



# NEWALLEN ALLIANCE

ALLEN COUNTY, INDIANA

Strategic Investment Plan

# GRABILL INDIANA

2016

# STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN for GRABILL, INDIANA

2016

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Allen County Council  
Allen County Department of Planning Services (DPS)  
Grabill Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Fort Wayne, Inc. (GFW)  
NewAllen Alliance  
Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC)

### Prepared By

Sturtz Public Management Group, LLC



## PLAN OVERVIEW

The purpose of the *NewAllen Alliance Strategic Investment Plan* (SIP) is to develop a collaborative strategy toward retaining and attracting high-quality jobs to the participating NewAllen Alliance communities of East Allen County, Indiana, including: Harlan, Hoagland, Grabill, Leo-Cedarville, Monroeville, New Haven, and Woodburn. This has been accomplished through the following efforts:

1. Providing a roadmap for the communities to use toward creating an environment for future economic development to occur;
2. Guiding the alignment of the investment of time, talent, and treasure toward common goals for the communities; and
3. Building the capacity for engagement between the communities and organizations that provide community and economic development services within Allen County.

As a product of this initiative, each community will receive a sub-plan such as this tailored to their specific needs and desires. In addition, the overarching investment plan will provide recommendations and resources to aid in the overall collaborative strategy. With the assistance of Sturtz Public Management Group (SturtzPMG), the *Grabill Strategic Investment Plan* (Plan) was spearheaded by the Grabill Community Planning Oversight Committee (CPOC), comprised of members of the Grabill community, with support from the NewAllen Planning Oversight Committee (NewAllen POC), consisting of regional stakeholder representatives and the CPOC.

In late November 2015, a “kick-off” event was held for presenting an overview of the project and the expected outcomes. Between December 2015 and March 2016, SturtzPMG met and regularly communicated with the CPOC, performed stakeholder interviews, conducted a public input workshop, distributed service provider questionnaires, and developed and distributed a community attitude survey. Area demographic, housing, and economic data was also collected to provide additional context to the strategic planning document.

Subsequent meetings were held with the NewAllen POC and CPOC to provide feedback on the information collected, and to discuss the goals and strategies that were later developed into a recommended plan of action. The Plan was then finalized and approved for the NewAllen Alliance and the participating communities to use as a tool for the implementation of strategies toward continued economic development and an improved quality of life. The plan was presented to the Grabill Town Council on September 7, 2016 and approved by resolution.



GRABILL, INDIANA is located in the northeastern corner of the state, a region with a population of nearly 700,000, and within a two-to-three hour drive from major Midwest cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and Indianapolis. Situated along Grabill Road in northeast Allen County, it is approximately 4.5 miles northeast of Fort Wayne, Indiana's second-largest city.

## Community Leadership

Grabill is an incorporated town led by a three-member town council and a clerk-treasurer. This administration is supported by town departments as well as a Redevelopment Commission and Park Board. Grabill is also assisted by the Allen County Plan Commission and Allen County Board of Zoning Appeals as guided by the

<sup>1</sup>Joanne Sauder and Robin Jump, "Grabill & Cedar Creek Township," in *History of Fort Wayne & Allen County: 1700 to 2005*, ed. John D. Beatty (Evansville, IN: M.T. Publishing Company, Inc., 2006), 479-484.

<sup>2</sup>Lou Ann Gerdau "Cedar Creek Township Including Leo & Cedarville," in *History of Fort Wayne & Allen County: 1700 to 2005*, ed. John D. Beatty (Evansville, IN: M.T. Publishing Company, Inc., 2006), 473.

## COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

### History of Community

Grabill, Indiana, located in Cedar Creek Township in northeast Allen County, was officially platted in February of 1902 when Joseph A. Grabill laid out 23 farm lots. However, the town's existence is attributed to the building in 1900 of the Wabash Railroad across the northeast section of the township as part of a route between Detroit, Michigan, and Lafayette, Indiana. The railroad station at this location was named "Grabill" in Joseph's honor as he owned 80 acres west of the tracks, and on January 1, 1902, the first steam engine went through the town.

Early Grabill businesses included a grain mill, lumberyard, and livery stables. On the southwest corner of Main and State Streets, Henry Souder built a large two-story, brick building that incorporated several enterprises including a drug store, harness shop, ice cream station, barber shop, the Fair Store (a department store), and the Grabill State Bank. Hence, the structure became known as the "Bank Block" and would become Grabill's most important business building.

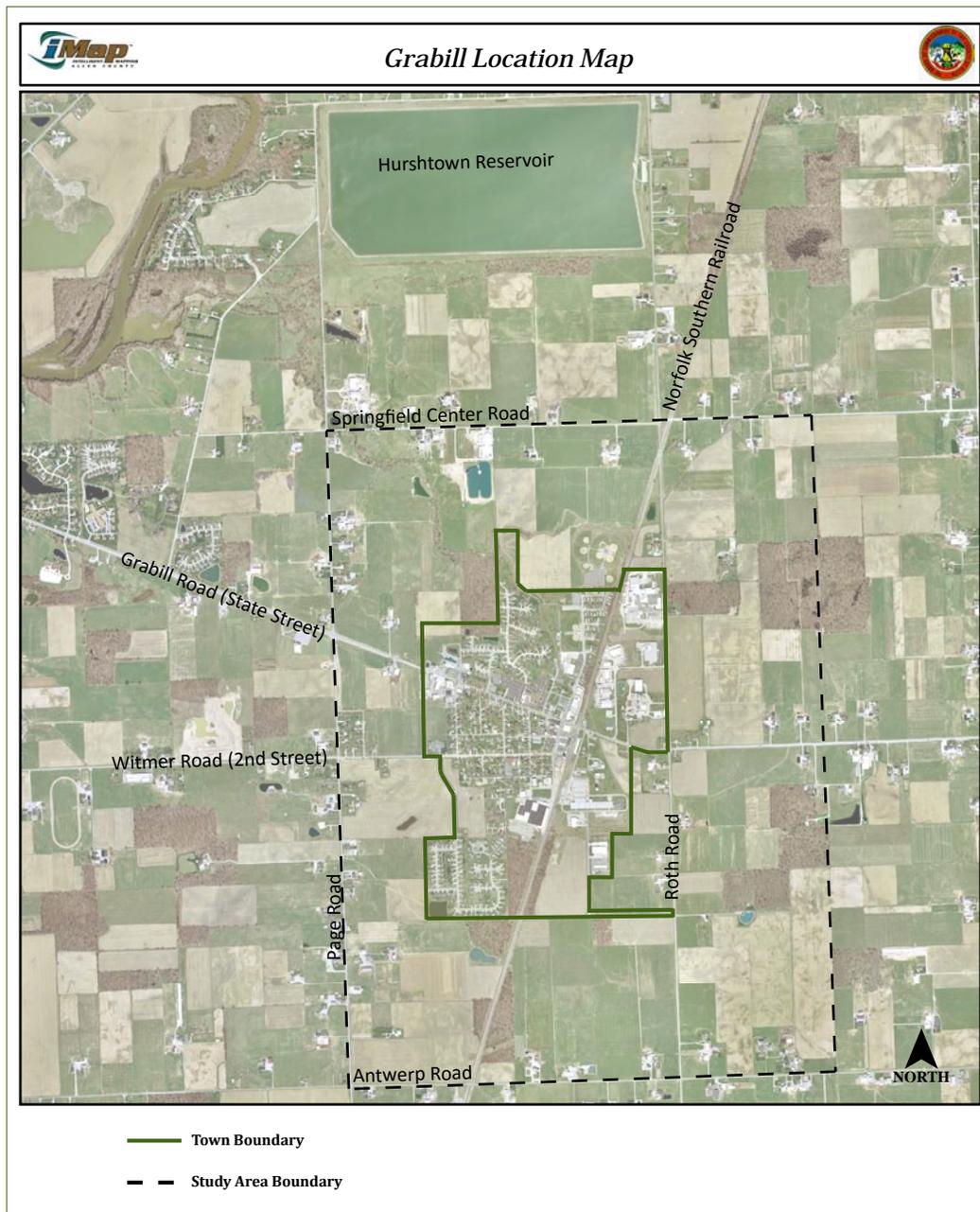
Grabill was incorporated as a town in 1912, which provided needed services for the growing community, including its own school and town board. After this, more businesses opened and thrived for many years including Grabill Clay Tile-Drain Tile Factory/Grabill Tile Mill, Sauder's Farm Hatchery/Sauder Feeds, Grabill Hardware, and Grabill Cabinet to name just a few. Some are still in existence today. Although passenger rail service ceased in the mid-1980s, the Norfolk Southern single-track freight rail line continues to be extremely busy.<sup>1</sup>

Grabill has a significant concentration of Old Order Amish, who first settled in Cedar Creek Township in the 1840s. Their farms surround the town, and they conduct a considerable amount of business in the area.<sup>2</sup>



Historic photo of State Street in Grabill  
Source: *Remembering Grabill Ind. 1902-50* by Kathryn Moore

## STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN for GRABILL, INDIANA



*Plan-it Allen!* Fort Wayne and Allen County Comprehensive Plan and Grabill's zoning ordinance. Other town services include fire and EMS, provided by Northeast Allen County Fire and EMS, as well as water and sewer, provided through the town and police.

To help support the town's businesses, Grabill early on formed a Chamber of Commerce which hosts informational meetings and sponsors events such as the annual Grabill Country Fair known for attracting large crowds from across the region.

### Existing Community Planning

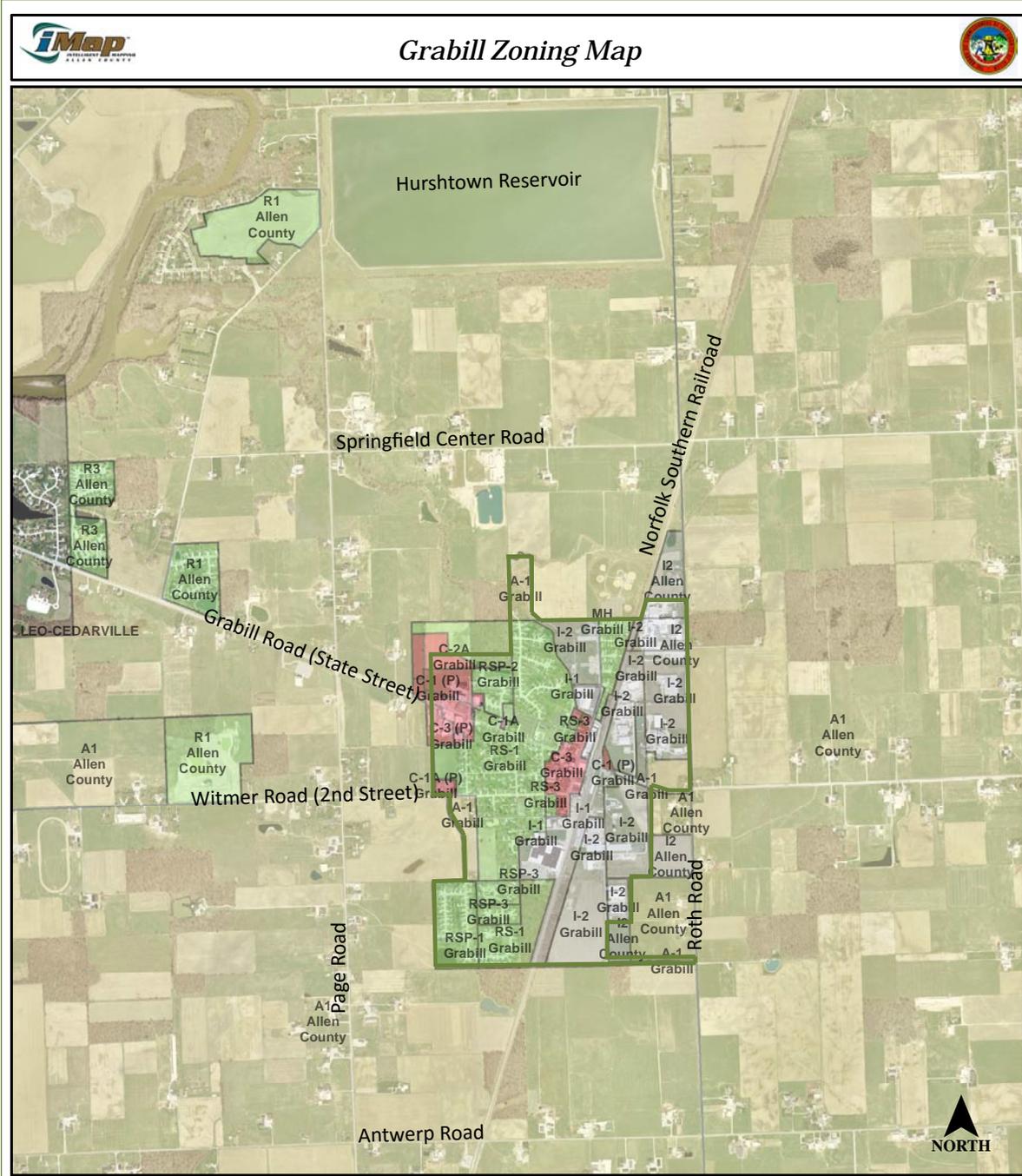
Existing plans were referenced that support the development of the plan including: *Plan-it Allen!* (2007), the combined Fort Wayne

and Allen County Comprehensive Plan, which includes the Town of Grabill; the *Town of Grabill Economic Development Master Plan* (2010), the *NewAllen Alliance Organizational Action Plan* (2014), the existing *Grabill TIF District Economic Development Plan* which focuses on industrial land east of the railroad tracks, and the *2035 Transportation Plan* (2013) by the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council.

### Study Area

The study area for this Plan was developed in reference to the boundaries of the town, and extending approximately .25 to .50 mile to adjacent roadways in unincorporated areas.

The Allen County Plan Commission provides oversight to land development within Grabill, as enforced through the Grabill Zoning Ordinance and to unincorporated areas around Grabill, as enforced through the Allen County Zoning Ordinance. Within the study area, residential and commercial zoning exists west of the Norfolk Southern Railroad while areas zoned for industrial use are located along the rail line, primarily to the east.



**Zoning Districts**

- Grabill Zoning**  
 A-1: Agriculture  
 C-1: Limited Commercial  
 C-1(P): Planned Limited Commercial  
 C-1A: Professional and Personal Services  
 C-1A(P): Planned Professional and Personal Services  
 C-2A: Neighborhood Shopping  
 C-3: General Commercial  
 C-3(P): Planned General Commercial  
 RS-1: Suburban Residential  
 RS-3: Multiple Family  
 RSP-1: Planned Single Family  
 RSP-2: Planned Two Family  
 RSP-3: Planned Multiple Family  
 MH: Manufactured Housing  
 I-1: Light Industrial  
 I-2: General Industrial

**Town Boundary**

- Allen County Zoning**  
 A1: Agriculture  
 C2: Limited Commercial  
 NC: Neighborhood Commercial  
 R1: Single Family Residential  
 R3: Multiple Family Residential  
 I2: General Industrial

# GRABILL, IN



Population  
**1,440**

**POPULATION BY AGE\*** NumberPercentage

Under 5 years	112	7.8
Ages 5 to 14 years	262	18.2
Ages 15 to 24 years	163	11.3
Ages 25 to 44 years	373	25.9
Ages 45 to 64 years	344	23.9
Ages 65 years +	186	12.9



Advanced Education:  
2-year degree or higher  
**25.2%**

**HIGHER EDUCATION** Allen County Indiana

At least a 2-Year degree	36.3%	21.7%
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Employment

**TOP 3 INDUSTRIES** by Employee

- Manufacturing
- Wholesale & Retail
- Public Administration



Households  
**540**



**551**  
Housing Units:  
98% occupied; 2% vacant

Allen  
Grabill County Indiana

**INCOME\***

Median Household Income	\$49,250.	\$49,124.	\$48,737.
Per Capita Income	\$19,137.	\$25,485.	\$24,593.
Per Capita Income as % of National Average	67.0%	89.2%	86.1%

**POVERTY STATUS\***

All Families	11.8%	15.5%	15.5%
Of Specific Populations:			
Under 18 years	15.8%	22.5%	22.1%
Related children under 18 yrs	14.8%	22.2%	21.7%
18 to 64 years	10.7%	14.2%	14.7%
65 years +	7.5%	6.7%	7.2%

**HOUSING\***

Monthly owner costs 30% or more of household income	14.2%	20.9%	24.7%
Median Year Built	1980	1972	1972
Median Home Value	\$103,600.	\$112,600.	\$122,700.
Owner-occupied	72.8%	69.4%	69.5%
Renter-occupied	27.2%	30.6%	30.5%

\* U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2010-2014

## COMMUNITY ASSETS

### Residential

Residential areas in Grabill are concentrated west of Main Street to about Fairview Drive, and north and south of Grabill Road/State Street. Older, and smaller, housing stock, in generally good condition, may be found in areas closer to the major town intersection at Main Street and Grabill Road/State Street. Maple Ridge, a 65-lot subdivision was developed north of Grabill Road/State Street in the 1970s and has homes with assessed values between \$150,000 and \$200,000. Newer houses exist in three subdivisions including Surrey Trace, platted in 2005 on the north end of town and containing 28 lots with homes valued between \$150,000 and \$200,000; Countryside Crossing, located off Witmer Road south of town and containing 99 lots with homes valued between \$100,000 to \$150,000; and Saddlecreek Estates, platted in 2015 off Witmer Road to the west of town and containing 39 lots with anticipated home values of approximately \$200,000 to \$300,000. The Grabill Mobile Home Park, located on Main Street just north of Grabill Road/State Street, was developed in 1973 and contains 69 lots. Woodland Glen Apartments, consisting of 32 units, provides an affordable apartment option for Grabill residents. Surrounding the current residential areas is land that is either being used for industrial purposes, or that is owned and farmed by Amish families where agriculture is their livelihood.

### Commercial and Industrial

Downtown commercial uses in Grabill are concentrated at the intersection of Main Street and Grabill Road/State Street and along Main Street between about North Street and 2nd Street. The various businesses include a general store, hardware store, retail shops, cabinet showroom, auto parts store, and meat market. Businesses are also focused around the intersection of Grabill Road and Fairview Drive, located approximately one-half mile west of downtown Grabill. Businesses in this area include a gas station, ice cream shop, liquor store, two grocery stores, a car wash, restaurant, and chain variety store.

Grabill is home to many industrial companies, most of which are concentrated east of the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks and north and south of Grabill Road. These companies include Grabill Cabinets, R3C, Continental Structural Plastics, Rite Products, Sauder Manufacturing, Sauder Feeds, Brindle Products, Grabill Truss, and several others.

### Educational, Recreational, and Institutional

There are no public school facilities in Grabill, so students must travel a few miles west to the neighboring town of Leo-Cedarville for classes at East Allen County Schools Corporation schools. Cedarville Elementary is a kindergarten through third grade facility with a population of over 700 students. In 2014, it was a National Blue Ribbon School, a United States program honoring schools accomplishing high levels of performance, and has received an "A" grade from the Indiana Department of Education for the past ten years. Leo Elementary accommodates students in grades four



2nd Street



Sauder Feeds Inc.



Commercial area along 2nd Street

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through six, and has been an A-graded school since 1999. Students in grades seven through twelve attend Leo Junior/Senior High School, a 2015 A-graded school. Amish children are educated at surrounding countryside schools. Two churches, Grabill Missionary Church and the Church House of Grabill, are centrally located in town. Several churches also exist near Grabill, but outside of the town boundaries including Countryside Church of Christ, Crossview, Harvest Fellowship, and Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

### Community Assets

Grabill Park, located on the south side of town west of Indiana Avenue between 4th Street and just north of Wildwood Drive, includes an enclosed pavilion, basketball court and playground space. Jack R. Harris Park, located on the north side of Grabill west of Main Street and just north of Sauder Manufacturing, is a larger facility that incorporates two baseball diamonds with a concession stand, playground equipment, basketball courts, picnic shelters, and a walking trail to a Department of Natural Resources preserve. The iAB Financial Bank Sports Complex, just north of the Jack R. Harris Park, has seven baseball diamonds, batting cages, and a concession stand with restrooms. It is owned by Leo-Grabill Sports Complex, Incorporated, a non-profit organization.

### Municipal, Government, and Other Community Services

Grabill municipal and government facilities include Grabill Town Hall, centrally located north of 1st Street just east of Main Street, and the Northeast Fire and EMS Station, located near the intersection of Grabill Road/State Street and Fairview Drive. Financial Partners Credit Union is also near this area, while iAB Financial Bank has a branch in downtown Grabill. The Grabill branch of the Allen County Public Library, located at the intersection of Grabill Road/State Street and Illinois Street, is somewhat centrally located for the town. Grabill is also served by two post office locations that are just 0.2 miles apart. The main post office is at 3rd and West Streets, and a village post office operates within the Grabill Hardware building on Main Street. Other services in the downtown area include Parkview Physicians Group, Grabill Eye Center, Christian Community Healthcare Clinic, and Grabill Veterinary Clinic. Grabill Family Dentistry is on the west side of town on Witmer Road just west of Fairview Drive.

### Historic Sites and Structures

According to the Indiana State Historic Architectural and Archaeological Research Database (SHAARD), of the 27 historic sites and structures surveyed in Grabill, four were rated as being “notable” in terms of the site or structure’s level of integrity, remaining historic fabric, alterations, additions, structure relocation, environment and associated history, and include:

- Albert Neuenschwander House (13333 West Street)
- Grabill Bank Building Block (13756 State Street)
- Grabill Mennonite Mission Church/Olde Church Museum (13506 West Street)
- Klopfenstein-Grabill Farm (13724 State Street)



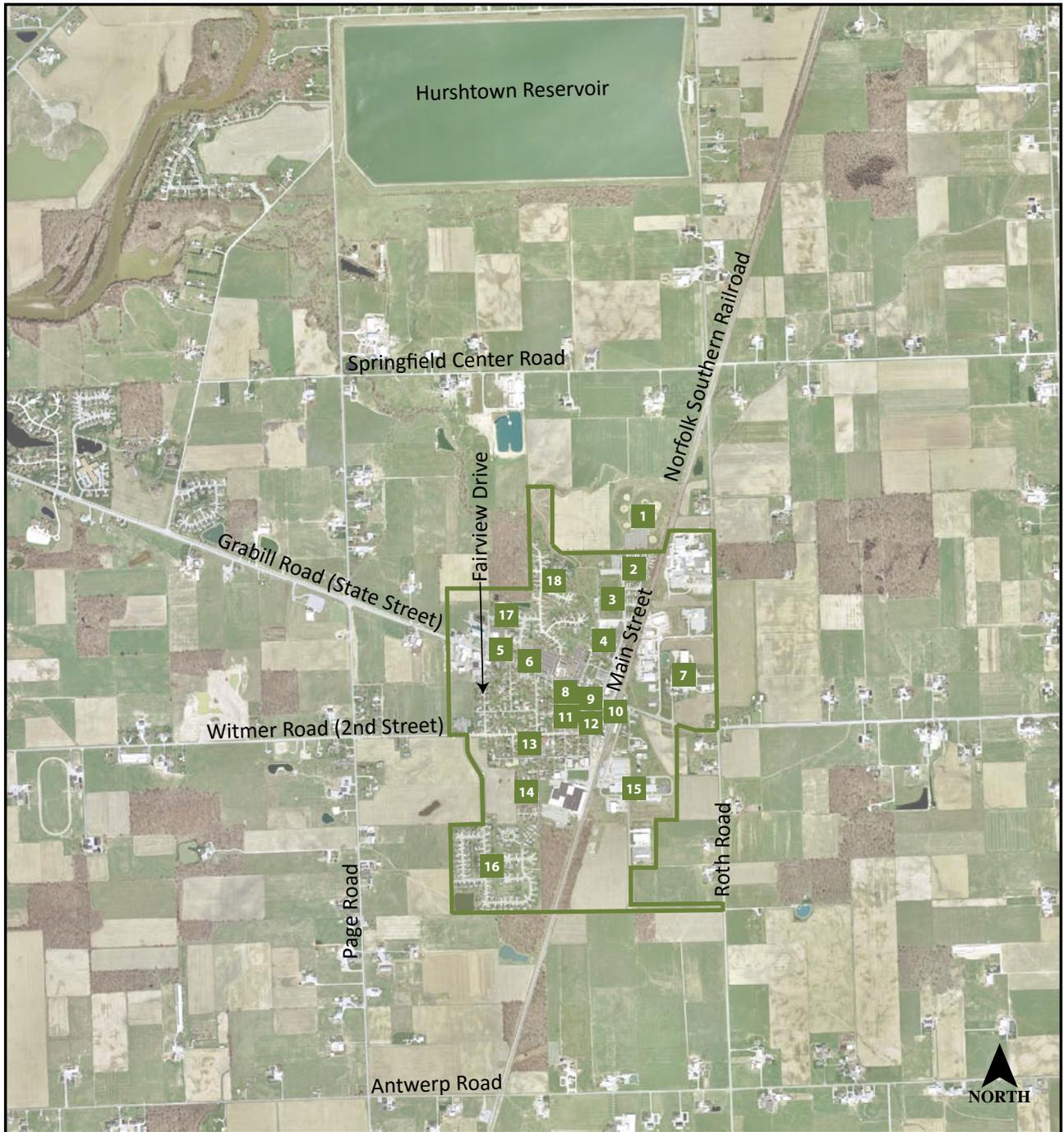
Grabill Park



Grabill Town Hall



Downtown Grabill



**Identified Properties**

**Town Boundary**

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. iAB Financial Bank Sports Complex | 10. Grabill Hardware                                      |
| 2. Grabill Mobile Home Park          | 11. Grabill Mennonite Mission Church - Olde Church Museum |
| 3. Jack R. Harris Park               | 12. Town Hall   |
| 4. Sauder Manufacturing              | 13. Albert Neuschwander House                             |
| 5. Northeast Fire & EMS              | 14. Grabill Park  |
| 6. Allen County Public Library       | 15. Grabill Cabinet Company                               |
| 7. Sauder Feeds                      | 16. Countryside Crossing Subdivision                      |
| 8. Klopfenstein - Grabill Farm       | 17. Surrey Trace Subdivision                              |
| 9. Grabill Bank Building Block       | 18. Maple Ridge Subdivision                               |

## PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

A leading factor in the ability of a community to grow is the condition of its public facilities and services, including drinking water, sanitary sewer, transportation systems, and public structures and lands. The intent of this review is to assess the needs for the infrastructure in regard to future growth rather than to analyze the physical conditions of the system within the community.

### Broadband

According to the Indiana Broadband Map last updated in 2014, internet availability within the Grabill area consists of several wireless providers including AT&T Mobility, LLC; Verizon Wireless; Sprint; and WATCH Communications. Wireless speeds range from 768 kbps – 25 mbps for downloads and 200 kbps – 6 mbps for uploads. Frontier North, Inc. provides DSL technology with 6 mbps – 10 mbps upload speeds and 200 – 768 kbps download speeds.

### Electric Utility

Indiana Michigan Power (I&M) is the electric distribution service provider for the Grabill area. As part of the American Electric Power Company (AEP) with operations across 11 states, I&M has the capacity to provide both transmission and distribution upgrades as needed for future development. Adequate lead time is requested in the event that a large energy investment is needed for a development.

### Natural Gas

The Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO), the natural gas service provider to the Grabill area, has sufficient capacity to extend services. Adequate lead time is requested in the event that a large energy investment is needed for development.

### Transportation

All public roads within the Grabill boundaries are under the jurisdiction of the Town of Grabill. As defined by the Indiana Department of Transportation Functional Class Map for Allen County, State Street/Grabill Road and Witmer Road/2nd Street are classified as Rural Major Collector roadways and Roth Road is a Rural Minor Collector roadway. These are the only local roads that are eligible for federal funding as no highways travel through Grabill. Norfolk Southern Railroad owns the rail line that travels through Grabill from the northeast toward Butler, Indiana, to the southwest to New Haven, Indiana, along a segment owned by Norfolk Western. As a result, railroad crossings exist within the community including at State Street/Grabill Road just east of downtown, and at Roth Road and Springfield Center Road northwest of Grabill.

Two bridges within the study area, located on Springfield Center Road and on Page Road each crossing Witmer Ditch, are under the jurisdiction of the Allen County Highway Department.

The town maintains the sidewalks and has actively been improving the ramps throughout the community to ADA compliance. At this time, 65% of the ramps have been completed. Every street but one has sidewalks.

One goal of the NewAllen Alliance is to have trails connecting to each of its communities, making the existing trail along the north side of Grabill Road linking Grabill to the neighboring town of Leo-Cedarville a significant asset to the area. As noted in the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council 2035 *Transportation Plan*, trail connectivity has been identified between Grabill and Harlan, Indiana, along Grabill Road. The proposed trail would then travel along Thimler Road to Trammel Road. In addition, widened road shoulders are desired along Roth Road to make it more attractive as a connection to Hurshtown Reservoir north of town.

### Sewer & Water

Grabill has its own water system. The town is located on a large aquifer that provides a significant supply for the town and surrounding development including the Cedars near Leo-Cedarville and the Harlan community. An additional well will soon need to be drilled at a cost of approximately \$50,000 to accommodate growth due to the Saddlecreek Estates development.

The town of Grabill also provides wastewater collection and is under contract with the City of Fort Wayne for its treatment. Grabill operates at approximately 50% its of contractual capacity.

### Parks and Recreation

Grabill Park, located on the south side of town west of Indiana Avenue between 4th Street and just north of Wildwood Drive, includes an enclosed pavilion, basketball court and playground space. Jack R. Harris Park, located on the north side of Grabill west of Main Street and just north of Sauder Manufacturing, is a larger facility that incorporates two baseball diamonds with a concession stand, playground equipment, basketball courts, picnic shelters, and a walking trail to a Department of Natural Resources preserve. The iAB Financial Bank Sports Complex, just north of the Jack R. Harris Park, has seven baseball diamonds, batting cages, and a concession stand with restrooms. It is owned by Leo-Grabill Sports Complex, Incorporated, a non-profit organization. Future parks needs include new playground equipment, an improved pavilion at Grabill Park, and the addition of a pavilion and amphitheater at Jack R. Harris Park.

## CONTEXTUAL RESEARCH

As part of the overall *NewAllen Alliance Strategic Investment Plan* (SIP) initiative, contextual research was conducted of each community which included site visits with a drive-by tour and meetings with individual Community Planning Oversight Committees (CPOC). Each CPOC was asked to describe what they were hoping to achieve from the planning process. The following is a compilation of common responses given by the communities:

- To establish our community as a great place to live in Allen County
- To improve community identity and pride
- For the rest of Allen County to learn more about our community
- To facilitate new, smart growth that leads to more jobs being created (Hoagland and Leo-Cedarville do not desire industrial growth)
- To retain the authentic heritage of our community
- To improve the volunteer structure and community involvement
- To be better positioned to seek funding for projects

In addition, the six strategic focus areas of the SIP were discussed with each CPOC. Common issues and possible strategies identified include:



New Growth & Development

To improve developmental regulations to influence the quality of new development as it occurs  
To explore alternatives to enhance opportunities to fund and sustain community improvement (i.e. incorporation, economic improvement districts, tax increment financing, etc.)



Economic Development

To develop a better local understanding of economic development processes  
To develop marketable sites for future industry  
To increase a community-wide focus on the agriculture industry  
To increase space for small business activities  
To contribute to the larger economic goal of attracting people to the region by providing an alternative place to live



Redevelopment

To revitalize downtowns  
To preserve and repurpose existing vacant structures



Housing

To differentiate by promoting unique elements not common in urban areas  
To promote housing for young families and seniors  
To promote the rehabilitation of existing, aging housing stock



Infrastructure

To develop a county-wide focus to support broadband development  
To understand limitations and opportunities of sewer and water infrastructure to help form approaches to future development decisions



To create and/or enhance community parks and gathering spaces  
To develop sidewalks and trails to improve walkability throughout each community  
To connect each community and to larger trail infrastructure through trails and bike lanes  
To provide places to enhance community wellness

## STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN for GRABILL, INDIANA



*Trail connecting Grabill to Leo-Cedarville along Grabill Road*

Additional contextual research was conducted through interviews with over 30 community leaders throughout Allen County and Northeast Indiana to get a “big picture” perspective of the strengths and weaknesses of East Allen County in addition to gaining a broader understanding of the regional environment and identifying potential opportunities for funding and leveraging other resources. Below is a summary of some of the key findings of this research:

- Due to the proximity of Interstate 469, the recent upgrade of US 24 to an expressway, and the Maplecrest Road extension, momentum and interest in East Allen County appears to be growing.
- Planning will give communities a course of action and align county resources in support of these endeavors.
- East Allen County is a very diverse region consisting of urban, suburban, and rural areas.
- There are significant transportation assets in East Allen County (Interstate 469, US 24, US 30, Adams Center Road and the planned intermodal facility) prompting a need to better understand how to capitalize on them.
- East Allen County should focus on agricultural businesses and industry in addition to the clustering of supportive business and industry to large employers such as Steel Dynamics, Inc. and BF Goodrich.
- Perceptions of the East Allen County Schools Corporation vary. Due to recent consolidation efforts, the loss of a public school in some places has equated to a loss of identity, while others view having five high schools in the system as spreading limited resources over too many facilities.
- Workforce development is important. Programs such as the East Allen County Schools’ Associated Builders and Contractors Program, Future Farmers of America Programs, and other professional development training opportunities through the local libraries and schools should be promoted and enhanced.
- The entity with control of the sewer and water systems has significant influence into how, when, and to what level development occurs. There are some who advocate for a county-wide sewer district managed by an appointed board, and others who prefer retaining more direct involvement and oversight by elected officials.
- More housing is needed, particularly for seniors and young families. Communities are encouraged to seek out companies willing to design developments that are unique to their area and that enhance and serve the housing needs, thereby differentiating themselves from other nearby communities and creating an opportunity to attract new residents.
- There is a lack of park and recreational opportunities throughout eastern Allen County.
- There are libraries in four of the seven communities. As these facilities are significant assets, they could potentially be a strategic partner for other community initiatives such as workforce training, co-working space, and the integration of storytelling into community park and trail offerings.
- Restaurants, frequently suggested as a need in most of the communities, can also sometimes serve to attract people to visit.

## PUBLIC INPUT

Throughout this planning process, public input was sought to gather information and solicit perspectives on the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of the Grabill area. This was accomplished through a community attitude survey of Grabill residents conducted in March 2016, and at a community workshop on March 22, 2016.

### Community Attitude Survey

In March 2016, a survey of Grabill residents was conducted to gather input for creating a community plan containing specific strategies aimed at guiding the area's future growth and development. The survey was available in several locations in Grabill, and was also accessible on-line through SurveyMonkey. There were 103 respondents to the survey, accounting for a response rate of 7.2% based upon the most recent population estimate of 1,440. The survey results were then tabulated by SurveyMonkey. In some cases, respondents did not answer every question or did not select the requested number of answer choices. The intent of the survey was to get a general sense of community attitudes rather than to conduct a true statistical analysis. Following is a brief narrative of the outcomes.

Fifty-four percent of respondents had lived in Grabill more than 10 years, while 27% had lived in the community for five years and fewer. Also, nearly 41% lived or owned a business or property within the area bounded by Springfield Center, Roth, Antwerp, and Page Roads. In terms of age, 29.4% of the respondents were between 45 and 54, 23.5% between 35 and 44, and almost 19% between 25 and 34, accounting for the largest segments taking the survey. Overall, 62.8% were satisfied and 19.6% were somewhat satisfied with Grabill as a place to live, and almost 8% responded that they were somewhat dissatisfied to dissatisfied.

When asked to describe Grabill's current identity, the most frequent characteristics given by the 80 respondents were "small town," "Amish community," and "quiet." When asked to describe Grabill's identity in 10 years, "same" and "small town" accounted for the most often given responses by the 78 who answered the question. However, words such as "thriving" and "exciting" were cited next, followed by "quiet," and "peaceful." Regarding the assets that best apply to Grabill, the top three chosen were (in order): rural location, close proximity to Fort Wayne, and the presence of the Amish community.

The next question, in which two of six possible options could be selected, asked respondents to choose what types of business development would be preferred in Grabill. Of the 184 responses received by 89 respondents, the restaurant option received nearly 30% of the responses followed by retail at 20.1% and other at 19.0%. Taking the write-in comments as a whole, ten of them related to activities such as "place to exercise," "yoga studio," "connecting trails," and "bowling alley." There were also multiple mentions for a bed and breakfast, unique/specialty shops and boutiques, and a microbrewery. *Note: Write-in comments for specific retail types were counted as a vote for "Other" causing the overall vote tallies to be distorted and the comments for each option to be mingled.*



Grabill Welcome Sign

Respondents were next asked to rank eight listed items based on what was most needed in Grabill. The top four items were (in order): improved internet access, recreational opportunities, retail establishments, and employment opportunities. Similarly, respondents were asked to rank five listed improvements that could enhance Grabill's livability. Revive downtown retail shops received the highest ranking followed by rehabilitation of blighted structures, and the beautification of Grabill with street lighting, trees, flowers, street art, etc. With respect to the most important recreational need in Grabill, respondents most often chose improvements to Grabill parks, followed by trail development, then organized recreational programs as their answer. Respondents were also asked to choose what transportation improvements were most important for Grabill to pursue. The option receiving the most votes was area walking and biking paths while street repairs and reconstruction and sidewalk repairs and installation were second and third respectively.

Another question, in which two of seven possible options could be selected, asked which of several listed public services were most needed or needed improving. In total, 155 responses were given by 83 respondents. Youth and recreational programs received 28.4% of the responses followed by planning and zoning regulations at 16.8%, and water at 14.8%. When questioned as to what type of housing is needed in Grabill, the most often chosen option by respondents was that of single-family housing ranging in price from \$91,000 to \$150,000 followed by a tie of senior apartments and senior living facilities with affordable apartments and rental units.

To complete the survey, 33 respondents provided additional comments and suggestions. Of those with multiple mentions, issues related to road maintenance and cleanliness appeared most often followed by comments to keep Grabill as a small town, to address perceived issues with the Grabill Town Council, and to rehabilitate blighted downtown buildings.

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### Community Workshop

Twelve people, with the assistance of five facilitators, participated in the March 22nd public meeting during which several community priorities were identified. Attendees were then asked to vote for their top three priorities which resulted in the revitalization of the northwest corner of State and Main Streets, the revitalization of downtown, and the development of an Amish working farm being the top combined vote recipients. A summary of the public meeting input is as follows:

STRENGTHS	NEEDS/WEAKNESSES
Safe	Beautification of Downtown (Residential, Trees, Landscaping)
Easy Access	Redevelopment of Downtown (State & Main)
Low Traffic	Marketing/Branding
Parks & Sport Complexes	Housing for Aging Population
Diverse Housing Options	Small Apartment Complex
Strong Service Businesses	Road Repairs - State
Library	Ownership of Businesses Into Community
Churches	Stability and Consistency of Businesses
Amish	Strategic Location of Businesses
Schools	Electrical Line Buried
Pride of Ownership	Trail to Reservoir
Faith-Based	Pharmacy
Small Business Variety	Re-structuring of Tourism
Trail to Leo	Land-locked (Can't Expand)
Friendly Mix of Age Groups	4-H, Arts Programs
Utility Rates	Railroad Crossing
History	Shovel-ready Land
Police, Fire, EMS	Access to Major Roads
Manufacturing	Traffic-Calming
Youth Programs	Fitness Center
Hardware Store	B&B or Motel
Grabill Fair and Parade	Reception Hall
Sauder Industries	Restaurant
Reservoir	Clean Up Lumber Yard

## Community Workshop - Continued

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TALLY
<b>Revitalization of Downtown (More Options, Increased Focus On Tourism, Local Shops)</b>	<b>7</b>
Focus On Tourism - Enough To Do For People To Spend The Day	2
Improve/Remove Mobile Home Park	
Improve Eye Appeal	1
Grabill Road Corridor Improvements	
Increased Trail Connectivity	2
Visitors Center	1
<b>Revitalized Vacant Corner</b>	<b>8</b>
Retain Small Town, Laid-back Atmosphere	1
Preserved Historic Buildings	1
Internal Trail and Walkway Connections	1
Swimming Area	2
Over/Underpass at Railroad	1
Passenger Rail Service	
Train Car Café	2
Ampitheater	
<b>Amish Working Farm</b>	<b>5</b>
Partnerships	
Self-sufficient	
Museum - History	1

\* Top 3 Responses are Bolded

## STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN for GRABILL, INDIANA

### ACTION PLAN

Through the synthesis of research and community discussion detailed throughout this document, a plan of action was developed. Overarching strategies are those established by the NewAllen Alliance. Plan elements are presented in a manner that is both individual to the community, but also complements activities conducted throughout East Allen County. The action plan also acts as an implementation tool by listing the strategic action, responsible parties, potential resources, and a targeted time period for implementation.

#### 1. MANAGE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Potential Resources	Time Period
1.1	Update the zoning ordinance to reflect more appropriate development guidelines for the community.	Town of Grabill	Allen County DPS	0-2 years
1.2	Expand the TIF District economic development area and plan to include the downtown.	Grabill Redevelopment Commission	Town of Grabill	0-2 years

#### 2. CREATE RURAL AND SUBURBAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Potential Resources	Time Period
2.1	Promote awareness of small business development training and capital resources.	GFW, Grabill Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance	Brightpoint, Indiana Small Business Development Center, Northeast Indiana Innovation Center, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	On-going
2.2	Support the development of economic development initiatives focused on the agricultural industry.	GFW, Grabill Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance	Purdue Extension, Indiana Farm Bureau, Indiana Department of Agriculture, USDA	On-going
2.3	Support and collaborate on workforce development efforts.	East Allen County Schools (EACS), GFW, Monroeville Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance	Area Institutes of Higher Education, Indiana Office of Community & Rural Affairs, Indiana Workforce Development, Workone Northeast	On-going
2.4	Seek collaborative opportunities with the Allen County Public Library to provide support to local business including: informational materials, training, technology and space.	Allen County Public Library, Grabill Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance	Brightpoint, Indiana Small Business Development Center, Northeast Indiana Innovation Center, USDA	0-2 years

#### 3. PRESERVE AND CAPITALIZE UPON OUR AUTHENTIC HERITAGE

	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Potential Resources	Time Period
3.1	Participate in a branding and marketing effort in collaboration with NewAllen Alliance.	Grabill Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance	East Allen County Schools, Local Fundraising, NewAllen Alliance	0-2 years
3.2	Establish a Main Street organization to support promotion, design and economic vitality of the downtown.	Grabill Chamber of Commerce, Town of Grabill	Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs	0-1 years
3.3	Pursue development of an Amish themed hotel/restaurant complex along Grabill Road/State Street.	Private Developers	Private resources, Regional Cities funds	0-1 years
3.4	Explore the development of an Amish Working Farm.	Private Developers	Private resources, Regional Cities funds	0-3 years

#### 4. CELEBRATE COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH INVESTMENT IN CENTERS OF ACTIVITY

	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Potential Resources	Time Period
4.1	Participate in an initiative to physically improve local community parks and downtowns based on collective branding and landscape design. Involvement includes development of a "Quality of Life" design plan that unifies the look of the community at major entrances, in the downtown area, and within the parks with investments into street lighting, sidewalks, furnishings, signage, landscaping, and park improvements.	Grabill Chamber of Commerce, Grabill Main Street (once organized), Grabill Park Board, Town of Grabill, NewAllen Alliance	Local Fundraising, NewAllen Alliance	0-2 years
4.2	Pursue funding to implement "Quality of Life" design plan.	Grabill Chamber of Commerce, Grabill Main Street (once organized), Grabill Park Board, Town of Grabill, NewAllen Alliance	Allen County Capital Improvement Board, Local Fundraising, Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs grants, Regional Cities funds	0-2 years
4.3	Support infill commercial development within downtown Grabill.	Town of Grabill, Grabill Chamber of Commerce, Grabill Main Street (once organized) NewAllen Alliance	Private investment, NewAllen Alliance grants and loans, Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs grants, USDA loans	On-going
4.4	Complete downtown streetscape improvements.	Town of Grabill, Grabill Main Street	Local Fundraising, Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs grants, Grabill TIF District	0-5 years
4.5	Explore the establishment of an investment co-op to support revitalization efforts.	Town of Grabill, NewAllen Alliance	Private Investors	0-2 years
4.6	Explore a collective contract for maintenance of quality of life investments.	NewAllen Alliance	Allen County Parks Department	0-2 years
4.7	Support the connection of communities through trails and bike lanes/shoulder improvements throughout East Allen. In respect of Grabill, support and pursue the addition of trails to Hursttown Reservoir and along Grabill Road to Harlan.	Allen County Highway Department, NIRCC, Town of Grabill	Allen County Highway Department, INDOT	On-going
4.8	Pursue the development for more recreational and fitness programming for residents of all ages.	Area Churches, Grabill Park Board	Private Donations	0-2 years

#### 5. PROVIDE A RANGE OF QUALITY HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Potential Resources	Time Period
5.1	Support the rehabilitation of existing homes.	Area Housing Non-profits	Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Program	0-5 years
5.2	Support additional new housing, particularly in the \$90,000 - \$250,000 range.	Private Developers	Private Investment	0-5 years

## STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN for GRABILL, INDIANA

### 5. PROVIDE A RANGE OF QUALITY HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

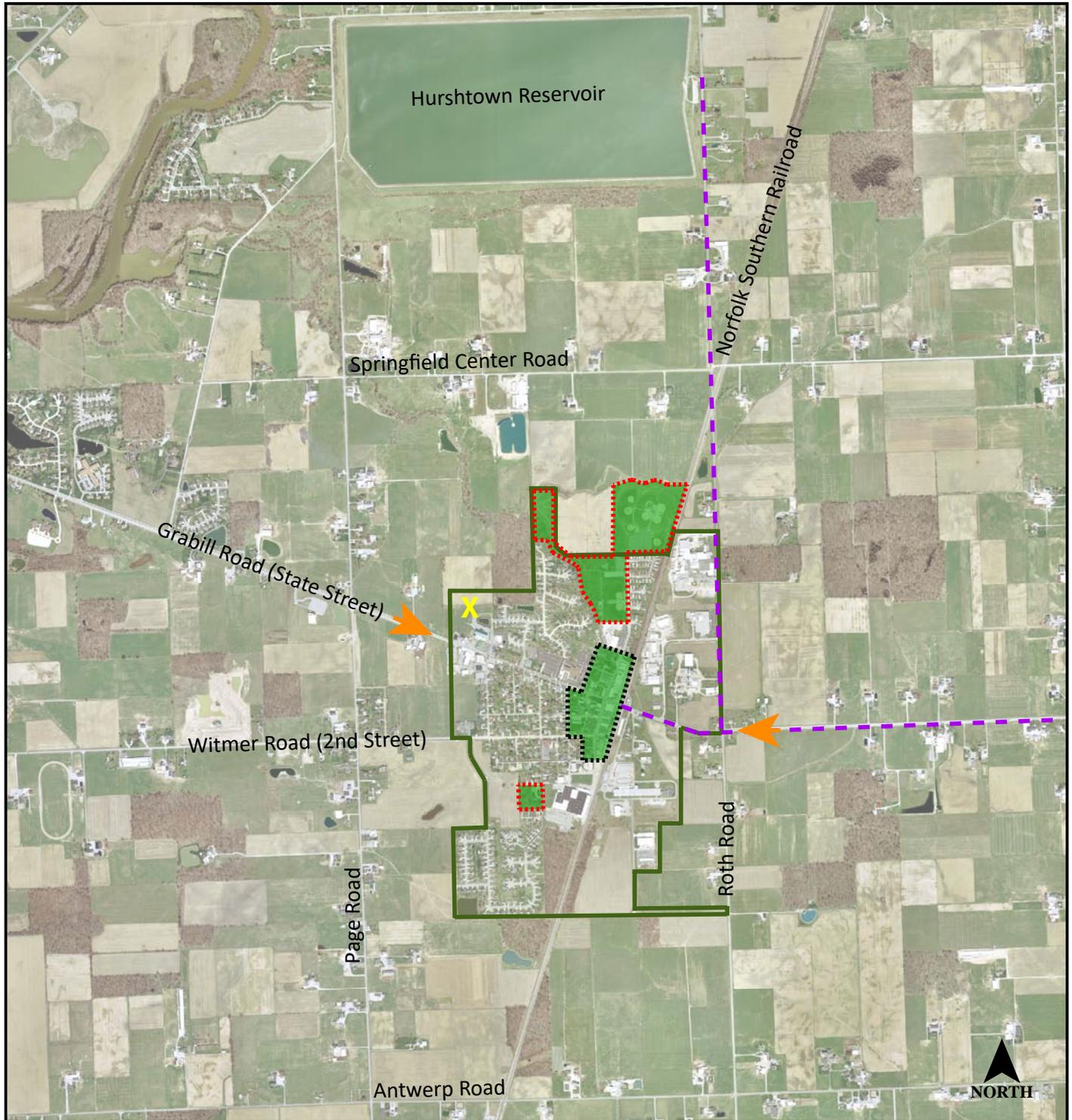
	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Potential Resources</b>	<b>Time Period</b>
5.3	Support the addition of affordable senior housing.	Private Developers	Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority Tax Credits	0-5 years
5.4	Address blighted structures throughout the community by identifying locations for acquisition, rehabilitation and/or demolition.	Town of Grabill	Allen County Building Department, Blight Elimination Funds, Brightpoint	0-5 years

### 6. PROVIDE ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE

	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Potential Resources</b>	<b>Time Period</b>
6.1	Continue to implement an annual sidewalk installation program in addition to annual ADA ramp improvements to address sidewalk needs throughout the community.	Town of Grabill	Town of Grabill, INDOT	On-going
6.2	Explore and pursue the opportunity to enhance broadband speed and reliability throughout the community (both business and residential areas)	GFW, NewAllen Alliance	Community Resources, Private Investment, USDA	0-5 years

### 7. ENGAGE AND CONNECT TO SUPPORT INVESTMENTS

	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Potential Resources</b>	<b>Time Period</b>
7.1	Participate in an on-going NewAllen Strategic Advancement Committee to oversee Strategic Investment Plan implementation.	Allen County DPS, Grabill Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance, Town of Grabill	Not Applicable	On-going
7.2	Work with a newly hired Community Development Liaison to advance initiatives.	Allen County DPS, Grabill Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance, Town of Grabill	Allen County Government, NewAllen Alliance	On-going
7.3	Foster and participate in community leadership development activities.	Allen County DPS, GFW, Grabill Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance	Local Business Sponsors, Local Foundations	On-going



- Town Boundary
- Downtown Boundary
- Parks/Athletic Facilities
- Bike Lane/Shoulder Improvements
- Quality of Life Improvement Area
- Hotel/Restaurant Development Opportunity
- Gateways



**NEWALLEN  
ALLIANCE**

ALLEN COUNTY, INDIANA

GRABILL, INDIANA

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