



CULTIVATE • BUILD • THRIVE -2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN-



JUNE 2020 - DRAFT



OUR VISION

"The Town of Middlebury, grown from tradition, is a welcoming, thriving community for all ages. A place committed to an entrepreneurship zest while maintaining a safe, family-oriented environment with quality education, innovation, and community involvement."

OUR PLAN

The process of strategic planning allows individuals representing all walks of life from our community to challenge themselves to create strategies, a road map, to guide future development. This planning process addressed twelve strategic topics with community members leading a team to develop their part of the plan. Additional input came through a community questionnaire and small group meetings. The entire process was facilitated by leaders from the Michiana Council of Government.

OUR COMMUNITY

As a community, we have been known as "makers," ones who thrive on the entrepreneurial spirit to cultivate ideas and then turn those ideas into reality. This sprit is exhibited through a wide diversity of; Amish businesses, Town Center merchants, and multi-national manufacturers. As a community, we have a strong sense of belonging, pride, family values, and a commitment to excellence in education. The planning process is meant to build upon these strengths.

OUR FUTURE

This plan will continue to encourage and support the "makers" spirit and the passing on of the traditional values that have made Middlebury the successful community it is today. It will help guide the strategic investments to continue in the spirit of being "Grown from Tradition."



Introduction

GROWN FROM TRADITION

We, as a community, have been known as "Makers," ones who thrive on the entrepreneurial spirit to cultivate ideas and make those ideas a reality. While we appear to be a "small" town when looking down from 30,000 feet in the air, but on the ground, we have a "skyscraper" maker's mentality of "going big," and this is shown from our worldleading manufacturing industries, successful local businesses, government leadership and administration, and the volunteerism and dedication from our local residents.

Looking back on the formation of the Middlebury community, Middlebury was built from traditions. Meaning, family-focused values were carried over into the workplaces that cultivated a welcoming, family-friendly atmosphere. An atmosphere that encouraged business leaders and their employees to not see each other from the lens of "job titles" but as family. An atmosphere that built lasting relationships and that encouraged one another to strive for their best and succeed. An atmosphere and spirit that was passed down from generation to generation. An atmosphere that was grown from tradition, reflective from the hard-working, dedicated, and committed families who started Middlebury-families who dreamed of starting a business one-day and turned those dreams into realities by starting businesses that have now grown into world-leading businesses.

OUR PLAN

This comprehensive plan will continue to inspire and guide the Town of Middlebury and community leaders to cultivate and build a thriving and resilient community. This Plan will continue to encourage and support the "Maker's" spirit and the passing on of the traditional values that have made Middlebury what it is today and to make strategic investments to continue to grow from tradition.

A comprehensive plan strengthens and unifies a community by engaging and empowering all types of residents, regardless of income, age, or disability, to participate and themselves to create an actionable plan, a road map, to guide future development that represents the interests of all residents. This Plan was developed by the vision and input of its community leaders and residents and was organized by a volunteer group of Town officials and staff, business owners, local citizens, and community organizations, known as the Steering Committee. This plan will serve as Middlebury's blueprint to cultivate and build a thriving and resilient community.

PLANNING PROCESS

Beginning in April of 2019, the Town of Middlebury kicked off the planning process by organizing a Steering Committee to serve as the lead representative body overseeing the development of the plan. Once of the first activities the Steering Committee participated in was to review the 2011 Comprehensive Strategic Plan and the status of the strategies. The 2011 Comprehensive Strategic Plan served as the base for the development of this plan. The planning team held monthly Steering Committee meetings to go through the five-step planning process (shown on the next two pages) and report on the progress of the plan development.

The planning process was designed to engage residents of the Middlebury 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 involvement through multiple facets that sought input from key stakeholders including Town officials and staff, residents, local business owners, Northridge High School students, and other community organizations. The plan addressed 12 focus areas (strategic topics) that were assembled as focus area teams, led by key community stakeholders to develop an actionable plan for their focus area.

THE FIVE-STEP PLANNING PROCESS:

Establish the community vision and core values – This integral step set the stage for the plan development. Several meetings involved vision building exercises that led the Steering Committee to identify what they liked and disliked about Middlebury and community aspects they valued the most. At this time, the Town engaged its residents and key stakeholders through multiple engagement efforts. Rather than hosting one public event to gather input such as an open house, we engaged residents and visitors at the Middlebury Summer and Fall Festivals and held stakeholder Focus Group Workshops. Over 900 postcards notifying participants of a public input survey were distributed at the Summer Festival. At the Fall Festival, the Steering Committee engaged nearly 30 participants using selfie message boards to share their vision of Middlebury in 2030. Coupled with an input survey, we received over 150 individuals to gauge how residents the future of Middlebury, development preferences, and what they value the most. Results of the Public Input Survey are in the Appendix. Middlebury's 2030 vision statement answers the question of what kind of town we want to be and sets forth principles (Core Values) that address the physical and social well-being of the town. The vision statement and core values acknowledge Middlebury is an appealing and welcoming place to all and that community leaders and partnerships will be a critical component to realize the Town's vision. Middlebury's 2030 vision statement and values are seen on pages 10 and 11.





Analyze existing conditions – The

planning team gathered the supporting facts and data to serve as the community profile. Information was collected using U.S. Census data, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Government Finance Tool, and interviews with Town staff, organization leaders, and community facility directors. Details on the Existing Conditions are in the Appendix. Using the existing conditions and the Core Values, the planning team held a Focus Group Workshop made up of key stakeholders and technical experts to identify the goals of what they want to see accomplished by 2030, then draw out what Middlebury is doing well and the major issues the Town needs to address to make these goals a reality.



Develop the action strategies –

This step involved a second Focus Group Workshop to align the major challenges and action strategies to the Core Values and prioritize the strategies that should first be considered for implementation in the next five years. Focus Group members then applied those priority strategies into a future land use map. Strategies looked at identifying potential new development and redevelopment properties in the planning area to establish a vision to guide land development decisions over the next 10 years.



Prepare plan document and review

- The final plan is the accumulation of steps 1 to 3 and was reviewed by the Steering Committee. The Plan was available for public review as a 15-day engagement period in June 2020. The community had the opportunity to attend focus area meetings and provide input on a focus area's priority action program.



Adopt final plan – The Steering Committee presented the final plan to the Elkhart County Planning Commission for their endorsement and adoption by the Middlebury Town Council.

PROJECT TIMELINE













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-2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN-

OUR VISION TO CULTIVATE, BUILD, & THRIVE

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OUR VALUES...

Attractive & Welcoming Community

Residents value a quaint, smalltown feel where neighbors are friendly and welcoming. They value the attractiveness and peacefulness of the Town Center, homes, and neighborhoods.



Opportunities for Community Connections

Residents value creating quality places to shop, eat, live and gather with neighbors and friends to build community connections. Through culture arts, events and festivals, residents are able to meet new people and create vibrant places to live.



Industry, Innovation, & Education

Residents value good jobs and opportunities for entrepreneurship, strong local businesses, and a wellsupported community school system.

Infrastructure & Safety

Residents value safe streets, where residents can get around with ease whether driving, walking, biking, or by buggy. Having dependable, high-quality utilities and infrastructure systems creates opportunities for growth and supports existing residents.

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Residents value having an affordable, family-friendly place to raise their kids. The simple lifestyle adds to the character and culture of the town.



Residents value the investment in green space, trails and parks and would like to see it continue to be maintained as high-quality amenities.



The 2013 Branding Study was guided by Insight Strategic Concepts, Inc. from Elkhart and Heiden Creative Company from Plymouth. The Branding Study Steering Committee first conducted a focus group research that engaged families and churches, educators, businesses, the Amish Community, youth, and governance and civic organizations. The research focused on collecting information using an input survey. The first three questions, what is your first impression of Middlebury, what adjectives, and emotions best describe Middlebury, guided the identification of the following six core values.

- Sense of community
- Industry, innovation, and education
- Infrastructure and safety
- Simple lifestyle and faith
- Family focus
- Nature, parks, and trails

Additionally, this research guided the team to design Middlebury's new logo and tagline, "Grown from Tradition."

The formation of these core values was inspired from the Middlebury Branding Strategy that was done in 2013, a top priority recommendation from the 2011 Comprehensive Strategic Plan. Additional inspiration came from the responses to a question asked in the public input survey – what are three qualities that make a community a desirable place to live. The goal of this question was to find common themes amongst the responses in comparison to the six values that were identified from the 2013 Branding Study. The Steering Committee then condensed those responses and the previous values into the set of values as previously mentioned.

These six core values serve as the basis that articulates the characteristics, aspirations, and social attributes the community desires.

