

Quality of Life

Goshen residents continue to cite quality of life as one of the community's greatest assets. In recent years, the City has seen a wave of Millennials and Baby-boomers moving and returning to Goshen to take advantage of the community's assets, including the vibrant downtown, burgeoning arts scene, recreational opportunities and range of affordable housing options. These amenities make Goshen truly unique and desirable to residents of all ages and lifestyles.

In addition to the City's cultural, recreational and civic amenities, Goshen residents' sense of community contributes greatly to the overall quality of life. The City's tagline, "Common Good. Uncommonly Great," captures Goshen residents' commitment to the greater good and involvement in the community.

To kick off the public participation process, a **Quality of Life** themed public meeting was held in January 2014. Topics discussed in this meeting included openness, arts and entertainment, recreation, education, health and safety, housing and job opportunities. Feedback received in this meeting helped shape the content for the three subsequent meetings—**Economic Development & Redevelopment, People, Neighborhoods & Housing and Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure.**

"When people ask me why we moved back to Goshen, the answer is simple. For us, it always comes back to quality of life. Our life in Goshen is wonderful! There are so many aspects of this community we enjoy on a daily basis. We live in a beautiful neighborhood with tree-lined streets, we take pleasure in the seasons, relish in our amazing and growing arts community, and thrive because of our friends and the talented, kind and creative people."

– David Kendall, Goshen Resident & GHS Teacher

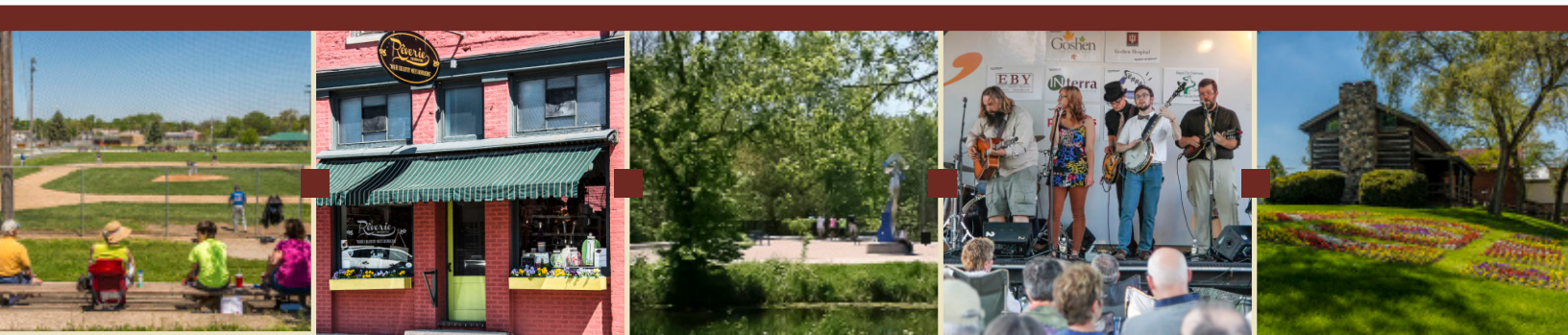
During the update process, leaders from Parks & Recreation, Police, Fire, Utility and Street Departments emphasized quality of life for Goshen residents was central to their mission. The results of public participation were clear: the City should continue to focus on enhancing quality of life.



Quality of life is a major theme throughout this plan. While the community has seen many improvements over the last decade, including the continued revitalization of downtown, redevelopment along the Millrace and the emergence of a strong arts and entrepreneurial culture, it is important that the plan update put quality of life at the forefront.

The goals and policies contained in each chapter are tied to quality of life. The **Neighborhoods & Housing** chapter emphasizes the importance of engaged neighborhoods with safe, affordable and attractive housing. This is accomplished by providing opportunities for engagement and involvement, enhancing sense of place and the experience of diversity in neighborhoods. The **Land Use** chapter focuses on improving the urban core and promoting infill development that is complementary to existing land uses. The **Economic Development** chapter calls for continued efforts to diversify the local economy, while supporting existing businesses, nurturing small businesses and fostering entrepreneurship. The **Natural Environment** chapter emphasizes the protection of the City's natural resources, improving the health of the community and promoting sustainable practices. The **Community Services & Facilities** chapter outlines goals for the delivery of city services, maintenance of civic facilities and maintenance/expansion of parks and recreational opportunities. Finally, the goals in the **Transportation** chapter aim to improve health and safety, protect the environment and strengthen the local economy by providing Goshen residents with a variety of transportation choices.

Quality of life is central to Goshen's identity. The community is a great place to live, work, play and raise a family. Building on these assets to strengthen quality of life for the common good will continue to make Goshen uncommonly great.



Photos by (left to right): Danny Graber, Ron McAllister, Melodie Rodgers, Branden Beachy, Danny Graber

Plan Development ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

Statutory Requirements

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document for the community, created by the Plan Commission, with community input, and adopted by City Council. The plan states visions, goals and policies for future growth and development.

The Comprehensive Plan is a result of an in-depth study and analysis of existing physical, economic and social characteristics of a community. Citizens and community leaders participate in public meetings to develop broad community-wide goals and objectives. While a Comprehensive Plan may include content on a variety of topics, ranging from economic development to the natural environment, Indiana Code requires Comprehensive Plans to contain a minimum of three elements:

- A statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction;
- A statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction; and
- A statement of policy for the development of public ways, places, lands, structures and utilities

The Executive Summary section of the Comprehensive Plan (pp. 10-11) demonstrates how the goals of each chapter satisfy the state requirements for Comprehensive Planning.

Once adopted, a Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for decisions and actions for the development of the community. Indiana Code requires that communities give consideration to the general policy and pattern of development established in the Comprehensive Plan when making decisions regarding development. It provides a strong legal basis for land use decisions and helps ensure that public resources are used efficiently.

PLANNING PROCESS

Comprehensive Plan & Community Vision: 2004-2013

On August 20, 2013, the City of Goshen Plan Commission passed a unanimous motion to authorize City Planning staff to update the Comprehensive Plan & Community Vision: 2004-2013.

The 2004-2013 Plan had extensive public participation and broad community support. Many citizens who participated in the 2014 update were also involved in the development of the 2004-2013 Plan. While the plan remains relevant today, an update was necessary to ensure that the plan remains current. Because of the strong community support and ownership of the 2004-2013 Plan, City staff felt that an update, not a complete rewrite, was appropriate in order to maintain the integrity of the plan.



Photo by Goshen City Planning Staff

In the 10 years since the 2004-2013 plan was adopted, Goshen has changed significantly. The City experienced modest growth in both population and land area. The Great Recession of the late 2000s hit the local economy especially hard, with 20.0 percent citywide unemployment in March 2009. Since then, the local and national economies have rebounded and continue to grow. Goshen continues to attract new investment and enterprises. The downtown area has seen significant investment, with a number of

new restaurants, retail establishments, businesses, arts, cultural and entertainment venues locating downtown. The City has seen a wave of Millennials and Baby-boomers coming or returning to Goshen to take advantage of the quality of life and diverse offerings of the City. The changes over the past 10 years and new goals for the coming decade require a plan that reflects where the community is and outlines a roadmap for where the community wants to go.

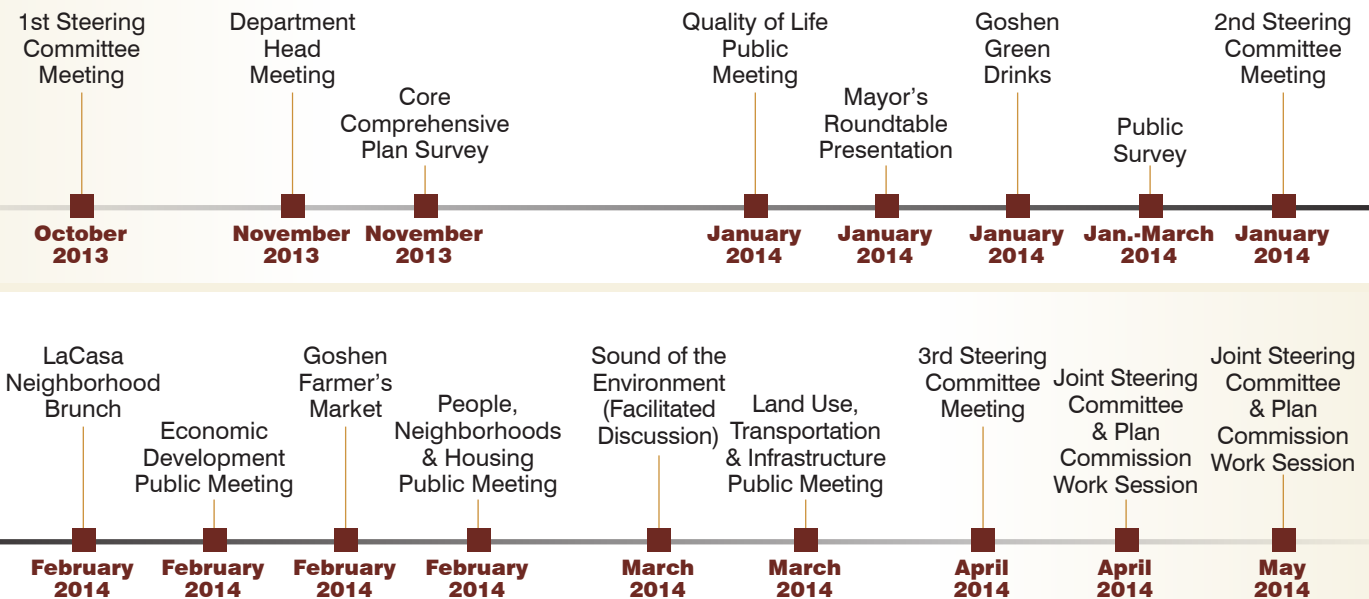
Internal Review

Beginning in May 2013, Goshen City staff reviewed the 2004-2013 Comprehensive Plan, noting accomplishments from the plan and priorities moving forward. Concurrently, Goshen City staff reviewed existing conditions of the City using a variety of data and other sources. In October 2013, a Steering Committee was formed to guide the process and provide feedback on the update. Members of the Steering Committee were selected to represent a wide range of groups and entities within the City. Planning staff solicited input from each City Department on current challenges and future priorities.

Based on the review of the 2004-2013 plan and existing conditions analysis, City Planning staff developed a Core Comprehensive Plan survey with input from the Steering Committee. This survey focused on the Core Principles of the 2004-2013 plan. It was sent to City board and commission members, elected officials and city employees. The results, which were reviewed by the City Planning staff and the Steering Committee, were used to determine content for the public survey and the public meetings.

Public Participation

Public input is an essential part of developing or updating a Comprehensive Plan. Four topic-driven public meetings were held from the beginning of January 2014 to the end of



March 2014. These included **Quality of Life, Economic Development & Redevelopment, People, Neighborhoods & Housing and Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure**. The format for each meeting was mixed, beginning with a presentation relevant to the topic, small group discussion and time at the end for comments on display boards. Attendance at each of these meetings ranged from 33 to over 50 participants, representing diverse opinions. While a number of community members attended multiple meetings, there were new faces at every meeting.

In addition to the four public meetings, Planning staff attended a number of other community events for input on the plan update, including Goshen Green Drinks, the LaCasa Neighborhood Leaders' Brunch, Sound of the Environment and the Goshen Farmer's Market. A public survey was available online and in hard copy, in both English and Spanish, from the end of January 2014 through the end April 2014. In total, 553 responses were received, with 540 in English and 13 in Spanish. Planning staff also provided monthly updates on the planning process to the Plan Commission. Several Plan Commission members were involved in promoting and organizing the public meetings.

Major themes from public participation included a strong preference for additional sidewalks and trails, for both recreational and transportation use. Aspects of the community that ranked highly were parks and trails, downtown and sense of community. Traffic congestion, which was discussed extensively in the 2004-2013 plan, was noted as an issue that continues to need attention in the next 10 years. In addition to traffic congestion, public input also showed lack of economic diversity and maintenance of properties in neighborhoods as top challenges facing Goshen.

AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION (APA) SUSTAINING PLACES FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

Goshen's Role as a Pilot Community

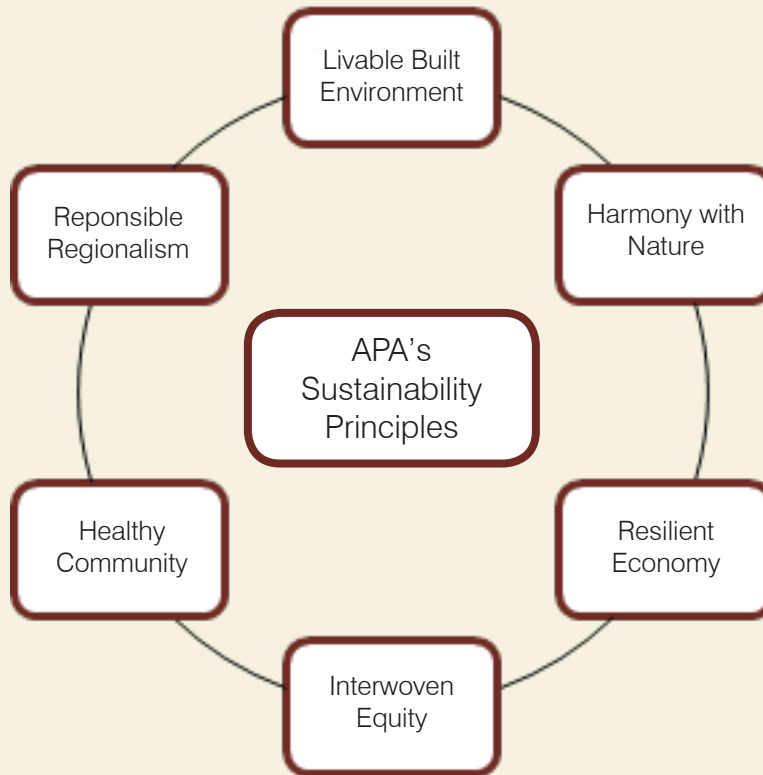
As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, the City of Goshen participated as one of ten pilot communities with the American Planning Association's Comprehensive Plan Standards for Sustaining Places. In September 2013, the American Planning Association (APA) released an email seeking interested pilot communities to help refine comprehensive plan standards for sustainability and evaluate a designation program. In October 2013, the City of Goshen was selected as one of ten pilot communities, representing diverse geographies, sizes, community characteristics and planning contexts.

Over the course of eight months, the City of Goshen participated in monthly conference calls with APA, providing feedback on the proposed plan standards. These standards are classified into three categories: principles, processes and attributes.



Photos by Goshen City Planning Staff

Plan principles are the overall goals for Comprehensive Plans, aimed at achieving sustainable communities. The six principles include livable built environment, harmony with nature, resilient economy, interwoven equity, healthy community and responsible regionalism. Each of these principle categories has best practices (actions or elements) that help to achieve the principle. Processes include standards for public participation and implementation, while attributes include standards for content and characteristics of the plan.



Goshen Planning staff reviewed the City's 2004-2013 plan using APA's plan standards for sustainability. Planning staff found that approximately one-third of APA's sustainability standards were missing or weak. These standards were integrated into the public meetings for citizen comment. Some of these included the development of local food networks and promoting green building design. Staff found that several standards that were absent or weak in the plan were being addressed on a day-to-day basis. As a pilot community with the APA's Plan Standards for Sustaining Places, Goshen was able to identify areas of the plan that were weak or missing, while incorporating national "best practice" standards into the plan update.