



**DOWNTOWN  
WABASH**  
INC.

# **Downtown 2030**

**8-Year Strategic Plan for Downtown Wabash, Inc.**



**[DowntownWabash.org](http://DowntownWabash.org)**



# HELLO, MY NAME IS DOWNTOWN WABASH

1

## THE NONPROFIT

Following 40 years as Wabash Marketplace, Inc., we've made the transition to our new identity as Downtown Wabash, Inc. We operate as a Nationally Accredited Main Street Organization, which means our nonprofit is dedicated to downtown revitalization.

2

## THE DESTINATION

Downtown Wabash sits in the valley between the Wabash River and the Hill Street railroad tracks. Recently designated a Cultural District by Indiana Arts Commission, Wabash is an arts and culture destination in Northeast Indiana. The footprint includes impressive architecture identified in the Historic District.

3

## THE OFFERINGS

Downtown Wabash features boutique shopping, live entertainment, movies, food and drink, lodging and recreational offerings. There is always something to do with nearly 40 free community events, such as First Friday and Farmers Market.

## OUR VISION

A DOWNTOWN DISTRICT THAT IS VIBRANT, EVERY DAY AND NIGHT, 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK, 365 DAYS A YEAR, WHERE DOWNTOWN IS THE GO-TO PLACE FOR ARTS, SHOPPING, DINING, ENTERTAINING, & LIVING.

## OUR MISSION

TO BE A CATALYST FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION, AS A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION UTILIZING THE MAIN STREET APPROACH IN DOWNTOWN WABASH.

## OUR TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

ARTS & CULTURE



# WHY IS DOWNTOWN 2030 IMPORTANT?

## Quality of Place for Population Growth

Downtowns are important because they provide quality of place. People want distinct, active places. Wabash County needs people to grow our population.

Downtowns across the country are experiencing new investment fueled by demographic changes, remote work capability and desire for walkable, mixed-use places. Wabash is no different with developers, residents and tourists rediscovering Downtown over the past two decades. Since the year 2000, more than \$73 million dollars have been invested in downtown projects. That's \$3M per year. Continued growth and development is necessary in Downtown because of the role it continues to play in shaping the city's culture, identity and quality of place.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Downtown Wabash, Inc. partnered with Wabash-based firm Transform Consulting Group to facilitate a strategic plan. They completed a comprehensive research report for strategic planning based on the following information:



2022 studies completed by Main Street America and Indiana Main Street which included: Community surveys, stakeholder focus groups and ESRI data.



Internal assessment data provided by Downtown Wabash, Inc.



Interviews conducted with key stakeholders including City of Wabash, Grow Wabash County, Honeywell Arts & Entertainment and Visit Wabash County.

**Every \$1 invested in our mission leverages \$19.34 in new investment in our community.**

# STRATEGIC GOALS

## Utilizing the Main Street Approach™

The Main Street Approach™ offers community-based revitalization initiatives with a practical, adaptable framework for downtown transformation that is easily tailored to local conditions. The Main Street Approach helps communities get started with revitalization, and grows with them over time.

### GOAL 1

#### DESIGN

Develop space and place by enhancing the physical assets in the district and highlighting the Wabash Cultural District

- Increase public art installations in the Downtown Wabash district
- Integrate immersive, hands-on arts and cultural experiences
- Improve the pedestrian experience with outdoor placemaking initiatives

### GOAL 2

#### ECONOMIC VITALITY

Cultivate a strong, collaborative and diverse economic base, especially with business and property owners

- Diversify makeup of downtown business types with recruitment strategies
- Champion established businesses in the Downtown district
- Grow the economic impact of supporting local businesses
- Increase utilization and occupancy rate of downtown buildings
- Increase housing in the Downtown district

### GOAL 3

#### ORGANIZATION

Focus on partnerships and resources to create a cohesive vision, collective mindset and a thriving nonprofit organization

- Increase and diversify funding
- Grow business membership with a collective mindset
- Nurture community partnerships in adopting the Downtown Wabash, Inc. strategic plan
- Increase organizational capacity

### GOAL 4

#### PROMOTION

Showcase our unique downtown experience with storytelling and events encouraging each market segment to shop, dine, have fun, work, live and invest

- Attract new residents to live in Downtown
- Focus on diversifying the business mix with recruitment strategies
- Encourage downtown district visits/patronage beyond events
- Increase out-of-town revenue in the Downtown district
- Increase awareness of the Wabash Cultural District

# INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

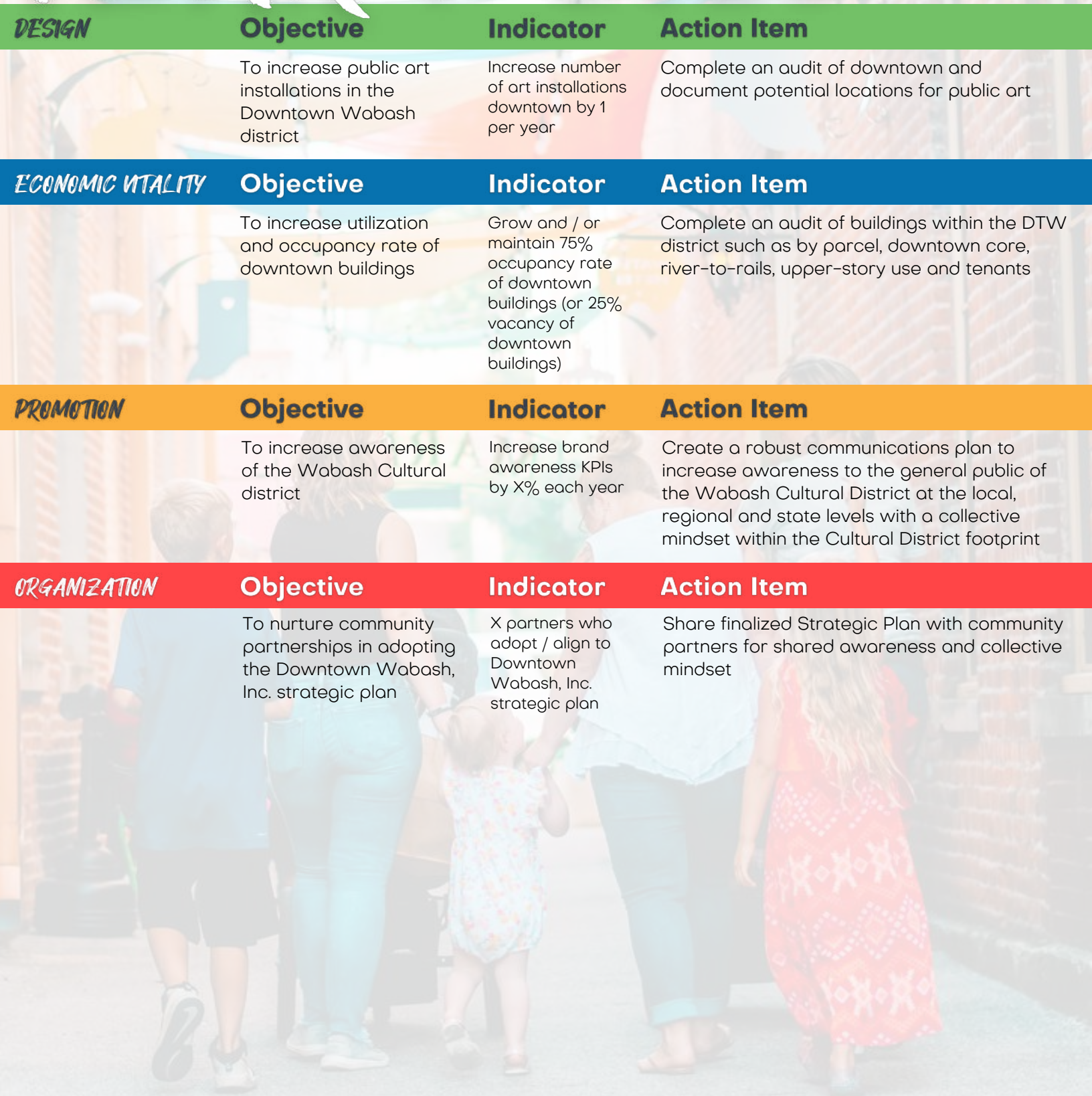
DESIGN	Goal	Indicator of Success
	To increase public art installations in the Downtown Wabash district	Increase number of art installations Downtown by 1 per year
	To integrate immersive, hands-on arts and cultural experiences	Increase number of immersive experiences by X per year/event
	To improve the pedestrian experience with outdoor placemaking initiatives	Increase scores on public surveys by X%

ECONOMIC VITALITY	Goal	Indicator of Success
	To increase utilization and occupancy rate of Downtown buildings	Grow and/or maintain X% occupancy/vacancy rate of Downtown buildings
	To champion established businesses in the Downtown district	Maintain X% retention rate of current businesses in Downtown from 2023 to 2030
	To grow the economic impact of supporting local businesses	Increase revenue for Downtown business by X%
	To diversify the makeup of downtown business types with recruitment strategies	Increase diversity in new businesses by X% by 2030
	To increase housing in the Downtown district	Increase the number of residential units Downtown by X%

PROMOTION	Goal	Indicator of Success
	To increase awareness of the Wabash Cultural district	Increase brand awareness KPIs by X% percent each year
	To encourage Downtown district visits/patronage beyond events	Increase door swings by X% by 2030
	To increase out-of-town revenue in the Downtown district	Increase out-of-town revenue by X% by 2030
	To focus on diversifying the business mix with recruitment strategies	Increase new businesses by X% by 2030
	To attract new residents to live in Downtown Wabash	Increase the number of residents Downtown by X% by 2030

ORGANIZATION	Goal	Indicator of Success
	To nurture community partnerships in adopting Downtown 2030	X partners who adopt/align to Downtown Wabash, Inc. strategic plan
	To increase organizational capacity	X new team members
	To increase and diversify funding	Increase budget to \$X by 2030
	To grow business membership with a collective mindset	90% of Downtown businesses become members

# YEAR 1: 2023



<b>DESIGN</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Action Item</b>
	To increase public art installations in the Downtown Wabash district	Increase number of art installations downtown by 1 per year	Complete an audit of downtown and document potential locations for public art

<b>ECONOMIC VITALITY</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Action Item</b>
	To increase utilization and occupancy rate of downtown buildings	Grow and / or maintain 75% occupancy rate of downtown buildings (or 25% vacancy of downtown buildings)	Complete an audit of buildings within the DTW district such as by parcel, downtown core, river-to-rails, upper-story use and tenants

<b>PROMOTION</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Action Item</b>
	To increase awareness of the Wabash Cultural district	Increase brand awareness KPIs by X% each year	Create a robust communications plan to increase awareness to the general public of the Wabash Cultural District at the local, regional and state levels with a collective mindset within the Cultural District footprint

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Action Item</b>
	To nurture community partnerships in adopting the Downtown Wabash, Inc. strategic plan	X partners who adopt / align to Downtown Wabash, Inc. strategic plan	Share finalized Strategic Plan with community partners for shared awareness and collective mindset

# YEAR 2: 2024

DESIGN	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To increase public art installations in the Downtown Wabash district	Increase number of art installations downtown by 1 per year	Create a list of potential project ideas with budget scopes to be grant-ready

ECONOMIC VITALITY	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To champion established businesses in the Downtown district	Maintain 90% retention rate of current businesses in downtown from 2023 - 2030	Develop a robust system of communications between Downtown Wabash, Inc. and all established businesses in the Downtown district with at least 7 touch points, annual check-ins, exit interviews, surveys
	To increase utilization and occupancy rate of downtown buildings	Grow and/or maintain 75% occupancy rate of downtown buildings (or 25% vacancy of downtown buildings)	Provide tools to building owners for promoting vacant spaces

PROMOTION	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To increase awareness of the Wabash Cultural District	Increase brand awareness KPIs by X% each year	<p>Create a robust branding plan to increase visual awareness of the Wabash Cultural District footprint</p> <p>Create a robust communications plan to increase awareness to the general public of the Wabash Cultural District at the local, regional and state levels with a collective mindset within the Cultural District footprint</p>

ORGANIZATION	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To increase and diversify funding	Increase budget to \$X by 2030	Research fundraising strategies and best practices as a Nationally Accredited Main Street (NAMS), comparing to other NAMS with successful funding streams
	To increase organizational capacity	X new team members	Grow opportunities of professional development, nonprofit management, engagement and advancement for board, staff and volunteers



# YEAR 3: 2025

DESIGN	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To increase public art installations in the Downtown Wabash district	Increase number of art installations downtown by 1 per year	Install one project per year

ECONOMIC VITALITY	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To grow the economic impact of supporting local businesses	Increase revenue for downtown business by X%	Build bridges for promotion and engagement between community partners and small businesses including retail, dining, entertainment, nonprofits, recreation, etc.
			Create a data plan involving downtown businesses, community partners and organizations to leverage information such as average monthly revenue including event revenue

PROMOTION	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To encourage downtown district visits/patronage beyond events	Increase door swings by X% by 2030	Create a data plan involving downtown businesses, community partners and organizations to leverage information such as average monthly foot traffic
	To increase out-of-town revenue in the Downtown district	Increase out-of-town revenue by X% by 2030	Promote businesses in the Downtown District with an adopted collective marketing mindset to advance sustainable marketing skills via training, coaching and development
	To increase awareness of the Wabash Cultural District	Increase brand awareness KPIs by X% each year	Create a robust communications plan to increase awareness to the general public of the Wabash Cultural District at the local, regional and state levels with a collective mindset within the Cultural District footprint

ORGANIZATION	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To increase and diversify funding	Increase budget to \$X by 2030	Write a 7-year fund development plan
	To increase organizational capacity	X new team members	Grow opportunities of professional development, nonprofit management, engagement and advancement for board, staff and volunteers

# YEAR 4: 2026

DESIGN	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To integrate immersive, hands-on arts and cultural experiences	Increase number of immersive experiences by X per year/event	<p>Audit existing immersive experiences</p> <hr/> <p>Define what immersive experiences mean to Downtown Wabash</p> <hr/> <p>Leverage community partners to offer more immersive experiences</p>
	To increase public art installations in the Downtown Wabash district	Increase number of art installations downtown by 1 per year	Install one project per year

ECONOMIC VITALITY	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To diversify the business mix with recruitment strategies (creating new units & filling storefronts)	Increase diversity in new businesses by X% by 2030	Create a business recruitment plan while working alongside key stakeholders and community partners such as Grow Wabash County

PROMOTION	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To encourage downtown district visits/patronage beyond events	Increase door swings by X% by 2030	Create a robust communications plan to increase regular local visits beyond the event schedule with marketing tactics such as conducting an audit, investing in collateral, arranging for paid media, email, direct mail, social
	To increase out-of-town revenue in the Downtown district	Increase out-of-town revenue by X% by 2030	Create a data plan involving downtown businesses, community partners and organizations to leverage information such as diners, shoppers, ticket buyers, etc.
	To increase awareness of the Wabash Cultural District	Increase brand awareness KPIs by X% each year	Create a robust communications plan to increase awareness to the general public of the Wabash Cultural District at the local, regional and state levels with a collective mindset within the Cultural District footprint

ORGANIZATION	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To increase and diversify funding	Increase budget to \$X by 2030	<p>Cultivate and nurture relationships with past, present and potential donors and sponsors</p> <hr/> <p>Create a marketing plan for donors for small and large gifts and sponsors in varying industries</p>
	To increase organizational capacity	X new team members	Grow opportunities of professional development, nonprofit management, engagement and advancement for board, staff and volunteers

# YEAR 5: 2027

DESIGN	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To increase public art installations in the Downtown Wabash district	Increase number of art installations downtown by 1 per year	Install one project per year
ECONOMIC VITALITY	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To diversify the business mix with recruitment strategies (creating new units & filling storefronts)	Increase diversity in new businesses by X% by 2030	Create a new business toolkit that lists all things new businesses need to know as they get up and running within the Downtown Wabash district
PROMOTION	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To focus on diversifying the business mix with recruitment strategies (filling storefronts, not creating new units)	Increase new businesses by X% by 2030	Align Promotion Committee to represent diverse small business recruitment as Downtown Wabash, Inc. grow into this area of expertise
	To increase out-of-town revenue in the Downtown district	Increase out-of-town revenue by X% by 2030	Create a robust communications plan that engages members of the Economic Vitality committee to target new businesses with marketing tactics such as conducting an audit, investing in collateral, arranging for paid media, email, direct mail, social
	To increase awareness of the Wabash Cultural District	Increase brand awareness KPIs by X% each year	Create a robust communications plan to target out-of-town consumers by leveraging community partners such as Visit Wabash County
	To increase awareness of the Wabash Cultural District	Increase brand awareness KPIs by X% each year	Create a robust communications plan to increase awareness to the general public of the Wabash Cultural District at the local, regional and state levels with a collective mindset within the Cultural District footprint
ORGANIZATION	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To grow business membership with a collective mindset	90% of downtown businesses become members	Define a collective mindset for the Downtown Wabash district with input from community partners and businesses
	To increase organizational capacity	X new team members	Grow opportunities of professional development, nonprofit management, engagement and advancement for board, staff and volunteers
	To increase and diversify funding	Increase budget to \$X by 2030	Create a marketing plan for donors for small and large gifts and sponsors in varying industries

# YEAR 6: 2028

DESIGN	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To improve the pedestrian experience with outdoor placemaking initiatives	Increase scores on public surveys by X%	Hire consultant for Downtown Master Plan with project development ideas and audit of infrastructure including parking, streetscape and wayfinding
	To increase public art installations in the Downtown Wabash district	Increase number of art installations downtown by 1 per year	Install one project per year
ECONOMIC VITALITY	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To diversify the business mix with recruitment strategies (creating new units & filling storefronts)	Increase diversity in new businesses by X% by 2030	Create toolkit for small-scale developers to develop underutilized business models (housing, co-working, new businesses)
	To increase housing in the Downtown district	Increase the number of residential units in downtown by X%	Create toolkit for small-scale developers looking to add residential units
PROMOTION	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To attract new residents to live in Downtown	Increase the number of residents downtown by X% by 2030	Align Promotion Committee to represent the real estate industry as Downtown Wabash, Inc. grows into this area of expertise
	To increase awareness of the Wabash Cultural District	Increase brand awareness KPIs by X% each year	Create a robust communications plan to increase awareness to the general public of the Wabash Cultural District at the local, regional and state levels with a collective mindset within the Cultural District footprint
ORGANIZATION	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To grow business membership with a collective mindset	90% of downtown businesses become members	Create an outreach plan to get 100% members through marketing, relationship building and management
	To increase organizational capacity	X new team members	Grow opportunities of professional development, nonprofit management, engagement and advancement for board, staff and volunteers
	To increase and diversify funding	Increase budget to \$X by 2030	Create a marketing plan for donors for small and large gifts and sponsors in varying industries

# YEAR 7: 2029

DESIGN	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To improve the pedestrian experience with outdoor placemaking initiatives	Increase scores on public surveys by X%	Prioritize projects from Downtown Master Plan and refine feasibility
	To increase public art installations in the Downtown Wabash district	Increase number of art installations downtown by 1 per year	Install one project per year
ECONOMIC VITALITY	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To diversify the business mix with recruitment strategies (creating new units & filling storefronts)	Increase diversity in new businesses by X% by 2030	Facilitate arts and cultural business opportunities to align with the Transformation Strategy
	To increase housing in the Downtown district	Increase the number of residential units in downtown by X%	Explore local/state/federal funding to support housing needs (facade grant fund expansion)
PROMOTION	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To attract new residents to live in Downtown	Increase the number of residents downtown by X% by 2030	Create a robust communications plan to target new residents with storytelling mechanisms showcasing the attractability of living in Downtown Wabash with marketing tactics such as conducting an audit, investing in collateral, arranging for paid media, email, direct mail, social
	To increase awareness of the Wabash Cultural District	Increase brand awareness KPIs by X% each year	Create a robust communications plan to increase awareness to the general public of the Wabash Cultural District at the local, regional and state levels with a collective mindset within the Cultural District footprint
ORGANIZATION	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To increase organizational capacity	X new team members	Identify staffing needs Grow opportunities of professional development, nonprofit management, engagement and advancement for board, staff and volunteers
	To increase and diversify funding	Increase budget to \$X by 2030	Create a marketing plan for donors for small and large gifts and sponsors in varying industries

# YEAR 8: 2030



DESIGN	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To improve the pedestrian experience with outdoor placemaking initiatives	Increase scores on public surveys by X%	Implement strategies from plan such as Miami Street Promenade, new parking, improved wayfinding, etc.
	To increase public art installations in the Downtown Wabash district	Increase number of art installations downtown by 1 per year	Install one project per year

ECONOMIC VITALITY	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To increase housing in the Downtown district	Increase the number of residential units in downtown by X%	Connect housing needs to the Transformation Strategy with ideas including Artist Residencies

PROMOTION	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To increase awareness of the Wabash Cultural District	Increase brand awareness KPIs by X% each year	Create a robust communications plan to increase awareness to the general public of the Wabash Cultural District at the local, regional and state levels with a collective mindset within the Cultural District footprint

ORGANIZATION	Objective	Indicator	Action Item
	To increase organizational capacity	X new team members	Grow opportunities of professional development, nonprofit management, engagement and advancement for board, staff and volunteers
	To increase and diversify funding	Increase budget to \$X by 2030	Create a marketing plan for donors for small and large gifts and sponsors in varying industries

# PICTURE THIS... **DOWNTOWN WABASH IN 2030**

## **We'll continue our mission in Downtown Wabash.**

People will be moving to Wabash. All of the current apartments will be full and new units will be added. Construction will begin on townhouses and apartment complexes. The sidewalks will be full with new residents that feel like they won the jackpot by moving to the community.

Downtown will be a mecca for arts and culture. Eight new art installations will beautify public spaces. Arts-based businesses will be locating in Downtown to join the artistic community. Buildings will be used for live/work spaces for artists. Creativity will be a cornerstone of the district.

Downtown Wabash will be the desired location to open a new business. The storefronts will offer a huge variety of retail, dining and services. There will be so much demand that new units will be created in the historic buildings, breathing them back to life. The small business staples in downtown will experience growth and abundance of resources.

By 2030, Downtown Wabash will be vibrant every day and night, as the go-to place for arts, shopping, dining, entertaining and living because of the role it will continue to play in shaping the city's culture, identity and quality of place.

**MANY THANKS GO TO**



**TRANSFORM**  
— CONSULTING GROUP —

**TransformConsultingGroup.com**

**We appreciate your continued, community-champion support of our strategic plan for Downtown Wabash, Indiana.**

# STAY CONNECTED WITH DOWNTOWN WABASH



INC.



#DowntownWabash  
DowntownWabash.org

Downtown Wabash, Inc. is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization in Wabash, Indiana. Downtown Wabash, Inc. is an Indiana and Nationally Accredited Main Street Organization.



#WabashFirstFriday



#WabashFarmersMarket



[DowntownWabash.org](http://DowntownWabash.org)