29.4% of New Middletown workers are traveling out of state (likely to Kentucky) for employment. Similarly, 38.2% of Harrison County also work outside of Indiana in 2020.

The average commute time of the town’s workforce is about 38 minutes. The other towns in Harrison County have a commute time of 35 minutes or less other than Laconia (72.0) and Mauckport (67.5). The commute time for these towns is likely impacted by the lack of mobility and accessibility to interstates or other primary thoroughfares. It also may point to those who are traveling to the regional employment center of Louisville or smaller employment centers like Brandenburg using the Matthew E. Welsh Memorial Bridge via SR135.

#### LABOR FORCE



*The town’s workforce participation rate is higher than Harrison County (58.6%) and relatively similar to the State (63.8%).*

#### COMMUTING TRENDS

WORKED IN STATE OF RESIDENCE	70.6%
<i>Worked in county of residence</i>	35.3%
<i>Worked outside county of residence</i>	35.3%
WORKED OUTSIDE STATE OF RESIDENCE	29.4%

*Approximately 70.6% of the workforce in New Middletown lives and works in Indiana, with 35.3% working in Harrison County and 35.3% working in another Indiana county.*

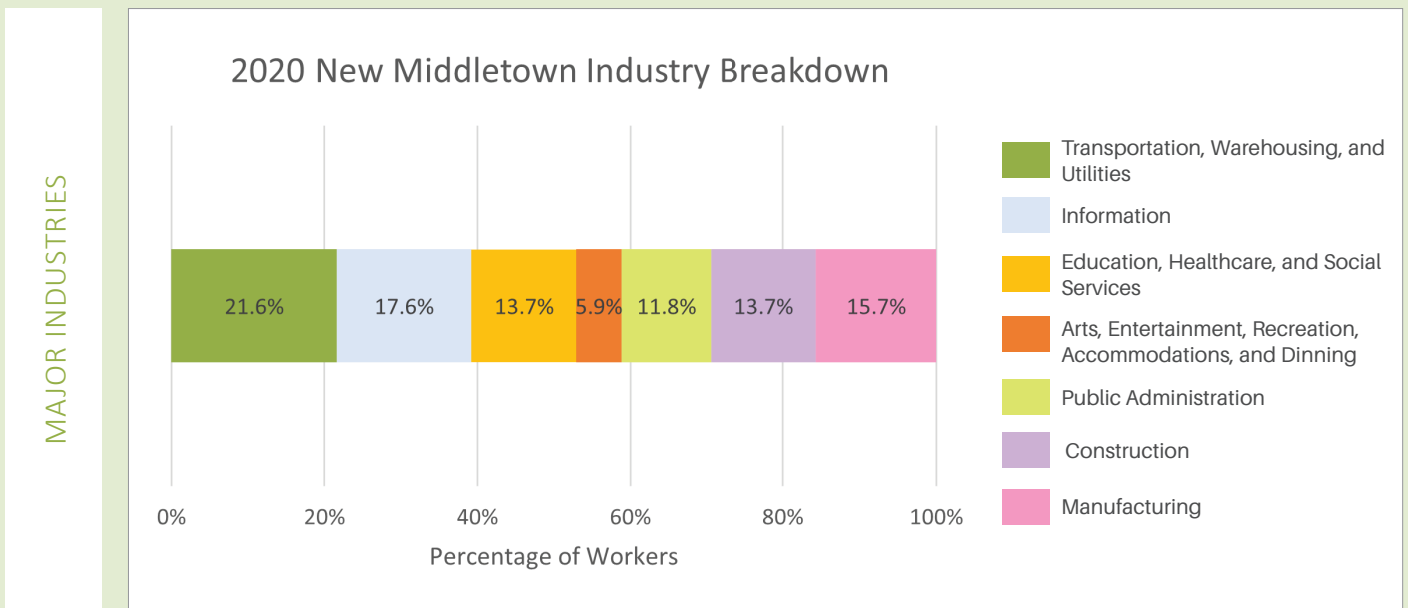
### The employment of residents has slightly shifted away from manufacturing.

As of 2020, the largest industries of the civilian employed population 16 years and over in New Middletown were transportation and warehousing, utilities (21.6%), information (17.6%), and manufacturing (15.7%). Historically, over half of the town's workforce was employed in the manufacturing (52.4%) industry. This percentage dropped to only about 15.7% in 2020. This can be misleading due to the number of employees in the manufacturing industry only decreasing from 11 to 8 employed but the total number of civilian employed population increased from 21 in 2010 to 51 in 2020.

In terms of local employers, according to the 2021 ESRI Business Summary, there were only four businesses in New Middletown (one retail trade, one public administration, one administration and support, and one educational services). However, ESRI and the US Census slightly vary in the geographic inclusion of businesses. The educational service (New Middletown Elementary School) is outside of town limits.

### New Middletown has a low unemployment rate.

Identifying short-term changes in employment trends can help local decision-makers understand how the community's workforce is performing. High unemployment rates can stem from a variety of things, but the most common causes are either a disconnect between the educational attainment or skills of local workers and the types of jobs available or a shift in occupation trends within the region. Major changes to the local, regional, and national economies can also drive unemployment rates. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, New Middletown had an unemployment rate of 3.4%. This rate was the same as the United States (3.4%) and a very comparable rate to Harrison County (3.0%). In 2020, New Middletown had a slight increase in unemployment (3.8%), however, the United States (5.7%) and Indiana (4.7%) had slightly larger increases in unemployment.







## EMPLOYMENT & WORKFORCE - KEY CONCLUSIONS WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR NEW MIDDLETOWN?

- **New Middletown has an adequate amount of the population enrolled in the workforce, but the age structure of the current population could lead to challenges.** As of 2020, almost 64% of the town's population is part of the workforce which reflects a positive trend for New Middletown. On the other hand, looking into the future, the population is projected to continue shrinking and getting older which could have a negative impact on the town's labor force.
- **With very limited local employment opportunities, this doesn't directly impact New Middletown's local businesses, but there are likely other repercussions.** As the current workforce gets older and closer to retirement, their income will change. A shift in finances could impact the individuals' disposable income and their desire for a particular housing type.
- **New Middletown's workforce has diversified by shifting away from manufacturing.** Between 2010 and 2020, the percentage of the workforce employed in the manufacturing industries decreased while other industries such as transportation, warehousing, and utilities, information, and educational services have increased. This shift in employment could be related to the increase in median household income over the same time period. This diversification can help limit the severity of recessions in the short term.
- **New Middletown will likely struggle to attract new businesses since the workforce is leaving town every day for work.** Commuting data reveals that the entire workforce is leaving New Middletown for work with an average commute time of 38 minutes. Commuting patterns such as these are important to consider because they can impact the types of desirable housing, transportation infrastructure, and amenities needed to retain residents. Commuting trends also impact the local economy. New Middletown will likely struggle to attract new restaurants, retail, and other desirable businesses because the daytime population isn't there to support the businesses.

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# THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE | TRANSPORTATION | UTILITIES | COMMUNITY FACILITIES

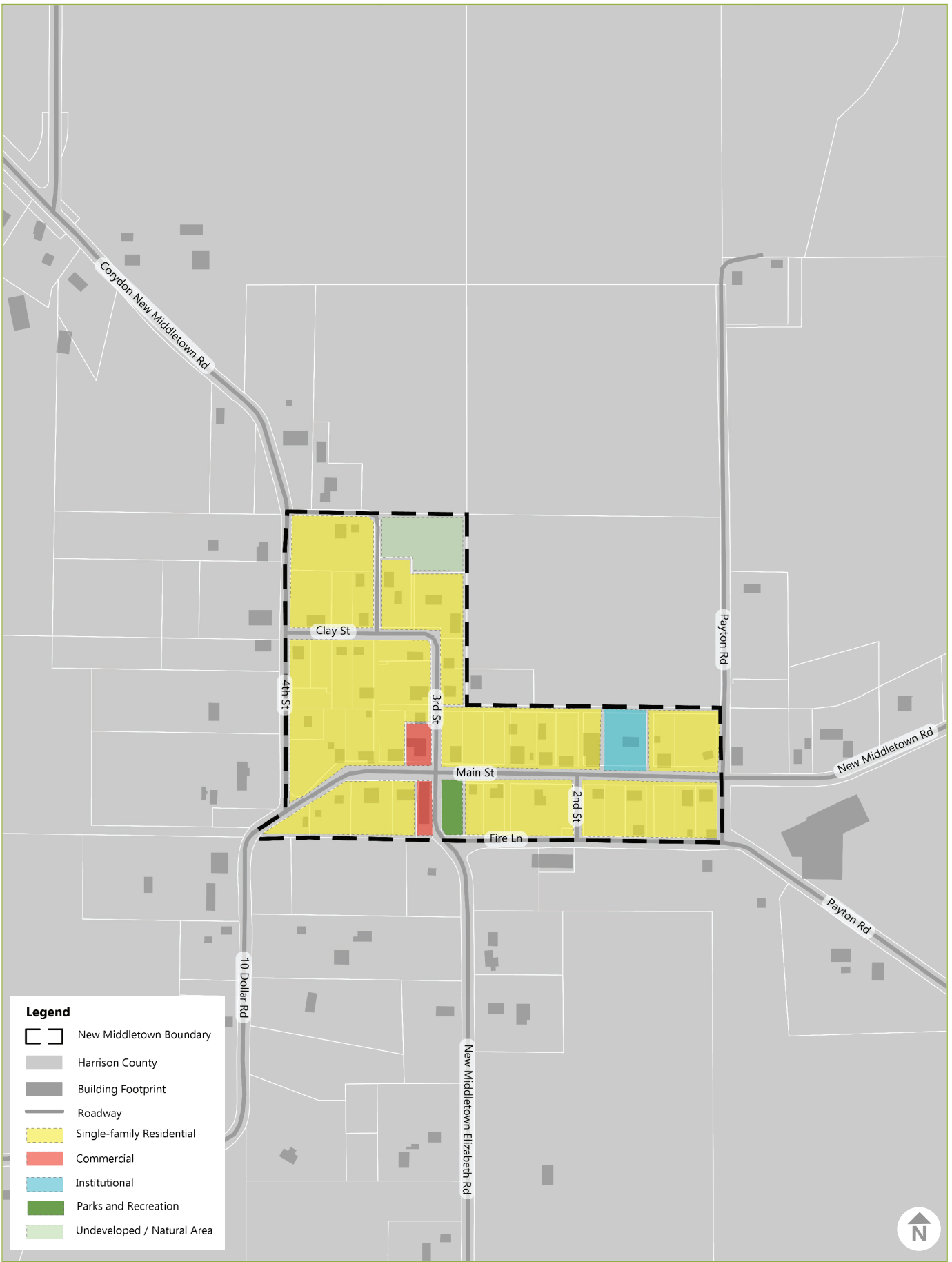
It is important to review the land use pattern, transportation network, and location of utility infrastructure to understand what’s happening on the ground. The following analysis provides an overview of the built environment, an explanation of its importance, and how it can impact future decisions and growth patterns.

## EXISTING LAND USE

It is important to look at the current land uses and development patterns to identify where conflicts might be occurring and where opportunities for growth may exist. Not only do land use patterns impact the built environment, but it can also impact the community’s tax base and how revenue is being generated.

Land use refers to the type of activity that is occurring on the property or within the structure. At its simplest form, there are eight common land-use types: agriculture, single-family residential, multi-family residential (such as apartments), commercial, industrial, institutional (such as town hall), parks, and undeveloped/open space.

Current Land Use	Percent of Total
Single-family Residential	86.2%
Multi-family Residential	0%
Commercial	2.6%
Industrial	0%
Institutional	3.0%
Agriculture	0%
Park & Recreation	1.6%
Undeveloped / Natural Area	6.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>



Each of the following existing land use categories are described below.

- **Single-family Residential** – The single-family residential category includes land used exclusively for residential purposes that only includes one house. Most houses within this category are detached housing structures.
- **Commercial** – This category includes land that is used for providing goods and services. For New Middletown, the current commercial uses include a gas station with a convenience store across the street.
- **Institutional** – Institutional uses include land used for religious, educational, medical, or civic uses. These uses are typically exempt from property taxes. Current institutional uses include several churches and town hall.
- **Parks and Recreation** – The parks and recreation category includes land used for active recreation or passive park space. New Middletown has one pocket park on the corner of Main Street and 3rd Street.
- **Agriculture** – The agricultural land use category includes land being used for agricultural purposes including growing crops or pastureland used for livestock. Over half of the land within the town is agricultural as well as a significant amount of land surrounding New Middletown.
- **Undeveloped / Natural Area** – This category includes land that is not developed. In most cases, the land is a heavily wooded area or privately-owned open space.

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## TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Transportation networks are made up of motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation. A well-connected network considers drivers and pedestrians. Reliable modes of transportation provide access food, healthcare, educational opportunities, and employment. In largely rural areas, like Harrison County, residents rely primarily on their vehicles for transportation, but there are a handful of other modes that can be used to get from point-A to point B safely.

### ROADS

Functional classification is a way to inventory how a road functions and the level of access to that road from private property. This includes several factors such as the efficiency of travel, traffic circulation, access points, number of lanes, speed limits, and how the road is used. The Federal Highway Functional Classification system has six primary road classes including interstate, freeway or expressway, principal arterial, minor arterial, major collector, and minor collector. Any road not classified is considered a local road.

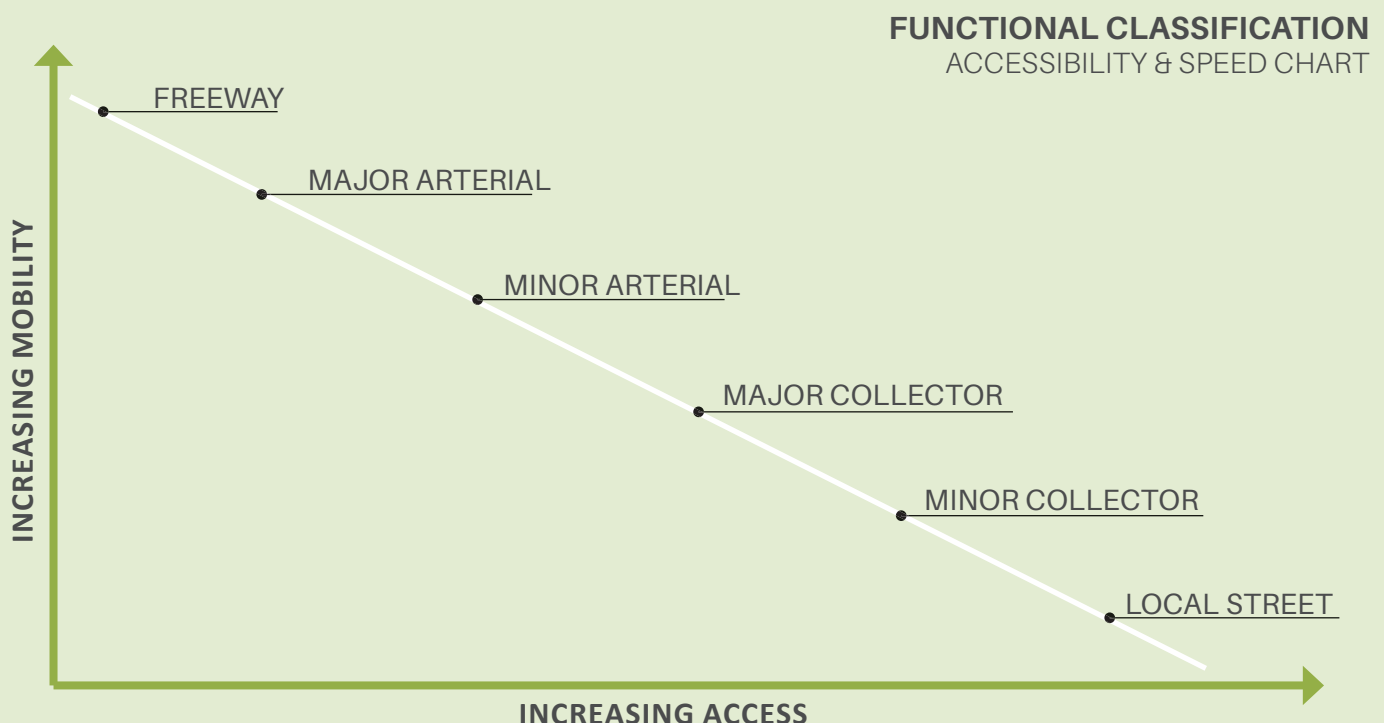
New Middletown has several roadway segments that are classified as major collectors. These collectors are responsible for connecting local streets with larger, arterial roads. Collectors typically provide less mobility between regional destinations and have

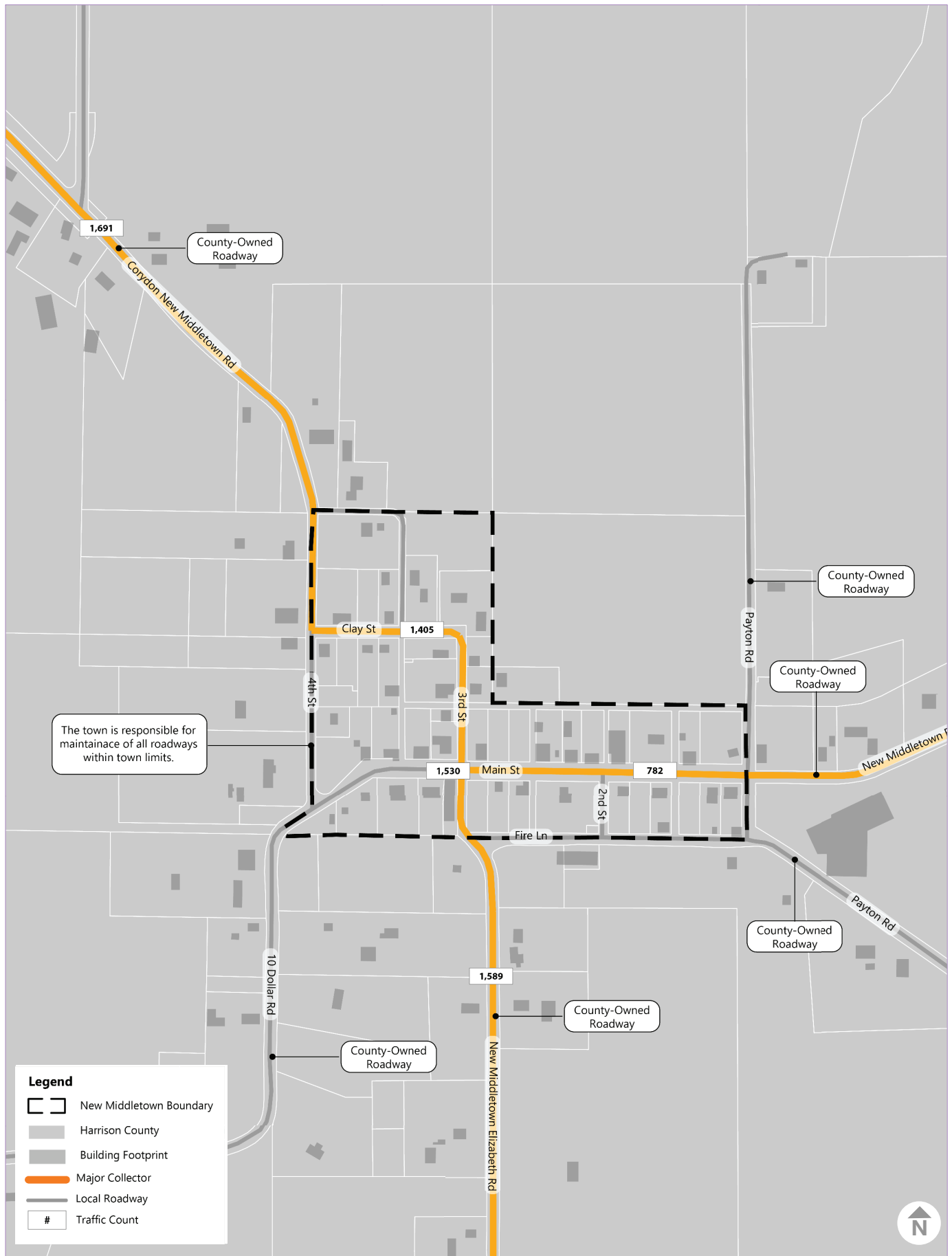
lower speed limits than arterials. The following roads serve as major collectors within New Middletown: Corydon New Middletown Road, Clay Street, Main Street, New Middletown Elizabeth Road, and New Middletown Road.

In terms of traffic, the intersection of Third Street and Main Street has the highest level of traffic with about 700 to 800 cars moving in each direction onto Main Street. New Middletown owns and is responsible for maintaining all the roads within the town limits. Any road outside of the town limits is owned and operated by Harrison County or the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT).

### SIDEWALKS AND TRAILS

Whether it's for recreation or transportation, sidewalks provide a safe route for pedestrians to walk or run. New Middletown has sidewalks along Main Street from the school to Fourth Street. In most areas, there is a grass buffer between the road and sidewalk to protect pedestrians. There are limited sidewalks outside of Main Street and the town does not have any trails.





## BUS ROUTES

There is one public transit service available to New Middletown residents. In partnership with the Harrison County Commissioners and Blue River Services Inc., the Southern Transit System (SITS) has ongoing efforts to serve the community with rural transit services. SITS provides public transportation to the counties of Crawford, Harrison, Scott, Washington, and Floyd. Offering door-to-door services ensure safe transportation from the entrance of the pick-up location to the entrance of the destination. Transportation services must be scheduled in advance by phone and costs range from two to four dollars one way, depending on mileage.

## UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

### WATER, WASTEWATER, AND STORMWATER

South Harrison Water Corporation (SHWC) provides water services to New Middletown and the surrounding area. SHWC is a not-for-profit, potable water utility provider that serves over 3,300 metered accounts in the rural, southwest portion of Harrison County and a small portion of Floyd County. The company owns and operates two wells, a two million-gallon per day softening / filtration plant, ten storage tanks, seven pump stations, and about 400 miles of water lines.

The company has an office and warehouse located just outside of New Middletown's limits. Recently completed in 2019, the water company constructed a new warehouse next to the New Middletown office with plans to expand the office footprint later in 2022.

### ELECTRIC

Electrical service is provided by Harrison County REMC, which is a not-for-profit, member-owned cooperative. The REMC provides electric service to more than 23,000 metered services in the counties of Floyd, Harrison, Clark, Crawford, and Washington. In addition to utility services, the organization offers several community programs for youth and members.

### BROADBAND

According to Broadbandnow.com, eight internet providers serve the town including Frontier, Viasat, HughesNet, Earthlink, MainStream Fiber, Community Wireless of Charlestown, Q Wireless, and Portative Technologies. In terms of quality speed, Viasat and MainStream Fiber provide the most effective

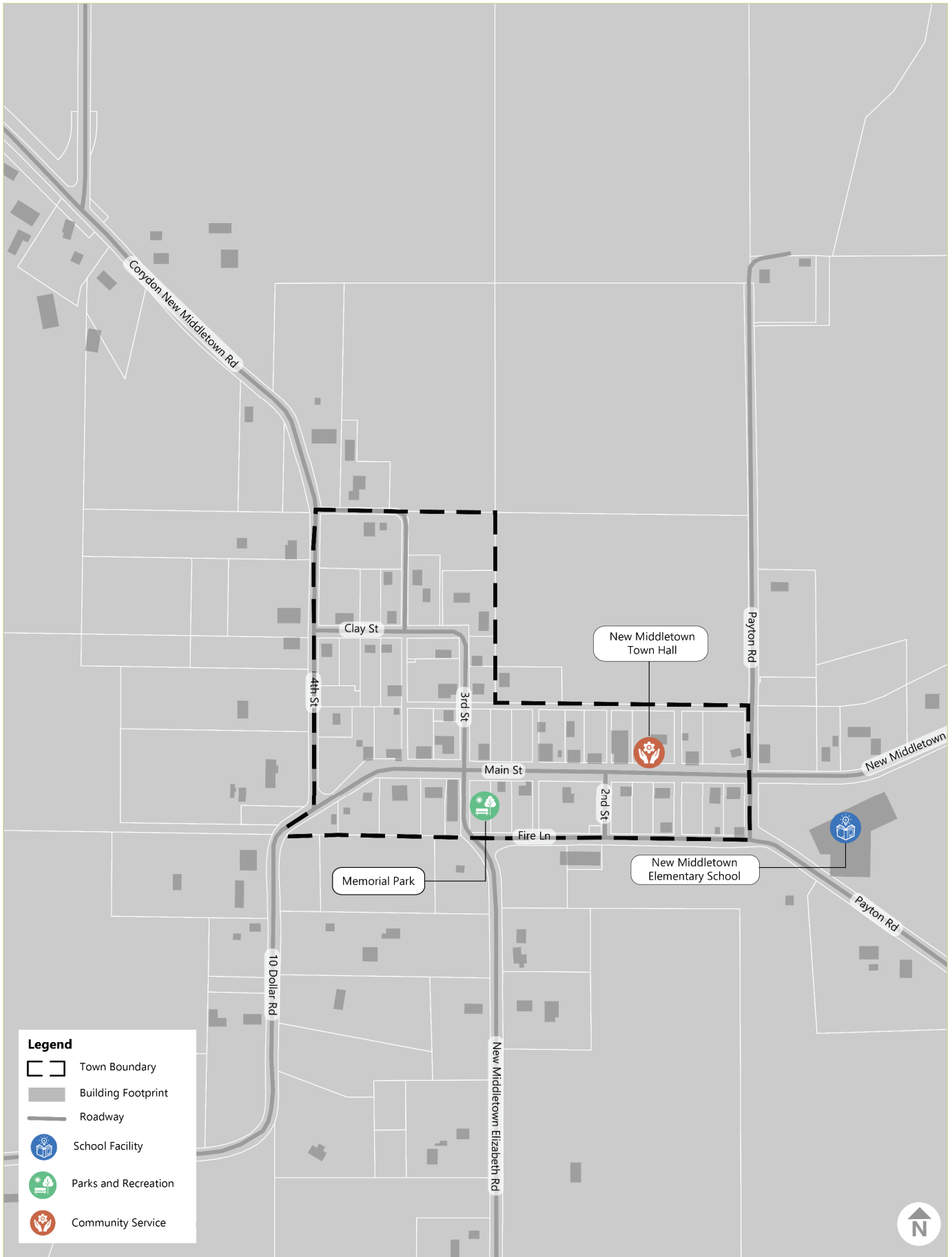
services.

The County has taken great strides to improve broadband connectivity for its residents. They have invested over five million dollars in broadband with MainStream Fiber. Additionally, in September of 2021, the Chamber of Commerce of Harrison County and the Harrison County Community Foundation launched a Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan. Once this plan is completed, Harrison County and New Middletown will be better equipped to tackle issues related to broadband infrastructure.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

There are fundamental services that residents and business owners must have access to meet their needs. New Middletown is home to three key public facilities that provide essential services to the community including:

- **New Middletown Town Hall** – Acquired in 2021, the town is in the process of renovating a building to become the new town hall. This facility will provide office space for town staff and a large multi-purpose room for community gatherings.
- **New Middletown Memorial Park** – Through fundraising and assistance from the Harrison County Community Foundation, New Middletown Memorial Park was constructed in 2016. This pocket park includes memorial pavers and benches to honor past community members and a gazebo.
- **New Middletown Elementary School** – One of three elementary schools within the South Harrison Community School Corporation, the New Middletown Elementary School is a valuable asset to the town. In addition to educational services, the school provides youth programs, serves as a community facility, and provides play equipment for the children living nearby.





# KEY CONCLUSIONS

## New Middletown's Strengths & Opportunities

The inventory collected and outlined within this analysis informs the planning process by revealing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats based on what the community has to offer today and what it could offer in the future. The following sections highlight the key conclusions that served as the foundation for the vision, goals, and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Close-knit Community** - In small communities like New Middletown, people are usually one of the greatest strengths. Everyone knows each other, watches out for one another, and is willing to lend a helping hand when needed. This creates an environment and a place that people want to call home.
- **Town Hall Renovation** - Acquired in 2020, New Middletown is in the process of renovating a building along Main Street to be the new town hall. This space provides an opportunity to create a space for gathering and collaboration, both indoor and outdoor.
- **Sidewalk infrastructure** - New Middletown has invested in its sidewalks along Main Street. The high-quality sidewalks and streetlights not only improve pedestrian connectivity but also add to the charm of the community. New Middletown has an opportunity to continue expanding this on other key roads to increase walkability.
- **Churches** - Local religious institutions serve as anchors to the community. Not only do they provide faith-based services, but they also contribute to the community by offering a large network of people for volunteering, a place for events, and programming and services that range from youth to elderly programs.

# KEY CONCLUSIONS

## New Middletown's Challenges & Threats

- **Decreasing population** - Data trends revealed that the town's population had decreased between 2010 and 2020. With just over 100 residents, the community will continue to struggle to attract and retain businesses, and worry about the elementary school closing. The primary solution to reversing this negative trend is likely dependent on overcoming utility challenges. Without adequate wastewater infrastructure in place, New Middletown will continue to struggle with population growth.

In addition to a declining population, the age structure can present challenges. Nearly 30% of the population is under 20 years old and 10% is over the age of 65. Retaining the younger generation is a key component of population growth.

- **High Vacancy Rate and Aging Structures** - A combination of vacancy and aging housing structures can create a series of housing challenges. Without the proper care and maintenance, aging structures can deteriorate very quickly. As structures become dilapidated beyond repair, it can impact the surrounding area by causing property values to decrease and also detracts from the character of the area. New Middletown has several structures that may not be structurally sound and could present a public safety issue. In addition to the challenges related to the existing housing stock, new construction is limited because of the lack of wastewater infrastructure.
- **Long Commutes and Primary Residential Land Use** - All of the residents who work leave the town for employment. This is typical for a smaller community, but the challenges lie in the financial constraints that come with a town having little to no commercial or industrial uses to generate tax revenue. The lack of commercial and industrial stems from two community challenges; lack of market demand to support the existing businesses and the lack of wastewater infrastructure to support new businesses.
- **Failing Septic Tanks** - Currently, the town does not have a centralized sewer system in place to support existing or future growth. Existing development is operating on septic systems which eventually lead to larger challenges for the property owner and for the environment. The town will have limited capacity to support additional growth without the necessary infrastructure in place.
- **Broadband Connectivity** - Internet access is a utility service that has received a lot of attention during the COVID-19 pandemic. As children and adults were forced to do schoolwork and continue their jobs from home, the importance of broadband was heightened. The community has expressed concerns about children having to sit outside the elementary school to do their schoolwork on E-learning days. Whether this is an infrastructure problem or an affordability/ equity problem, the town should coordinate with the county and local providers to enhance internet access and provide public wifi spots within New Middletown.

**TOWN PLANNING  
INITIATIVE**

**HARRISON COUNTY**

The Town of New Middletown

