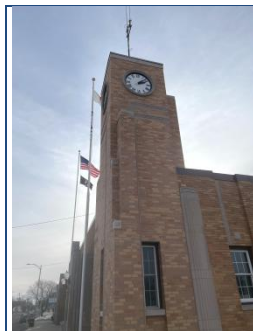




2025

GIBSON CITY STRATEGIC PLAN



***City of Gibson
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P. O. Box 545
Gibson City, IL 60936
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Mayor Daniel Dickey
Alderman Susie Tongate
City of Gibson
March 1, 2025

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*“Special Thanks to” Gwen Crawford, VP, Financial Analysis, Registered Municipal Advisor
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and

Patrick Hoban, CEO of the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council,

for

their expertise, suggestions, information and guidance

during the development of this strategic plan.

Foreword by City Clerk Jan Hall

My love of Gibson City runs deep, starting with my ancestors, Andrew and Amanda Jordan being the first settlers of the area. The homestead still stands southeast of town and remains family owned.

Being the middle daughter of Loel and Nelda Jordan, I had one choice – love it or hate it when it comes to Gibson City government, because that was and still is the main topic of conversation in my childhood home. My dad became an alderman in Ward 2 by winning a write-in campaign in the sixties. And so it began, he continued in Gibson City government until his untimely death August 17, 1988 during his 11th year serving as Mayor.

Margaret Anderson, a veteran full-time City Clerk of the City, was retiring and the clerk position was changed. Under the late Mayor Karen Rhodes, I became the first City Clerk with a pared down part-time position; taking minutes, official record keeper, local election official and tracking annual licenses.

Mayor Rhodes was adept in having valuable years' experience as an Administrative Assistant for the Gibson City School Unit Office as well as Alderman, Ward 4, serving as the Finance & Personnel Chairman of the City Council. She was very well versed in planning, budgeting and the importance of keeping a good relationship between City and state.

My first round of being a City Clerk was 8 years, 2 terms. I set my sights on serving as an Alderman and ultimately I'm now back to finishing another 8 years as your City Clerk.

My Mother, Nelda Jordan, also served as an Alderman in Ward 2 after my father's death – and became Mayor as well. She is now 91 years old, still in our family home, and asks me daily what is going on at City Hall! The main book read in our house is the City Code! Our combined years of service to Gibson City are easily 100 years.

I have served as Alderman and City Clerk with Mayor Daniel E. Dickey. Often times Dan and I didn't agree, but the truth of the matter is we always had the same end goal, the best interest of Gibson City.

*Mayor Dickey has spent the last few months collaborating with City officials, employees, City engineers, professionals, local businesses and our state representative and senator gathering input for a written strategic plan. I was pleased when he invited me to read a draft and asked for my thoughts. **Cont.***

As I write this, he is still working on finalizing an appropriate strategic plan to present to the City Council and community leaders. Dan has many years of personal experience owning and running his own business (CITS, Inc.) as well as being the first Chairman and a founding member of NCC, Inc. which was a national communications company incorporated in Nevada with headquarters in Phoenix, AZ.

We all agree that to keep Gibson City “on the map”, we must work together and stay on task with this detailed strategic plan. I urge everyone who calls Gibson City “home” to read this plan and gain an understanding of the many steps and years it often takes to complete just one project. Often a difficult and underappreciated job, but juggling all of these ideas and moving forward is the key to growth and preservation.

I would personally appreciate your feedback for future discussions.

Thank you.

Jan Hall – Gibson City Clerk



CITY of GIBSON STRATEGIC PLAN



Introduction

A strategic plan is a tool that helps determine the way we move forward and provides continuity over many years. It shows where we have been, where we are currently and where we want to go in the future as a community. Most importantly it provides a path to achieve our goals.

The plan should be affordable, practical, realistic, efficient, sustainable, goal oriented and measurable. It should also be adaptable to changing economic and social conditions, while at the same time providing a framework to insure our current and future success.

Changing and increased regulations and mandates at the state and federal level are our largest expense. For instance, we have been given a mandate, because of new and updated regulations to construct a new waste water facility at a huge expense to our community. We must constantly explore more efficient ways of doing business and implement new ideas and strategies to help offset some of the impacts of these regulations. Inflation is also another consideration as costs for everything continues to go up.

Please keep in mind that availability of funds, priorities and costs can change and impact the time line so the plan needs to be updated yearly. We also need to be nimble and adjust quickly if conditions change or when opportunities present themselves.

Having a strategic plan is key when applying for and potentially receiving grants.

“Find out where you are at, where you are going and build a plan to get there.”

Robert Kiyosaki



Vision

“We are “A Small Town With A Big Heart” that embraces the future while maintaining small town charm and traditional values. We support families as well as businesses and the jobs they provide.”



Community Profile

The City of Gibson (Gibson City) is a small rural community located in East Central Illinois in the County of Ford. The City is the second largest community in Ford County. Gibson City was purchased and platted by Jonathan B. Lott in 1869 and established in 1871.

The largest employer in Gibson City (and Ford County) is Gibson Area Hospital. Other larger employers are agricultural based such as One Earth Energy and International Flavors & Fragrances (IFF). The GCMS School District office and schools and Hearthside are also located in our community as well, both are large employers.

Gibson City has a robust retail, service and restaurant environment compared to many other small communities. Gibson City also supports many smaller surrounding communities including the rural areas. In 2024 our sales tax revenues were the highest compared to other communities in Ford County.

Three Illinois highways intersect in Gibson City i.e. IL Route 47, IL Route 9 and IL Route 54.

Rail lines in Gibson City include CNN, NFS and the Bloomer Line.

Five interstate highways are located within 45 miles of Gibson City. They are I-55, I-57, I-74, I-72 and I-39.

Our community has most major church denominations, various civic organizations and many organized sports programs and other activities including camping, swimming, hiking and fishing.



“Everything’s Waiting for You” in Gibson City

(From an article published in 2019)

I was listening to our local radio station the other day and they played a song titled “Downtown” composed by Tony Hatch and sang by Petula Clark from the mid-sixties that reminded me of Gibson City.

Here are a couple of the verses:

*Just listen to the music of the traffic in the city
Linger on the sidewalk where the neon signs are pretty
How can you lose?
The lights are much brighter there
You can forget all your troubles, forget all your cares*

*So go downtown
Things will be great when you’re downtown
No finer place for sure, downtown
Everything’s waiting for you*

“The lights are much brighter” in downtown Gibson City. Several years ago, we began to make improvements to our downtown area based on recommendations from our “Downtown Revitalization Committee”. Some of the things they recommended included new, overhead LED street lights, sidewalk improvements, new trees and planters, new curbs, gutters and landscaping. This year we are installing free, public WIFI and a new sound system that will play seasonal music you can enjoy as you stroll down our sidewalks while exploring many of our downtown restaurants, shops, retail stores, pubs and boutiques. We even have a confectionary with some of the best chocolates and goodies you’ve ever had. Starting this year we’ll also be featuring “street music” for your listening pleasure. The rest of our business district boasts even more shops, retail stores and restaurants with almost everything you need.

Looking for something to do on a nice evening or beautiful weekend? Gibson City is your destination. We have four City parks and two of them even have free, public WIFI. Activities in our parks include playgrounds for the kids, camping, fishing, a walking trail, baseball fields and tennis courts, picnic areas and much, much more. Annual events in Gibson City include our Lighted Annual Christmas Parade, Harvest Fest and our own “Friday Night Under the Lights” downtown car cruise which takes place the third Friday every month from May through October. After a round of golf you can enjoy a fine meal and cold beverage at one of our many fine eating establishments and then catch a movie at our local drive-in. **Cont.**

If you're looking for a safe place to live or raise your family, we have some of the lowest crime rates in east-central Illinois thanks to the GCPD. Even our local fire district is modern and well equipped and our voluntary fire fighters are constantly training. Gibson City has Ford County's only hospital and the award winning Gibson Area Hospital is always there if you need them. Not bragging, but Gibson City also has the only assisted living facility in Ford County, The Villas of Holly Brook. Their reviews are fantastic! The GCMS school district is second to none when it comes to academics and their sports program. The GCMS football team was IHSA 2A State Champions in 2017 and 2018 and they're having a great start in 2019 too. Furthermore, don't forget to stop by Moyer District Library, you will be impressed.

Almost all major denominations are represented by our local churches and you are always welcome and invited. Some of our civic organizations include the Lions, Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary and the Shiners' and I can assure you they are very active. Whatever your interests, there are other numerous organizations and groups you can join if you want to make a difference.

You'll find that Gibson City is a "business friendly community" and we understand your needs. If you're looking for a place to grow your business check us out. Besides having an industrial park, we have two TIF districts and an Enterprise Zone. For small or startup businesses we offer grants and low interest rate loans.

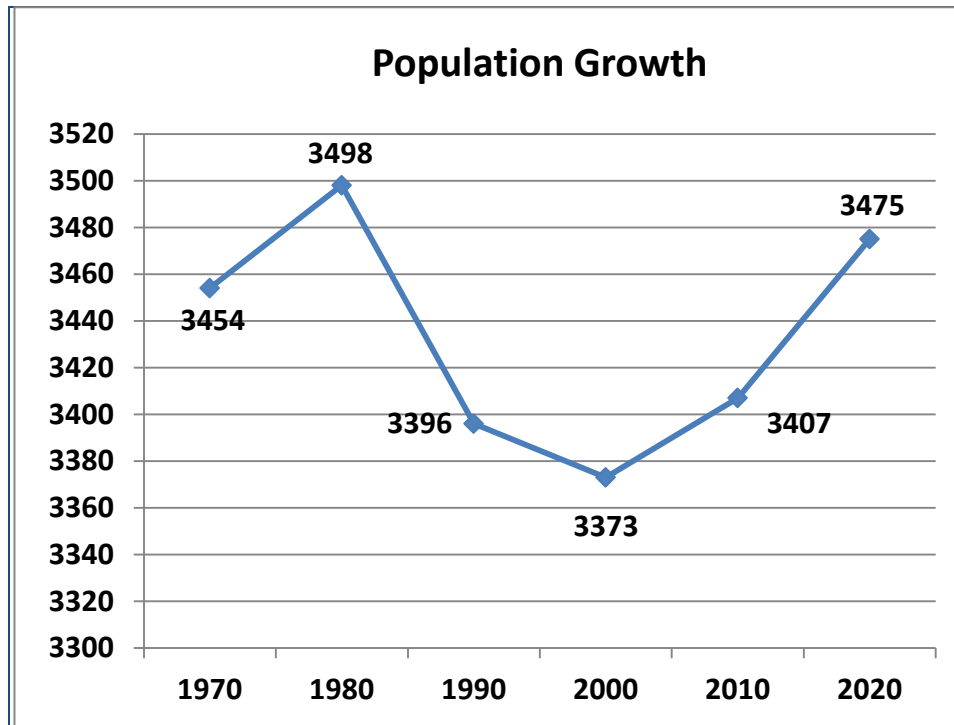
Look no further. Gibson City has everything you need and *"Everything's waiting for you"* in Gibson City.



Demographics

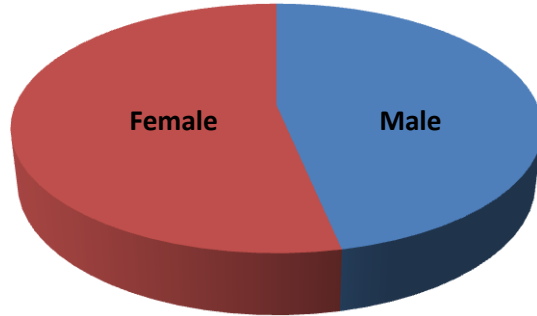
In 2024 Gibson City sales tax revenues were \$691,333.90, the highest in Ford County.

Demographic information sources used are censusreporter.org, datausa.io and wikipedia.org for the information to develop the charts and compile the data below. 2020 census data was used. There are inconsistencies with the data provided by the various web sites. Please use as an estimation tool only.

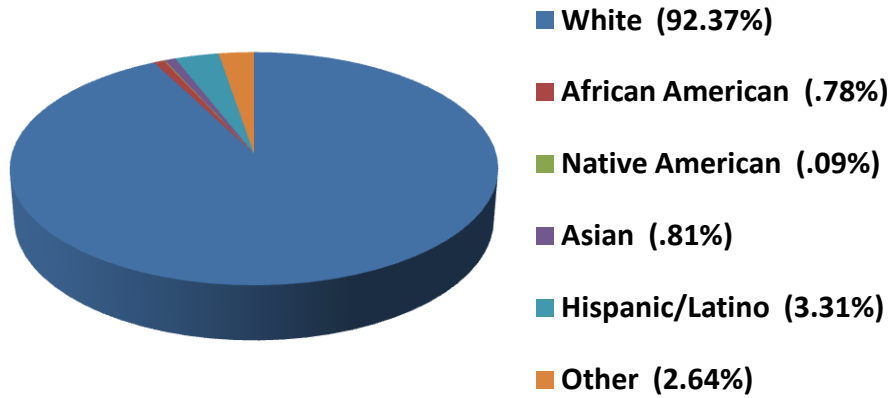


Gender

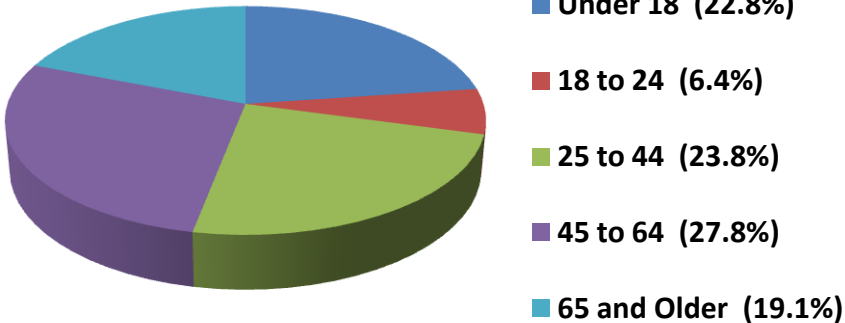
For every 100 females in 2020,
there were 87.7 males.



Racial Makeup

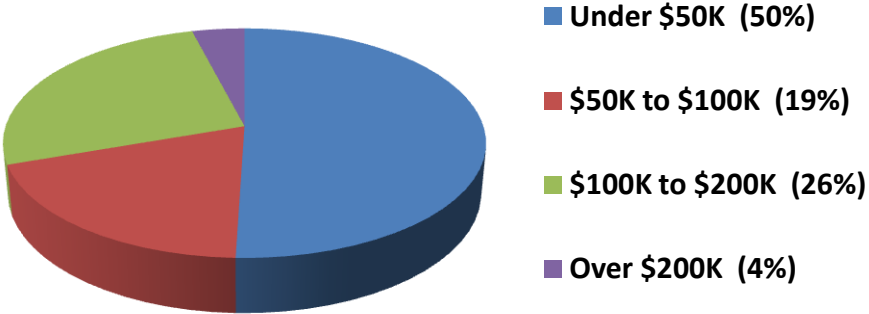


Age Distribution

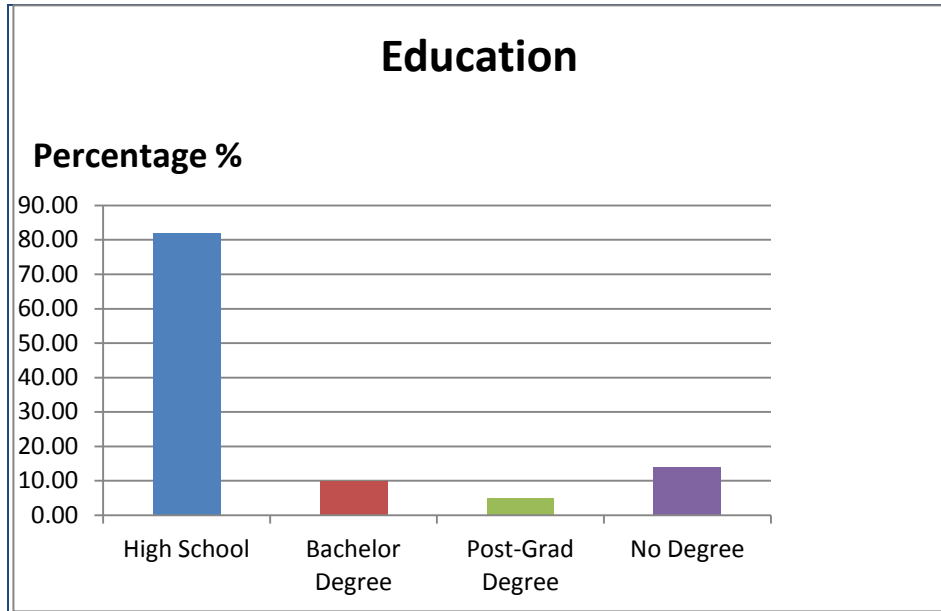


Median age was 43.8.

Household Income



Median household income was \$47,104.00 with median income for a family at \$68,977.00.
Poverty rate was 11.2%.
Average household size was 2.93.
Housing unit vacancy was approx. 1% with 67% owner occupied and 32% renter occupied.
Median value of owner occupied housing is \$138,400.00.
Veteran status was 8.5% with 193 male and 54 female.



Economic Development

The foundation of economic development is infrastructure. We need to continue to improve and expand our water, sanitary and drainage system capacities to support current and future residential development as well as commercial growth.

Housing -

Gibson City currently has two active residential development areas.

Falcon Pointe is located on the west side of our community on IL Rte. 47 and currently has five lots available. No additional development is planned for Falcon Pointe.

Railside Estates is planning to expand development with an additional 12 lots (Phase 3) on property located on the north side of town west of the GCMS Middle School. Railside Estates also has future plans (TBD) to develop an additional 12+ lots in Phase 4 on property located east of The Villas of Holly Brook.

Our vacancy rate is 1% based on demographic information indicating we need more housing including rental properties.

Large scale residential projects are not recommended at this time as we do not have the utility (water and sanitary sewer) capacities to support it. More information will be provided below towards a solution in the infrastructure portion of the plan. Just to be clear, we currently do have the utility capacities to complete the development of Falcon Pointe and Railside Estates.



Rick Bowen - *"I have been involved in real estate in central Illinois for over 25 years. I travel to at least 6 surrounding counties and at one time or another have visited most of the communities within those counties. These communities all have their strengths and weaknesses. Gibson City compares well with these communities. Cont.*

Gibson City has always had average to above average job availability, average to slightly above retail opportunities and superior healthcare and school district. To me what is slightly alarming is the population of Gibson City hasn't increased much and may have even decreased during this time.

The GCMS School District, Gibson Area Hospital and many of the other employers continue to offer quality services and seem to pay competitive wages.

At first glance there is no reason why the population hasn't increased more, or is there? My thoughts and opinion is the price of real estate and the availability of affordable real estate is to blame or partially to blame.

Higher prices, shorter marketing times and housing selling above market price have been common in most markets in recent years. Gibson City's real estate prices have always been a little higher than many of the surrounding similar sized communities. In my opinion Gibson City has always lacked in quantity smaller (1000-1200 square foot) entry level homes much like homes located in the south end of the community.

Early in my time in real estate the community's residential rental availability seemed to be in balance. The rising prices and shortage of available owner-occupied single family homes has created a shortage of rental units as many of the once rental units are now being purchased by owner occupants.

Commercial and retail within the community also seemed to be in balance early in my career. In the past several years tragic events have decreased the availability of downtown store fronts, many of which were used as retail stores and professional office space. It is my opinion the community of Gibson City needs and should continue to work toward making development affordable for:

- 1. Retail and office space growth that might provide space for locally owned small businesses to grow.*
- 2. Development of entry-level housing which should include smaller single family homes (1000-1200 square foot) and duplexes (zero lot line style housing). I've seen this style of housing used by senior citizens as they downsize. A variety of sizes and price points would be appealing, but most likely the smaller units would create the most demand.*
- 3. The development of more multi-unit residential rental units would help in meeting current demand (4-8 unit buildings might be the most appealing).*
- 4. In recent years there has been a higher demand, than past years, for larger residential homes and/or available lots to build this style of homes. The growth of Gibson Area Hospital is among many in driving this demand." **Cont.***

Rick Bowen – Owner Appraisal Services of Central Illinois and Broker for Cornerstone Real Estate

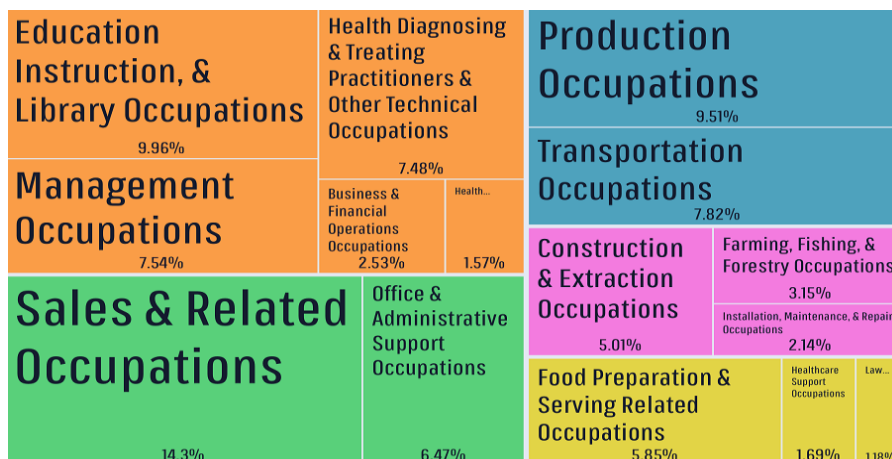


Recommendation: Gibson City needs more rental properties to fill current and future needs. Our needs include housing development for entry-level, single family homes including duplexes for senior citizens, and more retail and office space in the downtown area.

Business –



Gibson City Employment by Industries



From datausa.io

We are known as a “business friendly community” and we need to strive to keep it that way. Supporting our existing restaurants, retail, manufacturing and service businesses is paramount. Many businesses are having a difficult time due to changing economic conditions.

At this time, business retention should be one of our main focuses.

We also need to encourage our Citizens of the importance of buying local and bring more people to our community to support our existing restaurants, retail and service businesses. Tourism would be one solution.

Tools we currently have to help existing businesses and attract new business include TIF, low interest rate CDAP loans, an enterprise zone, property improvement grants and façade grants. These will be discussed in more detail under Economic Development Tools.

In the spring of 2013 we partnered with the Gibson Area Chamber of Commerce and invested \$100,000 into a “Buy Gibson City” program. It was very popular and successful. It increased the velocity of money being spent in our community and greatly benefitted our businesses.

Recommendations: Attention should be paid to existing businesses in regards to their needs.

With deteriorating economic conditions, we should consider implementing another “Buy Gibson City” program.

We also need to keep in mind that agricultural related businesses have historically been a great fit for our community and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future.



Steve Kelly - *“One Earth Energy LLC appreciates the offer of the TIF district to incentivize investment for infrastructure reimbursement. We began our construction in 2007, with payments starting in 2010, as they are in arrears. However, through these TIF programs, opportunities arose for future cash flows to be reinvested into new projects. For example, in 2015, One Earth reinvested approximately 20 million in capital expansion. Additionally, the decision to extend the life of the TIF district allows us to recoup 100% of our qualified expenses.*

The Enterprise Zone, through cooperation between McLean County, Ford County, and the City of Gibson, allowed One Earth to abate the sales tax on natural gas purchased for the plant. We looked at other ethanol plants in Illinois, and all but the one in Gibson City benefited from this tax relief. This cooperative effort by governing bodies provided an important incentive to create a more equitable environment for businesses. Looking ahead, a critical need for One Earth Energy in the Gibson City Industrial Park is the renewal of Jordan Drive.”

Steve Kelly – CEO One Earth Energy, LLC





Technology – Todd McNutt

Strategic Technology and Marketing Plan for Economic Revitalization

Summary

To rejuvenate the economy of our community of residents and revitalize downtown businesses, we propose a strategic technology and marketing plan. The goal is to leverage modern technology, digital marketing, and community engagement to attract new businesses, support existing ones, and increase foot traffic to the downtown area while remaining mindful of budget constraints.

Key Strategies

1. Digital Presence Enhancement

- *Develop a low-cost centralized community website and social media hub featuring a business directory, event calendar, and local promotions.*
- *Encourage local businesses to utilize free or low-cost website builders and social media platforms to improve their online presence.*
- *Implement an affordable e-commerce cooperative hub where local businesses can sell products online with shared hosting and resources.*

2. Smart Infrastructure & Connectivity

- *Expand public Wi-Fi availability in key downtown locations with affordable network solutions.*
- *Utilize community bulletin boards and QR code posters in key areas to direct visitors to online business listings and promotions.*
- *Implement a low-cost "shop local" loyalty program with mobile punch cards rather than high-tech solutions.*

3. Data-Driven Marketing and Promotion

- *Launch a grassroots digital marketing campaign utilizing social media, local influencers, and free promotional tools.*
- *Implement cost-effective email marketing and community newsletters to promote businesses and events.*
- *Organize social media contests and referral programs to increase local engagement. **Cont.***

4. Entrepreneurship & Business Support

- *Establish a shared business resource center in a community space offering free Wi-Fi and business workshops.*
- *Partner with regional organizations and online platforms to provide free or low-cost business training.*
- *Offer affordable, tiered incentives such as reduced permitting fees for technology-driven businesses.*

5. Community Engagement & Events

- *Organize low-cost tech-enhanced community events, such as digital scavenger hunts using QR codes.*
- *Implement a "shop local" campaign with low-cost printed promotional materials and social media challenges.*
- *Leverage existing community spaces and volunteers to promote downtown activities rather than relying on expensive digital solutions.*

6. Technology Incentives to Attract New Businesses

- *Offer modest tax incentives and local grants for businesses that integrate cost-effective technology solutions.*
- *Develop a shared co-working space with community-sponsored high-speed internet rather than high-budget infrastructure projects.*
- *Partner with local trade schools and regional universities to offer affordable business analytics and technology resources.*
- *Encourage sustainable and green-tech businesses by providing networking opportunities rather than costly subsidies.*

7. Leveraging Local Schools for Awareness and Workforce Development

- *Partner with schools to integrate low-cost technology workshops and job shadowing opportunities with local businesses.*
- *Establish student internship and apprenticeship opportunities by working with local businesses to create mutually beneficial programs.*
- *Organize community-sponsored tech fairs with minimal funding by utilizing school facilities and volunteer staff.*
- *Develop mentorship programs by connecting students with business owners for career guidance rather than costly formal training programs.*
- *Work with schools to incorporate local business challenges into curriculum-based projects, fostering practical problem-solving skills.*

8. Utilizing Technology to Enhance Safety and Crime Prevention

- *Install security cameras in high-traffic areas with community funding or business sponsorships.*
- *Implement a neighborhood watch mobile app for residents to report suspicious activities in real time.*
- *Establish a community alert system via text and email for emergencies and safety updates.*
- *Provide training and awareness programs for businesses and residents on using technology to enhance safety. **Cont.***

Implementation Plan & Timeline

Phase 1: Planning & Infrastructure (0-6 Months)

- *Conduct a needs assessment and survey local businesses on technology adoption.*
- *Identify free or low-cost funding sources such as small business grants and community-driven fundraising.*
- *Develop the community website and social media presence using affordable or volunteer-supported services.*
- *Enhance public Wi-Fi in key downtown locations using budget-friendly solutions.*
- *Launch initial social media and email marketing campaigns.*

Phase 2: Business Integration & Digital Marketing (6-12 Months)

- *Provide workshops and free resources on digital marketing and e-commerce strategies.*
- *Launch the online business directory and low-cost loyalty program.*
- *Promote QR code-based interactive business directories rather than high-cost kiosks.*
- *Organize a digital-first local business festival using community-driven sponsorships and volunteer support.*
- *Initiate partnerships with local schools for student workforce development programs.*

Phase 3: Expansion & Sustained Growth (12-24 Months)

- *Continue grassroots marketing campaigns and seek cost-effective partnerships.*
- *Expand business incubator initiatives with affordable shared workspace options.*
- *Optimize the community website and engagement tools based on user feedback.*
- *Develop ongoing student-business collaboration programs with minimal financial burden.*
- *Implement community safety technology initiatives and evaluate their effectiveness.*
- *Monitor progress through cost-effective data tracking and community surveys.*

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- *Increase in downtown foot traffic and business revenue.*
- *Growth in social media engagement and website traffic using low-cost strategies.*
- *Adoption rate of digital tools by local businesses with minimal investment.*
- *Number of new businesses opening or relocating to downtown with budget-conscious incentives.*
- *Measurable participation in low-cost local events and community initiatives.*
- *Number of students participating in workforce development and internship programs without excessive funding requirements.*
- *Reduction in crime rates and increased community safety awareness through technology-driven initiatives.*

By following these detailed steps, we ensure a structured and achievable implementation of our economic revitalization plan while staying within budget constraints.

Todd McNutt – President MCS Office Technologies

Gibson Area Chamber of Commerce



“This year’s Gibson Area Chamber of Commerce Board met to discuss ways to increase business in Gibson City. We would like to increase the benefits of being a Chamber member without adding additional costs to our members if at all possible.

Over the past year, we have added a position to focus on the social media aspect of our member’s businesses and their events. If you haven’t noticed, there has been an increased presence on Facebook promoting our members businesses and their events. You should continue to see the social media push.

We believe we have a wealth of knowledge in the Gibson City area and within our Chamber. So we have begun to have discussions on educational opportunities not only for our members but the business community at large and for the area residents. Various topics concerning employee engagement, reporting, taxes, etc. will be considered.

Also, we will continue to have informational speakers at our monthly meetings. We are also adding additional committees, with the first being a “Community Economic Development Committee” dedicated to searching for new business opportunities in Gibson City.”

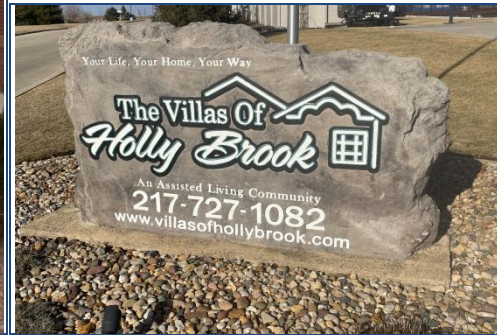
Bill Kirby – President Gibson Area Chamber of Commerce

Senior Care

The Villas of Holly Brook is an “assisted living” facility located in Railside Estates subdivision in Gibson City.

Gibson Area Hospital and Health Services offers a 42 bed “long term care” facility located at 430 E. 19th St. in Gibson City.

Goldwater Care located in Gibson City at 620 E. 1st St. is a “short term rehab and long-term care provider”.



Child Care

From International Association Workforce Professionals at iawpwa.org:

“The availability and cost of child care are critical considerations in workforce development, particularly as they affect parents’ ability to participate fully in the labor market. Workforce development professionals play a key role in understanding and addressing these challenges as part of broader strategies to support economic and labor force engagement.

Affordable and accessible child care remains a significant consideration for workforce and economic growth. It creates jobs within the child care sector, enables greater workforce participation, fosters economic mobility and contributes to long-term societal benefits. **Cont.**

Workforce development professionals, employers, policymakers and community organizations all have potential roles to play in addressing these challenges. By examining the relationship between child care and workforce outcomes, stakeholders can develop targeted strategies to support parents, enhance economic productivity and strengthen the labor force.”

Recommendation: TBD

Infrastructure

“Investment in infrastructure is a long term requirement for growth and a long term factor that will make growth sustainable.” Chanda Kochhar

Water – Tyler Martin



In the past couple years we have been replacing fire hydrants that were not working properly. Thirty two hydrants have been replaced to date with one to go. Cost for the project to date is approximately \$100,000. An additional \$25,000 will be needed to replace the final hydrant as line stops will also be necessary to complete the project. The Mayor and Council members have backed this project 100% as safety for our community is the priority.

The largest water department project in recent history was the water meter replacement project. This project was completed in 2024 at a cost of approx. \$1,300,000 including residential and commercial water meters, labor, residential water shut-offs, etc. The new meters are more reliable and much more accurate, save us time and money and aid us in identifying potential problems. **Cont.**

We are working diligently to improve the quality of our water. Recently we added a phosphate injection system which helps to sequester the rust in our older water mains. It has made a huge difference, but we have much more to do.

In 2025 we plan to upgrade the filtration at our water plant which will aid in better filtration of our potable water. Also, we are installing a new well with pump house and associated infrastructure. We are expanding our capacities for future growth. Estimated cost for both projects is \$3,400,000.

In addition we will begin our water main replacement project in 2025 to replace old water mains. The first phase will begin on 13th Street between State St. and Sangamon Ave. Cost for the first phase will be approx. \$125,000. \$50,000 was covered by a grant. Next year we plan on replacing water mains in the area of the GCMS High School and Elementary School. Other locations will be added as we move forward.

All of our wells now have generators installed so they will continue to work through power outages. This is key in making sure we can provide water to our system and keep our water towers full 24/7. Cost for this project was \$110,000.

Another project planned for the future is the construction of an additional 300,000 gallon plus water tower to be located in Jordan Industrial Park. Engineering designs and plans have been completed and when constructed will aid the Gibson City Fire Protection District in fire suppression and increase our capacities for future growth.

The water system and quality of water we provide is a top priority for the Mayor, Council and me. As we are all aware, these types of projects take time and money. We will continue searching for available grants to help cover the costs. We are moving quickly and efficiently as possible with replacements and upgrades.

I am working closely with the Mayor and the Council Water/Sewer Chair to identify and prioritize needed projects. We are also looking at ways to increase our capabilities, such as building a new water tower and increasing water filtration capacities, to enable future growth.

Tyler Martin – Superintendent of Water

Waste Water / Drainage – Brad Duncan

The City of Gibson takes great pride in providing our residences, businesses and manufacturers with the best possible infrastructure for waste water and storm water collection. This is evident with the projects that have been completed in the past, the present projects that are already in progress and projects that are planned for the future. **Cont.**

Past: The City of Gibson has completed the following projects that have already benefitted our community:

Gibson City completed a sanitary and storm sewer separation project (2010-2020) at a cost of \$4,500,000 which separated storm water inflow into the sanitary sewer system. We added new storm sewers for better drainage in the State Street corridor.

Backflow prevention devices have been installed to storm sewer outlets along Drummer Creek in 2016 which prevents Drummer Creek from backing up into our infrastructure thus preventing surcharging of our collection system.

We started a ditch/culvert revitalization program in 2024 with approx. \$65,000 allotted each year until completion which improves flow velocities, helps to prevent storm water from over-topping ditches and flooding homes and improves flow paths to the collection system.



Replaced curb and gutters on Lott Blvd., N. Sangamon Ave. and other streets in the community, ensuring storm water flow and velocity. This helps keep standing water off our roadways.

Present: Continuation of the ditch/culvert revitalization program which will take approx. 7 years with total cost estimated to be \$455,000.

Coordination with Sangamon Drummer Drainage District to dredge and clean Drummer Creek and tributary located on the east and south sides of Gibson City which helps to prevent storm water from backing up and flooding our infrastructure and allows for storm water flow to the Sangamon River.



Installation of flow meters in combined sanitary and storm interceptors to calculate real-time flow metrics which ensures accurate data collection that will aid in the reporting and design of new projects. **Cont.**

The City recently purchased a 15 acre tract of property on the NE side of our community which will be used to capture storm water. A 13 acre detention basin will capture approx. 60% of storm flows that enter Gibson City from outside City limits. It will also help to prevent overloading our existing system and help to prevent 100 and 500 year rainfall events from effecting areas in our community. Engineering is currently underway and once complete we will have cost estimates and then we will move forward with a financing strategy.

We are collaborating with railroads to perform maintenance and repairs to railway waterways and culverts.

We are initializing and finishing a real-time and updatable GIS (geographical information system) for our waste water, storm water and water systems which will give us capabilities to better manage and maintain our infrastructure now and in the future. GIS also aids in EPA and grant permit applications.

The City recently purchased a Jet/Vac truck used to clean and maintain sanitary and storm water mains. It also has the ability to hydro-excavate utilities in adverse areas and prevents blockages in our sanitary and storm sewer mains.



In the past year we purchased a new backhoe for sanitary and storm sewer excavations which will allow our department to do more of its own work instead of hiring outside contractors.

We are about to begin a (CIPP) cured in place pipe project on West Street which will help to prevent backups, extend the life of the mains and diminish risk potential. This will save the City hundreds of thousands of dollars and greatly extend the life of the combined sewer mains.

New storm water mains, manholes and inlets will be installed by early summer (2025) in Railside Estates to increase drainage capacity, help prevent flooding and increase available new housing in the development. Cost is estimated to be approx. \$330,000.

The City also purchased televising equipment in 2024 that we use to accurately detect blockages in our sanitary and storm water systems and monitor them for potential issues.

Cont.

Future: The City of Gibson is always planning for the future with projects that will increase the longevity of our infrastructure in an efficient, but impactful way.

The IEPA will be requiring the City of Gibson to construct a new Waste Water Treatment facility as our existing facility cannot meet new regulations and requirements. The new facility when completed will tremendously increase our capacities for future growth and also treat excess flows caused by larger rain events so we meet and exceed NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) permit requirements now and in the future.

The new system will allow us to treat larger volumes of flow which will ease the pressure upstream. It will also give us the ability to except more wastewater for future industrial, manufacturing and housing developments and help to ensure our future success.

Current cost estimates are subject to change, but projections at this time are approx. \$35,000,000. We anticipate that we will receive a low interest rate loan and loan forgiveness (grant). This is a six year process. We are currently working on a Long Term Control Plan which is required as a first step by the IEPA.

As stated earlier, we will be continuing our ditch/culvert revitalization program as well as completing more CIPP projects to extend the life of our sanitary and storm sewers which saves the City and taxpayers money.



In conclusion, the City of Gibson has always been at the forefront of providing excellence in service to our community residents. The current life of the waste water treatment facility has been extended approximately twenty years past its intended life span thanks to diligent maintenance and repairs. This is primarily due to the actions of the City staff, Mayor and Council members that have served this community well throughout the years. **Cont.**



I am deeply committed, including my staff and our elected officials, in taking the path to a bright and sustained future for Gibson City. The projects identified in this document will be added to and updated as the years press on, in the end, leaving Gibson City residents with an infrastructure that will serve them well.

Recommendations: Continue to move forward on projects mentioned above.

Brad Duncan – Superintendent of Waste Water and Drainage

Note: It is important that we do not subsidize utilities with tax revenues because it is not sustainable. Utility revenues must cover 100% of all costs supporting our water, drainage and waste water infrastructure.

Streets and Alleys – Tyler Martin



No dust, great color and a hard surface; pretty much sums up how our streets look around the City. This will be the fourth year of our oil and chip program utilizing the Trap rock. The new rock is harder and will last longer giving us the best possible bang for our buck versus limestone.

Several years ago we purchased a new pot hole patching machine called a DuraPatcher. Prior to the oil and chip process we seal the cracks and fill in the low spots, which contributes to a better, longer lasting surface. We will continue this program until all the limestone streets are sealed. We're spending \$200,000 to \$250,000 per year on the program and hope to complete it in 2026. This is just one example on how we are implementing new ideas to benefit our community.

I have been asked why we are not replacing streets and the answer is cost. For instance, the cost to grind and apply asphalt is approximately \$100,000.00 per block. That doesn't mean we won't use asphalt, but we will be strategic and use it on some streets with higher traffic flows.

Cont.

There are two major street projects that need to be completed in the next several years. One is S. West Street and the other is Jordan Drive in our industrial park. I have been discussing these projects with the Mayor, Street and Alley Committee members and our engineers. We don't have cost estimates yet for S. West Street, but engineering estimates to rehab Jordan Drive are over \$1,200,000. We are looking into possible grants and other sources, including Motor Fuel Taxes (MFT), to help pay for these projects.

Currently, we are working on replacing curbs and gutters on N. Sangamon Avenue and plan to complete similar projects on N. Melvin Street, 11th Street, 10th Street and Lott Boulevard. We also have plans to widen 19th Street at some point in the future as funding allows.

We do plan to continue our sidewalk program by replacing areas of sidewalks that are broken, missing or lifted.

The drainage issues in the downtown area are being addressed as well. We are looking into potential solutions to mitigate the issue and will keep the public informed.

The equipment we use on a daily basis is in very good shape and we follow a strict maintenance schedule to keep them that way. Our larger dump trucks, which are used to transport materials, spread salt and plow snow are the exception as they are older and require more maintenance. We are looking to downsizing in the future when some of these older trucks need to be replaced to keep costs down and help the Street and Alley Department become more efficient.

Costs for everything, in all departments, are going up at an increasing rate and we are trying very hard to implement strategies that are more efficient. We are motivated to help reduce the increased burden on our taxpayers as much as possible.

Recommendations: Continue to focus on projects identified above.

Tyler Martin – Superintendent of Streets and Alleys



Tourism

“Tourism is the front door to economic development.”

From an article at govpiilot.com titled “9 Key Ways To Stimulate Your Local Economy”:

“Introducing and nurturing tourism within a community holds potential as a catalyst for local economic stimulation. Visitors from all over flock to your community as they explore the culture experiences and attractions that the community has to offer. The hospitality sector will experience the benefits first hand as hotels, restaurants and tour operators experience the surge in jobs demands. Ancillary services, such as transportation, retail and entertainment are not forgotten in this endeavor. As tourists engage with the local culture, cuisine and crafts they are contributing directly to the economic vitality in addition to the well-being of permanent residents.”

The annual “Summer Bash” downtown concerts sponsored by Gibson Area Hospital and area businesses are huge events that bring people to our community. The “Harvest Fest” as well as the “Lighted Christmas Parade” sponsored by Gibson Area Chamber of Commerce are other large events that also bring people to Gibson City.

“The Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council (BNEDC) analyzed two 2024 Gibson City festivals, the August 17th “Summer Bash” and the September 14th “Harvest Fest”. According to Placer AI, the “Summer Bash” welcomed 6200 visitors, and the “Harvest Fest” welcomed 5100 visitors to downtown Gibson City.

The BNEDC inputted Placer AI’s visitor count into IMPLAN’s economic modeling system. The “Summer Bash” festival inferred an economic impact of \$1,200,000 and the “Harvest Fest” festival inferred an economic impact of \$958,000.

While the IMPLAN model uses McLean County figures, the impact data should be valuable due to its proximity to Gibson City and Ford County. Both events projected a positive return on investment.”
Patrick Hoban - CEO BNEDC

There are other events as well that are sponsored by the Gibson Area Chamber of Commerce, American Legion and other organizations that are held downtown and at other locations. “Friday Nights Under the Lights” car cruise is another example that helps promote our community. All of these events bring many visitors. In addition, Gibson City also currently has a location downtown for a “Farmers Market”. All these events are a form of tourism.

Hotel -

In early 2015 the City of Gibson contracted with “Hotel & Leisure Advisors” to conduct a detailed feasibility study for a forty room limited-service hotel in Gibson City.

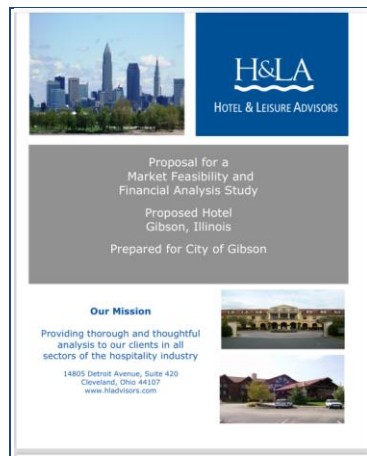
The 154 page study stated that “Although there were a number of sites available for consideration, we based our analysis on a proposed site on the east side of State Route 47 south of its intersection with State Routes 9 and 54.”

The feasibility study conclusion stated: “We are of the opinion that the subject neighborhood as it currently exists would be considered an attractive location for a hotel development. As shown in the market analysis section, the local employers are very interested in having a hotel in Gibson City. The subject site is off a main thoroughfare, within walking distance of several restaurants. Visitors passing through the area will be able to see the proposed property at this higher traffic count area.”

The study also states: “Our analysis indicates that the development of the proposed 40-key limited-service hotel produces a positive return.”

Please contact Gibson City Hall for an electronic copy of the feasibility study.

Recommendation: Tourism should be further explored and developed as it will bring additional visitors to our community and as a result help to support our many businesses and the jobs they provide. Tourism ideas should be based on our history, agriculture, railroads and energy. It is an untapped opportunity with huge potential. One of many ideas is to develop a “self guided” tour app that could feature the history of locations and buildings in our community. There are many ideas that need to be researched and discussed. The “Farmers Market” needs to be further developed by establishing a committee to focus on improving and expanding it.



Parks

Gibson City has four City parks.

Mellinger Park, commonly referred to as North Park, is located between Church and Melvin Streets and adjacent to 13th Street to the north.



Improvements have been made to the playground area, featuring an “*all accessibility playground*”. Other improvements have been made to McMillan Field, the pavilion and Scout Cabin as well. We recently installed a new furnace and new plumbing for the bathroom in the Scout Cabin.

Recommendations: The pavilion needs a new roof and the Scout Cabin needs more repairs.

Gibson City Swimming Pool -

The GC swimming pool is located in Mellinger Park as well and needs to be replaced. The City engaged an engineering firm to complete the engineering and currently the pool is in the permitting process which will hopefully be completed in the next several months. The bidding process hopefully will take place sometime in the first half of 2025. A 1% sales tax increase was passed by and is earmarked to pay towards the new pool. Engineering estimates projected for the new pool are in the 6-7 million dollar range, but we will have a more accurate number when we receive construction bids. Once bids are received, Council will need to make a determination on how to move forward.

Recommendations: No recommendations can be made at this time due to unknown factors.

Arrowsmith Park, commonly referred to as South Park, is located between Church Street and Lott Blvd. and adjacent to 1st Street to the north. Improvements were made with a grant to the camping area approx. 12-14 years ago and are much appreciated by Gibson City residents and campers alike.



Recommendations: Camp sites have water and electricity, but do not have sanitary hook ups. This is a possible improvement that could be considered at some point in the future. Also, in the next several years, the asphalt needs to be sealed to protect the integrity of the asphalt. The playground equipment also needs to be modernized.

Lowry Park, commonly referred to as West Park, is located between 9th and 10th Streets and adjacent to West St. to the east. A T-ball field was built at Lowry Park approx. 8-10 years ago and a couple years ago a skate board park was added with funds raised by a volunteer group.



William Eugene Campbell Memorial Park,

formerly known as the Jordan Pond Park is located on the west side of Jordan Industrial Park. The area was established in 2016 around an existing detention basin located in Jordan Industrial Park and is owned by the City. A committee was also appointed to oversee improvements to the area.

Many improvements have been made to the area including a walking trail, pavilion, Dog Park, docks, fishing and wildlife habitat. Projects like these are good examples of how we are utilizing and improving on what we already have. **Cont.**

In 2024 the City was awarded a \$20,000 grant from Earthrise Energy to install an electrical service to provide light and power to the pavilion and parking area. This should be completed in 2025. Additional electrical amperage will also be installed for future expansion of amenities and projects in the park.

A dry hydrant was installed and it was paid for by Earthrise Energy. The dry hydrant allows the Gibson City Fire Protection District to pump water out of the pond if needed for larger fires.

Recommendations: Once the electrical system is installed we should promote its improved and more beneficial uses to the public and organizations such as the Scouts.

In 2024 the City purchased 15 acres on the northeast side of our City located east of the intersection of 19th Street and Lawrence Ave. This property was purchased to help alleviate drainage issues (more information concerning this property can be found under the drainage section of this document).

Although not a park, this area could also be used as a dual purpose property. A green space/recreation area could be incorporated into the design including a parking area, a walking path with benches, picnic tables etc. and also a disc golf course. Disc golf has become very popular and would provide more activities for our youth and potentially attract visitors to come to our community. The cost of a disc golf course is very minimal.

Pollinator/prairie plants could be planted to attract wildlife and keep maintenance costs low. The dual purpose property design, drainage and green space, would also make it advantageous in acquiring potential grant funding. Engineers are currently working on plans and the design concept.

Recommendations: Continue to move forward to develop this dual use area as funds become available.



Image from Google Earth

Finances – Alderman Scott Davis

Over a decade ago, the City of Gibson implemented a comprehensive and detailed balanced budget process, designed to effectively track individual line-item expenses and ensure the integrity of our finances. The City relies on over twenty different tax and revenue sources—excluding utilities—to fund its operations and services. At the start of each fiscal year, which begins on May 1st, we conservatively project the revenues these sources will generate, using those estimates to guide our expenditure planning.

For larger capital projects, we often save in advance to cover costs, ensuring we have sufficient funds set aside. In some cases, we may finance projects through bonds or low-interest loans, but we exercise great caution in ensuring that these obligations do not overextend our resources. We carefully assess the ability of projected revenues to cover both operational expenses and debt service on these loans.

Certain recurring expenses—such as salaries, insurance, and utilities—are budgeted first, as they are essential to the City's daily operations. After addressing these fixed costs, we prioritize remaining funds for infrastructure improvements, engineering projects, and other community needs, based on ongoing assessments and strategic goals.

Each year, we pass an "Appropriations Ordinance" in accordance with state statute. This ordinance typically represents the City's budget, plus an additional 10% to allow for flexibility in unanticipated expenses.

Revenue generated through utility fees, including drainage, water, and wastewater services, is not classified as tax revenue but is integrated into our budget process. It is crucial that utility fees remain self-sustaining, as they are used exclusively to maintain and improve our utility infrastructure. This approach ensures that our utilities do not rely on tax revenues, safeguarding the long-term viability of these critical services.

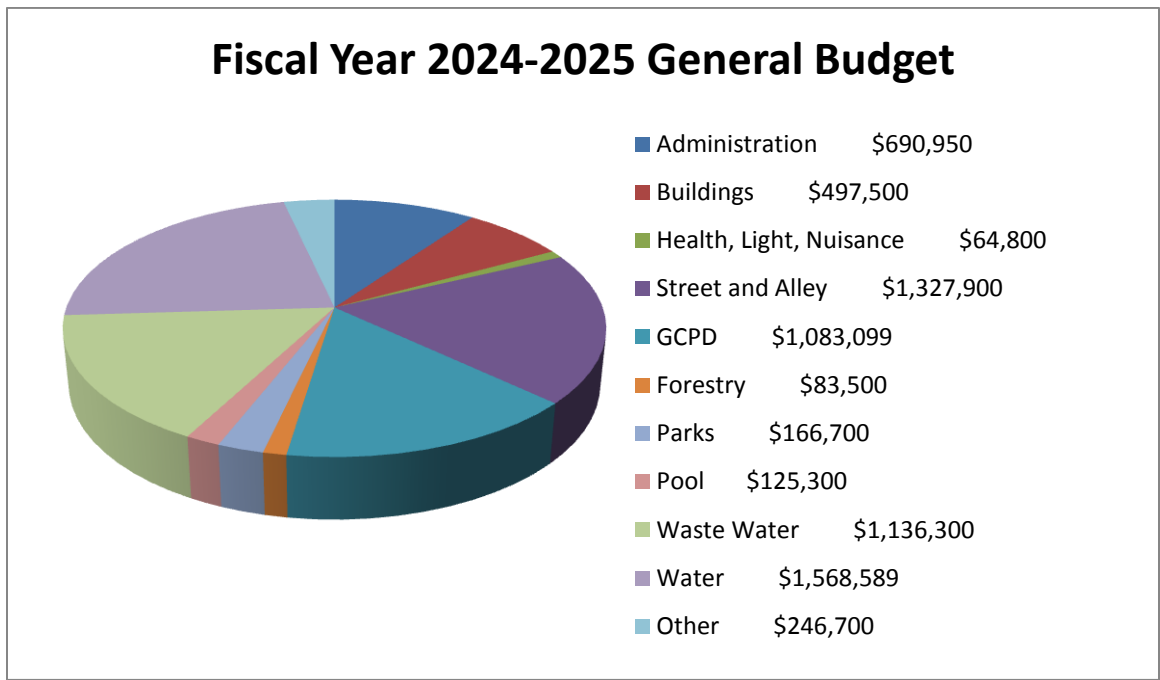
Throughout the fiscal year, we diligently monitor and manage the budget to ensure financial stability for both the City and its residents. This ongoing oversight is vital to maintaining the quality of life for the community.

Additionally, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) plays a key role in funding economic development initiatives, including residential and industrial development, drainage, and infrastructure improvements. The revenues and expenditures associated with TIF Districts are carefully tracked by our TIF consultants, *The Economic Development Group* from Bloomington, IL. They provide valuable advice and generate the necessary reports to help guide our management of the TIF Districts. **Cont.**

Maintaining a "strategic fund" for emergencies is another essential aspect of our financial planning. This fund is designated for unanticipated crises, such as floods, tornadoes, or other natural disasters. For example, following the devastating flood in August 2021, the City spent over \$500,000 on flood remediation efforts. Having reserves available for such situations ensures that we can respond quickly and effectively when the unexpected occurs.

In conclusion, our goal is to live within our means, maintain a stable and responsible budget, and plan proactively for the future. By balancing fiscal discipline with forward-thinking strategies, we aim to ensure the continued success and sustainability of the City of Gibson.

Alderman Scott Davis – Finance and Efficiency Chair



Note: Water Department does not include \$4,136,491 budgeted for Capital Expenditures for new water well infrastructure and replacing water meters.

Downtown



From an article from Planners Web by Andy Kitsinger:

“Downtowns in many American communities have experienced more than fifty years of neglect, abuse and abandonment. There are a number of factors that have contributed to this indifference toward our central cities. Several decades of bad public policy, private market forces, as well as individual prejudices have all worked counter to the health of central cities.

Fortunately over the last two decades this trend has slowly begun to shift. Today, cities of all sizes have implemented plans to revitalize, re-grow and reinvent their downtowns. Why are downtowns important and why the need for all of these revitalization strategies? Because downtowns are the heart of a city and region – and having a healthy heart is essential to having a strong city and region.”

We began revitalizing our downtown approximately a decade ago. The City established a “Downtown Revitalization Committee” to research and come up with ways to begin the revitalization process for our downtown area. As a result, the City adopted many of the committee’s ideas and began making improvements to our downtown.

Since then the City replaced antiquated lights and poles with new, high efficiency lighting with the aid of a grant received by the USDA, a sound system, new curbs and gutters, repaired sidewalks and improved the drainage. More drainage improvements need to be made. Later we installed new trash receptacles, signs, benches and tree planters with Red Bud trees. The tree planters need to be finished.

This year we began replacing curbs and gutters at the north end of our downtown. We also implemented our “Facade Grant” program which initially targeted the downtown to help many businesses make improvements to their facades such as windows, doors, tuck pointing, awnings, etc. **Cont.**

Recently, because of several major fires in our downtown we established a “Downtown TIF District” to help several businesses rebuild including Hood’s Ace Hardware and Hustedt Jewelers. The new TIF district will aid existing businesses in making improvements and help establish new business development.

The revitalization process of our downtown has helped to create an atmosphere that is conducive to the health of our downtown. Vacancies have also decreased over the years since we began the project. Further achievements made also helped to stimulate new events such as the GAH “Summer Bash”, “Harvest Fest” and “Friday Nights Under the Lights” car cruise as well as other events.

We are not done. We’ve accomplished much, but other ideas and solutions need to be implemented. The downtown is the heart of our community and we must work with and help downtown property owners make improvements to their properties.

Recommendations: When money becomes available, we need to transfer \$100,000.00 from TIF II to the Downtown TIF and use the money for additional matching (75%/25%) property improvement grants to support existing businesses and help attract new business development in our downtown area.

We also need to finish the tree planters with a skim coat designed to make them look more attractive. Also, more drainage improvements need to be made in the downtown area on Sangamon Ave. from 7th to 10th Streets.



Jim Hood – “A Lifetime of Cooperation”

*“My parents came to Gibson City almost 70 years ago to open the local Ace Hardware store. They had been searching for the ideal community to start a business and most importantly, raise a family. Every potential community had its pros and cons, but my father recalled fondly, **Cont.***

“Gibson City stood out as the only community recommended by every single person we called”. So, in 1956 Hood’s Ace Hardware opened in downtown Gibson City. Fast forward thirty-six years and in 1989 my wife and I returned to Gibson City to take over the family business and raise our family here. It was the best decision we ever made.

From a business owner’s perspective, the City of Gibson was always supportive, always accommodating and quick to help. In June of 1980 a terrible fire burned our store to the ground. I was in college at the time, but I remember my Dad calling me and reporting that for many evenings during the rebuilding process we had 6-12 volunteers from the community volunteering to help put the store back together. Some were professional tradesmen and many were ordinary citizens. All refused to be paid. One of the most extraordinary volunteers during this dark time was City of Gibson Superintendent Don Ehlenfeld, who was on site many evenings. Don was knowledgeable, hard working and practical. On several occasions he found errors in the plans or the specifications, offering invaluable advice. This was my first exposure as a young man to Gibson City’s “secret sauce”, that is, the character and generosity of the citizens within our community.

Forty two years later, and deep within our tenure running the business, a devastating fire at a business next door totaled the inside of our building and badly damaged the exterior. Once again, the City of Gibson stepped forward both publicly and behind the scenes as we faced the prospect of potentially tearing down our damaged building and going out of business. Eventually we were able to purchase the fire ravaged property next door and with a TIF grant from the City, repair the severely damaged wall between us.

I can say with 100% certainty that after our fire loss, the support and resources we received from the City and TIF program are the reasons Ace Hardware still stands on that site today.

As my wife and I look back on our business here and consider Gibson City, with its outstanding schools and incredible healthcare infrastructure, we see a place people would like to be, but lack of affordable housing has been and continues to be a barrier to growth. We believe that with perceived high property taxes and tight real estate inventories many young families are finding it difficult to come here, ultimately selecting other options. We have so much of the “secret sauce” already solved in Gibson City. We have a clean, safe community with excellent schools and outstanding healthcare services. We have strong agriculture, industry and renewable energy employment opportunities readily available. If we can put a lid on rising property taxes and expand the availability of affordable housing, we believe Gibson City is well positioned for growth.”

Jim Hood – Former Co-Owner Hood’s Ace Hardware

Economic Development Tools

Illinois Basic Economic Development Course can be found at
<https://bedcillinois.com/>

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) – Gwen Crawford

“Gibson City established its first Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District in 1986 pursuant to the Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act (65 ILCS 5/11-74.4 et. Seq. the “TIF Act”), which expired in the tax year 2009 payable in 2010.

Since 1986 the City of Gibson has established four more TIF Districts: TIF 2 was established in 2003, which includes One Earth Energy, Jordan Industrial Park, Falcon Pointe and Railside residential developments. The Villas of Holly Brook Assisted Living Facility and other residential and commercial are also included. In 2013 TIF 2 was legislatively extended unanimously by all taxing bodies for an additional twelve years giving it a total lifespan of thirty five years.

TIF 3 was established in 2007 and includes areas on the southwest side of the City to encourage commercial and industrial growth.

TIF 4 was established in 2023 to annex and add additional property for One Earth Energy.

The Downtown TIF was established in 2023 to help property owners reconstruct fire damaged buildings in the downtown. It is also intended to help encourage redevelopment and reinvestment in existing commercial businesses and to help attract new businesses in the downtown area over the next twenty five years. Cont.

Tax Increment Financing has been and will continue to be an essential tool for growth and development in Gibson City. All of the City’s TIF increment has been reinvested into private and public redevelopment projects in the City’s TIF Districts, including various public infrastructure projects. Most of these projects would not have been possible without the use of tax increment financing. TIF enables the City to complete these public and private projects without raising local property taxes.

*When a TIF District is created, the County determines a base value on each property located in the TIF area. Any new taxes that are generated from growth in assessed value over and above the base value for each property is then reallocated into the City’s TIF fund for a period of twenty three years. The TIF may last thirty five years or longer if legislatively extended. The TIF increment is then used by the City for public and private projects that are eligible within the TIF areas pursuant to the TIF plans. **Cont.***

When a TIF District expires, the new assessed value of the properties within TIF areas that has been created by new development is then available to various taxing districts to include in their future tax levy calculations.

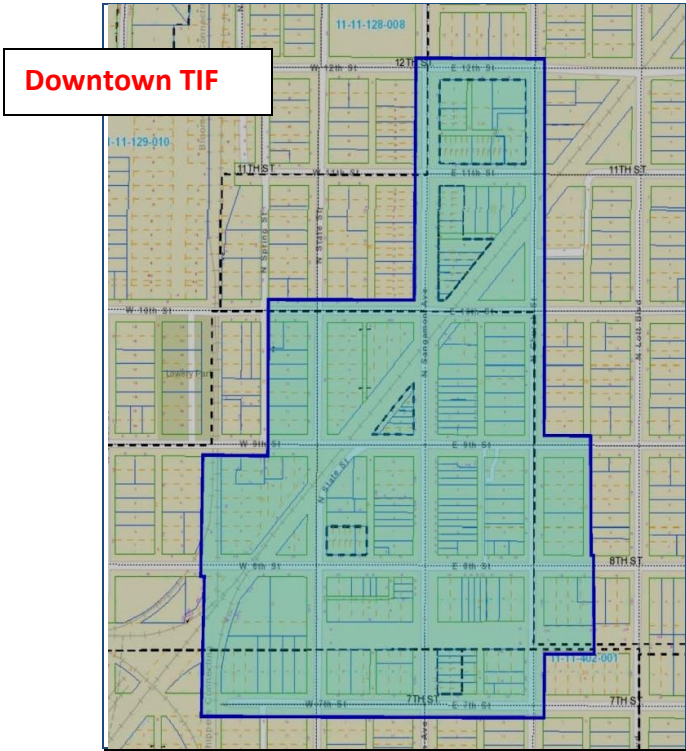
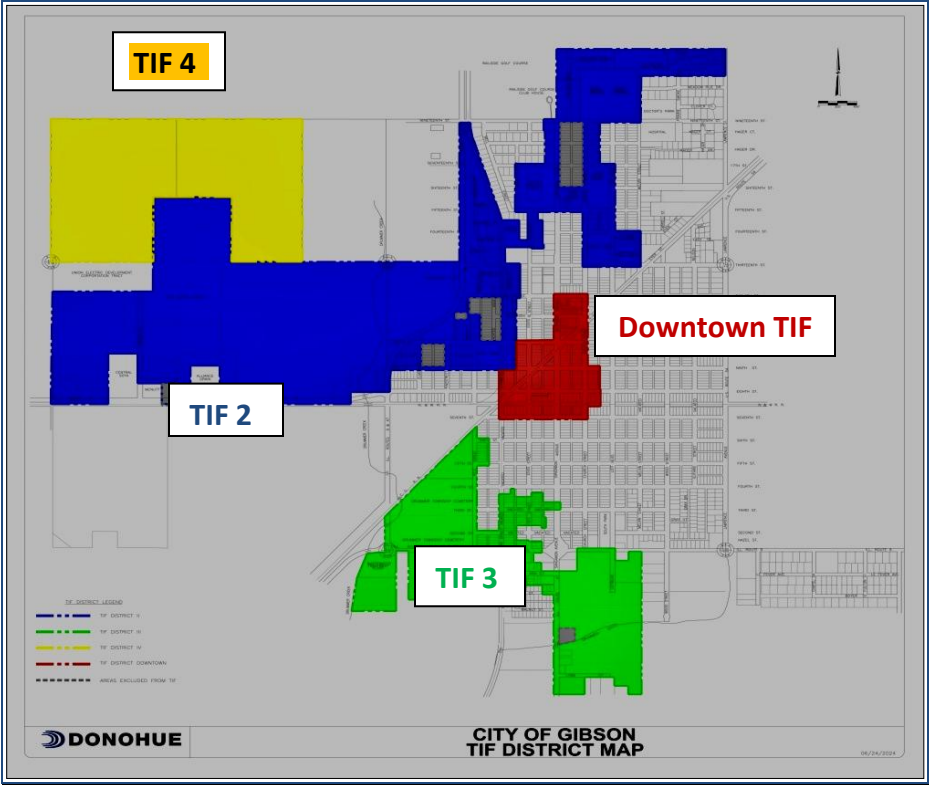
Gibson City is an excellent location for additional future light industrial, manufacturing, commercial and residential development. The City intends to use its TIF Districts to encourage new development on underutilized and/or distressed properties in order to promote the health, safety, morals and welfare of the public. It also intends to address blighted conditions and institute conservation measures in order to encourage private investment and reinvestment in the downtown and other areas of the City located in TIF districts. Furthermore, the City plans to restore and enhance the tax base of the taxing districts in the Gibson City area by undertaking public and private redevelopment projects.

Without an influx of new private investment and ongoing improvements to public infrastructure, made possible by tax increment financing, further deterioration of local properties and local related amenities are likely to occur. It would also further impair the value of private investments as well as the sound growth and tax base of affected taxing districts.

By improving infrastructure and encouraging new investment, The City expects to create new employment opportunities, improve public services necessary for stimulating future population growth, further incentivize the local economy and improve the overall quality of life for its residents.”

**Gwen Crawford – VP, Financial Analysis, Registered Municipal Advisor (SEC, MSRB)
The Economic Development Group, Ltd.**







“What is CDAP?”

The Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP)? It is a revolving loan fund established to provide funds to new and existing businesses in Illinois. Originally administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, the grants were awarded to local government on behalf of businesses for infrastructure improvements in support of the business or as a loan to the business for the purchase of machinery and equipment, building construction or renovation, or for use as working capital. When the loan was repaid, a revolving loan fund was created. The first eligible use of the CDAP Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) specified that the funds be used as loans to business to encourage investment in the community and job creation/retention.

Today the City of Gibson administers the program without State of Illinois assistance. CDAP RLF lending is intended to increase capital availability to projects that create or retain jobs locally. Use of the revolving loan fund spreads the risk among lenders reducing the cost of capital to borrowers. Loan interest is set at below market interest rates, reducing borrowers’ debt service and increasing cash flow for other business purposes. CDAP revolving loan funds also help bridge the gap between project costs and conventional financing when needed.

Are taxpayer dollars involved?

No, the Gibson City CDAP RLF was created from interest generated from the community’s first CDAP loan customer.

When did the program begin?

The first CDAP RLF loan was made in 1990.

What is CDAP’s recapture strategy?

The City of Gibson CDAP revolving loan funds are increased through the repayment outstanding loans. Those payments recapture the prior funds used plus interest so the new fund balance additional may be used to finance additional new projects.

How does the fund work?

*An application may be picked up at any Gibson City bank. Once the application is complete, it is submitted to a CDAP Committee member. The CDAP Committee then reviews the application and reports its recommendation to the City Council, with the City Council making the final decisions whether to approve or deny the loan request. **Cont.***

How has the CDAP RLF helped economic development in Gibson City?

The purpose and amount of CDAP RLF loans has varied greatly since its inception. Revolving loan funds have been used to assist new and existing Gibson City businesses with equipment purchases, building repairs and improvements and for use as working capital.”

Tracy Epps – President Bank of Gibson City

Recommendation: CDAP funds need to be increased by \$100,000 to support the loan demand for new and existing businesses.

Façade Grants –

The Façade Grant program was implemented in 2017 with the original intention of helping our downtown area businesses. In 2019 it was amended and expanded to help all businesses within City limits. The program is a 50%/50% matching grant program up to \$5000 and covers façade improvements that can be seen from the street such as painting, tuck pointing, awnings, windows, doors, etc. Typical annual funding for this program is \$25,000.

Recommendation: Façade Grant program funding could be increased if there is a need.



Enterprise Zone – Patrick Hoban

“The Illinois Enterprise Zone Program is an Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) incentive program designed to stimulate economic growth. Gibson City, Ford County, McLean County, the City of Bloomington and the Town of Normal share an

Enterprise Zone. Businesses located or expanding in the enterprise zone may be eligible for the following state and local tax incentives.

- *Sales tax exemption on building materials*
- *An exemption on the state utility tax for electricity and natural gas”*

Patrick Hoban – CEO Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council

Currently the Enterprise Zone envelops Jordan Industrial Park and at the invitation of Mr. Hoban, the City of Gibson is currently adding additional properties to the enterprise zone to help incentivize economic growth in targeted areas.

Property Improvement Program -

The “Property Improvement Program” was implemented in 2013 to provide new and cost effective methods to target and assist in clean up and removal of blighted, private and rental structures on properties within the City of Gibson city limits. Program will pay up to \$5000 for demolition and \$400 for dumpster rental.

Marketing –

Almost eighteen years ago we added a line item to our budget titled “Marketing”. The money in this line item is used to promote our community through various avenues with a majority of the funds going to coop advertising in conjunction with our local businesses and civic organizations as well as event sponsorship. Typical funding for this line item is approximately \$20,000. It is very important that we continue to promote our community in various ways.

Years ago, the City installed an electronic sign on the intersection of Routes 47, 9 and 54. It is also used to promote businesses, churches, organizations and activities in Gibson City.

Industrial Park

Jordan Industrial Park is located on the west side of Gibson City and hosts many businesses including One Earth Energy, International Food & Flavor (IFF), Earthrise Energy, Alliance Grain and others.



All available properties in Jordan Industrial park were sold as of 2024. That’s a good problem to have, but we need to start looking into expanding the industrial park to accommodate new businesses.

Recommendation: Begin the process of looking for new property to expand Jordan Industrial Park so we have room to grow.

Grants – Patrick Hoban

“State and grants for local municipalities offer a range of benefits and challenges. On the positive side, these grants can significantly enhance local infrastructure, community services and economic development. They provide funding for projects like community clean-ups, tourism events, and environmental conservation, which can improve quality of life and attract tourism or business investments. However, there are also cons to consider.

The application process for these grants can be complex and time-consuming, often requiring significant administrative effort. Additionally, grants may come with stringent conditions or matching fund requirements, which could strain local finances if not budgeted for appropriately. There’s also the risk of dependency on grant funding, potentially leading to financial instability if future grants are not secured.

Finally, the availability and amount of funding can fluctuate based on state budget allocations, making long-term planning challenging for municipalities.”

Patrick Hoban – CEO Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council

Some grants, when released, have a limited time to submit applications, so it is important to have the engineering completed ahead of time for key targeted projects. This is commonly referred to as “shovel ready”.



GCPD – Adam Rosendahl



Over the last year the GCPD has purchased several items to help ensure the safety of the public along with the safety of our officers.

The department purchased six new mobile data computers (MDC's). These computers are used in squad cars and allow us to obtain certain information on a vehicle and occupants.

The GCPD has also purchased body cameras for all officers and they will be fully functional soon. Both projects were paid for out of our Covid reimbursement fund.

The GCPD also purchased a new squad car last year and hopefully will purchase another one in 2025 utilizing the state bid for purchase. Over the next several years we plan to have our squad cars on a rotation and replace older vehicles when needed.

These tools will help us to keep the Citizens of Gibson City safe for years to come.

Adam Rosendahl – GCPD Chief of Police



Conclusion

City resources are limited and we need to keep our focus primarily on maintaining and improving our infrastructure as it is not only the foundation of our economic success, but also helps to further enhance our quality of life and well being as a community.

We must not only maintain, but improve our infrastructure and expand the capacities of our utilities to insure sustainable, long term growth.

Also, of high importance, is economic development. We must strive to create an environment that is beneficial for our existing businesses not to just survive, but to thrive. We must listen to their needs and respond with practical solutions and use all of our available economic development tools to help them succeed. The same economic development tools can also be used to attract new business. Our businesses provide jobs, more choices and enhance our quality of life as well as increasing our tax base.

Gibson City is "Open for Business" and we are "Business Friendly".

We currently have five residential lots available at Falcon Pointe and twelve more lots being developed at RAILSIDE ESTATES (2025). RAILSIDE ESTATES also has additional property for approximately 10-15 more lots that could be developed. We are already working to increase our storm water, waste water and potable water capacities for future expansion of business and residential housing development.

The Citizens of Gibson City are our biggest asset. We must always listen to their ideas, needs and concerns and always consider what is in the best interest of our community today and for our posterity. Youth retention should also be a priority by fostering an environment that gives them a reason to stay in our community.

We must also keep in mind that we do not have total control of everything. There are many state and federal regulations and mandates that we must follow. As stated earlier, these are our largest expense.

Gibson City is like a large ship following a charted course to help guide it to its destination. We hope for smooth sailing, but know storms and rough seas are always a possibility. We must be willing to adjust our course to take advantage of smooth seas, but still make it to our destination.

This strategic plan will be the chart that guides us on a course for continued and future success. We must continue to build on the accomplishments of those that came before us and pass on to the next generation a foundation that they too can continue to build upon.

Change is coming no matter what. We can resist it and just let it happen and hope for the best or embrace, guide and manage it. It's our choice.

Appendix A



<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Cost Estimates</u>	<u>Completed</u>
More rental units/properties	3 – 5 Years	NA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entry level homes/duplexes	3 – 5 Years	NA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retail/office space in the downtown	6 – 10 Years	NA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Upgrade water plant filtration	1 – 2 Years	\$1,900,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Installation of new well/pump house	3 – 5 Years	\$1,500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water main replacement program	1 – 10 Years	1 st Phase \$125,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Construction of 300,000 water tower	6 – 10 Years	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ditch/culvert revitalization	6 – 10 Years	\$455,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
New storm water infrastructure RAILSIDE ESTATES	1 – 2 Years	\$330,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
New waste water plant	5 – 7 Years	\$35,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oil and chip road project	3 – 5 Years	\$500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
West St. cured in place pipe project	1 – 2 Years	\$325,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
13 acre drainage basin (N. Lawrence Ave.)	3 – 5 Years	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jordan Dr. rehab (Jordan Industrial Park)	3 – 5 Years	\$1,300,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
S. West St. project	3 – 5 Years	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>
New North Park Pavilion roof	3 – 5 Years	\$300,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sealing of campground asphalt (Arrowsmith Park)	1 – 2 Years	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scout Cabin upgrades	3 – 5 Years	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electric service for WEC Memorial Park	1 – 2 Years	\$35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transfer money from TIF 1 to Downtown TIF	1 – 2 Years	\$100,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transfer money from savings to CDAP	1 – 2 Years	\$100,000	<input type="checkbox"/>

