



New Middletown Public Engagement Event #3

Engagement Summary

October 6, 2022

Meeting Overview

The project team hosted the third public engagement opportunity for the Town of New Middletown on October 6 at the Town Hall. Nearly 20 people stopped by the public open house to review the draft plan recommendations which included ten catalyst initiatives. For people that weren't able to attend, an online survey is available through the month of October. Both the meeting and online survey was advertised through social media.

What did we hear?

In addition to the plan overview and the draft plan summary handout, there was 5 presentation boards that outlined the ten catalyst initiatives. The catalyst initiatives are identified as the top priority strategies for the town to implement over the next five to ten years. The handout and the input summary is provided the following pages.

NEW MIDDLETOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN | **DRAFT PLAN SUMMARY**

THE VISION

A VISION STATEMENT ISN'T ABOUT WHAT THE COMMUNITY IS TODAY BUT INSTEAD, IT IS ABOUT WHAT THE TOWN WANTS TO DO OR BECOME IN THE FUTURE.

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

BIG IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE!

PLACEMAKING

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

Gateways: Provide well-marked, inviting entrances into the town.

Volunteerism: Initiate a recognition program to celebrate people's contribution to New Middletown.

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

Community Beautification: Organize a seasonal community cleanup day.

PARKS AND RECREATION

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

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

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

LAND USE

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

Variety of Housing Options: Advocate for development of additional single-family, multi-family, and senior-living housing options.

UTILITIES

Septic Maintenance: Protect groundwater and surface water quality from inadequate or failing septic systems.

Sewer System: Determine the feasibility of providing sewer utilities to existing and future development areas.

Broadband Development: Work with the county to provide high-speed and high-quality internet access.

Broadband Access: Provide free public access to WIFI hotspots around the elementary school, Memorial Park, or town hall.

TRANSPORTATION

Sidewalk Connectivity: Extend the sidewalk network along New Middletown Road SE and Fire Lane SE.

Crosswalks: Improve crosswalk visibility to increase safety.

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

HOUSING

Housing Support: Provide opportunities for new housing to sustain the local school and support business needs.

Grant Programs: Utilize state grants to establish a housing repair program.

Blight Removal: Rehabilitate or demolish poorly maintained and neglected properties.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

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

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

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





PLAN INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan, in simplest terms, defines a community's goals and aspirations for the future. It answers four key questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- Where do we want to go?
- How do we get there?

HOW SHOULD THE PLAN BE USED?

The *New Middletown Comprehensive Plan* encourages the community to maintain its rural quality of life, vibrant unique places, and strong sense of community pride. The plan should be used to guide decisions related to growth and development and also help prioritize projects and programs identified for the short, mid, and long-term.

HOW IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ORGANIZED?

The *New Middletown Comprehensive Plan* is organized into three chapters including:

Chapter 1: About the Plan

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

Chapter 2: The Path Forward

Utilizing community feedback and data-driven facts as the foundation, chapter two outlines the vision for the future and several supporting big ideas. This chapter is organized into three themes including:

- Theme #1 - Celebrate Our Assets
- Theme #2 - Build Quality Places
- Theme #3 - Collaborate to Expand Our Offerings

Chapter 3: Our Next Steps

Building on the highest priority strategies, chapter three provides additional details on the 10 catalytic initiatives that were identified as the most critical strategies to implement. This chapter is intended to assist the town in implementing each one of these projects, programs, or policies.





PROPOSED CATALYST INITIATIVES

Instructions: Review the following information. Using the dot stickers and post-it notes, share your feedback!

Catalyst Initiative 1:

COMMUNITY EVENTS

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

Action Steps:

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

Catalyst Initiative 2:

COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION

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

Action Steps:

- Work with the New Middletown Community Event Committee (if created) to make a detailed event plan that includes but isn't limited to a date and potential rain date, number of volunteers needed, outline of all work to be completed during the event, and list of supplies needed.
- Negotiate with a local dumpster or trash provider to donate or provide a dumpster that is accessible to residents and business owners on the day of the event.
- Create a flyer highlighting the details of the cleanup and distribute it to residents and post online.
- Coordinate with New Middletown Elementary to post event details to the school's website and newsletter.
- Supply any additional materials and supplies needed such as litter grabbers gloves, and trash bags.
- Create and assign specific tasks during the cleanup event such as cleaning a specific street or block, assisting in volunteer check-in, or planning or mulching a public area.
- Organize a thank you gift, note, or other form of gratitude for volunteers.

INITIATIVE #1		COMMENTS	INITIATIVE #2	
AGREE	DISAGREE		AGREE	DISAGREE
<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div>#1 -- the "Good Neighbors" committee would help with this.</div><div>#2 - The town is already doing this so update to say, "Continue to..."</div><div>#2 - Yes we are doing it but it needs to be more organized and promoted.</div><div>Council could benefit from training on how their role in code enforcement and proper maintenance.</div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	

Question or comment? Leave a post-it note here!





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Catalyst Initiative 3:

EXPAND AMENITIES

Identify desired improvements and apply for grant funding to provide additional park amenities at Memorial Park.

Action Steps:

- Conduct a survey of residents to gauge interest in a variety of seasonal lawn games and activities that may be purchased and managed by the town.
- Purchase or construct a small shed at the south edge of Memorial Park to store the new park equipment.
- Purchase and install outdoor picnic tables on the south side of the park.
- Organize a “check-out” system for residents and visitors to utilize the available lawn games and activities.

Catalyst Initiative 4:

SEPTIC MAINTENANCE

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

Action Steps:

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

INITIATIVE #1		COMMENTS	INITIATIVE #2	
AGREE	DISAGREE		AGREE	DISAGREE
<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>	<div>#3 - incorporate local art into the park.</div> <div>Would like full size basketball court.</div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>

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Catalyst Initiative 5:

SEPTIC SYSTEM INVENTORY

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

Action Steps:

- Conduct a door-to-door survey of existing septic system failures and issues.
- Summarize the survey results and coordinate appropriate or feasible options to the Harrison County Health Department, Harrison County Regional Sewer District, and/or Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) to explore potential options for a public sewer system and/or to address failing septic systems.

Catalyst Initiative 6:

SEWER SYSTEM

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

Action Steps:

- Partner with the Harrison County Health Department and Harrison County Regional Sewer District to determine feasible alternatives to failing septic systems and seek funding implement these.

INITIATIVE #1		COMMENTS	INITIATIVE #2	
AGREE	DISAGREE		AGREE	DISAGREE
<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div>Disagree with #6 because Lanesville did it and it raised the cost for residents.</div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>

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Catalyst Initiative 7:

BROADBAND ACCESS

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

Action Steps:

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

Catalyst Initiative 8:

SIDEWALK CONNECTIVITY

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

Action Steps:

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

INITIATIVE #1		COMMENTS	INITIATIVE #2	
AGREE	DISAGREE		AGREE	DISAGREE
<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>		<div>Be ware of the distance the wifi can go. (Extending to parking lots)</div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>

Question or comment? Leave a post-it note here!





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Catalyst Initiative 9:

HOUSING GRANT PROGRAMS

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

Action Steps:

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

Catalyst Initiative 10:

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

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

Action Steps:

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

INITIATIVE #1		COMMENTS	INITIATIVE #2	
AGREE	DISAGREE		AGREE	DISAGREE
<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>		<div>#9 - These programs need to be monitored better - paying particular attention to who is in charge.</div> <div>Put the dollar general that is in the works in the town, in area's that are already zoned for commercial.</div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

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