

Building Blocks

Cities with stable populations are often comprised of safe neighborhoods with more opportunities for businesses and a strong tax base capable of supporting high-quality public services. Four defining qualities describe not what the Indianapolis community is, but what it wants to become, which is to make Indianapolis a HEALTHIER, more RESILIENT, more INCLUSIVE, more COMPETITIVE city. These defining qualities are mutually reinforcing. In many ways, they are dependent on one another.

A More Resilient City

A community's resilience can be measured by how it functions when it encounters change or controversy. Change can be sudden, as in the case of a flood, or gradual, as in public health challenges like the rise in obesity.

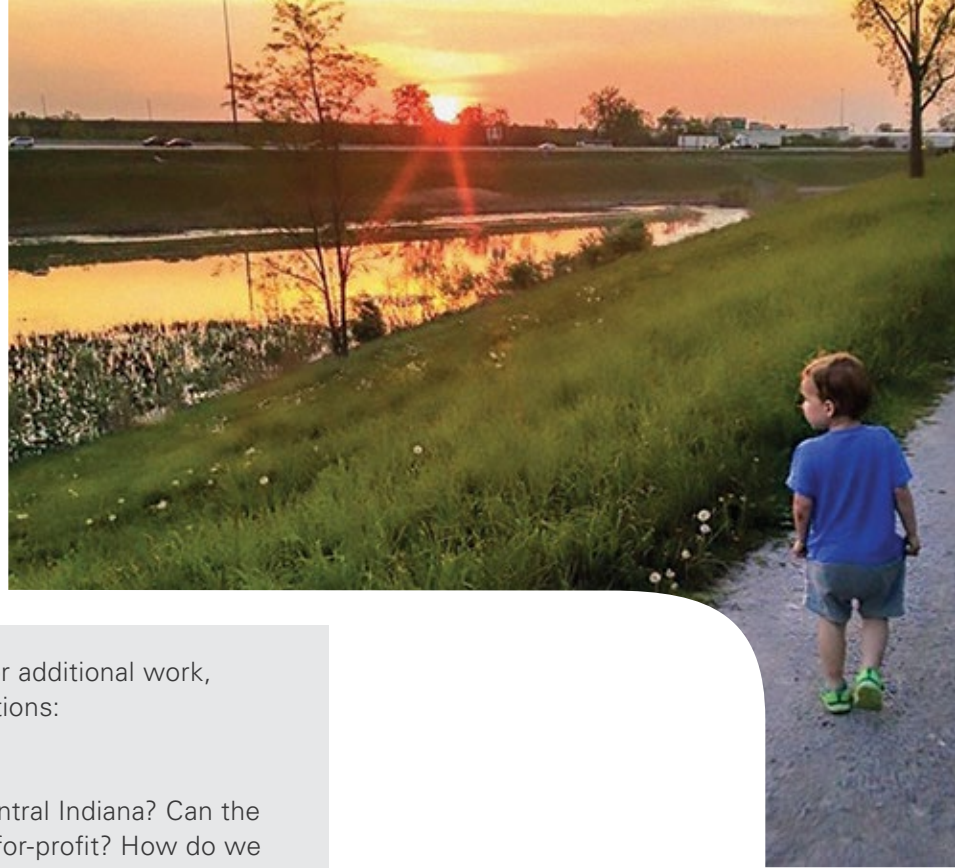
Resilience is determination – the ability of our residents, neighborhoods, businesses and government to tackle any challenge that is put in front of them. Resilience enables individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems within a city to adapt and grow in the face of chronic stresses such as unemployment, hunger, systemic inequalities, violence, disease and public transportation challenges.¹⁷ Resilience also prepares a community to “bounce-forward” in the face of unpredictable threats or shocks such as natural disasters, seasonal weather conditions, disease outbreaks and

disruptions in the local, national or global economy. When public infrastructure, such as roads, sewers, or emergency response facilities and systems are stressed or shocked, resilient cities recover from the resulting business disruptions and property damages swiftly, enabling residents to return to their normal lives more quickly. The added community benefit is that when these systems are not being stressed or shocked, they simply operate more effectively and efficiently.

Resiliency stretches beyond environmental changes and challenges, and it depends on more than just physical assets. Resiliency is a combination of policies, social cohesion and institutional and civic participation. A resilient city has numerous social interactions, strong personal relationships and measurable civic engagement. A resilient city's residents attend community meetings, volunteer and vote. Resiliency requires

choices and the ability to exercise one's choices, especially in one's political representation, housing and transportation. Resiliency further requires an economy that can weather market downturns and other global disruptions.

We must build a city that is more sustainable, that values human and environmental health and invests accordingly. We must ensure that Marion County residents are better insulated from chronic stressors and shocks to the physical, social and economic systems of the city. We must create an environment that fosters voting, and removes barriers for the same. We must decrease the number of situations that must be mitigated, increase our ability to prepare and respond, and improve our ability to adapt and change quickly.



The Bicentennial Plan seeks to lay the foundation for additional work, locally and regionally, to answer the following questions:

DEFINE RESILIENCE LOCALLY

What does the term mean in Marion County? In Central Indiana? Can the definition transcend all sectors: public, private, not-for-profit? How do we account for multiple jurisdictions and levels of government? What data and analytical techniques should we use? Can physical, economic and social systems be connected?

IDENTIFY THE PROBLEMS

How will the local and regional economies be impacted by natural disasters and a changing climate, beyond business disruptions and property damage?

DETERMINE VULNERABILITIES

What are the interdependencies between people and places? How do our economic strengths or weaknesses directly impact our quality of life?

EVALUATE THE RISKS & COSTS

How dependent are residents and businesses on the local and regional infrastructure? Where and in what ways are we most vulnerable?

INVESTIGATE OPTIONS

What are the opportunities that might come from being a more resilient community? How can a focus on resilience become an attraction strategy?

INNOVATE & TAKE ACTION

What assets exist that we can leverage to become a more resilient and self-sustaining community? What are our capabilities in energy and food production? How do we learn to live both with and without water for extended periods of time? What resources provide a public benefit every day but can be tapped especially hard in times of disaster? Is there an entirely new economic sector to be developed, locally or regionally, for this type of work?





Connections

The following are examples of some of the connections that were made throughout the planning process.

MARION COUNTY MULTI-HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Through a cross-agency, cross-department collaboration in 2006 (with an update in 2014), the Marion County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan was created to identify natural hazards that impact the county and its residents, to identify actions and activities that would minimize losses from these hazards, and to establish an implementation process for the creation and execution of the plan.

INDY HUNGER NETWORK

The Indy Hunger Network is a coalition of representatives from leading anti-hunger organizations, both public and private, as well as community volunteers who work to create a system that ensures nutritious food and beverages for everyone in need.

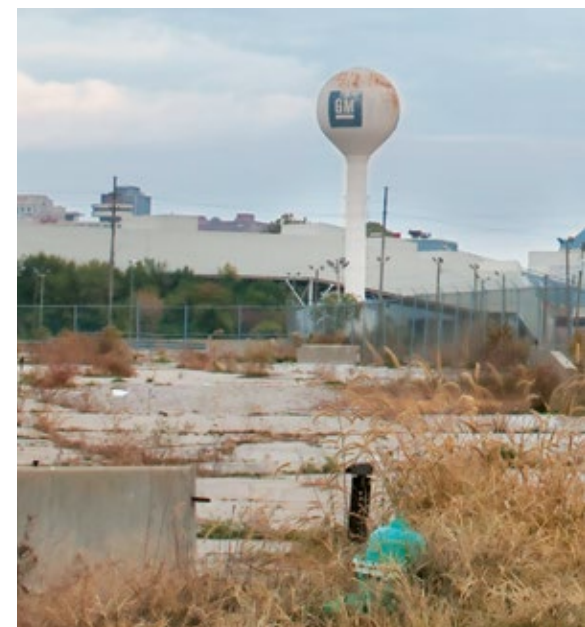
MAPLETON-FALL CREEK COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION'S 20/21 TARGET AREA

Mapleton-Fall Creek's LEED for Neighborhood Development certification process provides independent, third-party verification that a development's location and design utilize environmentally responsible, green building practices and look beyond the immediate site to inspire and help create better, more sustainable communities. Mapleton-Fall Creek Community Development Corporation is the first neighborhood in the state to receive conditional approval from the U.S. Green Building Council. It has uplifted the neighborhood with a deliberate, people-first approach that incorporates green measures in all developments, from buildings to infrastructure to neighborhood gardens. Mapleton-Fall Creek has a rich history, and the 20/21 Target Area has recently seen significant public and private investment to remediate brownfields, rehabilitate and build homes, provide infrastructure improvements, improve the facades of local businesses and promote a collective identity that highlights community assets, natural resources and amenities.

Brownfields are former industrial or commercial sites where future use is affected by real or perceived environmental contamination.

STAR COMMUNITIES

The STAR Community Rating System (STAR) is the first national certification program to recognize sustainable communities. STAR represents a milestone in creating more livable communities for everyone. Local leaders, including some in Indianapolis, use STAR to assess their sustainability, set targets for moving forward, and measure progress along the way. The rating system's evaluation measures define community-level sustainability and present a vision for how communities can become more healthy, inclusive and prosperous across seven goal areas. The system's objectives provide a much-needed vocabulary that local governments and their communities can use to more effectively strategize and define their sustainability planning efforts.¹⁸



KEEP INDIANAPOLIS
BEAUTIFUL (KIB) COMMUNITY
FORESTRY PROGRAM

KIB's Community Forestry program is part of NeighborWoods, a national effort to revegetate entire communities through partnerships to plant and tend to trees in populated areas through the Alliance of Community Trees. In partnership with the City of Indianapolis, KIB will plant 100,000 trees in strategic locations throughout Indianapolis. Trees improve the natural environment with their aesthetics and ability to produce clean air and water. Research also shows that trees help to reduce crime and foster more sociable neighborhoods.¹⁹



A Healthier City

The environments in which people live, work, learn and play have a tremendous impact on their health. The quality of the local environment, meaning the condition of our land, air and water, is paramount to the health of Marion County's residents. Increases in air quality-related illnesses, health care costs or environmental degradation that future generations will pay for down the road only exacerbate some of the problems that exist today. And while the health of our natural resources, air and water are crucial to our region's resiliency, nothing is more vital to the long-term prosperity of our city and the security of its people than the physical and mental health of our population.

Human health stretches far beyond what medical service providers can offer. Human health is determined by a number of societal factors. Social determinants of health are the economic and social conditions – and their distribution among the population – that influence individual and group differences in health status. They are conditions outside of our genetics and medical care that influence our health. Housing, transportation, education,



employment and criminal justice systems – the policies that they create and uphold – impact one's health more than the health care industry. Making Indianapolis a more healthy community will require that we collectively address these social determinants by incorporating health as a consideration in all policy decisions. A healthy city is one that equitably meets the needs and recognizes the human rights of all its residents.

We must build a city that promotes access to nutritious food and active living. We must embrace a new attitude and accompanying policies that value the health and well-being of our residents and invests accordingly. We must decrease the burden of chronic disease, increase the number of children and adults at healthy weights, and improve the overall health of Marion County's residents.

The Bicentennial Plan joins efforts to make Indianapolis a healthier community. The Bicentennial Plan seeks to lay the foundation for additional work, locally and regionally, to answer the following questions:

NEIGHBORHOODS

How do we begin to reconnect work and public health with neighborhood and community development?

DISPARITIES

What policy and structural changes are needed to eliminate disparities in health, education, employment, income, housing, and the justice system?

FOOD SECURITY

What does it take to ensure that every resident has reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food and beverages, if and when the (for profit) market is not able or no longer able to make the math work in a particular neighborhood?

SAFETY

How does a healthier community contribute to a safer community?

NATURAL RESOURCES

How can we better protect, enhance and leverage our natural resources to support clean air, water and soil, which dramatically contribute to the health of our community?