

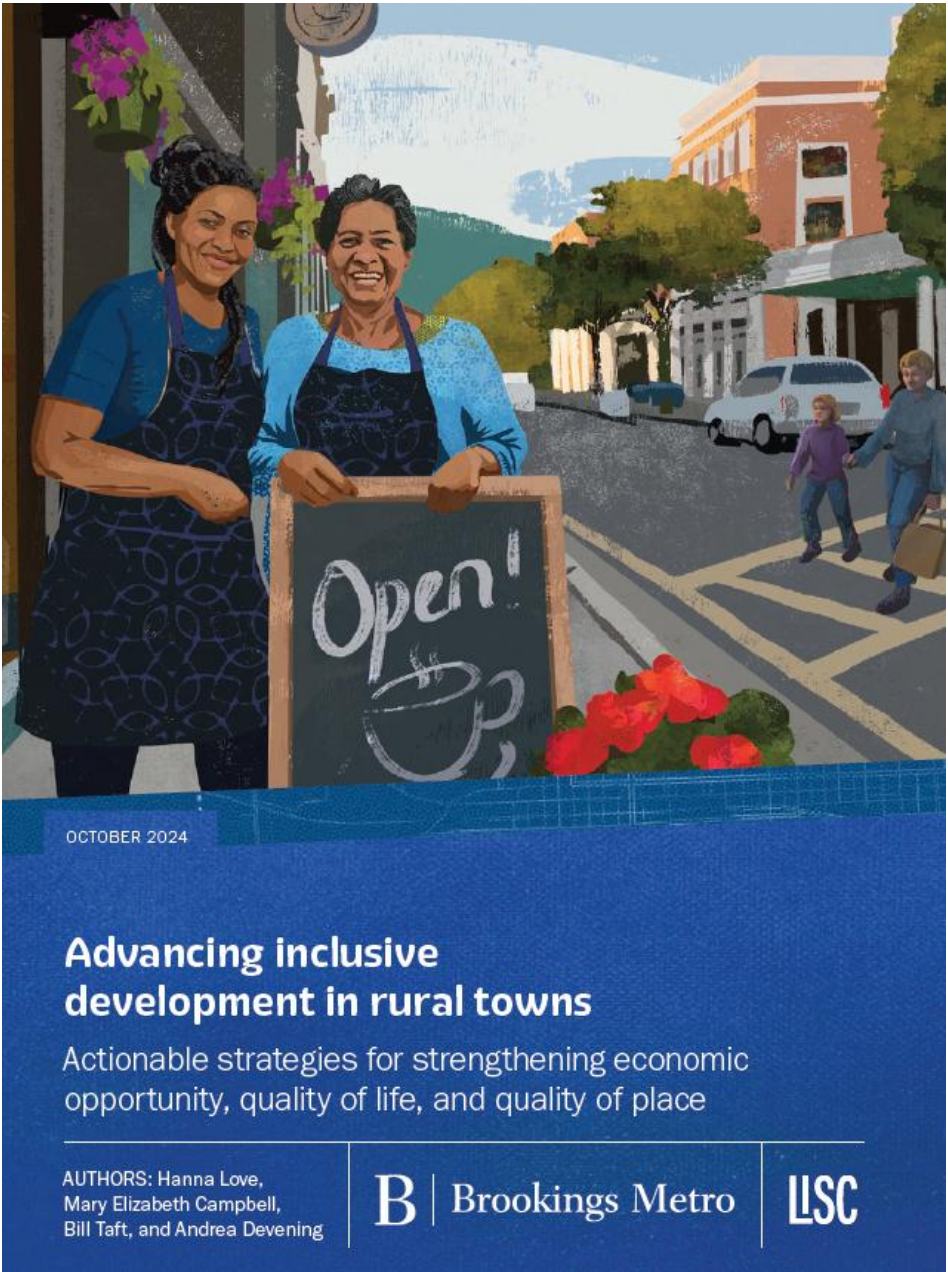
BROOKINGS

RURAL LSC



Community-Centered Development in Rural and Small Towns

Advancing Local and Regional Strategies for Quality of
Life and Economic Growth



Welcome and Introductions



RURAL LLSC



BROOKINGS



Session Overview

- 1 **Bridging Research and Practice for Community-Centered Development**
(Brookings)
- 2 **Local Spotlight: Vibrant Michigan City**
(EDCMC)
- 3 **National Insights: Community-Centered Models in Rural Towns**
(Rural LISC)
- 4 **Questions and Discussion**
(All)

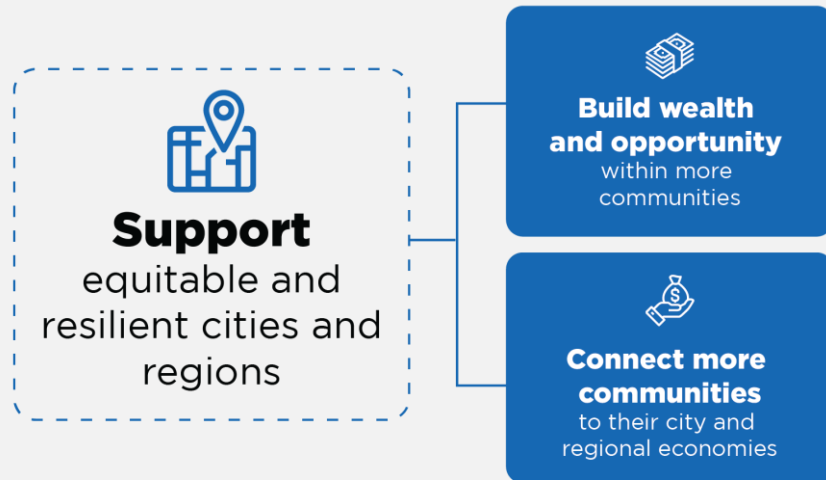


I. Bridging Research and Practice for Community-Centered Development

**Local and Regional Strategies for Quality of
Life and Economic Growth**

About the Brookings Institution and Transformative Placemaking

Hyperlocal focus with a big regional impact



Ways we **engage and partner** with local leaders:



Quick
market insights



Workshops
and
trainings



Communities
of
practice



Metro
labs

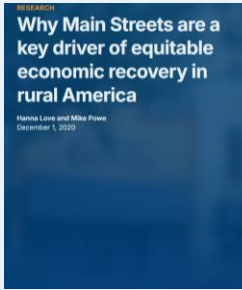
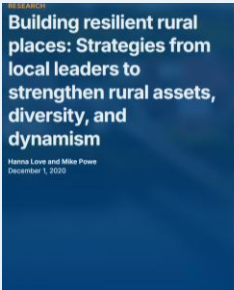
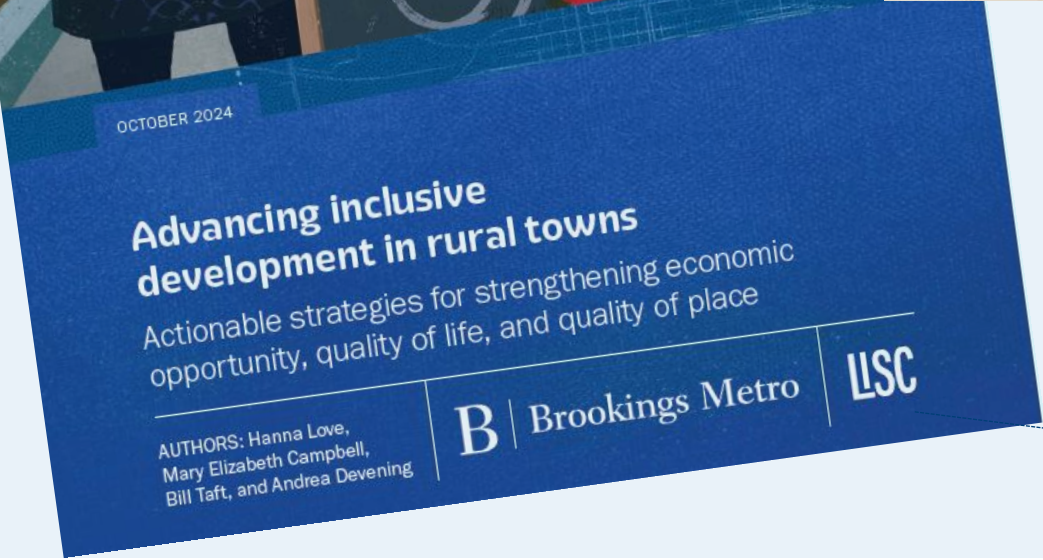
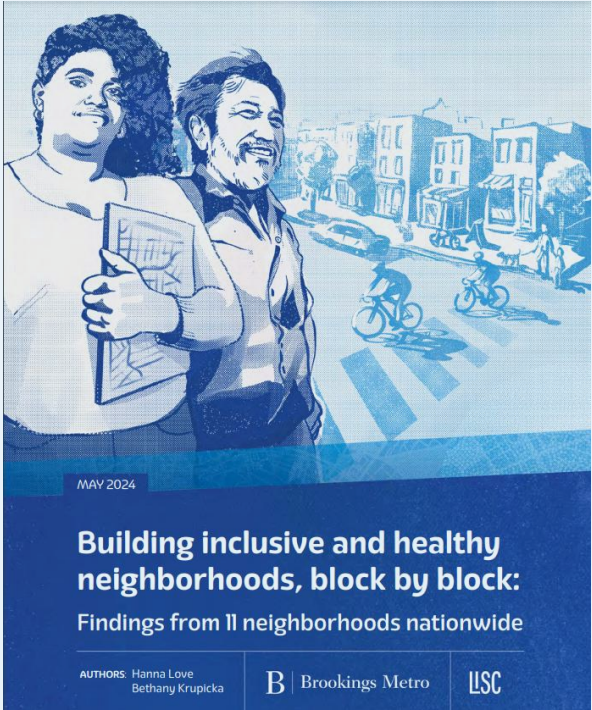
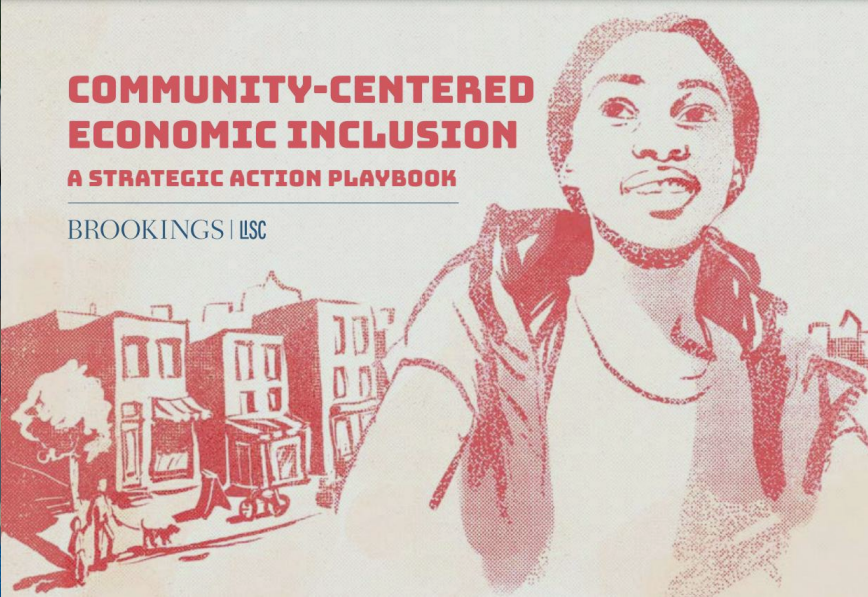
Established in 2018, the Transformative Placemaking Initiative seeks to address geographic, racial, and economic inequity through integrated, place-led, and community-centered development that supports **communities of opportunity**.

Many city and regional economic development efforts assume benefits “trickle down” to all neighborhoods. Transformative placemaking **ensures positive community outcomes “trickle up”** to drive more equitable city and regional economic growth.



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Our Partnership with LISC



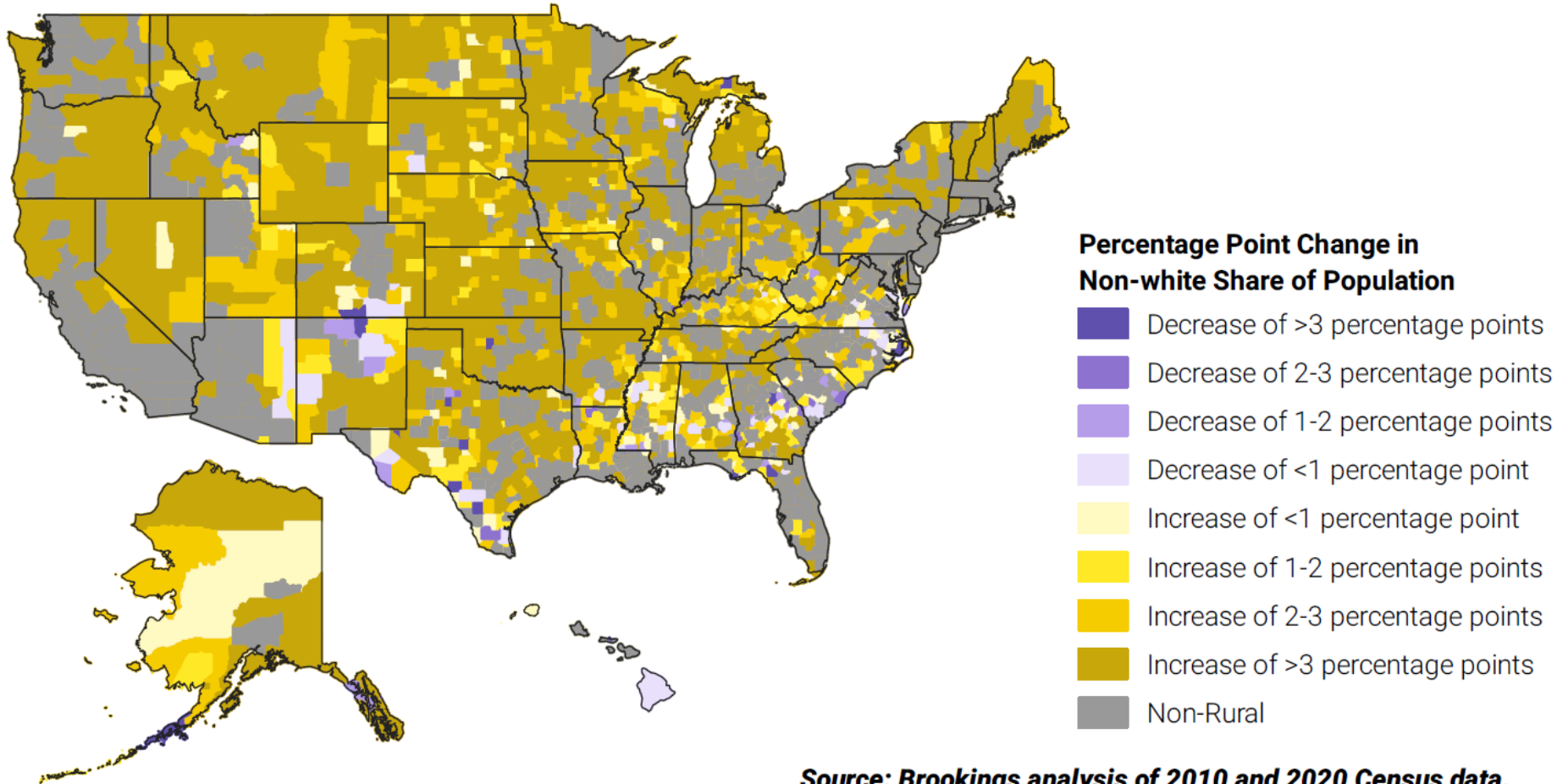
Why and how rural regions benefit from community-centered development

Inclusive development across places of all sizes



The Research: Rural places are demographically diverse, and more likely to succeed when they welcome newcomers

Change in Rural Population of Color, 2010–2020



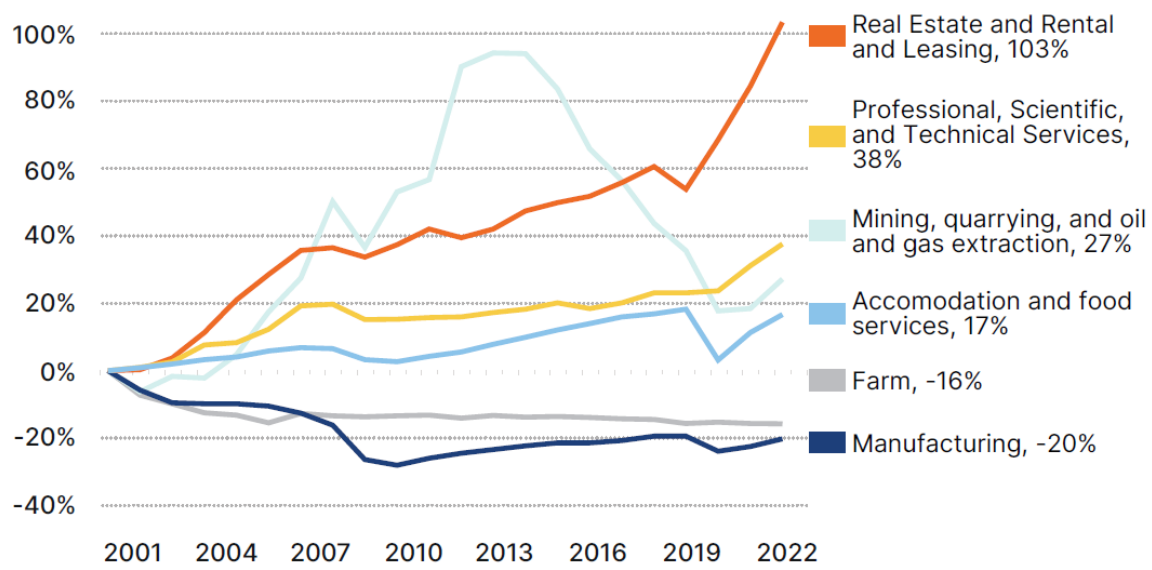
Source: Brookings analysis of 2010 and 2020 Census data.



The Research: Rural economies are also diversifying and anchored by small businesses and local entrepreneurship

Change in industry employment in rural America

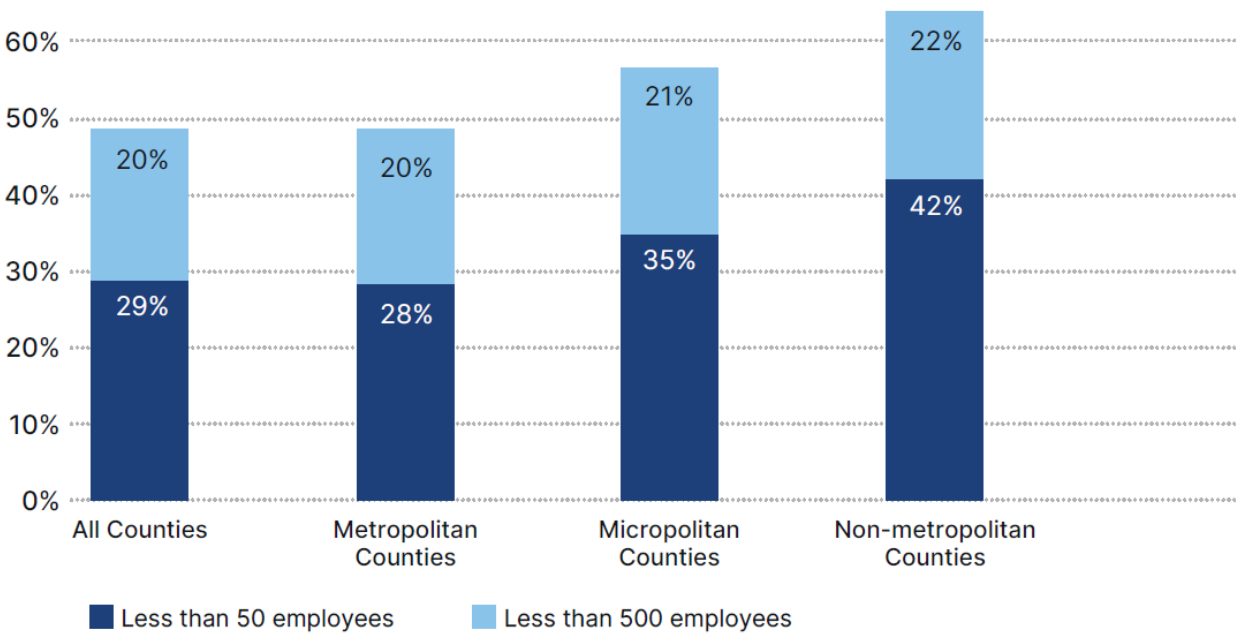
2001-2022 Employment (number of jobs)



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, "CAEMP25N Total full-time and part-time employment by NAICS Industry" (accessed April 24, 2024)



Small business job shares by county type across the US, 2022



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Quarterly Workforce Indicators Data



The Research: Rural areas are home to unique and undervalued assets that are critical to regional and national prosperity



In Practice: The development status quo has been slow to invest in rural strengths and needs

“

“We have jobs here that pay well, but people don’t want to work here because there is nothing to do. Other aspects of quality-of life must be retooled as economic development.”

“Neighborhood associations and community-based organizations don’t happen spontaneously or without support—and they are definitely not here.”

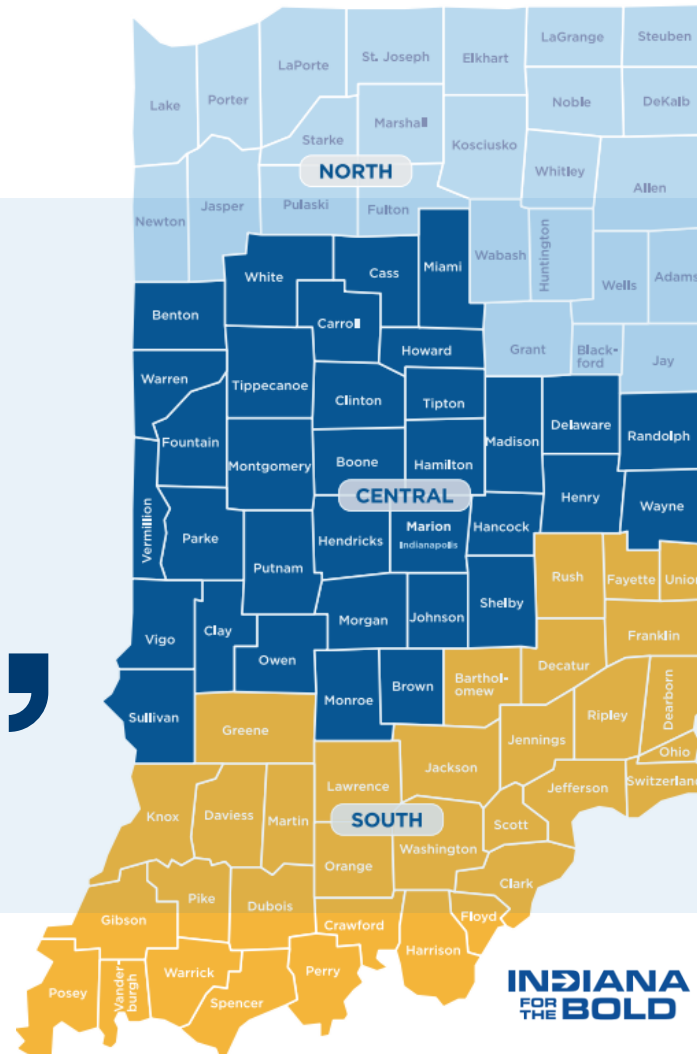
“Development on the lakefront has always been for rich people, not for us.”

”

-- QUOTES FROM RURAL INDIANA STAKEHOLDERS



Piloting a different approach in rural and small-town Indiana



“A place-based approach is critical. If you’re not making plans like this, you won’t have anything to offer when big opportunities come along. I’ve seen communities lose every opportunity for not knowing what they want beforehand.”

-- QUOTE FROM RURAL INDIANA STAKEHOLDER

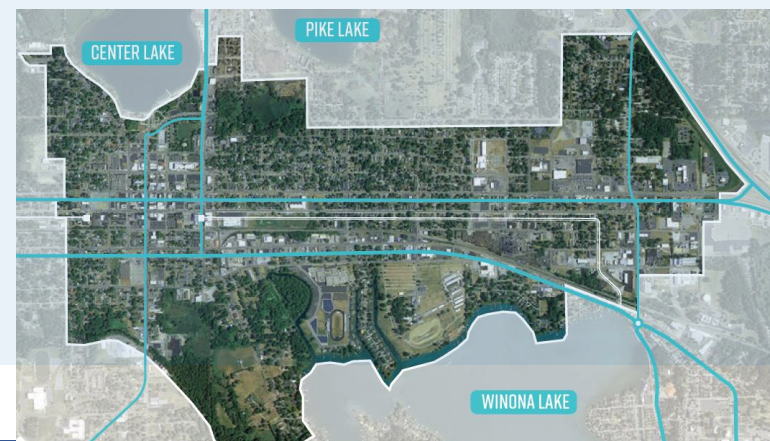
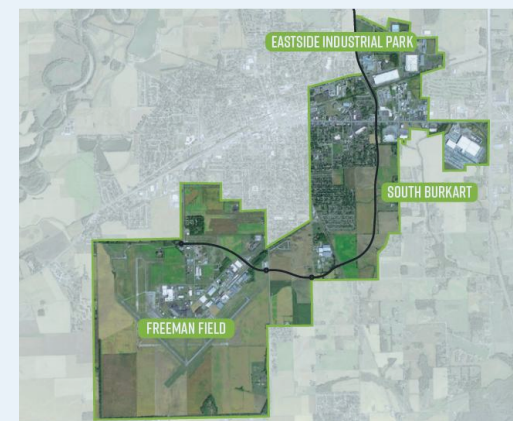
The “Learning Lab”: A multi-year community-centered initiative

THREE ELEMENTS THAT MAKE ‘COMMUNITY-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT’ UNIQUE

SCALE: CCEI aligns investments in “hyperlocal” districts—such as commercial corridors, industrial districts, and anchor institution hubs—where the potential for economic investment is ripe, but opportunity has often been hampered by economic disinvestment preventing residents from benefiting from economic assets. (For further explanation, see Step #1 in the next section.).

SCOPE: CCEI coordinates investments and resources around implementing a set of community-defined priorities that are prime for catalytic investment—spanning the fields of economic, community, and workforce development; placemaking; and public health. (For further explanation, see Step #4 in the next section.).

LEVEL OF INTEGRATION: CCEI breaks down siloes and legacies of distrust in historically underinvested communities by sharing decisionmaking power and implementation roles between community leaders, the public sector, and other city and regional officials. (For further explanation, see Steps #2 and #5 in the next section.).

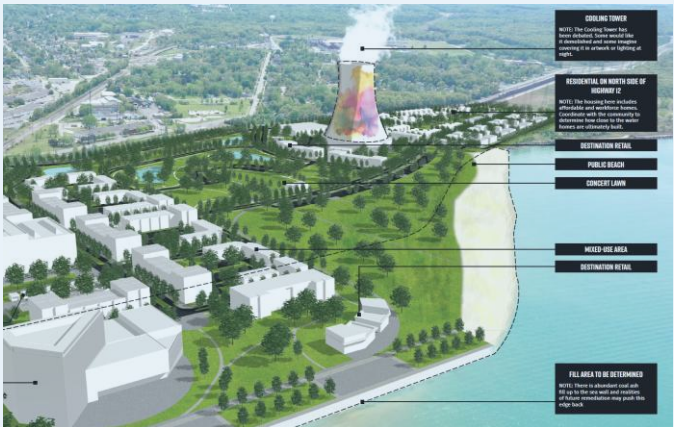


Community-centered development in action



“ The separation of housing, economic development, public works, employment, and workforce development as separate departments is a **mistake**. And it’s a repeated pattern that keeps these processes in silos and keeps them separate from the places that actually need their impact.”

”



Key lessons learned

Stage of CCEI	Lessons learned
The ‘where’ Selecting districts for economic inclusion	1. Access to hyperlocal economic data is limited in rural areas, which can minimize the role of “place” in larger city and regional rural economic development initiatives. 2. The case for inclusive place-based development can be a difficult one to make, often requiring exposure to new data, best practices, and strong facilitation for case-making. 3. On the upside, new exposure to hyperlocal information can go a long way in building momentum and political support for inclusive development in disinvested districts.
The ‘who’ Convening a coalition of leaders to co-create economic inclusion priorities	4. Neighborhood-level organizing is limited in many rural districts, which makes it difficult to engage community-based leaders and residents without significant capacity-building efforts to support neighborhood-level civic infrastructure. 5. Rural town agencies are often hamstrung by significant capacity gaps, impeding their ability to address equitable representation and community engagement challenges at the hyperlocal scale. 6. The “tight-knit” nature of small town social and civic dynamics can make equitable engagement more difficult, and at times lead to an aversion to push for local change on “hot-button” development issues. 7. Despite their challenges, rural areas saw greater participation from high-level town and regional stakeholders than is typical in many place-based efforts in larger cities and metro areas.
The ‘why’ Economic development planning to help correct for past harms and invest in undervalued assets	8. The traditional rural economic development model—which focuses on attracting businesses to locate or relocate into an area—can be a difficult tradition to break, and requires sustained education and engagement on the benefits of new approaches. 9. Rural corridors typically have few previous plans to draw from, which leaves a knowledge gap that can make rural CCEI efforts less able to learn from past community and economic development planning mistakes. 10. On the upside, rural residents were less likely to be fatigued by over-planning, and were enthusiastic and consistent in their participation throughout the CCEI planning and implementation process.

“

One thing that struck me is that we had no understanding of how [economic development] functions. We didn’t get involved in local land usage, we didn’t get a deeper dive in understanding all this.”



“A handful of folks in the Latino community are always invited to planning meetings. There needs to be more people involved. There are not as many Latino professionals, meaning they can’t do this as part of their job. We need to pay people who are doing that outside of their jobs.”

”

Key lessons learned

Stage of CCEI	Lessons learned
The ‘what’ Co-creating CCEI agendas	11. The CCEI process successfully increased buy-in for holistic, equitable economic development across unlikely stakeholders, enabling many to realize issues such as housing, workforce skills training, child care, entrepreneurial support, and placemaking are critical components of economic development. 12. Rural economic inclusion efforts benefit from locally tailored branding, communications, and storytelling capacity that help rural residents see themselves in local opportunities, rather than applying national frameworks or other non-rural-specific branding that may be perceived as irrelevant to small communities.
The ‘how’ Implementing, funding, and sustaining CCEI	13. Early implementation “wins” are critical for sustaining buy-in for longer-term CCEI priorities, as well as for maintaining trust with residents that the agenda’s promises will be kept. 14. Funding for implementation (and implementation capacity) is the largest hurdle for rural CCEI, as rural towns often have significantly strained philanthropic and governmental resources to fund equitable development initiatives. 15. Additional policy and supports are needed from public sector officials to make the case for adequate funding, investment, and capacity-building supports for rural economic inclusion.

“We are trying new things. We are hopeful about new development. I got optimism here. Let’s dream—let’s dream big, something for the next generation.”



Recommendations

1

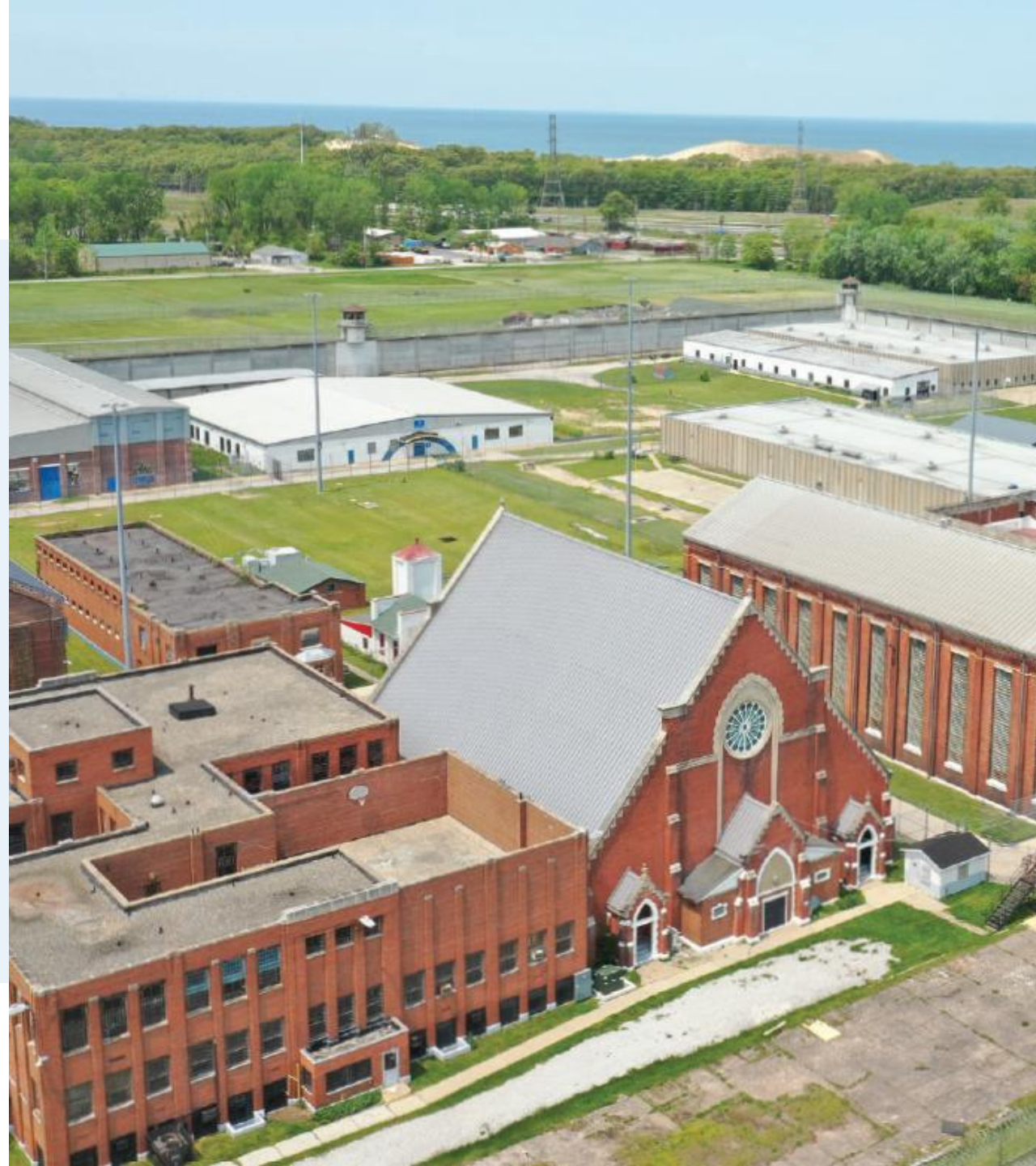
Build the capacity of community institutions, economic development organizations, and other civic entities to lead community-centered inclusion planning in rural towns.

2

Advance a more holistic vision for rural economic development—that encompasses quality of life, entrepreneurship, and placemaking—as a core component of regional growth initiatives

3

Hold policies, programs, and grantmaking decisions accountable for rural contexts to better align funding systems with community priorities and outcomes



An aerial photograph of Michigan City, Indiana, featuring a large body of water (Lake Michigan) on the left, a winding road, a baseball field, and various buildings and trees. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

II. Local Spotlight: Vibrant Michigan City

Advancing Economic Prosperity for All

*Economic Prosperity
For All*
Michigan City, IN



Vibrant Michigan City



EDCMC Mission

To champion economic growth, prosperity, and opportunity by creating a vibrant, inclusive, and competitive economy where residents, entrepreneurs, and businesses thrive.

Vision

To be a trusted broker and engine of economic opportunity for residents, entrepreneurs, and businesses, enhancing the business environment and quality of life for Michigan City.



Metrics to benchmark Progress

Job Creation and Retention

Capital Investment

Educational Attainment

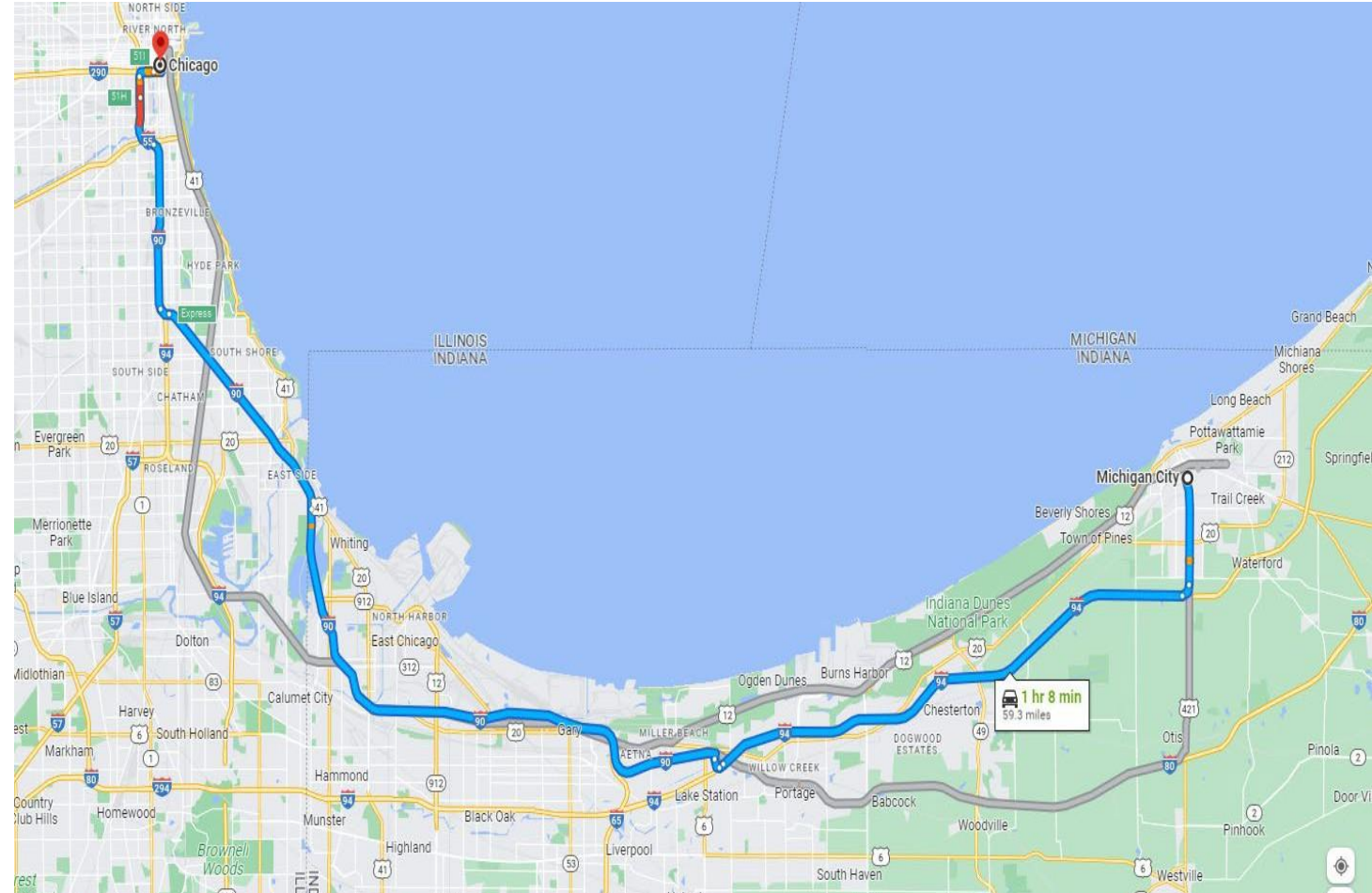
Income Growth & Poverty

Real Estate Development

Stakeholder Satisfaction

Michigan City, IN Data + Demographics

- **Founded:** 1830
- **Population:** 31,466 (Source: US Census Bureau)
- **2024 Cost of Living Index:** 82/100
- (Source: Area Vibes)
- **2023 Median Household Income:** \$52,979
- (Source: US Census Bureau)
- **Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units:** \$100,300 (Source: US Census Bureau)
- **2023 Annual Gross Domestic Product:** \$5.676B
- (Source: FRED Data)
- **A+ Rating in Healthcare Accessibility**
- (Source: Area Vibes)
- **Tourism – Annual Visitors**
 - **Lighthouse Mall:** 1.8 Million
 - **Indiana Dunes National Park:** 3.3 Million - Most visited National Park in Midwest
 - **Blue Chip Casino:** 796,700



Community Initiative

Partnering with:

- State of Indiana Economic Development Corporation
- 2 national non-profits—**Brookings Institute & LISC**
- Community Leaders from various sectors in targeted areas
 - City Stakeholders
 - Regional Stakeholders
 - Community Stakeholders

Goal

Create a “**playbook**” that will help Michigan City “build wealth in underinvested places, while driving more equitable city and regional growth.”- **Inclusive Economic Development.**

History

Brookings Institute & LISC implemented a pilot initiative from 2019-2021 in **L.A., Indianapolis, and Philadelphia.**

The findings from the pilot initiatives are being used as a guidance for other locations to implement a **CCEI** approach.

Other Cities Participating

Warsaw, Indiana
Seymour, Indiana

Community-Centered Economic Inclusion



Priority Areas:

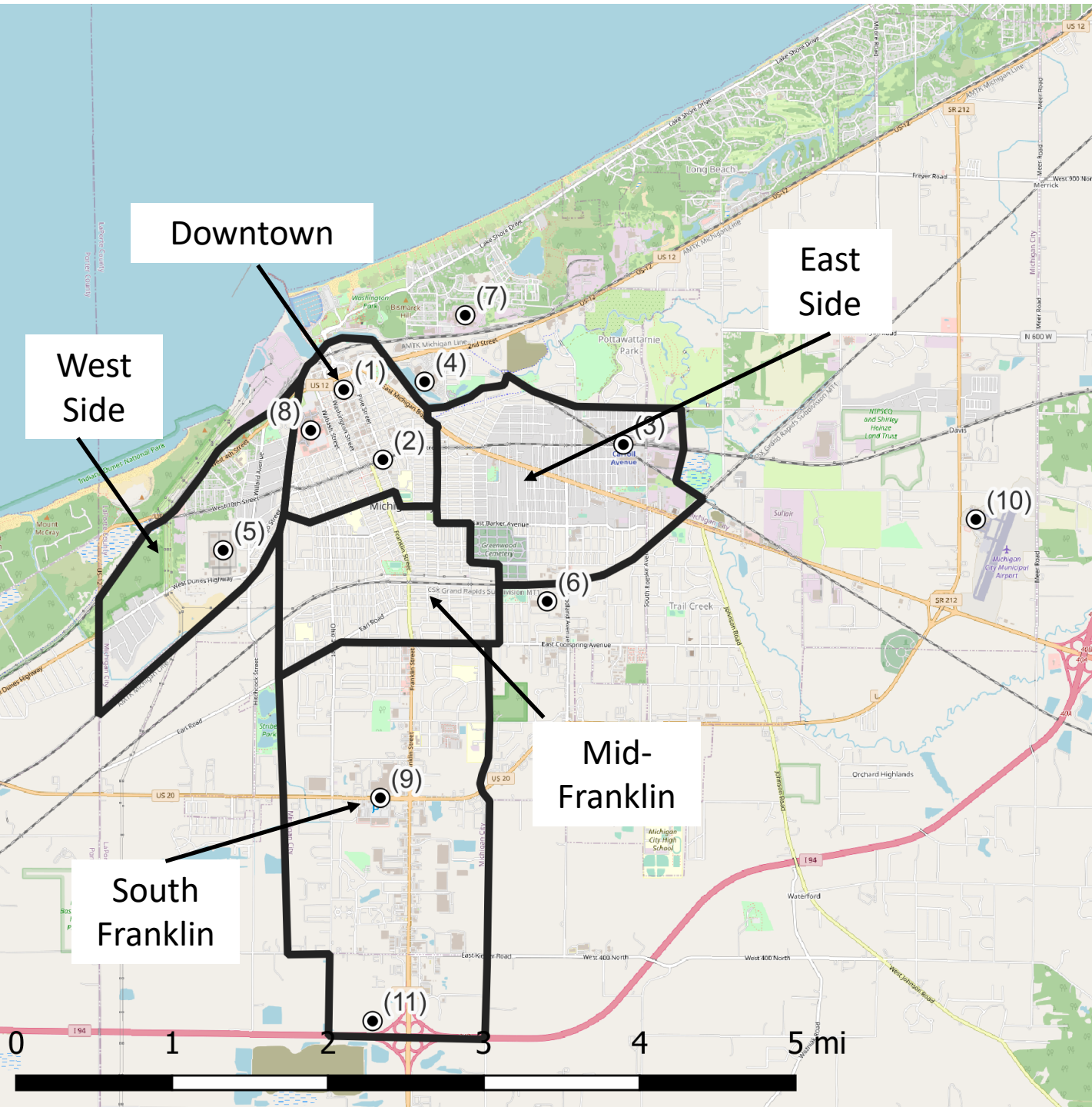
West Side | East Side | Midtown Corridor

Issues Being Tackled:

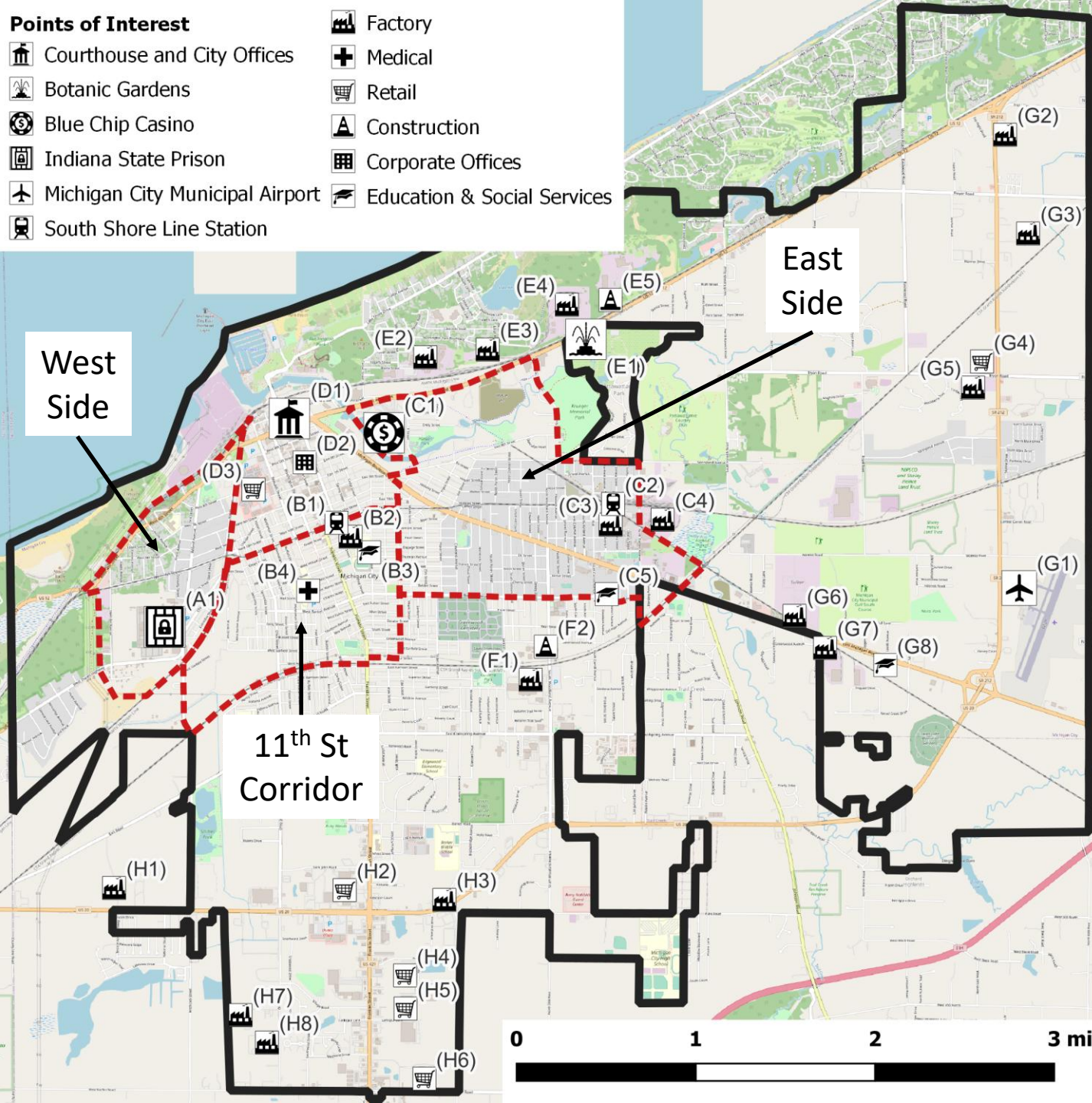
Affordable Housing
Food Insecurity
Access to Jobs
Public Safety
Economic
Development



Michigan City: Key Statistics



- 31,200 residents
 - 60% White
 - 28% Black
 - 7% Latino
 - 1% Asian American
- 17,300 jobs
 - 37% retail and hospitality
 - 24% industrial
 - 20% education and medical
 - 13% office
 - 6% public administration
- 28% of Michigan City workers live in city and 54% live in county
- 34% of jobs do not require any college
- 75% of jobs pay > \$1,250 / month
- 37% of jobs pay > \$3,333 / month
- Median Household Income: \$45,000
- Individual Poverty Rate: 23%

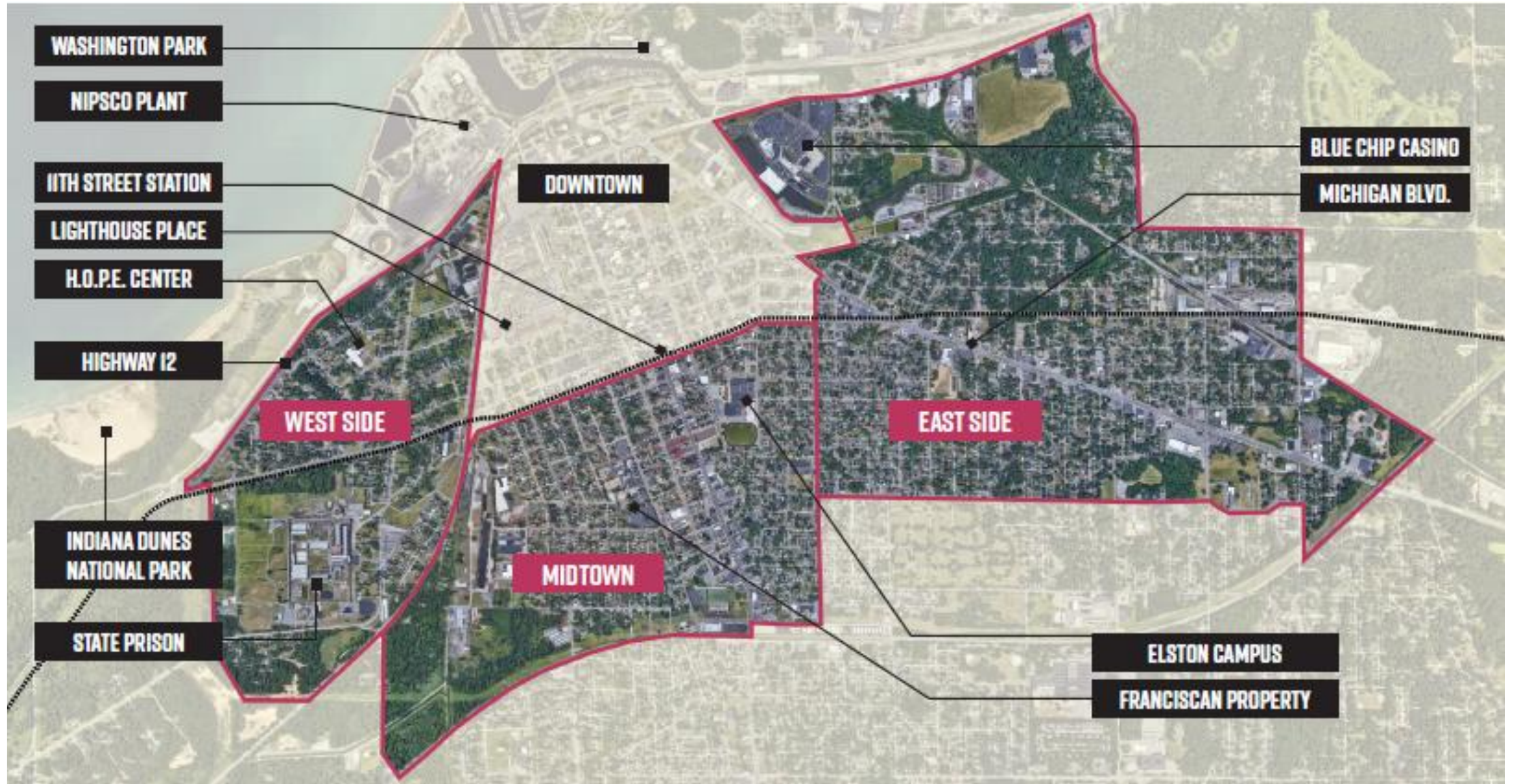


Michigan City's goals in priority area selection

- **Selection**
 - High ethnic population with socioeconomic disparities in income and health.
 - Food insecure with no walkable healthy food options
 - Opportunity for new housing, childcare, economic development and beautification
- **Why?**
 - All areas are connected by the 11th Street corridor and are adjacent to new development spurred by the Southshore Double Track project.
 - Greater access to resource, housing opportunities and growth in the future.
 - Median Household Income for African Americans in LaPorte County is \$36,304 versus \$62,761 for entire population.

Vibrant Michigan City

Michigan City census tracts



Priority Areas: The 11th St Corridor, the East and West Side

The 11th Street Corridor

- Why is the timing right to work on the 11th St Corridor?
 - Developments occurring closer to the 11th Street Corridor (Double Track, TDD)

The West Side

- What has encouraged the west side's growth?
 - Increased sense of community happening with local churches, HOPE & the Art Community
 - Challenge grant submitted with the Indiana Dept. of Health in partnership with several of the community agencies and churches. (November 2022)

The East Side

- How can this process build upon what has (or has not) been tried in this area in the past? Engaging residents
 - Zorn Brewery
 - Barrell House
 - Charles Westcott Park
- Area included in the Challenge grant



What challenges does Michigan City anticipate encountering working in these areas?

- Barriers
 - Lack of community trust
 - Engagement from the impacted and minority communities
 - Lack of funding
 - Infrastructure improvement needs for developing businesses and new housing
- What strategies will help you overcome these barriers?
 - Comprehensive engagement strategy that is intentional with multiple touch points and a two-way feedback loop.



Community Meetings

What's The Goal?

Create

- Create housing options for all, specifically safe and affordable options

Develop

- Develop job readiness skills and eliminate barriers to employment

Support

- Support small business and entrepreneurs

Promote

- Promote community centers and youth activities

Advocate

- Advocate for community input on key redevelopment sites

Key Players Plot Vibrant Michigan City Action Steps

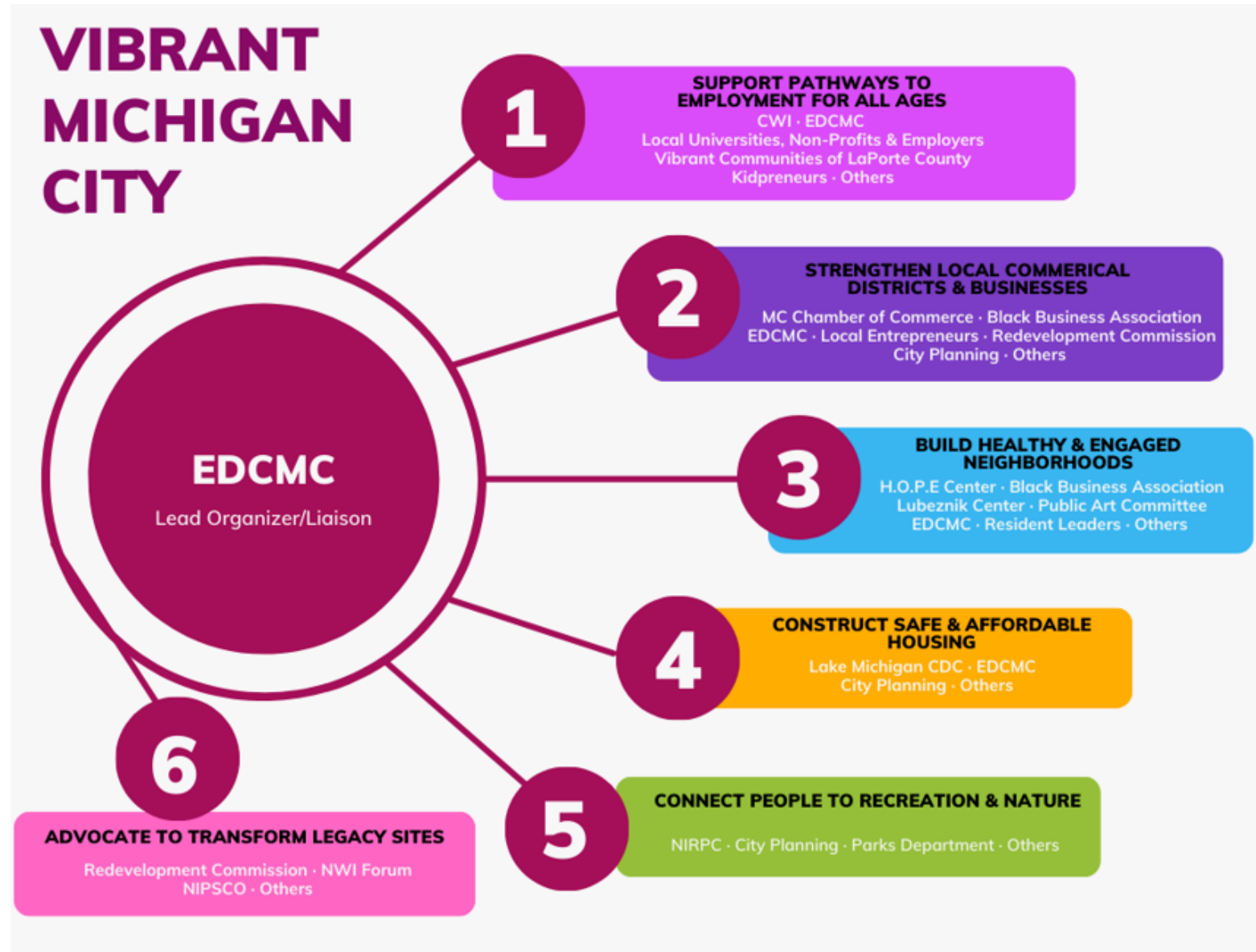


The agenda items is focused on economic ideas, built environment, civic ideas, and social ideas. The success of the initiative is grounded in the key players who are working together on this plan and the expertise that they all bring to the table.

	agenda action tasks	topic	timing	implementers
1	Support Pathways to Employment for All Ages			
	1.1 Create a Local Opportunity Hub	Economic Civic + Social Built	Mid-Term	CWI, EDCMC, Universities, and Others
	1.2 Overcome Common Barriers to Employment	Economic	Short-Term	Local Non-profits, Local Employers, and Others
	1.3 Engage Youth in Activities and Entrepreneurship	Economic Civic + Social	Mid-Term	Vibrant Communities, Kidpreneurs, and Others
2	Strengthen Local Commercial Districts and Businesses			
	2.1 Strengthen Michigan Boulevard	Economic Built Civic + Social	Mid-Term	Chamber, Black Business Association, Others
	2.2 Develop an Innovation Center	Economic	Mid-Term	EDCMC, Local Entrepreneurs, Others
	2.3 Support South Franklin and Midtown	Economic Built Civic + Social	Mid-Term	Redevelopment Commission, City Planning, Others
3	Build Healthy and Engaged Neighborhoods			
	3.1 Invest in the H.O.P.E. Center	Civic + Social	Mid-Term	H.O.P.E. Center, Black Business Association
	3.2 Activate Neighborhoods with Creative Placemaking	Civic + Social Built	Short-Term	Lubeznik Center, Public Art Committee, Others
	3.3 Support Neighborhood Associations	Civic + Social	Short-Term	EDCMC, Resident Leaders, Others
4	Construct Safe and Affordable Housing			
	4.1 Build and Rehab Single-family Homes	Built	Mid-Term	Lake Michigan CDC, EDCMC, Others
	4.2 Develop Affordable Neighborhood Housing	Built	Mid-Term	City Planning, Lake Michigan CDC, Others
5	Connect People to Recreation and Nature			
	5.1 Improve Highway 12 to Create Dune and Lake Access	Built Civic + Social	Long-Term	NIRPC, City Planning, and Others
	5.2 Invest in Expanded Trails	Built Civic + Social	Mid-Term	Parks Department, City Planning, and Others
6	Advocate to Transform Legacy Sites			
	6.1 Explore State Prison Reuse Options	Economic Built Civic + Social	Long-Term	Redevelopment Commission, NWI Forum, Others
	6.2 Encourage Community-Serving Reuse of NIPSCO Site	Economic Built Civic + Social	Long-Term	NIPSCO, Redevelopment Commission, Others

Vibrant Michigan City: Next Steps

IEDC ERC Fellow to lead on organizing groups involved to begin implementing playbook initiatives.



Vibrant Michigan City Updates

Better City Grant Writers

Seek grants that will bolster economic development & community-centered efforts & initiatives

- U.S. EDA Build-To-Scale Grant
 - NIPSCO Bridge Grant
 - USDA RBDG Grant



Ball State Community Development Course

Four VMC participants attended and learned tactics of effective leadership as well as key components of community development including:

Storytelling, placemaking, and the importance of social networks



Vibrant Michigan City

Small Business & Manufacturing Roundtables

Host quarterly meetings with small business to share challenges, opportunities, and resources, in partnership with the MC Chamber of Commerce.



Manufacturing Roundtable with NWI ISBDC

ARPA Small Business Assistance Grant



Assisted 35 small businesses in mitigating the negative effects of COVID-19, with total funding reaching over \$700,000.
Childcare, Retail, Restaurant, Public Services

Other Initiatives

Youth Entrepreneurship

Buddingpreneurs helps children develop their entrepreneurial, financial literacy, and leadership skills.



Summer Bootcamp & Youth Shark Tank

Vibrant Michigan City Updates

Michigan City Neighborhood Leadership Academy

8-week program – community empowerment to become
active leaders within their individual neighborhoods

Class of 2024

**24 Graduates - 6 different wards –
implementing 8 neighborhood initiatives
and projects**



Class of 2025

**25 Graduates - 5 different wards - 8 group projects
centered on making an impact in their
neighborhoods**



Neighborhood Leadership Projects



- Neighborhood Block Party
- New Neighborhood Associations
- Video Gaming/Esports Outreach
- Neighborhood Social Media Group
- Gardening/Recycling Education

Neighborhood Leadership Projects



- Small Business Roundtable
- ISP Re-Imagination Study
- UPBI (MCEDI)
- West Fest 2024
- Love Your CITY Grant



Neighborhood Leadership Projects



Buddingpreneurs Summer Bootcamp (Youth Development)

Midnight Basketball



Why are WE involved? Reimagining Economic Development in a Small American City

Major new transit investment is bringing change to Michigan City – move the needle for the whole community! INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Two Cadence Park Plaza, Michigan City,
IN 46360 | 219-873-1211 | 219-873-1595 |
www.edcmc.com



Society of Innovators Award



Our team and Mayor Angie Nelson Deutch have been named Advocate for Innovation inductees for the development and implementation of Vibrant Michigan City Playbook!

Advocates are recognized because they “embody the mission of the Society of Innovators to champion innovation in Northwest Indiana.”

An aerial photograph of a rural town, partially obscured by a semi-transparent blue overlay. The image shows a river on the left, a baseball field in the lower center, and various residential and commercial buildings scattered throughout the landscape. A road and railroad tracks are visible on the right side.

III. National Insights: Community-Centered Models in Rural Towns

RURAL LSC

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Los Angeles, with a light blue semi-transparent overlay. The city features a mix of residential and commercial buildings, green spaces, and a prominent multi-lane highway with a dedicated transit lane in the foreground. In the distance, the city skyline is visible against a clear blue sky.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

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RURAL LSC



Community-Centered Development in Rural and Small Towns

Advancing Local and Regional Strategies for Quality of
Life and Economic Growth