



Argos 2030



Comprehensive Plan

Argos Comprehensive Plan

Prepared for:
The Town of Argos

Prepared by:
Michiana Area Council of Governments
with assistance from
Marshall County Economic Development Corporation

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to the steering committee members, Argos employees and citizens, and representatives from various groups and organizations for their participation, insights, and ideas through the planning process and development of the Town of Argos' Comprehensive Plan.

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| Doug Middleton | Town Street/Water/Wastewater Operator |
| Dustin Johnson | Town Council President |
| Dylan Colburn | Argos Citizen |
| George Null | Town Council Vice President |
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| Jim Burroughs | Town Utilities/Street/Parks Superintendent |
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| Mark McIntire | Argos Citizen |
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| Rob Hurford | Argos Citizen |
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What's in the Plan: An Overview and Organization

This section summarizes the Argos Comprehensive Plan for those who wish not to read the entirety of the plan and be able to develop a general understanding of the plan contents. The Argos Comprehensive Plan is organized into four chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction – This chapter describes the purpose and need for the comprehensive plan, outlines the planning process used to develop the plan, and community profile.

Chapter 2: Visioning Argos – Utilizing the information gathered from the visioning exercises, this chapter presents the Town's vision and aspirations, and the core values that reflect the highest goals to guide future planning, development, and budget decisions. Core values were a culmination from the building block exercise, community vitality indicators, and recognized interrelationships between community elements during the development of Chapter 3. Additionally, core values are represented as symbols to later be used in the Action Program found in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3: Shaping Argos – This chapter summarizes the community vitality indicators, represented as Argos' existing conditions, into the strengths and challenges sections, with the concrete details for each element remaining in **Appendix A**. The strengths section draws out what Argos is doing well to accentuate the Town's successes and quality programs that make it a desirable place to live. The challenges are the major issues identified by the Steering Committee, Town staff, and the public as the greatest areas of concern the Town needs to address. These sections contributed in the shaping of Argos' core values and action strategies. The last Steering Committee and public meetings had attendees finalize and prioritize the list of recommended action strategies. The intent of an identified strategy builds upon what the Town is doing well and/or addresses the major challenges. The proposed action strategies is not a complete list as new strategies are welcomed to be added so long as they appropriately address the challenges and reinforce the core values.

Chapter 4: Building Argos – This chapter contains the Future Land Use Map and Proposed Transportation Network to serve as the framework to guide zoning and development decisions, and illustrates where the Town would like to see growth occur. This chapter also presents the Action Program that summarizes the interrelationships between the major themes of the Plan. Recognizing the interrelationships allows the Town of Argos to make a greater impact by looking at the community as a whole to address multiple challenges through one program or project. This approach emphasizes, for example, how a challenge in housing affects economic development, infrastructure, and the quality of life.

The Action Program aligns the strategies with the core value(s) it reinforces; represented by the core value symbols. The Program is organized by the timeframe for implementation. Indicates the higher priority strategies that should receive the strongest consideration for implementation in the next five years. Additionally, a strategy identifies the likely responsible party for implementation; however, the Town should serve as the lead coordinator with the identified organizations to see these strategies through to implementation. The Action Program will help achieve the goals of making this Plan easier to understand, digest, and hold value for the Town to stand behind and quickly reference when making planning, development and budgeting decisions. This chapter concludes with details on what the Town should do next by providing a course of action; highlighting the roles for the Town and Plan Commission, implementation tools, Town revenue sources, and potential funding opportunities.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan is an integral factor in determining the success of a community as it establishes a long-term vision on what the community aspires to be for the next 10 to 15 years. It serves as the Town of Argos' official policy guide in making land use and development decisions and provides a road map detailing how the Town will achieve their vision. Unlike specific area and corridor plans that focus on certain facets of a community, the comprehensive plan allows the Town of Argos to step back and see their community from a broader perspective in order to address the overarching challenges and needs hindering Argos from moving forward.

Only a comprehensive plan considers the Town of Argos' needs, values, and aspirations, and interrelationships across community elements like transportation, housing, economic development, and land use to name a few. The comprehensive plan will guide local decision-makers, developers, and organizations to ensure their initiatives are aligned with Argos' vision and focus on maximizing the capacity of existing infrastructure before considering annexing unincorporated areas to accommodate new growth. Argos' Comprehensive Plan not only guides land use and development decisions but also identifies and builds upon the Town's unique assets to make it an attractable place for new families and businesses. Lastly,

builds community support by engaging and empowering all types of Argos' residents, regardless of income, age or disability, to participate and develop a Plan that best represents the interests of all residents.

Intent of Plan Update – The Need for an Updated Plan

Many of Argos' community leaders and residents want to see their town improve and be viewed as an attractable place to live in north central Indiana. While Argos has an adopted comprehensive plan, developed by Ball State University in 2003 known as the Argos Community Plan, much has changed in Argos and the Town wants to update the current plan to reflect the needs and values of today. The update to the Argos Community Plan is intended to accomplish the following goals:

- 1. Make the plan reflective of the interests of all residents** – Establish a vision of where the Town of Argos wants to be in the future that best represents the interests of all residents;
- 2. Create a valuable resource for the Town of Argos** – This plan is more than a document, it is a tool to help guide future public and private decisions regarding growth and development;
- 3. Present realistic action strategies** –

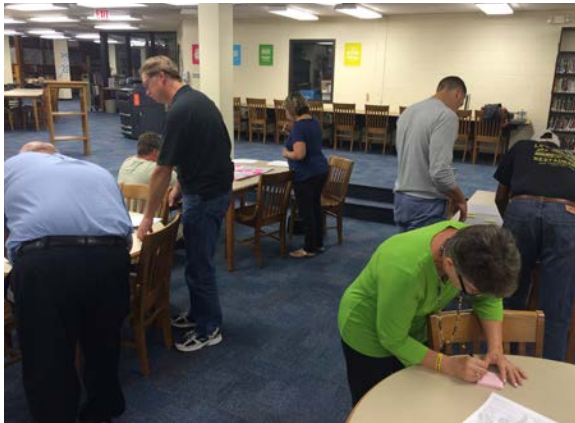
Identify strategies that are achievable in the next 5 to 10 years that achieve Argos' vision; and,

- 4. Create a digestible plan that everyone can stand behind** – Make the plan easier to read and understandable for Town leaders, residents, and business owners so each can hold the other accountable to ensure progress.

The other major influence leading to the update of Argos' current comprehensive plan is the competitiveness amongst similar size towns to receive community development grants from the state. Grant opportunities from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA)'s Stellar Communities Program or Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) look for communities who have an adopted comprehensive plan that clearly identifies a vision, strategies that address challenges in economic development, housing, transportation, and quality of life, and exemplify community pride.

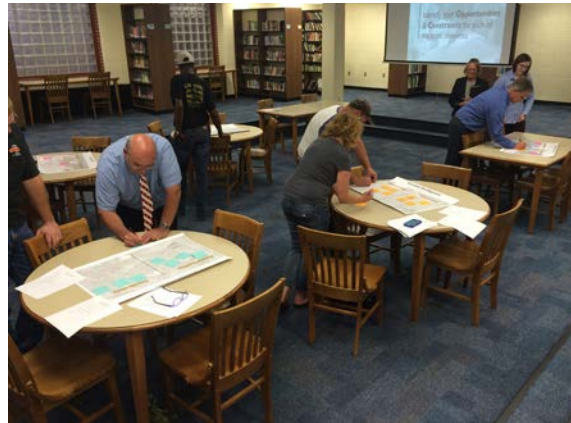
Planning Process

Beginning in 2016, the Town of Argos kicked off the planning process to update the 2003 comprehensive plan by organizing the planning team responsible for the development of the plan and Steering Committee, made up of key individuals and citizens, to serve as the lead representative body overseeing the development of the plan. The planning process was designed to engage residents of the Argos community in developing a vision for the Town's future, identify the building blocks the Town values the most, identify the major opportunities and challenges, and action strategies to serve as a guide for local and private decision-making. Additionally, the process was built on the foundation of community participation and engagement through a variety of input from Town officials and staff, residents, business owners, and stakeholders in multiple facets.



The planning team held monthly Steering Committee meetings to report on the progress of the plan development. The plan update involved a five-step process:

- 1. Establish the community vision and core values** – This integral step set the stage for the plan development. Series of meetings involved rounds of vision building exercises that led the Steering Committee and citizens to identify what they liked and disliked about Argos, and community aspects they valued the most. These exercises led to the establishment of the citizen's vision for the future of Argos.
- 2. Analyze existing conditions** – The planning team gathered the supporting facts and data that provides a snapshot of Argos today, represented by seven community elements: housing, economic development, land use, transportation, community facilities,



Logo Competition

Steering Committee offered a logo design competition for Argos Community students in grades 7 to 12 as a creative way to engage the youth in the planning process. Students were asked to think about their vision for the Town of Argos, what makes Argos unique and best represents the Town's character. The Steering Committee reviewed the entries and selected the winning design at their November 29, 2016 meeting. The winning student was senior, Baily Nifong, whose design was the inspiration for the Plan's logo, shown on the cover.



natural and cultural resources. Information was collected using U.S. Census data, the Town's 2003 Comprehensive Plan, and interviews with Town staff, organization leaders, and community facility directors. Details on the **Existing Conditions** are in **Appendix A**. Using the existing conditions, the planning team guided the Steering Committee to draw out what Argos is doing well as the strengths and the major issues the Town needs to improve for each element. During this step, a public open house and an online and paper survey provided further engagement of the Argos community. Results of the Public Input Survey are in **Appendix B**.

- 3. Develop the action strategies** – This step also involved a series of Steering Committee meetings to develop future growth scenarios and action strategies to guide improvements for the next 5 to 10 years. Action strategies build upon what Argos is doing well and/or address Argos' major challenges. More importantly, this led to the Town identifying the highest priority strategies that should receive the strongest consideration for implementation in the next 5 years.
- 4. Prepare plan document and review** – The final plan was the accumulation of steps 1 to 3, and reviewed by the Steering Committee. The Plan was

available for public review prior to adoption that included an open house and a 30-day engagement period.

- 5. Adopt final plan** – The Steering Committee presented the final plan to the Town's Planning Commission for their endorsement and adoption by the Town Council.



The Public Open House, held on October 8, 2016, helped guide town residents in identifying the community's opportunities and challenges for each of the plan elements (Population, Housing, Economic Development, Transportation, Community Facilities, Natural and Cultural Resources) that later served as a framework in identifying the action strategies.



Community Profile

Planning Area & Regional Context

Planning Area

The Town of Argos has the power to make planning and zoning decisions within the town limits and two miles beyond the municipal boundary in the extra-jurisdictional planning area as authorized by Indiana Code (IC 36-7-4-205). The Argos Planning Area benefits the Town to have the ability to secure long-term economic investments, protect environmentally sensitive areas such as farmlands, manage growth and land development decision. **Figure 1.1** illustrates the extents of the planning area.

Regional Context

The Town of Argos is located approximately 8.5 miles south of the City of Plymouth in Marshall County in the north central region of Indiana, see **Figure 1.2**. The Town is conveniently located off US 31 and SR 10, with US 30 8 miles to the north.

Within a 200 mile radius of Marshall County, there are over 30 million people and major markets such as Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, and Columbus. Argos has access to regional and local amenities such as Lake Michigan, trails, major and minor league teams, theaters and other cultural activities, and high quality higher education institutions.

Figure 1.1: Argos Planning Area

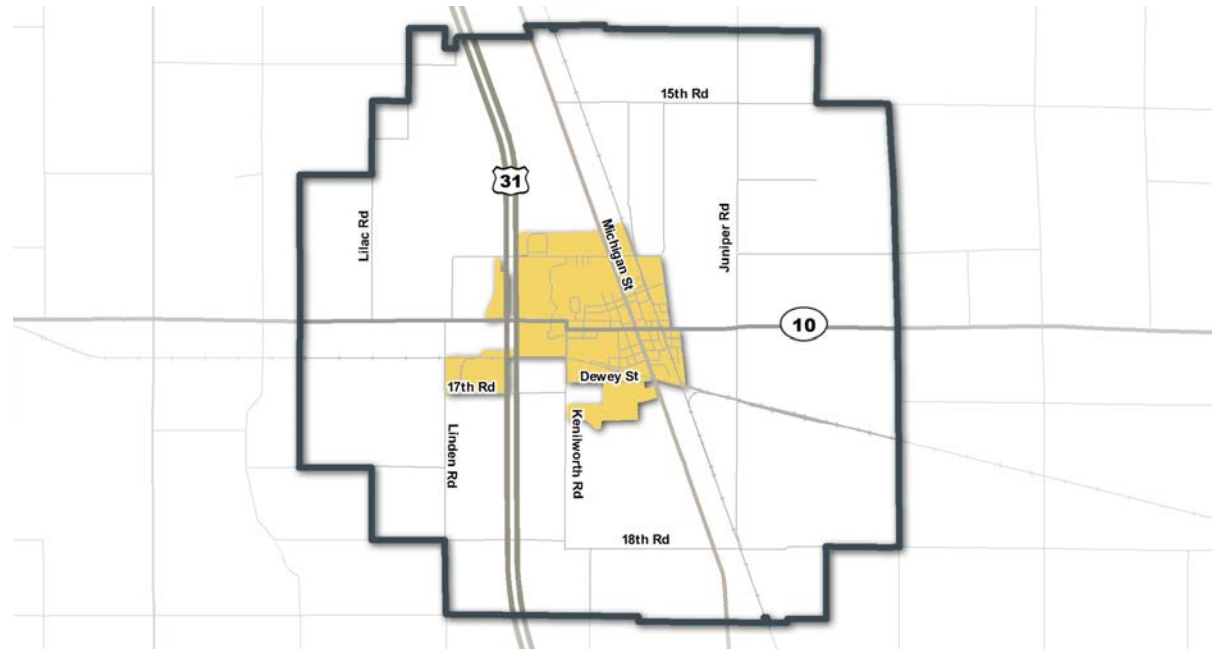
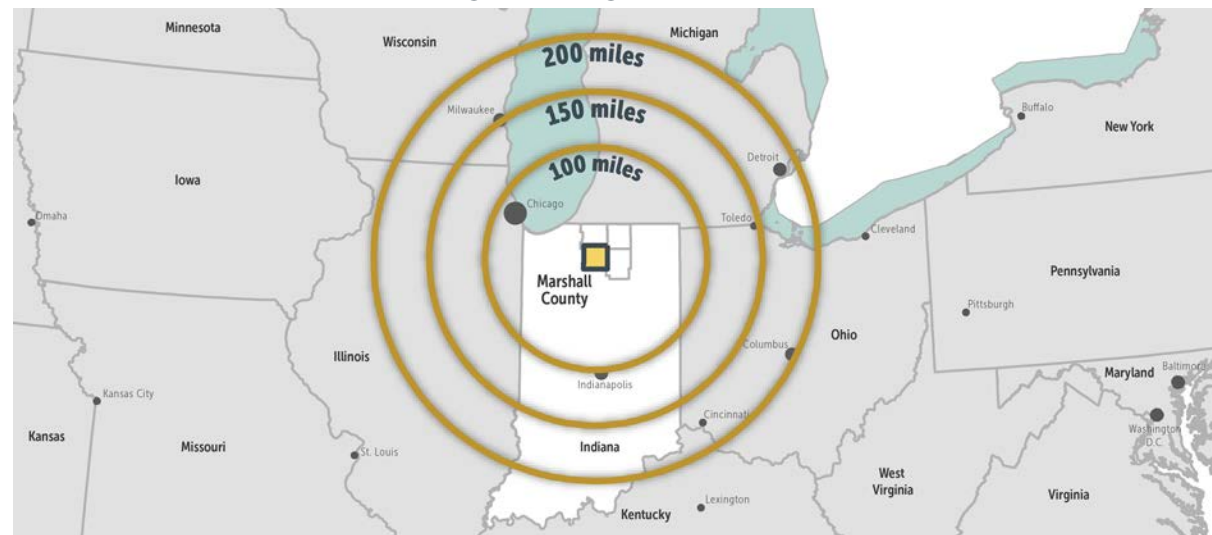


Figure 1.2: Regional Context



Community Vitality Indicators

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) lists five characteristics or Community Vitality Indicators that rural communities, like Argos, can develop a preliminary understanding of the Town's vibrancy. The five indicators include **Population Growth, Educational Attainment, School Enrollment, Net Assessed Value, and Per Capita Income**. These indicators help describe Argos' community profile. More detailed information is provided in the Population, Housing, Economic Development, and Community Facilities Existing Conditions in **Appendix A**.

The following community vitality indicators provide a snapshot of Argos today and helped citizens formulate the Town's core values, discussed in **Chapter 2** and Action Strategies in **Chapter 3**.

Population Growth

Determining Argos' population trend is one indicator to gauge the Town's vibrancy. Over the last 25 years, Argos' population grew at a slow rate of 0.56 percent from 1,642 in 1990 to 1,656 in 2015.

Argos' population is also aging with a two percent increase in median age from 31.8 in 2000 to 32.5 in 2014 but remains lower than Marshall County with 39 percent. Argos has 12.8 percent of its population classified as

disabled, and of those classified as disabled, 35.5 percent are 65 years and older.

Argos' poverty rate (based on population for whom poverty status is determined) increased from 11.5 percent in 2000 to 20.5 percent in 2014. Although the poverty rate is higher than Marshall County, the percent change was lower (78 percent) compared to 95 percent in Marshall County.

Despite an aging and slow population growth, Argos has many features and amenities such as its parks, public library, a top rated school district, customer service, economic incentives, and land available for new development, that can influence population growth through the planning horizon. By 2030, the Town could anticipate a modest growth of 1,740 residents.

Educational Attainment

Assessing Argos' education indicators can determine if the community is attractable to advanced industries and knowledge base employment. In 2014, Argos Community School District had the highest graduation rate in the region with 88 percent of residents graduating high school. Triton Community School District (Bourbon) was 85 percent; Bremen School District was 80 percent, and Culver School District was 87 percent. Despite the higher graduation rate, Argos has the lowest percentage of residents in the region with a bachelor's degree or higher with only 12 percent.

School Enrollment

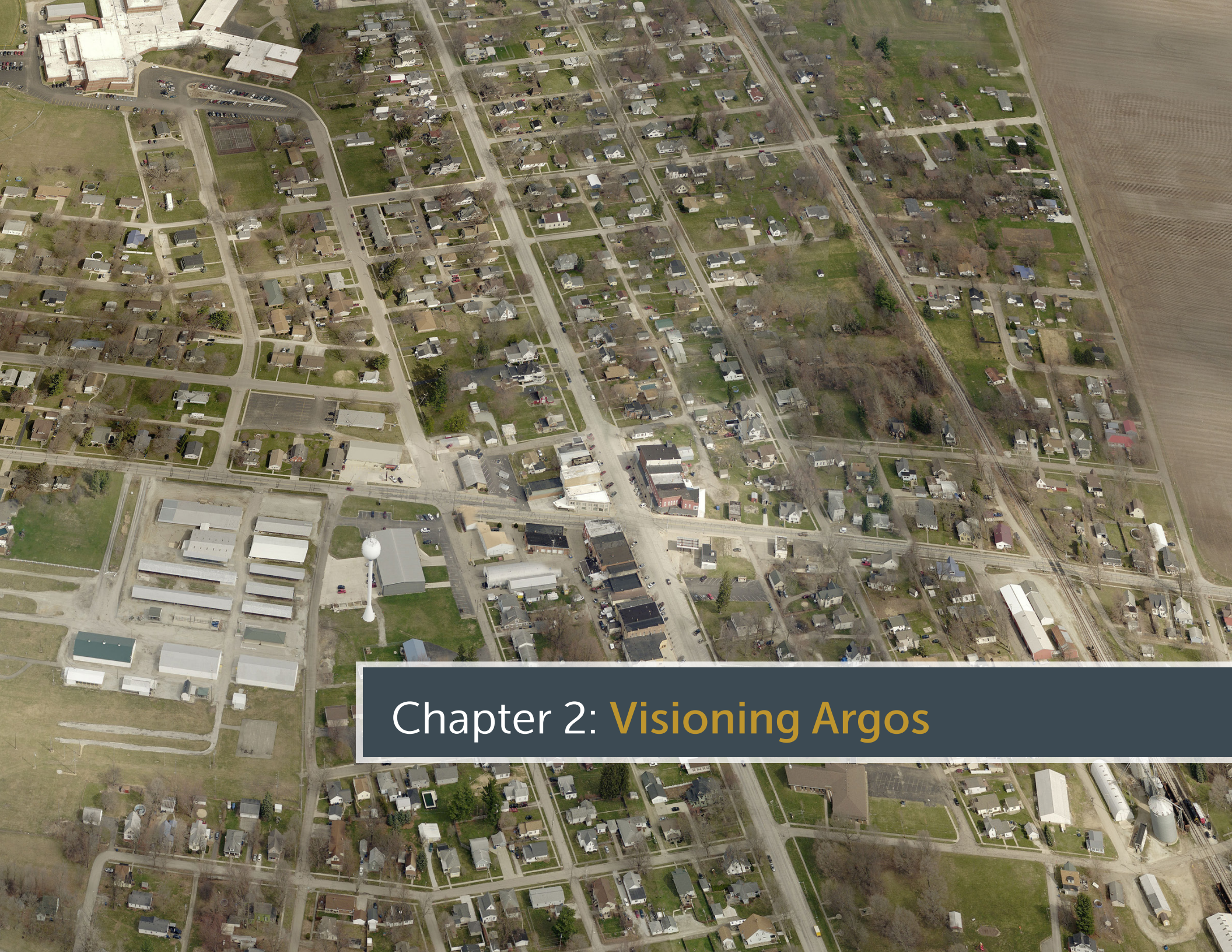
In addition to attainment, enrollment also affects the attractiveness of a community. Argos and Triton (Bourbon) School Districts have declined between 2011 and 2015 by 9.5 percent, while Culver School District has declined by 20 percent. Bremen School District experienced a 0.07 percent increase in enrollment.

Net Assessed Value

Argos' net assessed value indicator is often referred to the property tax base for the Town. Growth in the assessed value is a reflection of new construction and the demand for development to help pay towards the Town's operating costs and the ability to enhance the quality of life. Argos' assessed value has decreased approximately 10 percent from \$42 million in 2011 to \$38 million in 2015. Marshall County saw a one percent decrease from \$3.9 billion in 2011 to \$3.8 billion in 2015.

Per Capita Income

Examining Argos' per capita income is another indicator used to measure the health of the local economy. Argos' Per Capita Income increased 15 percent from \$15,643 in 2000 to \$18,034 in 2014. Despite the increase, the Town's Per Capita Income is the lowest compared to Bourbon (20,001), Bremen (20,149), and Culver (26,855).

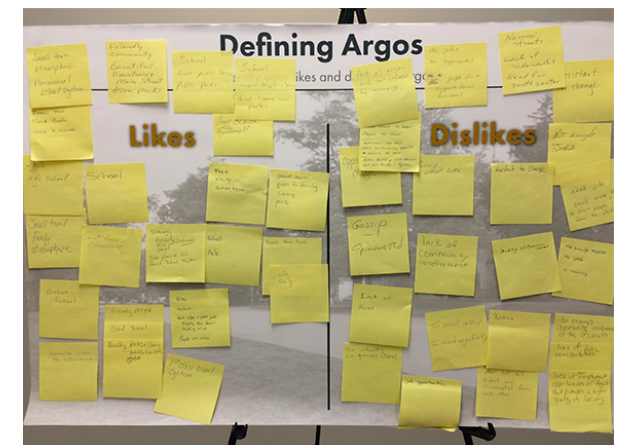
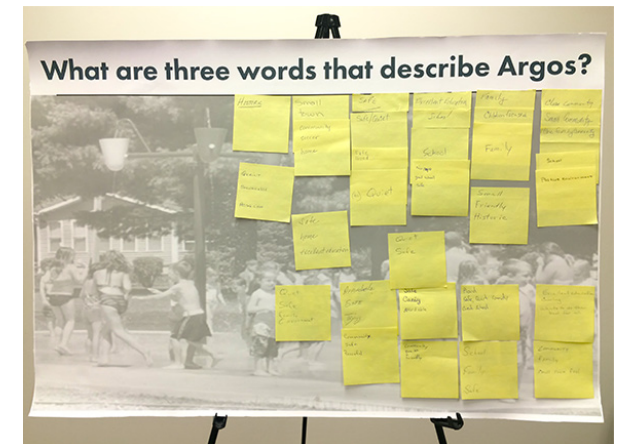


Chapter 2: *Visioning Argos*

A Vision for Argos' Future

The process to identify a vision for Argos engaged its residents over a four-month period through community engagement efforts, including a series of steering committee meetings, a community forum, online survey, and interaction with Argos' youth. The Vision Statement describes the Town's current values and desired achievements looking ahead into Argos' future. The vision statement serves as the framework for the Core Values and Action Strategies that will guide Argos into the future. The vision statement below embodies the Town's commitment to preserving Argos' small town character and future aspirations.

The Town of Argos will embrace its small town values of being a safe, friendly, rural town with high quality parks, public services, and school system while promoting itself as a vibrant community that efficiently **balances growth**; builds a **prosperous economy**; creates places that **enhances the quality of life**; and provides **transportation choices** that promote active, healthy lifestyles.



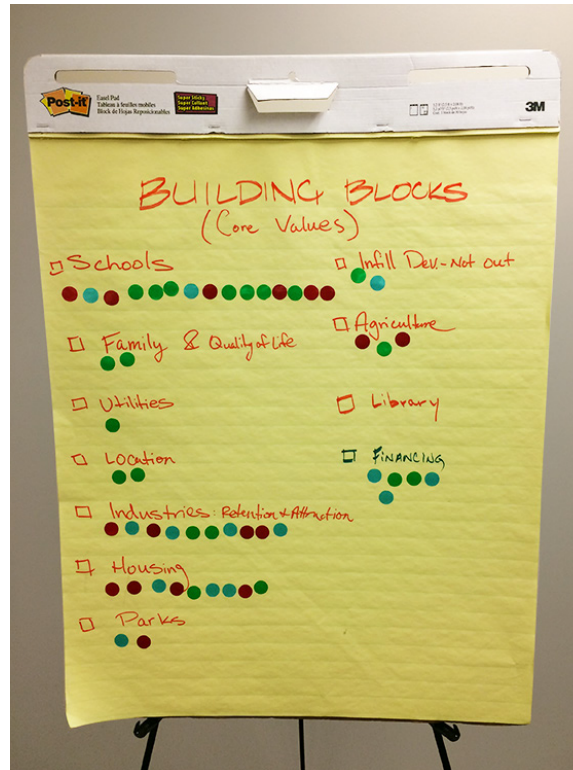
The vision statement was realized through multiple community engagement opportunities through the visioning process. Activities such as the boards shown above, guided the community to define Argos and the strengths that led to the creation of the vision statement.

Core Values

In order to realize the vision, every current and future resident must benefit from its outcomes. Achieving the vision of being a small vibrant town with quality services and amenities requires more than a statement. It needs the framework established from the community's Core Values and Action Strategies that identifies how Argos will achieve the vision.

The initial themes of the core values were identified during the visioning process with input from the steering committee and Argos community and further developed after realizing the interrelationships amongst the challenges. These overlaps create opportunities by looking at the community as a whole to create one program or project that addresses multiple policies rather than for each individual challenge. Thus, each core value describes the desired achievements and highest priority goals and serves as the framework to guide future planning and development decisions. Core values are depicted as symbols to later be used in the Action Program in Chapter 4.

Argos' Core Values include **Encouraging Balanced Growth, Promoting Economic Prosperity and Vitality, Enhanced Quality of Life,** and **Expanding Transportation Choices.**



The visioning process also guided the community to identify the Building Blocks or Core Values. Building Blocks are the facets the community values the most, areas they want to improve, and what makes Argos unique. The image above depicts the top rated values including Argos Schools, attracting and retaining industries, housing, and public financing.



Encouraging Balanced Growth

Argos is proud of being a small town. It is a community where everyone knows everyone else, and you can rely on your neighbors if you need help. This core value reflects the Town's emphasis on maintaining its small town character by focusing on infill and redevelopment and maximizing its current infrastructure capacity, while not sacrificing customers' needs. This means preserving environmentally sensitive areas and agricultural lands by encouraging development in targeted areas where land is served by existing utilities and public services. The Town envisions its downtown and redevelopment areas as compact mixed-use centers that foster economic vitality and competitiveness in the region, supports walking and biking, and connects residents from their homes to work, shopping, and recreational opportunities.



Promoting Economic Prosperity & Vitality

Argos understands in order to be a thriving, prosperous, community it must have a strong economy. This core value focuses on expanding Argos' economic sectors through partnerships between the business community, town government, and economic development corporations to help employ a diverse workforce with opportunities for the young and old. It also focuses on the need to provide workforce training and services to help residents attain living-wage jobs. It makes doing business in Argos the easy choice that inspires local entrepreneurs and small business start-ups and attracts major employers. It addresses the need to ensure the cost of living is affordable for residents of all income levels and attractable compared to its regional communities.



Enhanced Quality of Life

Argos is a safe and friendly town to raise a family with the small town charm that residents have come to value. This core value reflects the Town's emphasis on maintaining its small town charm while ensuring it has the quality community assets in place that attract to all types of people. In order for Argos to be competitive in today's market, the Town must offer standards that build neighborhoods with lasting value, a range of housing choices, while ensuring homes are affordable for residents at all income levels. An enhanced quality of life comes from stronger communities garnered from social interaction, community involvement, and pride. It also ensures Argos' younger demographic has equal opportunity for the highest quality of education that allows them to receive the resources and services they need to thrive and fully develop lifelong skills.



Expanding Transportation Choices

Argos is committed to improving its transportation network by providing choices that are accessible, efficient, well-maintained, and cost-effective to accommodate all users' needs. This core value focuses on providing a complete network that sufficiently handles new development, supports businesses and industries, and makes biking and walking a safe and viable option. It means ensuring Argos' streets are designed or retrofitted as an attractive public realm to enhance Argos' quality of life and induce social interaction. It also means expanding its trails and sidewalks to connect to activity centers, developments, neighborhoods, community facilities and parks to support active, healthy living lifestyles via bicycling and walking.



Chapter 3: **Shaping Argos**

It is important that we define and measure current successes and deficiencies as to better prepare the Town for future growth and development. Through a detailed look at the town as it exists today, we can make decisions to build upon what we are getting right, and improve where we are falling short. This chapter provides a summary of the planning elements, organized by the strengths or opportunities, challenges, and action strategies that reinforce the challenges.

Each of the following elements includes a summary of the strengths and challenges identified from the existing conditions document in **Appendix A**. This will identify what we are getting right and areas where we are falling short. The Steering Committee identified overarching strengths and challenges for each element and developed Action Strategies to address the issues. The intent of the strategies is to help guide the Town through making future planning and development decisions. The list of strategies is not exhaustive and welcome additions as long as they address the challenges and reinforce the Core Values.

Housing & Neighborhoods

Strengths

While Argos is a small community with limited large tracts of land available for new housing developments, there are a number of infill

opportunities to construct new homes. Approximately eight percent of land in Argos is undeveloped and capable of receiving the Town's utility water, wastewater, and electric systems. The Colonial Heights development has 15 undeveloped platted parcels. Additionally, 25 acres of undeveloped land exist within the residential areas around the school, fairgrounds, downtown, and east of Michigan Street.

The cost of living in Argos is relatively low compared to its regional communities, Marshall County, and the state. The median home value in owner-occupied housing units in Argos in 2014 was \$82,600; lower than Marshall County (\$124,000) and state (\$122,700). On average, Argos residents pay less in taxes compared to the Towns of Culver, Bourbon, and Bremen. The median mortgage payment in 2014 was \$769; lower than the Town of Bremen. Rent payments are also affordable with the median monthly cost at \$648; lower than the Towns of Culver, Bourbon, and Bremen.

Challenges

Reinvigorate Older Homes

Although the homes in Argos are located in a matured neighborhood setting, the majority of the homes are old and fallen into disrepair. Most of the housing stock was built prior to 1980, with less than one percent constructed after 2010, due to the recession and lack of developer's interest. Construction in the Colonial Heights development has halted

leaving several platted parcels undeveloped. The culmination of limited construction activity has led to no new housing stock, making it difficult to attract young new families, couples, or individuals. Argos has seen a decline in homeownership with a two (2) percent decrease from 68 percent in 2000 to 66 percent in 2014. However, the Town has seen a four (4) percent increase in renter-occupied units from 30 percent in 2000 to 34 percent in 2014. The increase in



Most homes in Argos were built prior to 1980.



A view down Indiana Avenue.

rental properties has contributed to a lack of investment in many of the residential areas. The low monthly rents do not produce the income necessary for property owners to renovate or upgrade home exteriors. Code enforcement is handled by the Marshall County Building Commissioner and currently does not have a modern building code ordinance to proactively enforce code violations. As a result, homes continue to depreciate and make Argos look unappealing for potential homebuyers.

Creating New Housing Developments

Argos has an inadequate supply of housing options available for the aging (Baby Boomers) and young professionals and families (Millennials). Argos' housing composition is changing as these Generations are increasing and demonstrated a demand to live in a more urban setting with little yard maintenance and conveniently be able to walk to amenities and services. Even though the young professional age cohort (20-35) is increasing, this cohort is leaving to live in communities that are more vibrant, walkable, and economically prosperous. Most of the housing types in Argos are single-family homes with limited integration of other housing options available in existing residential areas. Argos has two apartment complexes that are located on the edge of Argos' corporate limits, which are separated from amenities and services. One of the apartment complexes is available only to seniors. Additionally, Argos has several

repurposed single-family homes as multi-family living quarters, located in several locations surrounding the downtown area.

While the cost of living in Argos is comparable to some similar communities in size, the Town's goal is to make sure living in Argos is affordable and attractable to all types of income earners and residents. Approximately 58 percent of residents living in Argos make less than \$50,000, which is lower than those living in Marshall County and the state. According to US Census data, 26 percent of owner-occupied households and 16 percent of renter-occupied households are considered housing cost-burdened. Most of Argos' homeowners pay between \$500 and \$800 in monthly mortgage payments, with the median payment at \$769 (higher than the Towns of Bourbon, Culver, and Lakeville). The average cost of utilities in Argos is \$77.20, which is significantly higher than the Towns of Bourbon, Bremen, Culver and North Liberty. Argos has an inadequate supply of affordable housing options for low-income residents or families. The older established residential areas need to explore opportunities to integrate affordable housing options as these areas are in proximity to amenities and neighborhood services.

Encouraging Home Ownership

The Town has made it easier and appealing towards renting rather than homeownership. The percentage of owner-occupied housing units has consistently

decreased from 70 percent in 2000 to 66 percent in 2014; whereas, the percentage of renter-occupied units has increased from 30 percent in 2000 to 34 percent in 2014. While Argos wants to ensure housing options are available to those who choose to rent, they want to encourage investment in the rental properties, increased sense of community pride, and improved quality of life for all residents. Additionally, the percent of housing costs compared to household income (those considered housing cost-burdened) has increased for homeowners from 24 percent in 2000 to 26 percent in 2014; whereas, renters experienced a decline from 30 percent in 2000 to 16 percent in 2014.



Several homes on Westview Court were built in the 1990s.

Action Strategies

Reinvigorate Older Homes

- Coordinate with the Marshall County Building Commissioner and other incorporated Towns to develop and enforce a unified code enforcement ordinance.
- Seek grant opportunities from the Indiana Owner-Occupied Rehab Program and Federal Community Development Block Grant Program on improving dilapidated homes.

Building Neighborhood Support

- Create a Town of Argos Housing & Neighborhood Committee to oversee the community's housing and neighborhood needs.
- Partner with Argos Community Schools and community groups to recruit student volunteers to perform neighborhood clean ups, paint homes, participate in Habitat for Humanity projects, and other similar community-based projects.

Creating New Housing Developments

- Incentivize housing developers and new homeowners with tax abatements for the construction or ownership of new affordable single-family homes and other housing types (in targeted

areas) to improve housing choice for all types of residents and age cohorts.

- Ensure new development is designed in a manner that is sensitive to the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Direct new development to targeted development and redevelopment areas, when possible, and encourage site designs to integrate a mix of neighborhood retail services, employment opportunities, and/or affordable residential uses, and the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Review the Town's Zoning Ordinance to incorporate "green" building techniques for new and rehabilitated housing, and pursue incentives that promote the construction of energy-efficient homes.

Encouraging Home Ownership

- Partner with the Argos Community School Corporation to include classes for high school students, workers, and residents to learn about what it means to be a homeowner or renter, financial requirements, home maintenance, and how to avoid foreclosure.
- Educate prospective homeowners on available programs, incentives, and financial assistance.

Economic Development

Strengths

Argos has several competitive advantages that make it an attractable place to live and do business. Argos is conveniently located in the region by having direct access to major highways such as US 31 and SR 10 and close proximity to US 30, as well as direct rail service. It is less than 35 minutes to the South Bend-Mishawaka metro area, 10 minutes to the City of Plymouth, 20 minutes to the City of Rochester, and 30 minutes to the City of Warsaw. Being able to access these major cities in about 30 minutes or less allows Argos' residents to access better employment opportunities to make living wages. Additionally, convenient highway and rail access provide convenient shipping opportunities for commercial businesses and manufacturing industries.

On average, Argos residents pay lower property taxes than the Towns of Bourbon, Bremen, Culver, and North Liberty. The unemployment rate in Marshall County has consistently decreased from around 13.5 percent in 2010 to 4.1 in 2015. In addition, Argos' school system has been rated as a top school district in the state for the past several years and serves as one of the main attractions for people wanting to live in Argos.

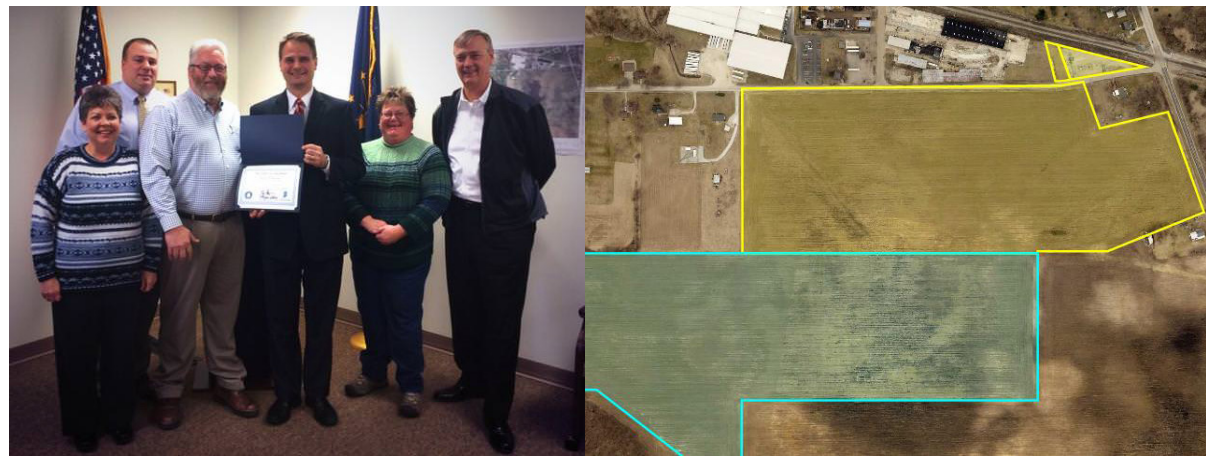
Argos has 188 acres of available land,

including the 74-acre Industrial Park and 56 acres in the TIF districts, at affordable prices. The Town has a great partnership with the Marshall County Economic Development Commission (MCEDC) as MCEDC seeks to diversify Marshall County's economy and assists the local communities in business expansion and retention, attraction, entrepreneurial, and workforce development. The Town of Argos, in partnership with MCEDC, purchased 74 acres of land to serve as the new Industrial Park, located off 17th Road that features access to rail service, it is a shovel-ready site and served by the Town's utility system. MCEDC is looking into constructing a shell building to better market this site and attract the first major employer in the Industrial Park.

The town has a Redevelopment Commission that works with MCEDC on development

strategies and provision of financial incentives to aid in doing business in Argos. The Town provides tax abatements, fees-in-lieu, TIF districts, and reduced electric utility rate for large consumers. Additionally, the Town has invested \$40,000 towards a Façade Improvement Program to improve the image of downtown businesses.

Argos also owns and operates its own water, wastewater, and electric utility systems available to customers within the town's corporate limits and capable of serving residents who wish to utilize the town's water and wastewater services outside the corporate limits. The Town's water and wastewater systems are operating under capacity and capable of handling 50 percent of future growth. The Rochester Telephone Company (RTC), in partnership with the Town of Argos, has created a three-phase strategy in providing a high-speed fiber



Town receives Shovel-Ready Award for the Industrial Park located off 17th Road as shown above.

optic network to the town's residents and businesses, and currently offers service to Argos' industries.

Challenges

Attracting New Development in Targeted Areas

Although workers living in Argos can conveniently access US 31, SR 10 and US 30 to commute to larger communities that provide better employment opportunities, Argos needs more diversified local employment in order to sustain itself. Nearly 50 percent of Argos' workforce commute to larger communities such as the South Bend-Mishawaka metro area, where higher paying jobs are readily available. Likely cause is from the limited amount of higher-paying industries to provide living wages for its residents and financially support the local economy. Argos is also limited in a skilled workforce with only 12 percent of the workforce having a bachelor's degree or higher. Argos has an inadequate supply of professional offices and local retail businesses and regional scale retail uses. Residents have to commute to larger regional communities in order to purchase daily essentials and even enjoy an evening at quality sit-down restaurants.

Redevelopment Opportunities

Although Argos does have two TIF districts with 56 acres available for land development, Argos has not seen construction activity and

only a few retail establishments are in place in the second district to collect revenue. As a result, no substantial revenue has been collected to adequately support the districts or repay the bonds.

Even though Argos has financial incentives and shovel-ready sites available to attract new industries, today's industrial market trend looks at the community's lifestyle and quality of life when deciding to locate their business. Industries focus on where people want to live that offers vibrant downtowns, pedestrian and bicycle friendly communities, recreational amenities and cultural events, and quality school systems. Argos does offer high-quality parks, public services, and school system, but needs to reimagine its downtown to offer more vibrancy and set-



ITAMCo is one of Argos' largest employers.

aside land to potentially be developed as social gathering spaces or plazas in order to attract developers and industries.

Promoting Argos

Although reinvestment efforts helped improve the exteriors of most of the downtown business owners expressed concerns that the Town does not offer incentives to retain downtown businesses or attract new businesses. Business owners suggested the Town could offer a "doing business in Argos" marketing program to help retain and attract small businesses to downtown. Early in the visioning exercises, Steering Committee members emphasized the importance of the Town to establish a cohesive vision in order to attract economic development.

Action Strategies

Attracting New Development in Targeted Areas

- Increase business attraction to the Industrial Park by erecting a shell building to better attract prospective industries rather than raw land.
- Recruit targeted industries that offer higher paying wages.
- Invest in necessary infrastructure improvements on underserved sites within the Town limits and new developable sites in the unincorporated areas to ensure the needs of future population and employment are adequately met.
- Direct new industries and professional offices to locate within the targeted development and redevelopment areas, where adequate infrastructure exists, to promote infill development and increase employment opportunities for Argos' residents.
- Conduct an economic market analysis to explore the feasibilities of attracting new local retail businesses such as boutiques, cafés, delis, pharmacies, and grocery stores in targeted development and redevelopment areas.
- Reevaluate the lifespan of the current TIF districts and how to market for

future development.

- Work with Rochester Telephone Company to extend their fiber optic network to remaining businesses and residents within the Town limits.

Redevelopment Opportunities

- Develop a Downtown Revitalization Plan and continue the Downtown Façade Grant Program.
- Develop an Argos Main Street Program and apply for the Indiana Main Street Community designation to be eligible for funding opportunities from the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) to facilitate strategic improvements for downtown.
- Seek to participate in Smart Growth America's Small-Scale Manufacturing and Placed-Based Economic Development Technical Assistance Program to learn how to become a vibrant and livable community.

Promoting Argos

- Develop marketing materials such as a promotional video and pamphlet that promote the benefits of doing business and living in Argos.
- Implement a "Doing Business in Argos" Program to better support the business climate and guides new

business owners through the process of starting up a business in Argos.

- Implement a "Shop Local" incentive program and marketing campaign.

Land Use

Strengths

Although the Town of Argos is small in land area (1.17 square miles) and appears to have little room to accommodate growth, Argos has 188 acres of land available for development in the Town of Argos. The Town has identified two tax-increment financing (TIF) districts with 56 acres available for new development and a 74-acre industrial park on the south side of Town to bring in new employment opportunities. Additionally, the Town is a full-service utility provider for water, wastewater and electric and has a greater influence to determine where and when the Town grows.

Argos could grow outward by annexing land on the fringe to support new housing and jobs; however, the Town has identified their first priority to focus growth inside the Town limits. One of the Town's core values is to balance growth, which focuses on infill and redevelopment first to maximize its current infrastructure rather than expanding the municipal boundary. Besides Argos Schools attracting prospective residents, Argos' small town character also attracts residents. The overwhelming majority of Argos' residents stated they like living in Argos because they do not want to live in a large city like South Bend. They like the quietness, closeness with neighbors, relaxed and rural atmosphere Argos has to offer.

The Town values encouraging development to occur in the TIF districts and Industrial Park, downtown and in undeveloped areas in proximity to these areas to balance jobs and housing.

Challenges

Community Planning & Zoning

Although the Town of Argos has a planning commission established as enabled by State statute, with limited growth the Town does not hold regularly scheduled planning commission meetings and receives little participation. Additionally, the Town's Plan Commission is responsible for hearing zoning petitions and reviewing the zoning ordinance. As the Town looks to grow and receives development proposals, Town

Council will need to appoint planning commission members to meet on a regular basis in order to oversee the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Accommodating New Growth

In the next 10 years, Argos will be challenged on how to properly accommodate the supply of housing, jobs, and commercial establishments, and public services to sustain Argos' future, while also being considerate of conserving active farmlands and rural character that has attracted many of its residents.

As the Town looks to add more homes and jobs, the land available for additional Town facilities diminishes. The Town has enough



An overhead view of downtown Argos.

capacity in its water and wastewater system to support growth by 50 percent, but may need to consider the location for an additional healthcare services and areas for parks as the Town has not identified new parklands. Additional population from constructing new homes would also affect Argos Community Schools, as the current facilities would need to be considered for upgrades and/or expansion to support the additional students. The Town is also in need of a community center to provide a space for Argos' youth and host community and regional events.

Land Use Form

Although the Town of Argos has an adopted zoning ordinance, the Town will need to reevaluate the current ordinance to consider site and building design standards not only exclusive to the site but with the context of Argos community in mind. The Town wants to preserve their small town character and grow simultaneously, but with the available amounts of land inside the Town limits, the Town will need to proactively work with developers to ensure site plans and building designs are relevant to the context of "Argos" in terms of scale, form, and development patterns. Additionally, all the development in Argos was built prior to the Town's current zoning ordinance and would be costly to retrofit existing sites, but can make sure new development is accessible between sites via cross access driveways and bicyclists and pedestrians.

Argos' downtown is designated as a historic district and has a lot of history that adds to the character of the community. While the Argos Redevelopment Commission and Town supported a Façade Improvement Program, this program was discontinued, as it was not renewed in the Town's budget. The Town should consider continuing this program in order to preserve the historic buildings and character in downtown.

There are many environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and farmlands in the Argos Planning Area. Argos has over 194 acres of wetlands and a drainage ditch the Town needs to be mindful of in limiting development in these areas. These areas provide a unique and scenic setting that enhances the character of the community

and could be threatened by future growth and development. The Town needs to hold firm on its balance growth core value by directing new development to first, consider locating inside the Town's corporate limits before planning to develop in the unincorporated areas. New housing can first develop on undeveloped parcels in already established residential areas, as well as targeted development areas where jobs are envisioned as a way to manage the land along the edge of the Town's corporate limits, decrease commute times, and expand transportation options to support biking and walking. If the Town becomes completely built-out and needs to expand its municipal boundary, the Town could consider reviewing the current ordinance to allow



An aerial view depicting the existing land use.

conservation residential design standards to allow new housing developments while minimizing the negative impacts on surrounding farmlands.

Action Strategies

Community Planning & Zoning

- Appoint Plan Commission members to meet on a regular basis and oversee the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.
- Work with Marshall County Planning Director to review the current zoning ordinance to determine if amendments to sections are necessary in order to better reflect the needs and aspirations of the Town as outlined in the adopted Comprehensive Plan.
 - Add conservation residential design standards to preserve surrounding farmlands while allowing new housing development.
 - Create an overlay district along Michigan Street that supports adaptive reuse of downtown buildings as live/work uses to attract creative and local retail businesses to help create a vibrant downtown.
 - Encourage the use of low impact design (LID) practices and green building techniques.

Accommodating New Growth

- Promote regional planning and increased coordination between

Marshall County, OCRA, IHADA, IDEM, MCSWCD, INDOT, Marshall County EDC, and MACOG to address major housing, economic, environmental, and transportation challenges.

- Align land use and transportation planning decisions to ensure new development appropriately connects to the existing road network and dedicated rights-of-way can sufficiently accommodate planned streets.

Land Use Form

- Encourage infill and redevelopment opportunities in targeted development areas that place residential, commercial and retail, and industrial businesses in proximity to each other to promote active, healthy lifestyles via walking and bicycling.
- Promote compact mixed-use development along Michigan Street and intersecting side streets in downtown and targeted redevelopment areas to preserve small town character, agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands.

Transportation

Strengths

Argos is conveniently located in the region by having direct access to major highways such as US 31 and SR 10 and close proximity to US 30, as well as direct rail service. It is less than 35 minutes to the South Bend-Mishawaka metro area, 10 minutes to the City of Plymouth, 20 minutes to the City of Rochester, and 30 minutes to the City of Warsaw. Being able to access these major cities in about 30 minutes or less for Plymouth and Rochester provides not only benefits to Argos' residents but commercial businesses and industries for convenient shipping of products.

Although it is often a difficult feat for small rural towns to have amenities and opportunities to support active, healthy lifestyles, Argos has made great strides in accommodating for bicyclists and pedestrians. The Town has approximately eight miles of sidewalk and 1.7 miles of multi-use trails, including the newly constructed quarter-mile (0.25) multi-use trail from Argos Community Park to US 31. The Town also has plans to add an additional 1.7 miles of trails and 1 mile of signed bicycle route on Michigan Street, which will connect residents to Yearick, Memorial and Pond Parks, Argos Community Schools, and downtown. These projects are identified in the Michiana Area Council of Governments' (MACOG) Active Transportation Plan (ATP),

the bicycle and pedestrian element to the Michiana on the Move 2040 Transportation Plan. Additional regional planning efforts identified in the ATP include providing access to the Town of Culver, and Cities of Plymouth and Rochester.

The Town of Argos, in coordination with MACOG, assessed the community's street pavement conditions using the Pavement Assessment Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) in May 2016, which rates each road segment from intersection to intersection on a scale from 1 to 10, in order to develop a Road Asset Management Plan. Roads receiving a score of 1 means the road has structural failures and needs to be reconstructed, whereas 10 means the road has a brand new surface. This Plan identifies the current pavement conditions, likely needed treatments for improvements

and five-year financial implementation plan. Having the Road Asset Management Plan not only benefits the Town to program improvements into their capital improvement plan and annual budget but also provides opportunities to take advantage of state grant monies. One eligible opportunity Argos can receive is INDOT's Community Crossings State Match Grant Program, which helps fund preventative maintenance projects and/or reconstruction projects.

Gateway features symbolize an entry into the community or special district that speaks a sense of place and identity. While Argos does have "Welcome to Argos" signs at its gateways on Michigan Street and SR 10, an opportunity exists to improve the signs including the character, landscaping, and lighting. The Town's Redevelopment Commission is considering developing a



Argos can attract major industries with convenient access off US 31, SR 10, Michigan Street and Rail.

Gateway Plan to recommend enhancements to the current signage and identify additional key entrances to better market Argos at its entryways. Additional gateways will likely involve access from US 31; therefore, will require Argos to coordinate with INDOT, Marshall County, and US 31 Coalition to plan for appropriate access management from US 31 as the state plans for improvements to US 31.

Challenges

Coordination with Regional Partners & Planning Agencies

Coordinating transportation projects across multiple planning agencies is a likely challenge for any community. Argos is no exception, as the town's major safety issue involves the intersection of US 31 and SR 10. This intersection is one of the highest rated crash locations along the US 31 corridor between the Cities of Plymouth and Kokomo. In the last five years, this intersection had 47 crashes. Of the 47 crash occurrences, one resulted in a fatality, six resulted in incapacitating injuries, 12 were non-incapacitating injuries, two (2) resulted in possible injuries, and 11 resulted in property damages. The Town will need to proactively coordinate with INDOT to develop alternative cost-effective improvements to better align with the vision established in this Plan.

One of the concerns heard from the public

regards the lack of public transportation in Argos. While it may not be financially feasible to support fixed-route transit in the Town for reasons of not having enough density and attractions, the Town could pursue partnering with the Marshall County Council on Aging to extend weekly service for elderly and disabled residents.

Support the Inclusion of Alternative Transportation Options

Although Argos is increasing their efforts to better plan for alternative modes of travel, the Town still has ways to go. Much of the areas where sidewalks exist are in the older residential areas and were put in place as development occurred. As a result, the sidewalk network in the residential areas is fragmented or absent. The Town recently completed a Parks Master Plan with a vision of being known as "a town within a park" with connections between parks via multi-use trails, no formal bicycle and pedestrian



New trail connects residents from Argos Community Park to businesses off US 31.

master plan exists that identifies where future trail alignments should occur. Lastly, as the Town begins to grow, the Town will need to work with developers to ensure site designs and proposed land uses integrate mixed use in targeted areas are conducive to biking and walking.

Maintenance & Funding Mechanisms

Adequately maintaining your road infrastructure is a common challenge for any community, especially rural communities, as limited finances are available to incorporate improvements into the capital budget. Financial constraints also hinder a community to conduct routine preventative maintenance treatments ahead of time to avoid costly repairs or reconstruction. Although Argos has a Road Asset Management Plan, it was determined that 33 percent of roads need preventative maintenance treatments and 55 percent are structurally deficient and would require major repairs or reconstruction. While INDOT does offer the Community Crossings grant for communities with asset management plans, it does not guarantee the community will receive the full amount needed to make all the repairs. Argos will have to develop a strategy to be able to fund the difference.

Action Strategies

Coordination with Regional Partners & Planning Agencies

- Continue to support the US 31 Coalition on the remainder of the US 31 improvements in Marshall County from US 30 to the Marshall/Fulton County Line.
- Continue to coordinate with INDOT on transportation improvement projects at US 31 and SR 10.
- Coordinate with INDOT on the vision for the Industrial Park and needed improvements for 17th Road as it serves as the foreseeable entrance to the industrial park.

Support the Inclusion of Alternative Transportation Options

- Adopt and implement an ADA Transition Plan to recommend intersections and streets that lead to community facilities (school and parks) to receive improvements.
- Develop the bicycle and pedestrian improvements as identified in the Michiana on the Move 2040 Transportation Plan:
 - Signed bicycle route along Michigan Street;
 - Shared-use paths along:

- Indiana Avenue from Argos Community Park to 1st Street;
- Argos Community Park south to Argos Pond Park; and,
- Along railroad corridor from Pond Street to Michigan Street.
- Develop a Safe Routes to School Program, including items such as Walking School Buses.
- Encourage developers to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities into developments and ensure site design is interconnected with adjacent uses.
- Expand transportation options for the elderly and disabled traveling within and out of Argos.
- Explore opportunities to redesign Michigan Street into a vibrant, bicycle and pedestrian-friendly corridor.

Maintenance & Funding Mechanisms

- Develop and adopt a Road Asset Management Plan to systematically manage the Town's street network and prioritize road improvements to ensure available funding addresses the higher priorities.
- Pursue Community Crossings Match Grant monies to improve road segments identified in the Road Asset Management Plan.

- Develop an Argos Sidewalk Improvement Program and consider utilizing federal funding to increase connectivity between neighborhoods, parks and activity centers.
- Explore the feasibility to amend the Town's zoning ordinance to encourage developers to install public infrastructure such as trails and sidewalks as a condition of development approval or through a fee-in-lieu.

Promoting Argos' Gateways

- Develop an Argos Gateway Plan that seeks to improve the entrances into Argos from north and southbound Michigan Street, US 31 and SR 10 intersection, 17th and 18th Road.
- Seek grant programs for the installation of gateway signs as identified in the Argos Gateway Plan.

Community Facilities

Strengths

The Town provides quality facilities and services that underlie day-to-day living in Argos. The Town provides many of the necessities needed for daily living – drinking water, wastewater treatment, and electricity. Argos also offers public safety and health services, and many recreational opportunities.

The Town is fortunate to be a full-service utility provider for its residents as it operates and maintains its own water, wastewater, and electric services. This offers many benefits to its residents including convenience, excellence in customer service and quick response to emergencies, and discounted electric rates for large demand users. The Town's water and wastewater systems are operating 50 percent under capacity and are capable of handling growth through the next ten years before it needs to consider expanding its facilities. Argos' electric system is the largest revenue source for the Town and provides service to its residents and select residents outside the corporate limits. The Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA), in partnership with the Town of Argos, developed Marshall County's first alternative energy source via installing nearly 3,000 solar panels at Argos Solar Park. This solar farm will help offset peak demands and keep electric rates low for Argos residents and

businesses as the electric utility system is the Town's most sought after service and largest source of revenue. Electricity generated from the solar park will only be available to Argos customers rather than the greater electric grid system. Additionally, the Town is working with the Rochester Telephone Company to provide high-speed fiber optics to the business community and has plans to expand service to Argos' residents.

Argos has great community assets in influencing prospective residents to locate in Argos. Based on the public input survey, 59 percent of residents rated Argos' parks and 50 percent rated the school system as excellent. The Argos Community School District has been rated as one of Indiana's top school districts over the last several years. Argos Schools provides high-quality service and has a lot to offer its students. Argos Schools offers a low teacher to student ratio for better interaction and student development, advanced placement (AP) college courses, and an Agricultural Program to prepare students seeking a career in Agriculture. The Argos Public Library features over 30,000 materials in circulation and internet access, learning and activity programs, and routinely coordinates with Argos Schools and Fire Department. The Town recognizes how integral recreation is to enhancing Argos' quality of life and residents to have the opportunity to be physically active. Argos Park Board completed their Parks Master Plan that established a vision

of being known as "a Town within a park," and strategic improvements for the next five years to Argos' four parks. The Town



Argos Community Park features a splash pad.



Argos Community Schools is one of Indiana's top rated school systems



Argos Public Library is another great community asset.

also has a joint-use agreement with Argos Schools that allows shared use of public recreational properties.

Challenges

Maintaining Community Facilities & Infrastructure

Argos has many benefits that would support growth in the near future; however, Argos will be challenged with ensuring utility rates are affordable and Town generates sufficient funds to upgrade its utility systems, Argos Community Schools avoids consolidation with other school districts, and expand upon its healthcare and public safety services, and parks and recreation facilities. The Town knows the only way to fund improvements to its system and services is to increase tax revenue sources and charge higher service rates. Likewise, residents agree improvements are needed but are more



Lineman repairing overhead utility line.

reluctant to not approve and/or pay for improvements via tax increases.

Although the overall cost of living is relatively affordable, utility rates in Argos are higher than Bourbon, Bremen, Culver, North Liberty, and Walkerton. The average monthly utility cost for a two-person family household in Argos is \$224.39. Argos' rates are six (6) percent higher than the Town of Bourbon, 12 percent higher than the Town of Bremen, four (4) percent higher than the Towns of Culver and North Liberty, and one (1) percent higher than the Town of Walkerton. Maintenance of utility infrastructure was also mentioned as an issue for the Town as most of the underground piping dates to the 1970s. Town also has been experiencing no new utility customers, which hinders revenue being collected to properly budget for infrastructure improvements.

Although the Argos' school district has frequently been rated as a top school district in the state with career development, advanced college placement opportunities, and high graduation rate, the school district has seen a 16 percent decline in enrollment from 2011 to 2016. This poses a challenge for Argos Schools, as residents are reluctant of possibly consolidating with a nearby school district. This also poses a challenge for the Town as well. Many families are drawn to Argos because of their great school system and consolidation would likely force Argos students to attend a school outside of Argos, which would have a negative effect

on Argos' quality of life. It is imperative the Town works with Argos Schools to secure the district's future. Lastly, funding to manage the operation of Argos Schools is another challenge as the Elementary and Junior-Senior High school buildings are aging, teachers are not receiving an appropriate compensation to retain those employed and be attractable to hire new teachers, and extra-curricular programs are often not valued enough to retain.

The Town does have storm sewer infrastructure but is provided in limited areas of the community. The residential area west of Yearick Street and north of S.R. 10 does not have storm sewer infrastructure and frequently floods during heavy rainfalls.

Expand Argos' Parks System

The Town's Parks Master Plan established the vision of being known as "a Town within a Park," and has developed four parks, with one as community scale facility, but is costly



Entrance into Argos Community Park.

to maintain these facilities when the Parks Department only receives a small percentage of the Town's budget for maintenance. Additionally, the Parks Department is limited in staff, with the select staff also serving in multiple Town functions besides Parks.

Healthcare & Community Safety Protection Services

Argos is fortunate to have a medical center affiliated with a larger healthcare system such as Rochester Woodlawn Hospital. Like many large-scale healthcare systems, Woodlawn Hospital houses many practitioners and services; however, it was identified by the Woodlawn Health Board that their health system needs more specialty physicians and services that are essential to treat common occurrences and be competitive with other regional health care providers like St. Joseph Health System. An example service Woodlawn needs is an "Ear, Nose, and Throat" physician. Lastly, even though Argos has high-quality community protective services with the Town's Police Department and volunteer Fire and EMS Departments, funding the volunteer Fire and EMS are challenging, as these services are not recipients of the Town's capital budget. The Town will need to explore alternative funding mechanisms to ensure equipment and facility stay current with technology, support the staff needed to efficiently serve Argos' community and reduce response times.

Action Strategies

Maintaining Community Facilities & Infrastructure

- Continue to program and budget for capital improvements and maintenance of infrastructure in accordance with the Capital Improvement Program.
 - Conduct regular maintenance of Town's water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure and continue to replace aged infrastructure as conditions warrant.
 - Continue to ensure safe drinking water and reliable services for its residents.
 - Explore and implement cost-effective solutions to add stormwater infrastructure in the northwest region of the Town to properly mitigate flooding issue.
- Partner with the Argos Community School Corporation to develop and implement a School Master Plan to address facility and program improvements and enrollment issues.
- Continue to work with Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA) on the operation of the renewable energy solar field to generate electricity and reduce peak energy demand.

Expand Argos' Parks System

- Continue to maintain Argos' parks and seek recreational grants for maintenance and procuring new equipment to ensure facilities adequately serves residents needs.
- Identify feasible areas to be used or repurposed for new parklands to serve neighborhoods and underserved areas of Argos.
- Explore the feasibility to hire a full-time parks coordinator.

Healthcare & Community Safety Protection Services

- Formally adopt designated helicopter landing zones and explore additional opportunities to reduce Fire/EMS response times and transporting trauma victims.
- Partner with Woodlawn Hospital to explore opportunities to attract specialty healthcare providers (doctors, specialists, technicians, and nurse practitioners) or other related healthcare facilities.

Natural Resources

Strengths

Argos has many natural resources that add to the rural character of the community. The Town recognizes how integral accommodating open space is to enhancing Argos' quality of life. Argos Park Board completed their Parks Master Plan that established a vision of being known as "a Town within a park," and strategic improvements for the next five years to Argos' four parks. There are over 194 acres of wetlands in the Planning Area including the 11-acre wetland in the Argos Community Park that features an observation deck and natural surface walking trail. Argos also features several man-made ponds not only serve as detention areas to manage stormwater but enhances Argos' scenic setting.

The Town values creating ways to reduce its fossil fuel usage. The Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA), in partnership with



Reserved solar energy will help offset peak performance.

the Town of Argos, developed Marshall County's first renewable energy source via installing nearly 3,000 solar panels at Argos Solar Park. This solar farm will help offset peak demands and keep electric rates low for Argos residents and businesses. Best of all, electricity generated from the solar farm will only be available to the Argos community rather than the greater electric grid system.

While skepticism exists between those of the Argos community who want to see growth and farmers resisting new growth, Argos has many opportunities to build upon their value for Agriculture. Argos Community Schools has an Agriculture Building and Program that allows students to gain knowledge in the agricultural business from a classroom setting and hands-on experience. This gives students advanced preparation and learning who are seeking a career in farming, upon graduation. Argos is home to several organic farms such as Sunny Meadow Farm and Farming for Life. Sunny Meadow Farm is an all-natural dairy farm that utilizes environmentally friendly biodynamic farming methods. Farming for Life is a two-acre organic farm devoted to growing fresh organic produce, fermented foods and beverages, and restoring the life of its soils to minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides. Produce foods generated from Farming for Life is sold in many specialty all-natural grocery stores throughout Indiana, including stores located in Elkhart, Kosciusko, Marshall

and St. Joseph Counties.

Challenges

Preserving Environmentally Sensitive Lands & Rural Character

Even though Argos is small in land area, there are many environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and farmlands in the Argos Planning Area. Argos has over 194 acres of wetlands and a drainage ditch the Town needs to be mindful of as it considers to grow in the foreseeable future. These areas provide a unique and scenic setting that enhances the character of the community and could be threatened by future growth and development. The Town needs to hold firm on its balance growth core value by directing new development to first, consider locating inside the Town's corporate limits before planning to develop in the unincorporated areas. New housing can first develop on undeveloped parcels in already established residential areas, as well as targeted development areas where jobs are envisioned as a way to manage the land along the edge of the Town's corporate limits. If the Town becomes completely built-out and needs to expand its municipal boundary, the Town could consider reviewing the current ordinance to allow conservation residential design standards to allow new housing developments while minimizing the negative impacts on surrounding farmlands.

Protecting Water Resources

While Argos does have a stormwater collection system, storm sewer infrastructure is only provided in areas south of S.R. 10 and west of Michigan Street and properties east of Michigan Street are served by drywells. However, properties north of S.R. 10 and west of Michigan Street do not have any collection system. During heavy rainfalls, the areas around Woodland Trail and Westview Court are prone to flood due to no collection system, topography and slowly permeable soils. Argos is not a permitted community with a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) as it does not meet the 7,000 or more population threshold. MS4s is a federal program that helps communities reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff and control runoff from impervious surfaces and land developments through best management practices (BMPs). Argos could develop and implement BMPs to increase the protection of the water quality as it drains to the regional watersheds. Additional

stormwater management strategies Argos does not have in the current zoning ordinance is incorporating low impact development (LID) design standards. LIDs allow a developed site to act like their own natural environment to manage stormwater runoff onsite rather than discharging it offsite to a detention area. LIDs also help improve the overall water quality in surface and groundwater resources, minimize stress on municipal treatment facilities, and reduce flooding.

Protecting water quality in Argos is an ongoing challenge as the Town regulates nine drains, two of which are located in the Town, which equates to 13 linear miles of waterways within the Planning Area. According to IDEM, Argos experienced several violations in the last few years, as the Town did not meet the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitted effluent pollutant concentration limits in its wastewater discharge. Additionally, the Town has had a few sewer

overflows, with the last occurrence in 2013 at Myers Ditch. As the Town looks to grow, Argos will need to strategize how to improve its aging infrastructure to prevent sewer leaks, backups, and overflows.

Strengthen Local Agricultural Opportunities

Although Argos has many agricultural opportunities to build upon including being home to two organic farms, the Town does not have a grocery store or farmers market to capitalize on selling the organic foods produced by the local organic farmers.



The Argos lkes seeks to preserve Argos' natural resources and maintains 17 acres of land.



Agriculture is a major industry in Argos and provides opportunities for the Town to expand upon.

Action Strategies

Preserving Environmentally Sensitive Lands & Rural Character

- Develop and integrate environmental educational opportunities in Town Newsletter, Utility Bill, and/or Argos Community School Program.
- Encourage infill and redevelopment opportunities to support compact development land use policies to preserve small town character, agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands.
- Promote the benefits of environmental protection during site plan reviews the inclusion of green infrastructure, low-impact designs (LID), and green building techniques.

Protecting Water Resources

- Continue to maintain and enhance the Town's drywells and storm drains.
- Explore and implement cost-effective solutions to add stormwater infrastructure in the northwest region of the Town to properly mitigate flooding issue.
- Partner with Marshall County Soils Water Conservation District (Marshall County SWCD) and Natural Resource Conservation Service to engage

adjacent property owners in installing filter strips along surface waters utilizing NRCS programs to protect water quality and aquatic life.

- Develop a local stormwater master plan to systematically manage the Town's storm sewer system and identify Best Management Practices.

Strengthen Local Agricultural Opportunities

- Work with Argos Community School Corporation to build upon the Agricultural Program and explore opportunities for new programs that seek to build a skilled workforce.
- Incentive and work with local farmers to make it easier to market their crops by creating a local farmers market, co-operative foods, and/or grocery store for residents to access fresh, healthy foods.

Cultural Resources

Strengths

The Town of Argos has two historic districts that include buildings and sites of architectural and historical significance. Argos' central business district was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2001. The district includes 21 buildings around the streets of Smith, 1st, Williams, Michigan, Walnut, and Maple Ave, with architecture exemplifying Romanesque and Neoclassical movements. The second historic district is the Argos Chapter of the Izaak Walton League site located off 16th and Hickory Road, which includes 17 acres of fishing ponds and hatcheries, and clubhouse. Additionally, the Izaak Walton League is Argos' only wildlife and land preservation organization.

While Argos has no official historic preservation regulations or guidelines, the Town's Zoning Ordinance does require that new development should not inadvertently

have a negative effect on historic structures, including those listed in the National Register. In addition, any existing natural and historic features should be preserved through careful design. Historic properties in Argos may be eligible to receive federal and state preservation incentives and programs including tax incentives for rehabilitation, easement donation, and historical marker program.

Strong partnerships exist between the Town and public institutions and Argos Community Schools that provide many opportunities to engage and keep its residents entertained. Argos is home to several diverse faith-based institutions categorized into six denominations. Most participate in hosting community events such as special meals and musical programs to enhance Argos residents' spiritual needs and growth. The Argos Public Library offers a variety of services and programs throughout the year to engage Argos school students, build stronger families and community resident's welfare. Woodlawn Hospital, located in

Rochester, Indiana, provides support to Argos Community Schools by offering free physicals to Argos' athletes and medical assistance, if needed, during sporting events, as well as supporting the Marshall County 4-H Fair. Additionally, Argos Community Schools provides an after-school childcare program. The Town is home to four parks of different scales and services. Argos Community Park is the largest facility and holds several community events such as Summer Kick-off Festival, Movie Night and firework display for July 4th. Lastly, Argos has a half-acre community garden space located south of the water tower. Garden features three raised beds and four barrel planters, with plans to add three more raised beds.

Lastly, Argos is fortunate to be home to the Marshall County 4-H Fairgrounds. The 4-H Fair approximately draws in 2,500 to 3,000 visitors per day that benefits Argos' local



The Argos Summer Festival parade is one of the summer highlight events.



Marshall County 4-H Fair

economy. The 4-H Fair features livestock competitions, concerts, horse pull, square dancing tractors, beautiful baby contest, senior citizen day, mud bogging, a color run, and rodeo competition.

Challenges

Preserving Historic Resources

Although Argos has provisions in the zoning ordinance supporting protection of natural and historic features, properties, and buildings, the Town does not have official historic preservation regulations or guidelines to streamline the requirements needed for restoration of properties in the downtown historic district. The Town of Argos and the Redevelopment Commission designated \$40,000 to a Façade Improvement Program to support downtown business owners to restore the exteriors of their historic buildings. Many business owners participated, including the Public Library; however, funds are no longer available for this program. The Town should consider exploring opportunities to continue this program to provide assistance to the remaining properties that did not participate.

Additionally, it was identified during the public engagement process that the Town has a rich history that needs to be preserved and showcased to educate current and future residents; however, the only way to fully understand Argos' history is through

empirical knowledge from a long-time community resident.

Even though historic properties in Argos may be eligible to receive federal and state preservation incentives and programs, the expenditures required by the property owner to meet eligibility requirements still make it difficult for most property owners to take full advantage of them. Likewise, property owners who may be interested in becoming part of the downtown historic district or apply for designation will not pursue designation in fear of not being able to afford necessary improvements and maintenance accompanied by the designation.

Creating Quality Spaces to Promote Social Interaction and Community Pride

Although Argos has made great strides in providing parks and recreational amenities, the overwhelming majority (91 percent) of residents from the public input survey



The Town has been pursuing the old Speedway site to potentially redevelop this site as a public common area.

stated Argos does not have enough arts and tourism entertainment venues and would like to see more public art and gathering spaces. Steering Committee members and residents also expressed Argos needs a community center to provide a space for Argos' youth and have the ability to host community and regional events. Many residents love the fact Argos is home to the Marshall County 4-H Fair. Although more than 2,500 people attend the 4-H Fair, fair events do not attract as diverse an audience as the fair board and Town would like. Additionally, the Town of Argos feels the fairground is not utilized to its full potential as land is available for vendor space.

Marketing Argos' Cultural Resources

Although the Marshall County Convention and Visitors Bureau captures many local events on its website, social media, and Visitor's Guides, the Town would like to see more events and attractions highlighted in these resources to better market Argos. Additionally, the Bureau offers an annual grant to its local communities festivals and events to help fund for marketing materials. Argos wants to market more of its local events and should consider capitalizing on this grant opportunity.

Action Strategies

Preserving Historic Resources

- Educate homeowners of properties eligible for local and/or historic designation about available national and state tax incentives and code enforcement procedures for historic properties.
 - Utilize the federal government's Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit and/or Indiana's Residential Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit to help property owners improve historic properties.
- Identify and protect historic homes worth being designated as a Historic Site or added to the Downtown Historic District.
- Establish a Local History Exhibit in Downtown to preserve historic resources including locally significant historic properties not listed on national or state registries to educate residents and visitors on Argos' history.
- Explore the feasibility to partner with the Indiana Historical Society and/or create a part-time local historic preservation coordinator.

Creating Quality Spaces to Promote Social Interaction and Community Pride

- Seek opportunities to develop accessible community gathering spaces such as plazas, parks, and sidewalks in targeted areas such as the industrial park, TIF districts and former Speedway gas station in downtown to promote social interaction and placemaking.
- Partner with the Marshall County 4H Board to maximize the use of the fairgrounds beyond the annual Marshall County 4H Fair, this may include providing leasable space or new building that can be designated as an Argos Community Center.
- Explore opportunities to incorporate public art into Argos' parks and downtown.
- Explore opportunities to redesign Michigan Street into a vibrant, bicycle and pedestrian-friendly corridor.

Marketing Argos' Cultural Resources

- Pursue Marshall County Convention of Visitors Bureau's (CVB) grant opportunity to fund local marketing materials for community events.
- Continue the efforts and grow Argos' festivals and community events, as well as encourage neighborhood-

based activities that enhance Argos' quality of life.



Chapter 4: **Building Argos**

While the vision statement describes the type of place Argos wants to become, this chapter provides the framework for Argos' future; illustrated by the Future Land Use Map (**Figure 4.1**), Proposed Transportation Network Map (**Figure 4.2**), and Action Program. Also contained in this chapter is a course of action to carry out the Plan; organized by Town administration, implementation tools, Town revenue sources, and potential funding sources.

The summary of what Argos is doing well, the major challenges, and action strategies as they relate to each of the Town elements will remain in the previous chapter to keep this Plan easy to read and digest. Moreover, the specific details on the existing conditions for each element are located in **Appendix A**.

Future Growth

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and Proposed Transportation Network applies the vision statement that illustrates where the Town would like to see growth and the desired manner to accommodate new residents, jobs, parks, and transportation infrastructure over the planning horizon. The FLUM will serve as the framework to guide zoning and development decisions. Existing land use patterns and targeted development areas served as the basis for the development of the Town's FLUM,

see **Figure 4.1**. The series of maps was developed based on the input from the public survey and planning session with the Steering Committee. Proposed growth was prioritized into two scenarios:

- **First** – Focuses on the Town's core value of balancing growth. Growth prioritizes land management to first focus on infill, redevelopment, and preservation within the Town of Argos.
- **Second** – Assuming that Argos was built out, the second scenario focuses on strategic land expansion to accommodate additional employment and residential development.

Figure 4.2 illustrates where the Town plans to accommodate for expanded transportation network including bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Character Areas

The FLUM distinguishes the Town as character areas to guide zoning and development decisions to achieve the Town's vision over the planning horizon. Distinguishing the Town as character areas will help the Town to focus on the quality and character of the future land use, explore opportunities to integrate mixed land uses where appropriate, identify broad themes rather than parcel level and promote flexibility to allow zoning to implement the vision at the parcel level. The FLUM is

comprised of eight character areas, with descriptions of appropriate land uses.



Downtown – Downtown is characterized by a compact mix of uses with the highest permitted density and height restrictions. Mixed-use structures should focus on locating retail, restaurant, and service uses on the ground floor and office or residential uses on the upper floors where appropriate. Development should be encouraged along Michigan and Walnut Streets and intersecting side streets. Street design should support complete street initiatives to accommodate all modes of travel. Building styles should support place-making initiatives with buildings oriented towards the street, built up or close to the sidewalk, on-street parking and surface parking lots in the rear, so as to bolster interaction and activity on sidewalks. Downtown can also contain parks or common plaza area to reinforce a sense of place.



Photo: Eddy Street Commons, South Bend, IN

PUD – Planned Unit Development (PUD) is a master plan development that promotes flexibility in land regulations, encourages a mix of land uses and unique harmonious site design, with some similarities in character as Downtown. The PUD character area should include a mix of single-family and multi-family housing and price points, neighborhood-scale commercial uses, religious institutions, and open space. This character area is envisioned for properties off Marshall Road between the Colonial Heights subdivision and Michigan Street.

Neighborhood Living – Neighborhood living represents the largest character area in the Town of Argos. Uses are primarily single-family detached homes with a range of other housing types such as single-family attached homes and multi-family units. Although residents prefer a separation between uses, a mix of neighborhood-scale uses is provided to support the needs of the residents living in this area, which include



Photo: Town of Argos

parks, schools, and religious institutions. Buildings are typically oriented towards the local street with quick access to Michigan Street and S.R. 10. Street design should support bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to commercial areas, schools, and other civic uses, and parks. Neighborhood character should be protected from encroachment from other types of uses; however, a new development near this area should provide an appropriate transition in scale and use.

Neighborhood Commercial – Neighborhood commercial area is envisioned at the intersection of Michigan Street and Marshall Road. This area is a small, low-impact commercial node that provides goods and services to residents in adjacent residential areas. Similarly, to the Neighborhood Living area, future development should focus on improving access and bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between commercial and residential uses and clustering compatible



Photo: Heritage Square, Granger, IN

uses to provide an appropriate transition to the surrounding residential areas.

Community Commercial – Community commercial represents the Town’s tax increment financing (TIF) districts, located off U.S. 31 and S.R. 10. This area is envisioned to contain large-scale commercial uses to accommodate single and some multi-story buildings with medium to high-intensity development, and surface parking lots. Structures are typically multi-tenant strip centers with standalone buildings to serve the community’s shopping needs, as well as provisions for office spaces. A Large retailer or grocery store would typically anchor strip centers. Site designs should be cohesive with joint access between uses for improved connectivity and limit access onto U.S. 31, as well as shared parking to reduce the number of surface lots. Additionally, site designs should support a walking and biking environment with connections between the sidewalk and front door, and convenient

access to adjacent residential areas via multi-use trail.

Employment Center – Employment center represents the identified area the Town wants to attract living-wage jobs. Currently, 74-acres are designated as the Town’s industrial park. This area contains flex space buildings, office space, manufacturing, warehousing and other freight-dependent uses. Employment centers allow Argos residents to stay and work in the local area. They are located near major transportation routes for high visibility and convenient access to U.S. 31, S.R. 10, and U.S. 30, and rail service. Location for employment should first be concentrated in land within the Town corporate limits. Land in this character area should be “shovel ready” and supportive for future development to be economically competitive in the larger region.

Emerging Employment & Residential–

These emerging character areas are envisioned to serve the Town’s future housing and employment needs if the Town were built out. It is the Town’s core value to balance growth by focusing on infill and redevelopment inside the Town corporate limits before expanding outwards. Currently, these areas are served by agriculture use, but the Town is working with farmers to develop strategies to accommodate future growth while conserving farmlands. The emerging employment areas are consistent with the character and allowable uses in the employment center, as it is an expansion of the employment center area. The emerging residential areas should be consistent with the character of neighborhood living, with the exception of incorporating conservation design standards to minimize the effect on farmlands while allowing low-density residential development.

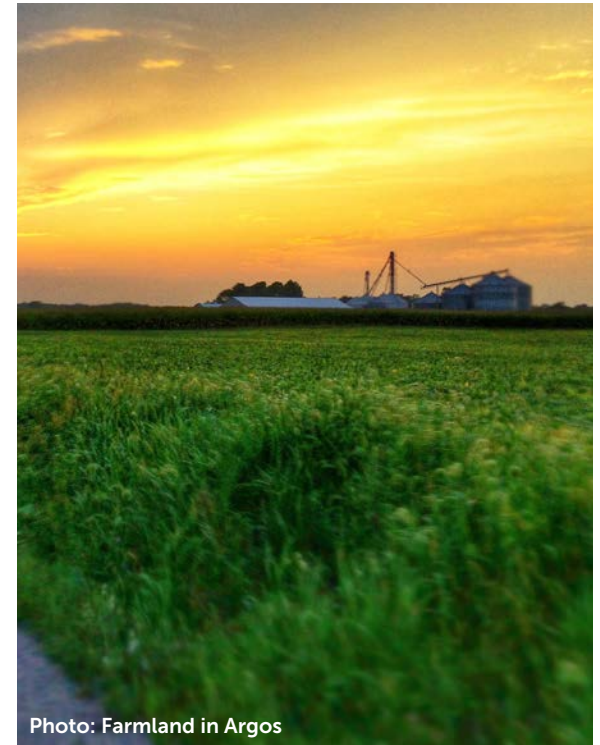


Photo: Farmland in Argos



Photo: Industrial Shell Building, Plymouth, IN

Rural Management – Areas designated as rural are intended to remain as rural as they are for the primary purpose of producing crops and raising livestock. Although isolated rural residential properties exist, non-agriculture uses should be limited in scale and compatible with agricultural uses. This area should preserve open space and environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands and waterways.

Figure 4.1: Future Land Use

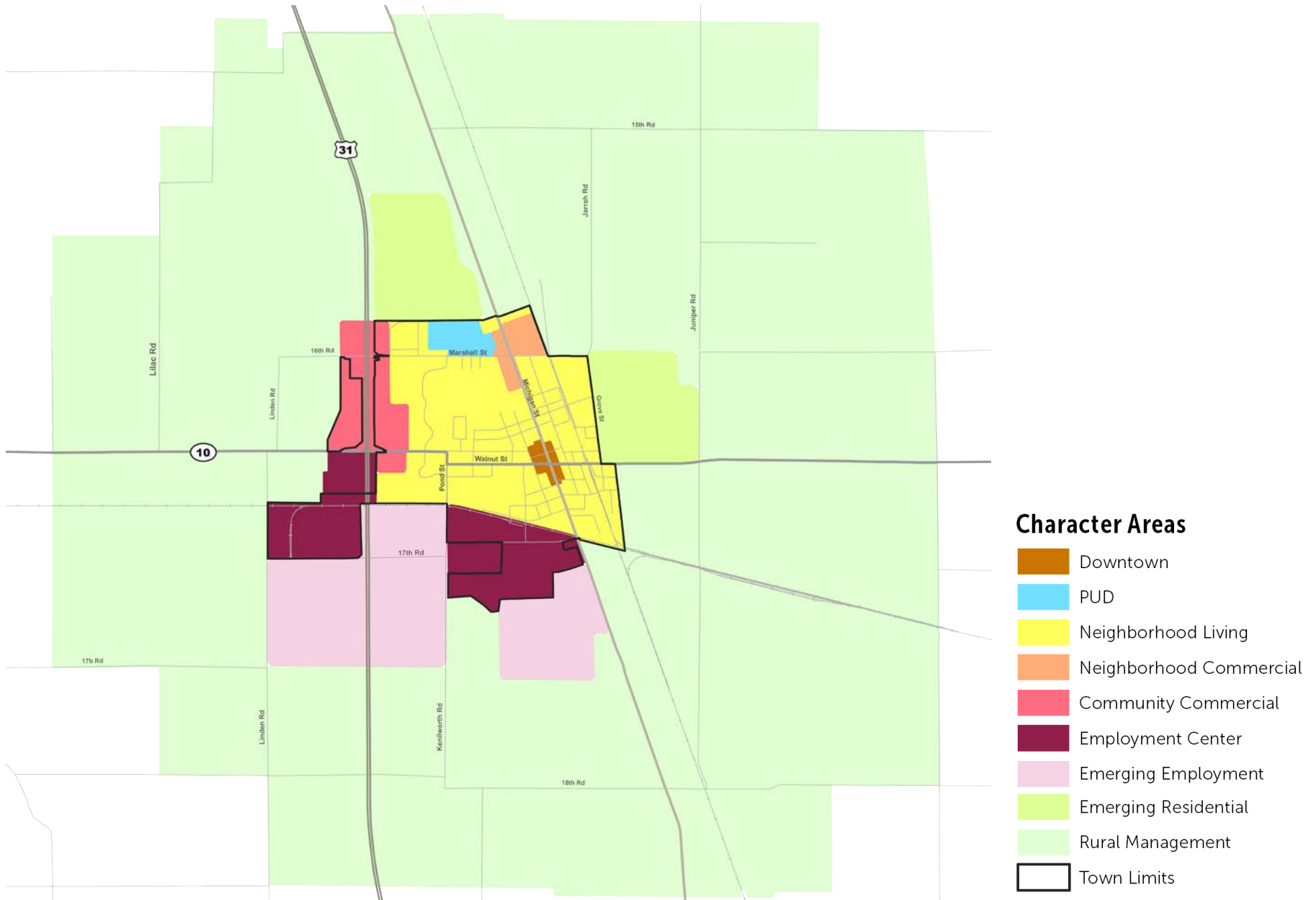
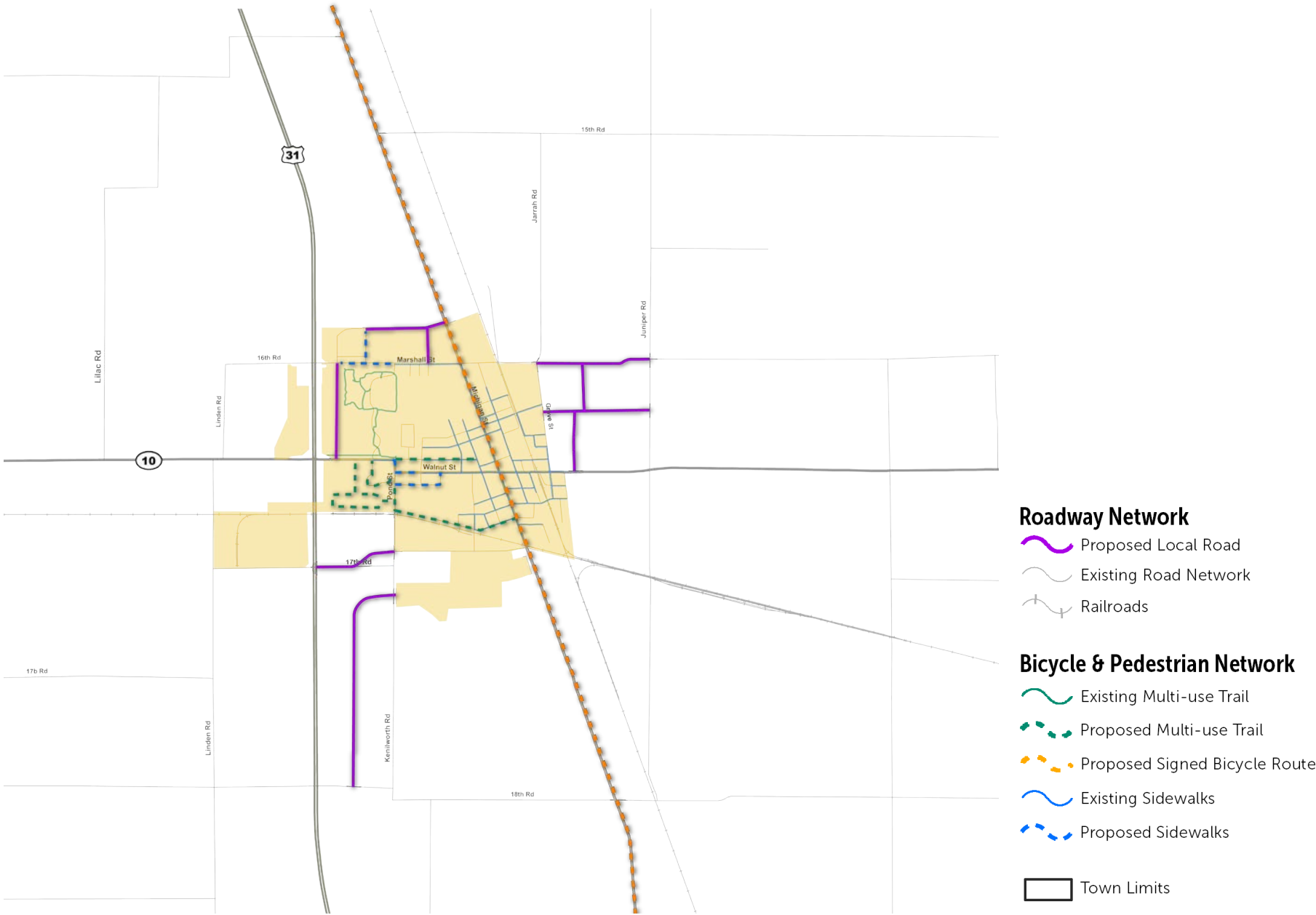


Figure 4.2: Proposed Transportation Network



Action Program

This section summarizes how the major themes of the Plan tie together. These major themes include the community's **Vision** and **Core Values**, element **Strengths, Challenges**, and **Action Strategies**.

The following **Action Program** lists the action strategies the Town can use to achieve their vision. The Action Program is organized by short and long-term strategies. It includes the department and/or organization responsible for implementing the strategy. Additionally, the Action Program indicates the higher priority strategies the Town should first focus on in implementing the Plan.

Argos' core values are the frameworks of seeing the vision come to life. Core values were a culmination of the interrelationships between the major challenges as they relate to the community elements. The **Action Program** aligns the strategies with the core value(s) it reinforces. This is graphically represented by the core value icons introduced in **Chapter 2**.

Action Program Key

Core Values



Enhanced Quality of Life



Promoting Economic Prosperity & Vitality



Encouraging Balanced Growth







Expanding Transportation Choices

Priority Strategies





















The Steering Committee met to review the Action Program and identified the higher priority strategies that should receive the strongest consideration for implementation in the next five years.

Action Program

| Core Value(s) | Action Strategy | Responsible Department or Organization | Priority |
|--|--|--|---|
| Short-term | | | |
|  | Coordinate with the Marshall County Building Commissioner and other incorporated Towns to develop and enforce unified code enforcement ordinance. | Marshall County Planning Department |  |
|  | Partner with Argos Community Schools and community groups to recruit student volunteers to perform neighborhood clean ups, paint homes, participate in Habitat for Humanity projects, and other similar community-based projects. | Argos Community Schools |  |
|   | Incentivize housing developers and new homeowners with tax abatements for construction of new affordable single-family homes and other housing types (in targeted areas) to improve housing choice for all types of residents and age cohorts. | Town Council, Home Developers and Marshall County EDC |  |
|   | Review the Town's Zoning Ordinance to incorporate "green" building techniques and low impact designs (LID) practices for new and rehabilitated construction. | Town Plan Commission and Marshall County Planning Department | |
|  | Increase business attraction to the Industrial Park by erecting a shell building to better attract prospective industries rather than raw land. | Town Council, Argos Redevelopment Commission and Marshall County EDC |  |
|   | Reevaluate the lifespan of the current TIF districts and how to market for future development. | Town Council, Argos Redevelopment Commission and Marshall County EDC | |
|    | Develop a Downtown Revitalization Plan and continue the Downtown Façade Grant Program. | Town Council and Argos Redevelopment Commission |  |
|   | Seek to participate in Smart Growth America's Small-Scale Manufacturing and Placed-Based Economic Development Technical Assistance Program to learn how to become a vibrant and livable community. | Argos Redevelopment Commission |  |
|   | Develop an Argos Main Street Program and apply for the Indiana Main Street Community designation to be eligible for funding opportunities from the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) to facilitate strategic improvements for downtown. | Town Council and Argos Redevelopment Commission |  |
|   | Implement a "Doing Business in Argos" Program to better support the business climate and guides new business owners through the process of starting up a business in Argos. | Argos Redevelopment Commission |  |























Action Program

| Core Value(s) | Action Strategy | Responsible Department or Organization | Priority |
|---|---|--|---|
| Short-term | | | |
|  | Implement a “Shop Local” incentive program and marketing campaign. | Argos Redevelopment Commission |  |
|  | Appoint Plan Commission members to meet on a regular basis to oversee the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance. | Town Council |  |
|  | Work with Marshall County Planning Director to review the current zoning ordinance to consider amending the text to include conservation residential design standards, a downtown overlay district, fee-in-lieu for public infrastructure, low impact design (LID) and green building policies. | Town Council, Town Plan Commission and Marshall County Planning Department |  |
|  | Adopt a Road Asset Management Plan to systematically manage the Town’s street network and prioritize road improvements to ensure available funding addresses the higher priorities. | Town Street Department, Town Council and MACOG |  |
|  | Pursue Community Crossings Match Grant monies to improve road segments identified in the Road Asset Management Plan. | Town Council and Town Street Department |  |
|  | Adopt and implement an ADA Transition Plan to recommend intersections and streets that lead to community facilities (school and parks) to receive improvements. | Town Street Department and MACOG |  |
|  | Coordinate with INDOT on transportation improvement projects at US 31 and SR 10. | Town Council, INDOT and Marshall County Commissioners |  |
|  | Continue to support the US 31 Coalition on the remainder of the US 31 improvements in Marshall County from US 30 to the Marshall/Fulton County Line. | Marshall County Commissioners and Town Council | |
|  | Coordinate with INDOT on the vision for the Industrial Park and needed improvements for 17th Road as it serves as the entrance to the industrial park. | Town Council, Town Street Department, Marshall County EDC and INDOT | |
|  | Partner with the Argos Community School Corporation to develop and implement a School Master Plan to address facility and program improvements and enrollment issues. | Argos Community Schools and Town Council |  |














Action Program

| Core Value(s) | Action Strategy | Responsible Department or Organization | Priority |
|-------------------|---|--|----------|
| Short-term | | | |
| | Continue to work with Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA) on the operation of the renewable energy solar field to generate electricity and reduce peak energy demand. | Town Utility Department | |
| | Continue to maintain Argos' parks and seek recreational grants for maintenance and procuring new equipment to ensure facilities adequately serves residents needs. | Argos Parks Board | |
| | Identify feasible areas to be used or repurposed for new parklands to serve neighborhoods and underserved areas of Argos. | Argos Parks Board, Argos Redevelopment Commission and Town Council | |
| | Formally adopt designated helicopter landing zones and explore additional opportunities to reduce Fire/EMS response times and transporting trauma victims. | Argos Volunteer Fire & EMS Departments and Town Council | |
| | Continue the efforts and grow Argos' festivals and community events, as well as encourage neighborhood-based activities that enhances Argos' quality of life | Argos Parks Board and Town Council | |
| | Pursue Marshall County Convention of Visitors Bureau's (CVB) grant opportunity to fund local marketing materials for community events. | Argos Parks Board and Marshall County CVB | |














Action Program

| Core Value(s) | Action Strategy | Responsible Department or Organization | Priority |
|---|---|---|---|
| Long-term | | | |
|  | Seek grant opportunities from the Indiana Owner-Occupied Rehab Program and Federal Community Development Block Grant Program on improving dilapidated homes. | Town Council | |
|  | Create a Town of Argos Housing & Neighborhood Committee to oversee the community's housing and neighborhood needs. | Town Council | |
|  | Educate prospective homeowners on available programs, incentives, and financial assistance. | Real Estate Agents and Home Developers | |
|  | Pursue incentives that promote the construction of energy efficient homes. | Argos Redevelopment Commission | |
|  | Partner with the Argos Community School Corporation to include classes for high school students to learn about what it means to be a homeowner or renter, financial requirements, home maintenance, and how to avoid foreclosure. | Argos Community Schools |  |
|   | Recruit targeted industries that offer higher paying wages. | Argos Redevelopment Commission and Marshall County EDC |  |
|   | Invest in necessary infrastructure improvements on underserved sites within the Town limits and new developable sites in the unincorporated areas to ensure the needs for future population and employment are adequately met. | Town Utility Department and Town Council |  |
|   | Work with the Rochester Telephone Company to extend their fiber optic network to remaining businesses and residents within the Town limits. | Town Utility Department and Rochester Telephone Company |  |
|    | Conduct an economic market analysis to explore the feasibilities of attracting new local retail businesses such as boutiques, cafés and deli, pharmacy, and/or grocery store in targeted development and redevelopment areas. | Argos Redevelopment Commission and Marshall County EDC | |
|    | Direct new industries and professional offices to locate within the targeted development and redevelopment areas, where adequate infrastructure exists, to promote infill development and increase employment opportunities for Argos' residents. | Town Plan Commission and Marshall County EDC |  |







Action Program

| Core Value(s) | Action Strategy | Responsible Department or Organization | Priority |
|---|--|---|---|
| Long-term | | | |
|  | Encourage infill and redevelopment opportunities in targeted development areas that place residential, commercial and retail, and industrial businesses in proximity to each other to promote active, healthy lifestyles via walking and bicycling. | Town Plan Commission | |
|  | Promote compact mixed-use development along Michigan Street and intersecting side streets to help promote downtown as a vibrant destination. | Town Plan Commission, Argos Redevelopment Commission, Town Street Department and Town Council | |
|  | Seek opportunities to develop accessible community gathering spaces such as plazas, parks, and sidewalks in targeted areas such as the industrial park, TIF districts and former Speedway gas station in downtown to promote social interaction and placemaking. | Town Council, Argos Redevelopment Commission and Argos Parks Board |  |
|  | Align land use and transportation planning decisions to ensure new developments appropriately connect to the existing road network and dedicated rights-of-way can sufficiently accommodate planned streets. | Town Plan Commission | |
|  | Promote regional planning and increased coordination between Marshall County, Marshall County EDC, OCRA, IHCD, IDEM, MCSWCD, INDOT, and MACOG to address major housing, environmental, and transportation challenges. | Town Council | |
|  | Develop the bicycle and pedestrian improvements identified in the Michiana on the Move 2040 Transportation Plan including signed bicycle route on Michigan Street and shared-use paths. | Town Council, Town Street Department, Argos Parks Board and MACOG | |
|  | Develop an Argos Sidewalk Improvement Program and consider utilizing federal funding to increase connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, and activity centers. | Town Street Department |  |
|  | Encourage developers to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities into developments and ensure site design is interconnected with adjacent uses. | Town Plan Commission | |
|  | Expand transportation options for the elderly and disabled traveling within and out of Argos | Marshall County Council on Aging and Town Council | |
|  | Develop an Argos Gateway Plan that seeks to improve the entrances into Argos from north and southbound Michigan Street, US 31 and SR 10 intersection, 17th and 18th Road, and identify available funding opportunities for installation of signs. | Argos Redevelopment Commission, Marshall County Commissioners and INDOT |  |

Action Program

| Core Value(s) | Action Strategy | Responsible Department or Organization | Priority |
|---|--|--|---|
| Long-term | | | |
|  | <p>Conduct regular maintenance of Town's water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure, and replace aging infrastructure as conditions warrant to ensure safe drinking water and reliable services for its residents</p> | Town Utility Department | |
|  | <p>Explore the feasibility to hire a full-time parks coordinator.</p> | Argos Parks Board and Town Council | |
|  | <p>Partner with Woodlawn Hospital to explore opportunities to attract specialty healthcare providers (doctors, specialists, technicians, and nurse practitioners) or other related healthcare facilities.</p> | Woodlawn Hospital, Marshall County EDC and Town Council | |
|  | <p>Develop and integrate environmental educational opportunities in Town Newsletter, Utility Bill, and/or Argos Community School Program.</p> | Town Utility Department and Town Clerk |  |
|  | <p>Partner with Marshall County Soils Water Conservation District (Marshall County SWCD) and Natural Resource Conservation Service to engage adjacent property owners to install filter strips along surface waters utilizing NRCS programs to protect water quality and aquatic life.</p> | Marshall County SWCD and Marshall County Planning Department | |
|  | <p>Develop a local stormwater master plan to systematically manage the Town's storm sewer system and identify Best Management Practices.</p> | Town Utility Department | |
|  | <p>Explore and implement cost-effective solutions to add stormwater infrastructure in the northwest region of the Town to properly mitigate flooding issue.</p> | Town Utility Department | |
|  | <p>Work with Argos Community School Corporation to build upon the Agricultural Program and explore opportunities for new programs that seek to build a skilled workforce.</p> | Argos Community School Corporation, Marshall County EDC and Argos Redevelopment Commission |  |
|  | <p>Incentivize and work with local farmers to make it easier to market their crops by creating a local farmers market, co-operative foods, and/or grocery store for residents to access fresh, healthy foods.</p> | Town Council and Marshall County EDC |  |
|  | <p>Identify and protect historic homes worth being designated as an Historic Site or added to the Downtown Historic District.</p> | Argos Redevelopment Commission | |

Action Program

| Core Value(s) | Action Strategy | Responsible Department or Organization | Priority |
|---|---|--|---|
| Long-term | | | |
|  | Educate eligible property owners about available national and state rehabilitation tax credits to help improve historic properties. | Town Council and Argos Redevelopment Commission | |
|  | Explore the feasibility to partner with the Indiana Historical Society and/or create a part-time local historic preservation coordinator. | Town Council | |
|  | Establish a Local History Exhibit in Downtown to preserve historic resources including locally significant historic properties not listed on national or state registries to educate residents and visitors on Argos' history. | Town Council and Public Library | |
|  | Partner with the Marshall County 4H Board to maximize the use of the fairgrounds beyond the annual Marshall County 4H Fair, which may include providing leasable space or new building that can be designated as an Argos Community Center. | Town Council, Marshall County 4H Board and Marshall County Commissioners |  |
|  | Explore opportunities to incorporate public art into Argos' parks and downtown. | Argos Parks Board | |

Implementing the Plan

The Argos Comprehensive Plan serves as the policy document to guide growth and development over the planning horizon. It sets a general framework for local decision-making and provides direction for future planning and zoning efforts, budgeting priorities and coordination with other public and private organizations. This chapter outlines the roles for the Town of Argos and Planning Commission, as well as implementation tools necessary to carry out the listed strategies in achieving the vision.

Role of the Town Government

The comprehensive plan should be used on a daily basis by Town staff, committees, and Planning Commission to review and evaluate site plan proposals are consistent with the Plan's vision, prioritize capital expenditures for new facilities and infrastructure, and encourage private investment. Town Council should refer to the Plan when approving development proposals and capital expenditures that affect the community.

Maintain Open Dialogue with Community

Although the Argos community was involved through the planning process to help create a cohesive vision, develop the core values and strategies that will make Argos a better place to live and work, community involvement should not stop

there. Maintaining an open dialogue and consistently encouraging community involvement after the Plan is adopted is a key for successful implementation. The Town should be on the forefront actively communicating the Town's vision and action strategies to the community to foster a sense of pride and ownership in the Town in which they live in and unity to achieve the vision. Simple procedures to communicate with the greater community could be to make sure the Plan is accessible online, hard copies are available at the municipal building or library, routinely update the Town's website, regularly inform the public through the newsletter of development and policy changes, as well as seek input when evaluating the comprehensive plan.

Serve as Lead Coordinator with other public agencies, organizations and private entities

Along with continuing communication with the community, the Town should also lead and coordinate implementation efforts with other public and private organizations to increase the opportunity of implementing the action strategies. For this reason, including responsible parties in the Action Program eliminates the question of who is going to implement the strategy. While the Town may not ultimately be the responsible party to implement the strategy, the Town should be the lead coordinator in contacting the responsible party to start the process. In doing so will cultivate long-

lasting partnerships for future projects and programs.

Documenting Progress

Regular evaluation and monitoring of the Argos Comprehensive Plan is another key component for successful implementation. If the plan is to be a valuable resource to the Town, the Town must establish a method to measure the successes and challenges in achieving the vision and implementing the action strategies. Continual monitoring on the progress of implementing the Plan will keep key decision-makers such as Town Council and Plan Commission, and Town staff, partnering organizations and the public informed about the Plan's effectiveness. Additionally, monitoring the Plan will help identify what aspects of proposed projects and programs are working and areas that need improvements. This contributes to the Plan being a living document, as the Town can review and update the Plan every five years to stay current with changing community needs and resources that come available.

Plan Evaluation

The Argos Comprehensive Plan lists recommended action strategies over the planning horizon along with the foreseeable time for implementation. In order to document the progress of the Plan, two critical components must be in place. While it may not be feasible to

implement all strategies within the planning horizon, Town Council and staff should take the identified high priority strategies from the Action Program and create a **Five Year Performance Program**. The Five Year Performance Program will serve as one of two components for monitoring the Plan; the second is an **Annual Progress Report**.

Five Year Performance Program

The Action Program identifies the overall strategies, the next step is to create a Five Year Performance Program that identifies the necessary steps to accomplish a strategy. The Five Year Performance Program should include:

- Specific action steps for each priority strategy (project or program) to be undertaken;
- A timeline to begin work on each action step (e.g. Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 etc.); and
- An indication of the department and/or organization responsible for implementation.

Following the Five Year Performance Program, the Argos Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed and updated every five years to determine the overall progress and response to arising issues or new community needs and aspirations. This leads to the second component for monitoring the Plan.

Annual Progress Report

Along with the Five Year Performance Program, the Town should monitor the performance of implemented strategies by using an Annual Progress Report. Performance monitoring provides an assessment of whether strategies that have been implemented in past fiscal years are achieving the Town's vision. For instance, when a specific strategy is implemented, performance monitoring will assess the results of the strategy. The Annual Progress Report should include:

- A list of implemented projects or programs from the Five Year Priority Action Program;
- Description of the implementation status and results stating whether the projects or programs are working or not working;
- If a project or program is not working, evaluate the need to continue and/or identify ways to make it better, with consideration by Town Council;
- List any completed projects in the current year; and,
- Next fiscal year's work program.

The Annual Progress Report should be presented to the Plan Commission to hear their considerations and submittal to Town Council at the end of each fiscal year.

At the end of the fifth year, the Annual

Progress Reports should be documented as one report to assess the overall progress of the Five Year Performance Program and determine necessary updates to the Argos Comprehensive Plan to respond to arising issues or community needs and aspirations.

One suggestion the Town could undertake in creating the Annual Progress Report is holding at least one joint Town Council-Planning Commission Workshop per year to assess what happened the previous year, identify what needs to be done in the current year, and brainstorm ways to implement the added strategies in the current year.

Role of the Plan Commission

In Argos, as elsewhere, it is the Plan Commission's primary responsibility to prepare and adopt the Comprehensive Plan and recommend it to Town Council for adoption. The Plan Commission are trustees of the Town's future and have a responsibility to help prevent growth patterns that may result in the wasteful and inefficient use of public resources.

The Plan Commission is also responsible for preparing, overseeing, and making recommendations to amend the Argos Zoning Ordinance; more details on the purpose for zoning ordinance are under the Implementation Tools section of this chapter. The Plan Commission will spend most of their time hearing zoning petitions, approve or deny proposals to subdivide land, and review and approve site plans to ensure

development and land use comply with the Town's Zoning Ordinance and vision from the Comprehensive Plan. Likewise, make recommendations to the Town Council on proposals to amend the text of the zoning ordinance and/or amend the zoning map following a rezoning. Other duties for consideration may include overseeing the Town's annexations and utility extensions policy; assist the Argos Redevelopment Commission in recommending revitalization areas; neighborhood revitalization; location for new public facilities; school districting; and improvements or extension of public rights-of-way.

Implementation Tools

Zoning Ordinance

The purpose of a zoning ordinance is to govern the subdividing of lands, regulate the uses on the land in terms of scale, intensity, and appearance, and implement the land use policies from the Comprehensive Plan. Likewise, the zoning map and regulations should reflect the vision of the future land use map. Zoning is an important regulatory tool for implementing the Town's vision by establishing the types of uses to be allowed on specific properties and prescribe the character and intensity of permitted development. It is one of the Plan Commission's primary responsibilities to oversee the Town's various development ordinances and ensure they are

concurrent with the Comprehensive Plan.

While the Comprehensive Plan is a guiding policy document for growth and development in the community and setting guidelines for the quality, character, and intensity of new development over a long-term, the zoning ordinance operates at a parcel level dealing with development on a daily basis to ensure the vision of the Comprehensive Plan is carried out. However, the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning do not always operate harmoniously as they are accompanied by constant changes in real estate market, community desires, and/or local decision makers.

Areas to review and make improvements, if necessary, include modify the zoning map and district standards to better reflect the future land use map; revise the plan development process to allow additional flexibility in regards to housing density and mixed-use developments; monitor impacts on stormwater management and use of best management practices (BMPs); requirements for developers in land dedications and exactions; and, define the type and scale of new development to require a traffic impact study.

Capital Improvement Plan

Like the Zoning Ordinance, the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is another implementation tool in carrying out the Plan's action strategies. The Town uses the CIP to plan, budget, and finance the purchase

and/or construction of capital improvement projects within a 10-year period. Eligible projects include constructing large capital infrastructures such as roads or utilities, Town facilities, and parks, equipment or other fixed assets. All projects should then be reviewed, prioritized, and programmed with cost estimates and funding mechanisms, into the Town's capital budget for each fiscal year. A capital budget is the Town's annual budget that lists projects to be implemented in the current fiscal year. Therefore, the CIP is updated annually to reflect shifting priorities, emerging issues, changes in technology, and alterations from projected revenue. The CIP allows the Town to weigh project costs and benefits, and analyze the fiscal impacts to prioritize for the most beneficial public improvements while staying within budget constraints.

It is important to note that projects listed in the CIP are not guaranteed to make it into the annual capital budget. Therefore, the Town should analyze all of the projects included in the CIP each year during an update. Additionally, the review of the Comprehensive Plan update should correspond with the preparation of the Town's annual capital budget and CIP. This ensures resources are aligned with proposed changes in the upcoming fiscal year.

Town Revenue Sources

Many of the action strategies in the Comprehensive Plan can be implemented through administrative decision-making or Town funded programs, details provided under the Town Revenue Sources section. However, others may require outside assistance, in which case the Town should proactively search for external grant opportunities.

The Town of Argos utilizes several revenue sources to finance capital improvement projects. These includes:

General Fund

The Town's General Fund accounts for the revenue collected from all Town enacted funding sources including property taxes, utility fees, and any permits. The General Fund pays for personnel and department operations, with a small percentage available for capital improvements. The amount used for capital improvements is set by Town Council prior adoption of the annual capital budget.

Utility Fees

The Town of Argos has the advantage of being the Town's utility provider for water, wastewater, and electric. These services are financed and operated at the expense of its utility customers through user fees, in which the collected revenues is used to cover the

operation and maintenance costs, pay off debt from utility bonds, as well as construct small-scale projects. More details on the Town's utility services are in the Community Facilities Element in **Appendix A**.

Land Exactions

An Impact fee is one land exaction tool the Town could use to implement public infrastructure and facilities. Impact fees are intended to require developers to pay a fee, prior to acquiring building permits, to help offset the cost impacts from the new development in order for the Town to efficiently serve the community. These fees are established based on the capital and operation effects of new development. Currently, the Town does not have impact fee policies but could review and determine the feasibility to enact impact fees for fire, stormwater, transportation, and parks and recreation facilities. Additionally, the Argos Community School District revenue is separate from the Town's as the School District has their own special tax district.

Fee-in-Lieu's is another land exaction tool to implement public infrastructure and facilities. They operate differently than impact fees in that they are not based on the impacts of development, but the requirement for developers to construct public infrastructure or facilities to serve the area. Fees can be used as subject to final site plan approval, and the Town may work with a developer to pay a fee-in-lieu

of constructing the public infrastructure or facility so long as the infrastructure or facility is proportionate and reasonably tied to the development area. Example fee-in-lieu's can be applied for constructing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and park spaces.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is another financing tool to pay for Town-owned public improvements such as streets, sidewalks, utilities, landscaping, parks, buildings, and transit facilities within designated redevelopment areas. Within designated TIF districts, any incremental or new tax revenues are dedicated to funding public improvements over a set period after paying off previously issued TIF debt or bonds. The Town has two TIF districts located off U.S. 31 and S.R. 10. More details on the Town's TIF districts are in the Economic Development Element in **Appendix A**.

Public-Private Partnerships

A public-private partnership (PPP) is a business relationship between a private-sector company and a government agency for the purpose of completing public projects. PPPs can be used to finance, build, and operate capital projects. The Town has partnered with the Marshall County Economic Development Corporation to acquire 74-acres of land off 17th Road to serve as the Town's new industrial park in hopes to bring in more living-wage jobs.

The Town also partnered with the Indiana Municipal Power Agency to construct Marshall County's first renewable solar energy park off Linden Road to help offset peak electric demands and lower rates in the Town. More details on the industrial park are in the Economic Development Element in **Appendix A**.

Potential Funding Opportunities

There are a number of grant sources available to the Town of Argos to enhance transportation infrastructure, support new community facilities and community revitalization efforts. Many of the sources described below require communities to have an adopted Comprehensive Plan or specific master plan for the applicable functional area, in which case the Argos Comprehensive Plan can be used to leverage grant applications. Identified grants in the following sections are not an exhaustive list but are potential sources the Town could utilize in the next five years. Additionally, the Town of Argos should routinely work with other public agencies to offset project development costs, especially those having regional impacts. Additional funding sources are provided in the element existing conditions documents located in **Appendix A**.

Transportation Funding

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) administers the federal transportation program. The Town of Argos can apply for federal funds through a regular call for projects. The Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) can assist the Town to plan and apply for transportation funding through INDOT and other state programs.

Community Crossings Match Grant Program

On March 23, 2016, Indiana Governor, Mike Pence, signed House Bill 1001 and Senate Bill 67 into law, which made available additional funding to incentivize local governments to begin inventorying, assessing and improving their transportation assets, such as roads and bridges. This legislation provides funding to local governments for eligible road and bridge projects at a 50/50 match. Eligible projects include preventative maintenance, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of road and bridge infrastructure. The requisite for eligibility status is having an approved asset management plan that is compliant with the State's standards. MACOG assisted the Town in developing their road asset management plan. Argos will be eligible to apply for Community Crossing monies in the next program cycle in summer 2017.

Small Communities Sidewalk Program

Although the Town of Argos has sidewalk

infrastructure throughout the community, many gaps in the network exist. The Town may be eligible to receive monies from INDOT's Small Communities Sidewalk Program. This program helps rural communities to construct and/or update existing sidewalks.

Railroad Grade Crossing Fund

The Railroad Grade Crossing Fund is available for communities to implement safety improvements at public railroad-highway (at-grade) crossings. Eligible improvements include signage, pavement markings, and illumination.

Community Facilities Funding

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (INDNR) offers several community facilities grants such as Fire Management and Recreational Trails. Fire Management grants is a 50/50 match that helps volunteer fire departments purchase vehicles and equipment. The Town has received Fire Management grants in purchasing equipment. The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a state match grant to aid local communities in land acquisition and/or developing multi-use trails. The RTP reimburses a local community up to 80 percent of the project expenses upon project approval. More details on these programs are located on the Indiana Department of

Natural Resources website.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is available for local communities who have a state-approved Park and Recreation Board and Five-Year Master Plan. The LWCF is a state match grant that provides 50 percent of the costs for land acquisition and/or development of parks and recreational facilities upon project approval. More details on the LWCF are located on the Indiana Department of Natural Resources website.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

In partnership with Marshall County, Argos could evaluate the use of preservation methods including conservation easements, nature preserve dedication, or public land acquisition to protect its wetlands and ditches. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers many programs and technical assistance to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners such as the Farm Bill Conservation Program, Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).

United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides a Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program to rural communities with no more than

20,000 residents to aid in constructing or improving essential community facilities such as hospitals, health clinics, schools, public safety buildings, community centers, museums, local food systems and other community-based initiatives. More details on how to acquire the Rural Development Community Facilities Grant is available on the USDA's Rural Development website.

United States Fire Administration

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) offers a number of fire service grants the Town of Argos' Volunteer Fire and EMS Departments could pursue to offset costs for equipment, staffing, and fire prevention measures. One grant program Argos may be eligible for is the Assistance to Firefighters used to purchase equipment, protective gear, and vehicles as well as training initiatives.

Community Development Funding

Stellar Communities

The Indiana Stellar Communities Program is a competitive grant program amongst communities in similar size and scale that seeks to provide financial assistance to revitalize rural communities. A community seeking "Stellar" designation must have an adopted comprehensive plan that clearly identifies a vision, outlines strategies that address challenges in economic development, housing, transportation, and

quality of life, and exemplified community pride.

Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) works with local communities to help revitalize communities as thriving and attractive places to live and work in. OCRA provides a number of programs and technical assistance Argos could take advantage of such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Downtown Enhancement Grant, Historic Renovation Grant Program, Main Street Revitalization Program, and Public Facilities Programs. Details on each of these programs are available on OCRA's website.

Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority – CreatINg Places

The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) in partnership with Patronicity, announces a new innovative funding program called "CreatINg Places." Patronicity is a crowdfunding platform that brings together local residents, the project creators, and sponsors, in which the local community sets a fundraising goal to implement a large or small-scale civic project. Projects that meet their crowdfunding goals are eligible to receive a state match grant from IHCDA up to \$50,000. More details on crowdfunding are on Patronicity's website at www.patronicity.com/creatingplaces.

Argos Comprehensive Plan

Michiana Area Council of Governments

227 W. Jefferson Blvd.
County-City Building, Room 1120
South Bend, IN 46601