



# NEWALLEN ALLIANCE

ALLEN COUNTY, INDIANA

Strategic Investment Plan

# MONROEVILLE INDIANA

2016

# STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN for MONROEVILLE, INDIANA

2016

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

### Prepared By

Sturtz Public Management Group



## PLAN OVERVIEW

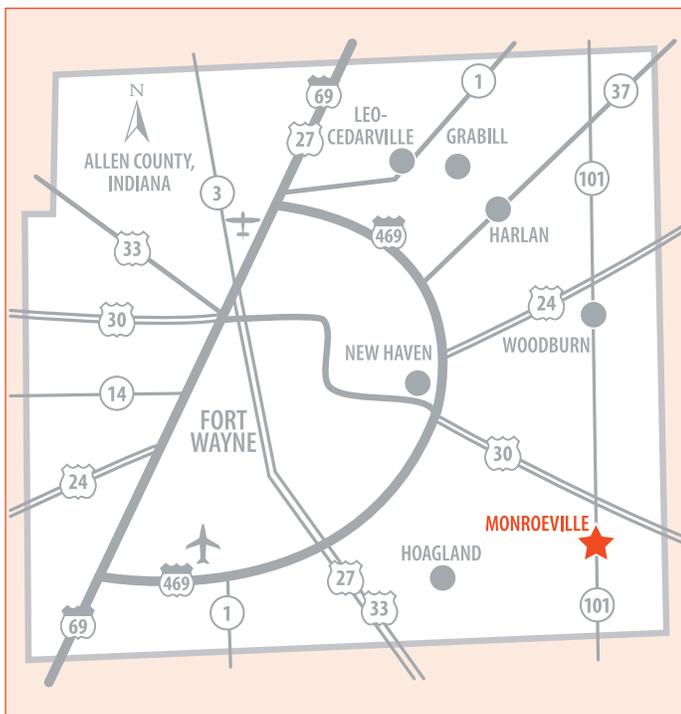
The purpose of the *NewAllen Alliance Strategic Investment Plan* (SIP) is to develop a collaborative strategy toward retaining and attracting high-quality jobs to the participating NewAllen Alliance communities of East Allen County, Indiana, including: Harlan, Hoagland, Grabill, Leo-Cedarville, Monroeville, 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 *Monroeville Strategic Investment Plan* (Plan) was spearheaded by the Monroeville Community Planning Oversight Committee (CPOC), comprised of members of the Monroeville 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 final plan was presented to the Monroeville Town Council on August 2, 2016 and approved by resolution.



MONROEVILLE, 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 Monroeville Road and State Road 101 in southeastern Allen County, it is approximately 13 miles southeast of Fort Wayne, Indiana's second-largest city.

school reorganizations,<sup>1</sup> Monroeville was left without any public school after Monroeville Elementary was closed in 2011.<sup>2</sup> The St. Rose of Lima Catholic School now occupies the former Monroeville Elementary building.

From the town's beginnings, the manufacturing of products figured significantly in its success, being home to a variety of successful factories over the years producing things such as camper, trailer, and pick-up truck caps and tops; brushes; brooms; pre-cast architectural items, wall panels, window sills, and caps; wooden boxes, pallets, skids, and crates; wire dies; and gloves. Today, agriculture continues to dominate in the surrounding township, and Monroeville retains its identity as a manufacturing center.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lois Ternet and Deborah Eidson, "Monroe Township & Monroeville," in *History of Fort Wayne & Allen County: 1700 to 2005*, ed. John D. Beatty (Evansville, IN: M.T. Publishing Company, Inc., 2006), 544-554.

<sup>2</sup>John W. Davis, "EACS Officially Closing Monroeville & Harlan Elementary Schools," <http://www.21alive.com/news/video/East-Allen-To-Vote-On-Putting-Students-In-Trailers-Next-Year-117192978.html> (accessed February 15, 2016).

<sup>3</sup>Ternet and Eidson, 554.

## COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

### History of Community

Monroeville, Indiana, located in Monroe Township, was platted in 1851 by Jacob and John Barnhart. The following year, Samuel Hanna received the contract for building a section of the Ohio & Indiana Railroad from Crestline, Ohio, through Monroeville to Fort Wayne, Indiana. The railroad was a contributing factor in Monroeville becoming the center of most of the township's commercial activity. The town was incorporated in 1866, and in 1871, a two-story wood-frame school was built at Elm and Monroe Streets. It was the largest township school building at the time. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, town businesses included several factories that made oil barrel staves (the narrow strips of wood used to form the sides of a barrel), a flour mill, carriage and wagon works, and a cigar factory. Farming also played a strong role in Monroeville's development. In 1895, the Citizens State Bank opened at the corner of Main and South Streets to help with the town's financial matters.

Due to the town's growing population, the Monroeville School was commissioned as a four-year high school in 1902. Three years later, Monroeville became a stop on the Fort Wayne, Van Wert, and Lima Traction Company electric railroad line that ran from Lima, Ohio, to Fort Wayne. Carrying both passengers and freight, a one-way trip lasted just two hours and ten minutes. The line was abandoned 27 years later, however.

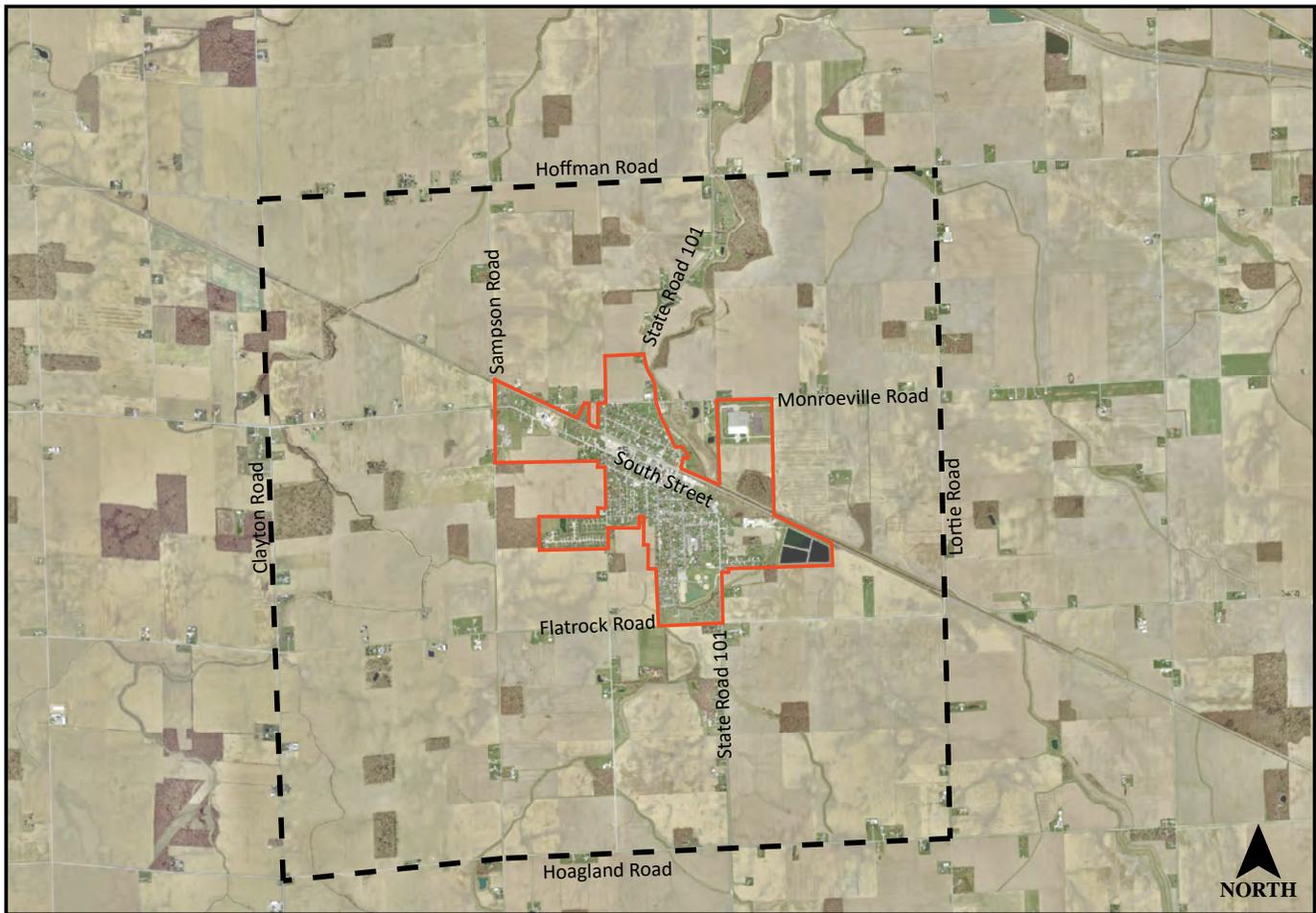
In 1913, a new, three-story brick school was approved for construction, housing grades one through twelve, and a major addition was built in 1926, making the school one of the best in the County. In 1956, a new gymnasium and more classrooms were added. However, following school consolidation in 1968, high school students went to Heritage High School in nearby Madison Township, while the Monroeville School held students in kindergarten through eighth grades until a new elementary school was built in 1978. Eventually, after several



Historic photo of South Street in Monroeville  
Source: Indiana Historical Society, P0408



## Monroeville Location Map



— Town Boundary      - - - Study Area

### Community Leadership

As Monroeville is an incorporated town, it is led by a five-member town council that has authority over the town budget, employees, operations of public facilities and services, capital improvements of public facilities and lands, and the appointment of boards and commissions that serve the town's interests. Monroeville also has a Redevelopment Commission and a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District.

The Monroeville Chamber of Commerce, a 501(c)(6) non-profit entity, is a business league with the objective of supporting business and industry in the town. Annual membership is between 70 and 80 businesses and individuals.

### Planning Efforts

Existing plans were referenced that support the development of this Plan including *Plan-it Allen!* (2007), the combined Fort Wayne and Allen County Comprehensive Plan which includes the Town of Monroeville; the *NewAllen Alliance Organizational Action Plan* (2014) by the Community Research Institute, and the *2035 Transportation Plan* (2013) by the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council.

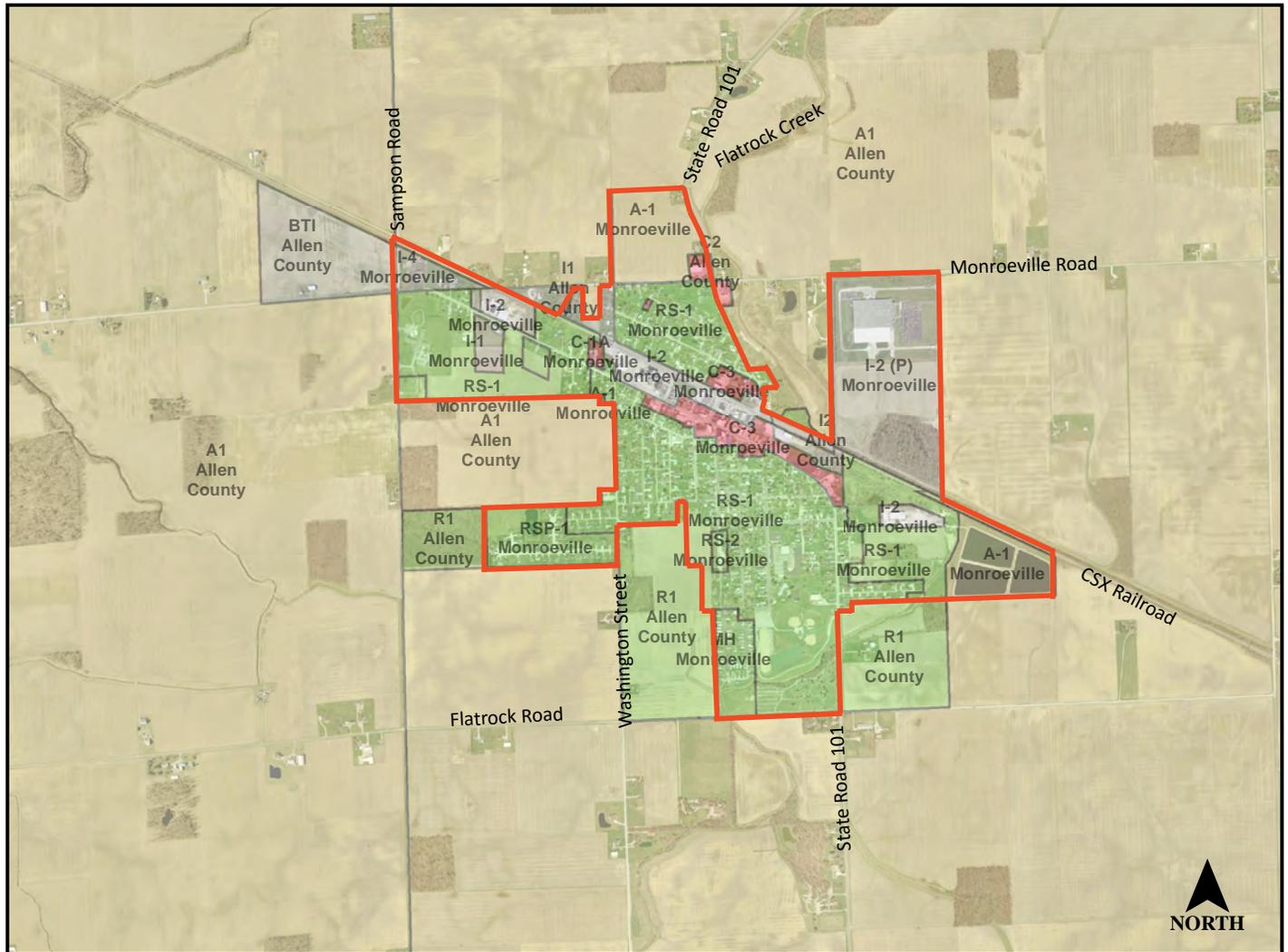
### Study Area

The study area for this Plan was developed in reference to the Monroeville town boundaries and extending approximately one-half to one mile beyond to adjacent county roadways in unincorporated Allen County. The area is roughly bounded by Hoffman Road to the north, Lortie Road to the east, Hoagland Road to the south, and Clayton Road to the west.

The Allen County Plan Commission uses the Monroeville Zoning Ordinance as a tool to guide land development within the Monroeville town boundaries. Most of the land is zoned as residential, although areas zoned for industrial and commercial use exist along State Road 101 and along the CSX Railroad and State Street. Outside the boundaries of Monroeville, the Allen County Zoning Ordinance is utilized.



## Monroeville Zoning Map



### Zoning Districts

Town Boundary

#### Allen County Zoning

- A1: Agricultural
- BTI: Business, Technology & Industrial Park
- C2: Limited Commercial
- R1: Single Family Residential
- I2: General Industrial

#### Monroeville Zoning

- A-1: Agriculture
- C-1A: Professional and Personal Services
- C-3: General Commercial
- C-1(P): Planned Limited Commercial
- I1: Limited Industrial
- I4: Industrial Park
- I-2: General Industrial
- I-2(P): Planned General Industrial
- RS-1: Suburban Residential
- RS-2: Two Family Residential
- RS-3: Multiple Family Residential
- RSP-1: Planned Single Family Residential
- RSP-3: Planned Multiple Family Residential
- MH: Mobile Home

# MONROEVILLE, IN



Population  
**1,294**

### POPULATION BY AGE\*

	Number	Percentage
Under 5 years	74	5.7
Ages 5 to 14 years	168	13.0
Ages 15 to 24 years	161	12.5
Ages 25 to 44 years	280	21.6
Ages 45 to 64 years	431	33.3
Ages 65 years +	180	13.9



Advanced Education:  
2-year degree or higher  
**22.5%**

### 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
- Education & Health
- Professional & Business Services



Households  
**513**



**565**  
Housing Units:  
90.8% occupied; 9.2%

Allen  
Monroeville County Indiana

### INCOME\*

Median Household Income	\$42,014.	\$49,124.	\$48,737.
Per Capita Income	\$19,403.	\$25,485.	\$24,593.
Per Capita Income as % of National Average	67.9%	89.2%	86.1%

### POVERTY STATUS\*

All Families	13.1%	15.5%	15.5%
Of Specific Populations:			
Under 18 years	24.6%	22.5%	22.1%
Related children under 18 yrs	24.6%	22.2%	21.7%
18 to 64 years	9.4%	14.2%	14.7%
65 years +	11.3%	6.7%	7.2%

### HOUSING\*

Monthly owner costs 30% or more of household income	33.3%	20.9%	24.7%
Median Year Built	1954	1972	1972
Median Home Value	\$78,000.	\$112,600.	\$122,700.
Owner-occupied	78.4%	69.4%	69.5%
Renter-occupied	21.6%	30.6%	30.5%

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

## COMMUNITY ASSETS

An identification of existing physical community assets and conditions was conducted. A map of several of the assets described below is provided on page 8.

### Residential

Residential properties in Monroeville are largely concentrated south of downtown and west of Water Street. Another smaller concentration of homes is located north of downtown in the area bounded by Railroad Street, Main Street, Monroeville Road, and North Washington Street. These areas consist mostly of smaller, older housing stock. A couple of examples of new residential construction do exist, however.

East of Water Street on the southern edge of town is a small subdivision, South Park, consisting of 18 lots platted in 1956, while there are also some 1960s-era homes on the west side of town. The newest subdivision, Villa Nova Estates, was platted in two sections in 1991 and 2004. Located west of South Washington Street and south of South Street, it contains a total of 60 lots ranging in assessed value from approximately \$90,000 to \$155,000.

Other housing options in Monroeville include a 71-lot mobile home park, Silverton Estates, located just west of Monroeville Community Park; Mulberry Court Apartments, an 18-unit senior housing complex on Mulberry Street just north of Dale Spieth Avenue; and Adams Heritage, a modern nursing home facility operated by Adams Memorial Hospital and located on the southeast corner of Whittern and Monroeville Roads.

### Commercial and Industrial

The commercial center of Monroeville exists along Main Street from South Street to Barnhart Street and South Street from about Allen Street to Monroe Street. Within this area is a variety of businesses including auto sales, auto repair shop, auto parts store, pizzeria, liquor store, tavern, café, ice cream/fast food restaurant, florist, hair salon, upholstery shop, and gas station with deli and convenience store. Commercial uses in Monroeville are also found just north of downtown Monroeville at Monroeville Road and State Road 101 where a Dollar General and an auto repair shop are located.

Recent demolition efforts have resulted in there being a number of empty lots scattered throughout downtown. Much of the south side of the 100 block of West South Street is now devoid of any structures. Some existing structures are also vacant. Also, other than the limited selection of food items available at the convenience store and the Dollar General, the nearest grocery stores are approximately 13 miles away in the neighboring Indiana towns of New Haven and Decatur, and Payne, Ohio. Felger's Meat Market in Woodburn, approximately ten miles north of Monroeville, provides fresh meat, fruits and vegetables.

Monroeville is home to many industrial and manufacturing companies, most of which are scattered around the outer edges of Monroeville. Such companies include Mitsuba, Precast Specialties, Inc., Monroeville Box and Pallet, and the Trupointe grain elevator.



*Home on Summit Street*



*Monroeville Community Park Amphitheater*



*Cornerstone Youth Center*

### **Educational, Recreational, and Institutional**

There are no public school facilities in Monroeville proper, so students must travel approximately five miles west into the countryside to East Allen County Schools Corporation (EACS) schools for classes. Heritage Elementary is a kindergarten through sixth grade facility that in 2015, received an “A” grade from the Indiana Department of Education. Heritage Junior/Senior High School, a 2015 “B” graded school, accommodates students in grades seven through twelve. Monroeville has two private schools, however. The St. Rose of Lima Catholic School occupies the former Monroeville Elementary School building, and is located just north of Monroeville Community Park. St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, at East South and Ohio Streets, provides a pre-school option.

Monroeville Community Park, encompassing 20 acres west of State Road 101 and north of Flatrock Creek, includes three baseball diamonds, a basketball court, two tennis courts, a sand volleyball court, a fishing pond, an event arena with seating for up to 3,000 people, a gazebo, an amphitheater, an outdoor pavilion with picnic tables, and an enclosed pavilion that may be rented. For bicyclists passing through Monroeville, the pavilion is available free of charge for overnight stays, providing an air-conditioned environment with a hot shower, washer, dryer, and other amenities.

Other recreational facilities in Monroeville include basketball courts at Cornerstone Youth Center, located near the intersection of Monroeville and Whittern Roads, and a basketball court at the former site of Cornerstone Youth Center in downtown Monroeville. Playground equipment and basketball courts may also be found at St. Rose of Lima Catholic School. Also, trail installation has been discussed for the area near the Monroeville Conservation Club bounded by Ohio Street, the CSX Railroad tracks, and Flatrock Creek.

Monroeville is home to four churches which include St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, Monroeville United Methodist Church, St. Rose de Lima Catholic Church, and the Church of the Nazarene. They are all located fairly close to one another in the center of Monroeville.

### **Municipal, Government and Other Community Services**

Monroeville Town Hall and the Monroeville Police Department occupy the former Monroeville Library building near the corner of Allen and South Streets. On South Water Street, just east of Monroe Street, are the Monroeville Waterworks and Monroeville Utilities buildings.

Connected to the east side of the Monroeville Waterworks structure are the Monroeville EMS facilities, while the Monroeville Volunteer Fire Department is on West South Street just in front of the Town Hall. Across Allen Street from the Town Hall is the Monroeville branch of the United States Post Office.

Monroeville is fortunate to have a branch of the Allen County Public Library which operates in a newer structure located on Main Street

just south of the CSX Railroad tracks. Other services in Monroeville include a downtown law office, physician and dental offices in the Heritage Professional Plaza located on Monroeville Road just east of downtown, and the Zwick and Jahn Funeral Home just west of downtown. Although Monroeville has been without a financial institution since 2015, it was announced in early 2016 that a new bank plans to occupy the vacated bank building at Main and South Streets.

Service organizations in Monroeville include Cornerstone Youth Center, American Legion Post 420, the Lions Club, and the Monroeville Youth League. Monroeville also supports the Four Presidents Corners Historical Society and the Monroeville Museum of History.

Four cemeteries are located in Monroeville, only two of which are currently in use. These include the Monroeville Memorial Cemetery, located on the south side of Flatrock Creek from Monroeville Community Park, and the St. Rose Catholic Cemetery, located in an area just south of McDonald Street and west of Flatrock Creek. The Old Methodist Cemetery at the northern entrance to Monroeville and the Masonic A & FM Cemetery located across McDonald Street from the St. Rose Catholic Cemetery are each older cemeteries that are no longer accepting burials.

### **Historic Sites and Structures**

According to the Indiana State Historic Architectural and Archaeological Research Database (SHAARD), of the 66 historic sites and structures surveyed in Monroeville, four were rated as being “outstanding” and eight as “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:

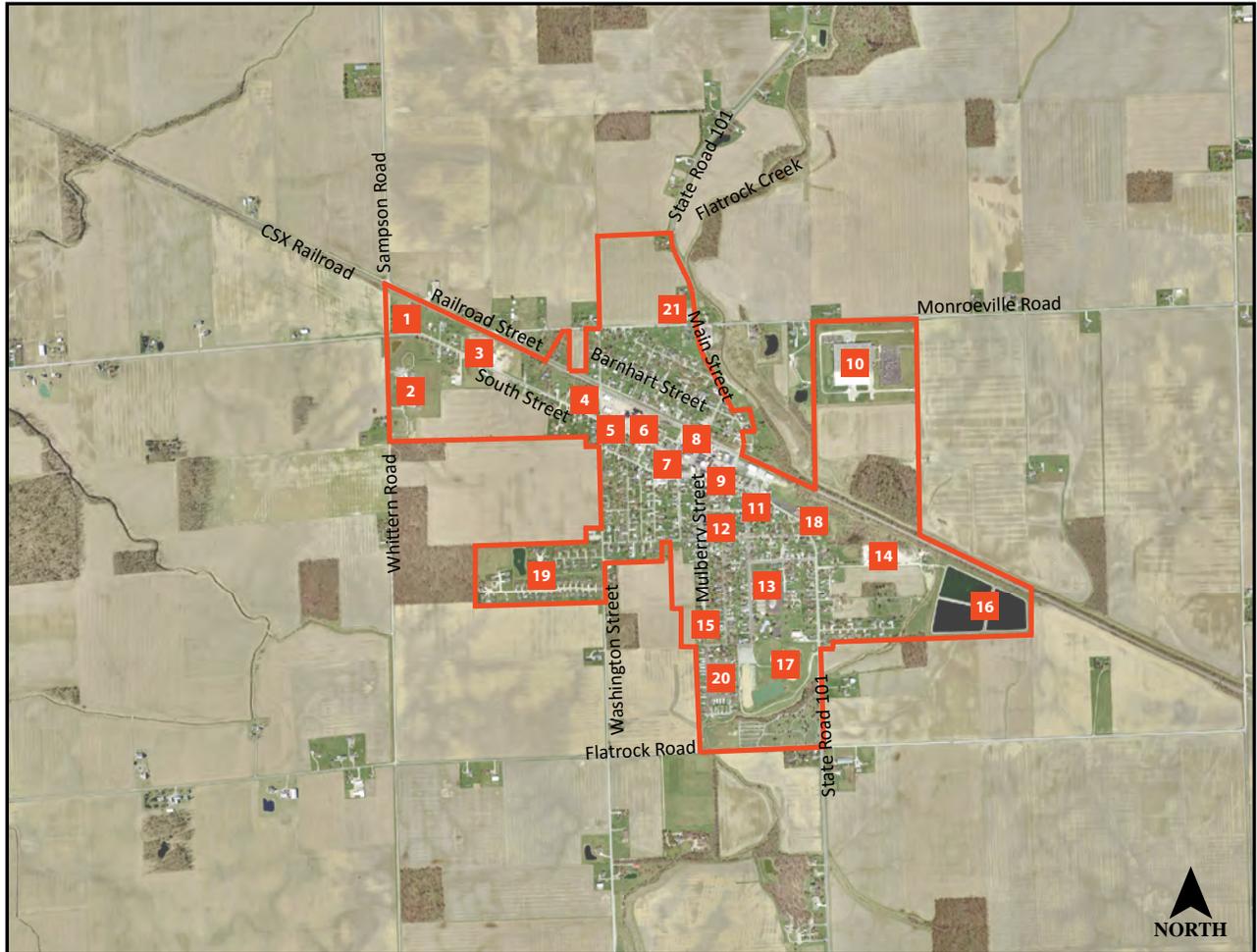
#### **Outstanding**

- J.B. Niezer House (302 South St.)
- Monroeville Library (104 Allen St.)
- Saint Rose de Lima Catholic Church (209 Mulberry St.)
- House (405 South St.)

#### **Notable**

- House (306 Water St.)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church/Church of the Nazarene (315 Elm St.)
- Commercial building (110 E. South St.)
- Monroeville United Methodist Church (204 South St.)
- House (402 Monroe St.)
- St. Mark’s Evangelical Lutheran Church (201 South St.)
- St. Rose Catholic Church Rectory (206 Summit St.)
- Monroeville State Bank building (103 Main St.)

Also identified in the survey was a potential historic district, called the Monroeville Commercial Historic District. Consisting of 29 structures and sites contained within downtown Monroeville, the district was evaluated as being an outstanding example of a rural commercial center. However, since the survey was completed, numerous buildings within the proposed district boundaries have been demolished which has diminished the historic integrity and significance of the area.



### Identified Properties

 Town Boundary

1. Cornerstone Youth Center
2. Adams Heritage
3. Monroeville Box - Pallet
4. Heritage Professional Plaza
5. House - 405 W. South Street
6. Truepointe Grain Elevator
7. Monroeville Town Hall & Police Department
8. Allen County Public Library
9. American Legion Post 420
10. Mitsuba
11. J.B. Niezer House - 302 E. South Street
12. St. Rose de Lima Catholic Church
13. St. Rose of Lima Catholic School
14. Precast Specialties
15. Mulberry Court Apartments
16. Monroeville Wastewater Facility
17. Monroeville Community Park
18. Monroeville Water Department
19. Villa Nova Estates
20. Silverton Estates
21. Dollar General



*State Road 101 sign*



*Monroeville Fire Station*



*Monroeville water tower*

## **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 Monroeville area consists of several wireless providers including AT&T Mobility, LLC; Verizon Wireless; East Allen High Speed Internet; MetaLINK Technologies, Inc.; Sprint; T-Mobile; and WATCH Communications. Wireless speeds range from 768 kbps – 25 mbps for downloads to 200 kbps – 6 mbps for uploads. Frontier North, Inc. provides asymmetric xDSL technology ranging from 6 – 10 mbps for downloads and 200 kbps – 768 kbps for uploads.

### **Electric Utility**

Indiana Michigan Power (I&M) and the Paulding Putnam Electric Cooperative (PPEC) both have electric distribution service territory in or near the Monroeville 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. AEP also transmits power to PPEC territory so capacity is strong throughout the area. Adequate lead time is requested in the event that a large energy investment is needed for a development. Coordination with the companies at the onset of potential development is good practice.

### **Natural Gas**

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

### **Transportation**

State Road 101 runs north to south through the center of the Monroeville and connects to US 30 just 2.25 miles to the north. All public roads within the town boundaries are under the jurisdiction of the town, while those outside of the incorporated area are under the jurisdiction of the Allen County Highway Department. Monroeville Road, South Street, and State Road 101 are all classified as Rural Major Collector Roadways, and Sampson Road is classified as a Rural Minor Collector as defined by the Indiana Department of Transportation Functional Class Map for Allen County, and are therefore eligible for federal funding.

The Town of Monroeville maintains road integrity and safety conditions by cleaning, patching, providing for snow removal, and installing signage and street crossing markings. The Town also implements an annual paving program.

The CSX Railroad tracks transect Monroeville from northwest to southeast, connecting to Fort Wayne to the northwest and Van Wert, Ohio, to the southeast. As a result, there are three railroad crossings within the study area at Washington Street, State Road 101, and Ohio Street.

The bridge on Monroeville Road west of State Road 101, traversing Flatrock Creek, is also under the jurisdiction of the Allen County Highway Department. A 57-mile long tributary of the Auglaize River, Flatrock Creek flows northwest from an area north of Decatur, Indiana, in nearby Adams County, through Allen County, and into Van Wert County, Ohio, joining the Auglaize River approximately 10 miles south of Defiance, Ohio.

Recently, approximately two miles of new sidewalks have been installed accompanied by new pedestrian crossings with flashing lights. While the enhancements have been significant, a continued sidewalk improvement program is needed to address areas of deterioration and places lacking connections altogether.

Trail development in Monroeville has been discussed to include a loop around Monroeville Community Park that ties into the sidewalk system, and to eventually have paths that connect each of the NewAllen Alliance communities to each other. The Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council 2035 *Transportation Plan* has identified widened road shoulders to facilitate bike travel along State Road 101 to Woodburn, along Hoagland Road to Hoagland, and through the connection of several roads leading northwest from Sampson Road into New Haven and Fort Wayne.

## **Sewer and Stormwater**

Monroeville has its own sewer utility that includes both wastewater treatment and collection infrastructure. The treatment plant, consisting of a lagoon system built in the 1960s, is located along Railroad Street southeast of town and can handle peak usage of 2.3 million gallons. The plant is near capacity and in need of expansion in order for any significant future development to occur. The separated storm sewer/wastewater collection system was lined five years ago, and lift stations are currently being updated. In addition, a recently established stormwater improvement fund has allowed for projects to occur as needed.

The Town is currently removing sump pumps from the system and plans to pursue an approach to address deteriorated laterals which could free up as much as 30 percent of the system's capacity.



*Monroeville Town Hall and Police Department*

## **Water**

Monroeville also operates its own water system comprised of 2" to 12" water mains, three 10" wells, and a 200,000 gallon water tower. The average daily usage is 100,000 gallons. Aged water mains and equipment are being maintained on a regular basis, with over \$1 million of pipe replacement currently being planned.

## **Police**

Police services are provided by the Monroeville Police Department.

## **Fire and EMS**

Primary fire and EMS response to the Monroeville area is provided by the Monroeville Fire Department, comprised of volunteer members, located at 205 West South Street. It provides fire suppression response, basic life support/ambulance response, and conducts several prevention outreach programs for the public with a focus on school-aged children.

## **Parks and Recreation**

The Town of Monroeville provides lawn and building maintenance for the 20-acre Monroeville Community Park. Future desired enhancements to the park include walking trails and splash pad installations, and parking lot improvements.

**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



Quality of Life

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



*St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church*

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 Monroeville area. This was accomplished through a community attitude survey of Monroeville residents conducted in March 2016, and at a public meeting on March 31, 2016.

**Community Attitude Survey**

In March 2016, a survey of Monroeville 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 mailed out to property owners and was also accessible on-line through SurveyMonkey. There were 278 respondents to the survey, accounting for a response rate of 21.5% based upon the most recent population estimate of 1,294. 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.

Just over 78% of respondents had lived in Monroeville more than 10 years, while approximately 11% had lived in the community for five years and fewer. Also, nearly 55% lived within the town limits of Monroeville. In terms of age, 19.6% of the respondents were between 25 and 34, followed by 18.6% between 55 and 64, 18.2% between 35 and 44, and 17.5% between 45 and 54. Overall, 32.2% were somewhat satisfied and 26.4% were satisfied with Monroeville as a place to live, accounting for almost 60% of the respondents. Nearly 5.5% entered that they were dissatisfied.

When asked to describe Monroeville’s current identity, of the 229 comments received, 44 used words such as “dying,” “struggling,” or “becoming a ghost town.” This was followed closely by “small town” which 41 respondents noted. When asked to describe Monroeville’s identity in 10 years, 60 of the 224 comments used words such as “growing” and “thriving.” “Small town” again was mentioned second most often followed by words such as “vibrant” and “revitalized.” Regarding the assets that best apply to Monroeville, respondents were asked to choose two of eight options. The top three chosen were (in order): rural location; close proximity to Fort Wayne, Decatur, and Van Wert; and friendly community.

The next question, in which two of five possible options could be selected, asked respondents to choose what types of business development would be preferred in Monroeville. Of the answers received by 246 respondents, industrial development was chosen 24.5% of the time, followed very closely by restaurant (23.7%) and retail (22.7%). Of the comments that clearly pertained to retail development, a grocery store appeared 44 times, significantly more than any other type of business. A hardware store was suggested on nine occasions, and there were eight comments for a drugstore. *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.*



*Monroeville Community Workshop*

When asked where new commercial development should be located, 33.3% of the 246 respondents selected the option for new downtown buildings, followed by in vacant downtown buildings (25.2%), then on the edge of town near State Road 101 (17.1%). Respondents were next directed to rank seven listed items based on what was most needed in Monroeville. The top four items were (in order): employment opportunities, retail establishments, service-oriented businesses, and quality housing to buy and/or rent. Similarly, respondents were asked to rank six listed improvements that could enhance Monroeville’s livability. The reuse of vacant downtown lots received the highest ranking followed by the rehabilitation of vacant buildings, and enhanced walkability through continued installation and maintenance of sidewalks.

With respect to the most important recreational need in Monroeville, respondents most often chose improvements to Monroeville Community Park, followed by trail development, then a gym or fitness facility as their answer. Respondents were also asked to choose what transportation improvements were most important for Monroeville to pursue. The option receiving the most votes was sidewalk repairs and installation while area walking and biking paths and street repairs and reconstruction 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, 439 responses were given by 235 respondents. Youth and recreational programs received 26.4% of the responses followed by planning and zoning regulations at 18.0%, and water at 14.6%. When questioned as to what type of housing is needed in Monroeville, the most often chosen option by respondents was that of senior apartments and senior living facilities, followed by single-family housing ranging in price from \$70,000 to \$90,000. Affordable apartments and rental units received the third highest percentage of votes for needed housing.

To complete the survey, respondents were asked to provide other comments or suggestions. Of the 91 responses received, the most commonly noted were parks-related to include general improvements to the existing facilities; adding amenities; building a splash pad, pool, or new downtown park; and developing programming. Eleven comments were made about needing to clean up properties around town followed by multiple suggestions (in descending order) to change/improve the town government system, get a grocery store, demolish vacant buildings, and get better internet service. All other suggestions were mentioned four or fewer times.

## Community Workshop

Fifty people, with the assistance of five facilitators, participated in the public meeting during which several community priorities were identified. Attendees were then asked to vote for their top three priorities which resulted in access to better internet service, enforcement of building appearance, and downtown revitalization activities being the top combined vote recipients. A summary of the public meeting input is as follows:

STRENGTHS	NEEDS/WEAKNESSES
Safe Quiet Community	Sidewalk Repair
Roads	Zoning - Improve the Town visually
Rail Service	Jobs
Small Retail - Dollar General	Town Government Transparency
Park	Cable & Internet Services
Churches	Railroad Crossings
Library	Park - Improve Equipment, Splash Pad, Restrooms
Police, Fire & EMS Services	Paving - More Rural Roads Need Paved
Cornerstone Youth Center	Fitness Center/Gym
Doctor & Dental Services	Hardware Store
Whippy Dip	More Press - Community Calender
Bank	Small Businessess - Cottage Industry
Lions Club	Revenue Creating Events
American Legion	Senior Citizen Activities
Funeral Home	Drug Awareness
Water, Sewer & Wastewater Services	Pharmacy
Festivals	Parking
History & Preservation	Lack of Volunteers - Both Young and Old
Nursing Home	Traffic Control - Semi's in Town
Town Owned Land - north of town	Grocery - Butcher and Produce
Close to Amenities	Retirement Community Housing
Food Bank	Vacant Commercial Buildings
Public & Private School	Donut Shop
Monroeville News	Laudromat
CME	
Grain Elevator	

**Community Workshop - Continued**

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TALLY
Infrastructure Behind Dollar General	1
<b>Downtown Revitalization Activities</b>	<b>12</b>
Partner With Allen County Parks	2
Increase Community Involvement	5
Improve Traffic Flow	2
Increase CME Coordination	
Use Ampitheater	1
Market Snowmobile Track	
Housing for Young People	
Youth Activities	8
<b>Enforcement of Building Appearances</b>	<b>14</b>
Marketing Strategy - improve "Town" brand	
Incentives for Graduates to Return	
Business Incubator	
Volunteer Corps	
Diverse Coalition to move Forward Strategy	4
Friends of Downtown "Main Street" Committee	2
Fresh Foods at Dollar General	8
Housing Study/Rehab with Brightpoint	1
Council Minutes Online	2
Library - more activities, promotion, learning	1

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TALLY
More Involvement at Town Board Meetings	4
Paid Fire/EMS or More Volunteers	4
Stoplight at 101/Monroeville	3
Promote Vacant Lot Development	4
Laundromat	2
Town/Cornerstone Partnership	
Cycling Trails	9
<b>Better Internet</b>	<b>21</b>
Funding to Expand 28 Acres N. of Town	2
Develop Shovel-Ready Sites	
Create Community Foundation	
Sidewalk Improvement Program	2
Paid Town Administrator	1
Downtown Improvement Plan	5
<b>Park Improvement Plan</b>	<b>10</b>
Develop Blighted Properties Plan	4
Apartments and Senior Housing	3
Welcoming Strategies	
People Working Together	5
Senior Activites	3
<b>Clean-up Properties</b>	<b>10</b>

\* Top 5 Responses are Bolded

## 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	Explore obtaining site control on agricultural land adjacent to Mitsuba for future industrial development.	Allen County DPS, GFW, Town of Monroeville	Allen County Capital Improvement Board, Allen County Redevelopment Commission, Town of Monroeville	0-2 years
1.2	Upon site control of additional industrial land, proceed with annexation, TIF district expansion, and shovel-ready status.	Town of Monroeville	Town of Monroeville	2-5 years
1.3	Create an organization such a community foundation to assist with fundraising and volunteer support of community initiatives.	Community Volunteers	GFW, Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne	0-2 years
1.4	Update the zoning ordinance to reflect more appropriate development guidelines for the community.	Town of Monroeville	Allen County DPS	0-2 years

### 2. CREATE A 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, Monroeville 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, Monroeville 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	Pursue collaborative opportunities with the Monroeville branch of the Allen County Public Library to provide support to local business including: informational materials, training, technology and space.	Monroeville Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance	Allen County Public Library, Local Foundations	0-2 years
2.5	Support the development of retail businesses that provide essential goods and services: hardware, fresh food, medicine.	Monroeville Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance	n/a	On-going

### 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 the NewAllen Alliance.	Monroeville Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance	EACS, Local Fundraising, NewAllen Alliance	0-2 years

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

	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Potential Resources	Time Period
4.1	Develop a "Quality of Life" design plan that unifies the look of the community at major entrances, in the downtown area, and within the Monroeville Community Park with investments into street lighting, sidewalks, furnishings, signage, landscaping, and park improvements.	Town of Monroeville, Monroeville Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance	Local Fundraising, NewAllen Alliance	0-1 years
4.2	Pursue funding to implement "Quality of Life" design plan.	Town of Monroeville, Monroeville Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance	Allen County Capital Improvement Board, Local Fundraising, Regional Cities funds.	0-2 years
4.3	Develop a five year Park Plan.	Town of Monroeville Park Board	NIRCC	0-2 years
4.4	Market the community in collaboration with NewAllen and EACS as a "Great Place to Live."	GFW, NewAllen Alliance, Monroeville Chamber of Commerce	Local Fundraising, NewAllen Alliance	0-2 years
4.5	Pursue the development of an additional passive park south of Mitsuba.	Allen County Parks Department, Town of Monroeville	Allen County Parks Department, Town of Monroeville	0-5 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 the addition of affordable housing for families and seniors.	Private Developers	Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority Tax Credits	0-5 years
5.3	Support additional new housing, particularly in the \$90,000 - \$150,000 range.	Private Developers	Private Investment	0-5 years
5.4	Support the elimination of blighted residential structures.	Town of Monroeville	Brightpoint, Indiana Housing and Community Development Blight Elimination Grants	0-2 years

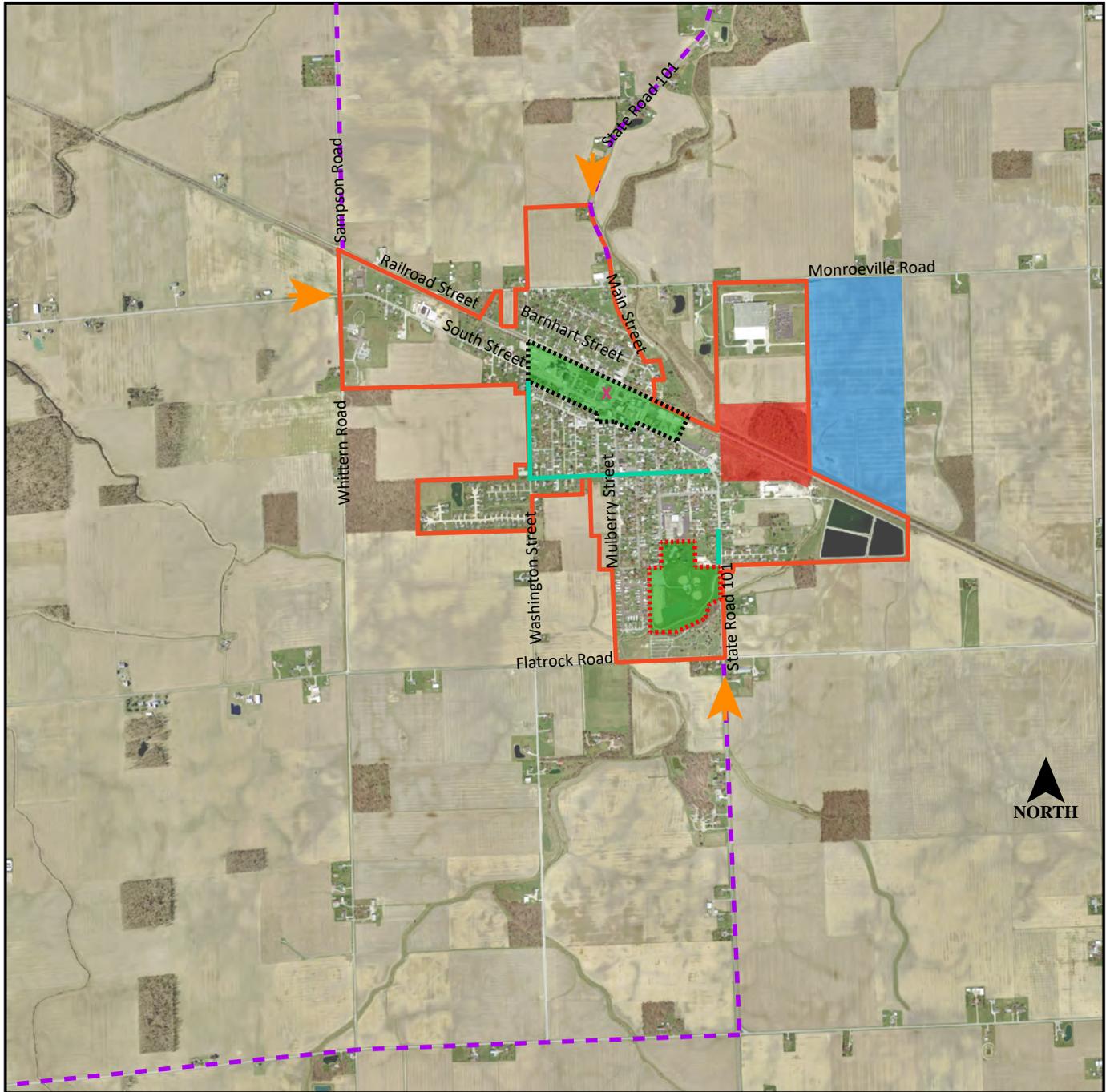
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN for **MONROEVILLE, INDIANA**

**6. PROVIDE ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Potential Resources</b>	<b>Time Period</b>
6.1	Conduct a study to understand costs and options for increasing the capacity the town's wastewater system.	Town of Monroeville	Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs Planning Grant, NIRCC, Town of Monroeville Wastewater Utility	0-2 years
6.2	Actively improve and monitor the capacity of the existing wastewater treatment system through sump pump removal and lateral improvements.	Town of Monroeville	Local bank community reinvestment dollars, Property owners	On-going
6.3	Upgrade the capacity of the town's wastewater treatment system.	Town of Monroeville	Indiana Finance Authority State Revolving Loan Fund, Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs Wastewater Grant, USDA, NIRCC	2-5 years
6.4	Upgrade water main trunkline.	Town of Monroeville	Indiana Finance Authority State Revolving Loan Fund, Town of Monroeville, USDA	0-2 years
6.5	Complete sidewalk improvements with the priority to include a trail along the perimeter of Monroeville Community Park, new sidewalk on the west side of State Road 101 connecting to the park, improved sidewalk throughout the downtown and along Forest Street, new sidewalk along Forest Street and S. Washington Street.	Town of Monroeville	Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), Town of Monroeville	0-2 years
6.6	Support and pursue the addition of bike lanes/ shoulder improvements along Hoagland Road to Hoagland, State Road 101 to Woodburn and the connection of several roads leading northwest from Sampson Road to New Haven.	Allen County Highway Department, NIRCC	Allen County Highway Department, INDOT	On-going
6.7	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 INVESTMENT**

	<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, Monroeville Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance	Not Applicable	On-going
7.2	Work with a newly hired Community Development Liaison to advance initiatives.	Allen County DPS, Monroeville Chamber of Commerce, NewAllen Alliance	Allen County, NewAllen Alliance	On-going
7.3	Foster and participate in community leadership development activities.	Allen County DPS, GFW, Monroeville Chamber of Commerce	Local Business Sponsors, Local Foundations	On-going



- |  |                                 |  |                                  |
|--|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
|  | Town Boundary                   |  | Quality of Life Improvement Area |
|  | Downtown Area Boundary          |  | Future Industrial Development    |
|  | Monroeville Community Park      |  | Future Park                      |
|  | Sidewalk Improvement Areas      |  | Allen County Library             |
|  | Bike Lane/Shoulder Improvements |  | Gateways                         |



**NEWALLEN  
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ALLEN COUNTY, INDIANA

**MONROEVILLE, INDIANA**

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