

HyettPalma
Indiana Downtown®

Churubusco

Downtown
Action Agenda
2011

Indiana Downtown®
A Collaboration of the
The Indiana Association of Cities and Towns
and
HyettPalma, Inc.

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Indiana Downtown®

Indiana Downtown® is an affiliate of the ***America Downtown®*** technical assistance program created by the National League of Cities and HyettPalma, Inc., in 1992.

Created in 2001, ***Indiana Downtown®*** is offered by the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, in conjunction with HyettPalma, Inc.

Making Downtown Renaissance A Reality

HyettPalma

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March 30, 2011

The Town of Churubusco
and Members of the Process Committee
Town Hall
Churubusco, IN 46723

RE: Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011

HyettPalma, Inc., is pleased to present to you the following report titled ***Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011***, completed under the program titled ***Indiana Downtown®***.

This document includes the community's vision for Downtown as well as the findings of a comprehensive analysis of Downtown's commercial markets. The vision and market analysis findings were used to define a specific economic enhancement strategy for the Downtown project area. The recommended strategy was specifically designed to enable Downtown to attain the community's defined vision as well as the identified market opportunities.

Thank you for the opportunity to lend our firm's expertise to this very important project. We hope you will keep us informed of your success and know that we stand ready to assist in any way we can as you proceed with Churubusco's Downtown enhancement effort.

Sincerely,

Doyle G. Hyett

Dolores P. Palma

Process Committee Members

At the request of HyettPalma, Inc., the Town of Churubusco established a Process Committee to oversee this project. HyettPalma would like to thank the members of the Downtown Churubusco Process Committee, listed below, for all their time, hard work, and dedication in preparing for and participating in completing the ***Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011***.

Town Council President:	Frank Kessler
Town Clerk/Treasurer:	Gerri Johnson
Town Supervisor:	Jeremy Hart
Economic Development Commission:	Steve Barcus
EDC Region 3A Representative:	Matt Showalter
Churubusco Chamber of Commerce President:	Chris Tomlinson
Rotary Club Representative:	Mark Coonrod
Turtle Days Association President:	Tracey Bultemeier
Downtown Property Owner, C&A Tool:	Rob Marr
Downtown Business Owner:	Michelle Tartaglia
Downtown Bank Branch Manager:	Lee Prescott
Downtown Neighborhood Resident:	Miriam Yates
Local Newspaper Editor:	Dave Crabill
School Superintendent:	Dr. Steve Darnell

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

In 1992, as America's largest membership organization representing the elected officials of this nation, the National League of Cities (NLC) decided to assume a more aggressive role in the areas of Downtown enhancement and local economic development. That role would involve offering technical assistance to local elected officials concerned about the economic success of their Downtowns.

To fill this role, the National League of Cities approached HyettPalma, Inc. Together, NLC and HyettPalma designed an advanced new pilot program. The new pilot would offer on-site, technical assistance to a limited number of communities. The new Downtown pilot was presented under the banner of *ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE: THE REBIRTH OF AMERICA'S DOWNTOWNS*. It was structured to guide local governing bodies – working in partnership with local business owners, property owners and concerned citizens – in rethinking ways to rebuild our nation's Downtowns.

Availability of the Downtown pilot was limited to eleven cities over a period of two-years. In addition, the pilot required the local governing body in each participating community to be the agency that contracted with NLC for services. This was done to ensure the involvement of the governing body from the very start of the local Downtown enhancement effort.

Once the pilot was completed, NLC and HyettPalma evaluated its effectiveness and whether or not to continue offering Downtown technical assistance. Based on the evaluation, and specifically on the advice and needs expressed by the pilot's local officials, a new comprehensive technical assistance program was developed titled *AMERICA DOWNTOWN® -- NEW THINKING. NEW LIFE.*

After several years of tracking the *America Downtown®* program's success, the leadership of the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns (IACT) determined that a similar technical assistance program would be of benefit to communities in Indiana. Therefore, in 2000, IACT approached NLC and HyettPalma about developing such a program. With the backing of NLC, *Indiana Downtown®* was unveiled as an IACT

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program in the Summer of 2001.

Modeled after the **America Downtown®** program, **Indiana Downtown®** was launched as a pilot program that would run for a two-year period and assist ten communities. After that time, the pilot was designed to be evaluated by IACT and HyettPalma, with the assistance of local elected officials from the ten participating communities. Based on the response and recommendation of local elected officials from the pilot communities, **Indiana Downtown®** was made a permanent member service offered by IACT.

Indiana Downtown® brings together the local government insight of IACT and the Downtown expertise of HyettPalma, Inc. Together, they offer individualized assistance and a combination of strengths not available anywhere else. **Indiana Downtown®** was structured to provide the help local officials need to create a brighter future for their Downtowns.

Indiana Downtown® provides direct, hands-on help to city and town officials and community leaders who want to start, refocus, or energize their Downtown enhancement efforts. In 2011, the Town of Churubusco became a member of the **Indiana Downtown®** program. The program's strengths are built on the following convictions.

- The assistance provided is implementation-oriented – not another Downtown plan or study but an aggressive course of action that local officials and community leaders can start to implement immediately.
- The recommendations made for each Downtown are pragmatic – tailored to local resources so that they can be realistically implemented.
- The solutions offered are success-oriented – designed to improve each Downtown's economy so that the results are long-lasting.
- The on-site assistance is inclusive – providing a forum that brings public and private sector constituents together to identify Downtown issues, define a Downtown vision, and take needed actions in partnership.

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IACT is committed to providing Indiana communities with the assistance they need to implement their enhancement efforts once their Downtown Action Agendas have been completed. An integral component of this implementation process is incorporating state technical assistance programs and funding resources. To do so, IACT is working with representatives from Indiana Main Street, the Indiana Department of Commerce – Community Development Division, the Indiana Department of Tourism, and the Governor's Office. Through **Indiana Downtown®**, IACT will continue to seek further avenues of assistance to help Indiana cities and towns revitalize their Downtowns.

Project Overview

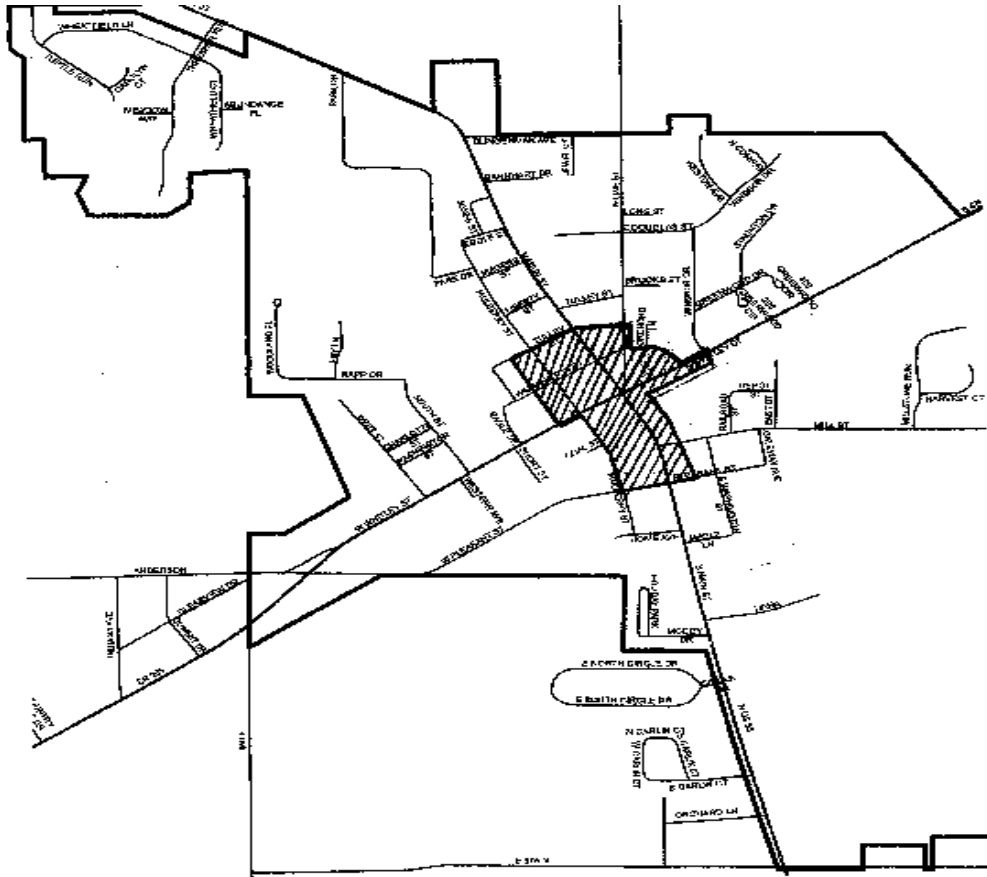
I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 2011, the Town of Churubusco determined that a Downtown enhancement strategy was needed to further revitalize Downtown Churubusco. The ***Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011*** was defined with involvement from the Town government, the local business sector, representatives of non-profit organizations, and members of the community.

The ***Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011*** shown in the following pages incorporates the desires, preferences, and concerns expressed by the people of Churubusco for their Downtown. Based on the desires and concerns expressed by the people of Churubusco – combined with a realistic analysis of Downtown's market potentials – a ***Course of Action*** was defined for public and private sector implementation. The ***Course of Action*** is meant to enable Downtown Churubusco to reach the vision defined locally, to overcome the key issues it faces, and capture the identified market potentials.

A map of Downtown Churubusco, as defined for this project, is shown on the following page.

Downtown Churubusco



Downtown Churubusco Today

II. DOWNTOWN CHURUBUSCO TODAY

Churubusco is fortunate in that its Downtown has not become rundown and deteriorated over the years, as have so many small town Downtowns nationwide. Instead, when discussing Downtown Churubusco's future, local residents repeatedly express a desire for their Downtown to "stay healthy" and "become even better" as a result of this enhancement effort.

Among Downtown's current assets – that should be built upon in order to retain and increase Downtown's health – are:

- Its buildings, which give Downtown its character and charm;
- Its good and diverse businesses, which create Downtown's variety of offerings;
- Its loyal customer base, which has been created by savvy, friendly, customer-oriented business owners;
- Its upper story apartments, whose residents are potential Downtown customers;
- The investment that has been made by Downtown's business and property owners, which has allowed Downtown to remain healthy;
- The cooperation that exists among Downtown business owners, creating a strong Downtown community;
- The strong and highly appreciated Turtle Days Festival, which is sponsored by the Turtle Days Association and attracts approximately 6,000 attendees each year;

- The support and leadership of Churubusco's Town government, which are invaluable incentives for instilling investor confidence in Downtown and its future;
- The active involvement and support of the Churubusco Chamber of Commerce, which is an invaluable tool for business retention and attraction; and
- The strong support and participation of local industry and of the school system, both of which have demonstrated an on-going willingness and commitment to being good Downtown neighbors.

In addition to the above assets, Downtown Churubusco is extremely fortunate to have the following impressive conditions in place – all of which are not only impressive, but are not often found in many Downtowns.

- There is a strong “all for one” attitude among Downtown's current business owners. This manifests itself in their helping each other with snow removal, making their private parking areas available to each other's customers, referring customers to each other, and more.
- Downtown's current business owners have demonstrated a remarkable understanding of a very important fact of business life: to remain in business for the long haul, and to continually thrive in business, business owners must evolve, change, and adapt their businesses to keep up with changing times, markets, competition, and customer desires. Not only have Downtown Churubusco's business owners demonstrated an understanding of this fact, but they have demonstrated the willingness and ability to successfully act on this fact, keeping their businesses current and profitable.
- During sessions held to define this ***Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011***, community members defined a future vision for Downtown that is extremely realistic, manageable, and implementable given the available resources of funds, staff, and volunteers.

- The resident survey conducted as a part of defining this **Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011**, showed that trade area residents are currently very happy with Downtown. And, the things they would like to see changed in the future are very achievable for the most part – that would be an increase in retail variety, restaurant variety, and family entertainment/recreation.
- Those in both the public and private sectors expressed a strong desire for an economically stronger Downtown Churubusco – and not just a beautified Downtown. This is a critical understanding, since it has been proven time and time again that a Downtown cannot be made economically stronger solely through beautification efforts. And, a Downtown that does not maintain a strong economy will only slide into a deeper and deeper decline each year, regardless of how beautiful it might be.
- There is another very important understanding held by Churubusco’s public and private sector leaders. That is: a stronger Downtown makes for a stronger town. Or, stated another way:

***You can’t have a first class town
without a first class Downtown.***

The **Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011** has been specifically crafted to recognize and leverage Downtown’s current assets and impressive conditions – as well as its needs and potentials. As a result, the **Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011** stresses the following types of actions:

- “**Spruce Up**” buildings and public spaces;
- “**Fill Up**” building vacancies;
- “**Speak Up**” to get the word out about all Downtown has to offer; and
- “**Stand Up**” to implement the enhancement effort in partnership.

Resident and Business Surveys

III. RESIDENT AND BUSINESS SURVEYS

As a part of this project, two surveys were conducted to gauge the condition of Downtown Churubusco, as perceived locally. These were a survey of owners/managers of businesses located in the Downtown project area and a telephone survey of residents living in Downtown's primary trade area. A summary of the survey responses follows.

Use of Downtown

Residents of Downtown's primary trade area were asked how often they come to Downtown Churubusco. Their responses show that 81% of respondents now come to Downtown with great frequency – between 1 and 7 times a week. This frequency can be seen in the following:

- 31% said they come Downtown daily;
- 30% said they come Downtown once or twice a week; and
- 20% said they come Downtown 3 to 6 times a week.

The remaining 19% of residents surveyed said they now come to Downtown Churubusco:

- 1-3 times a month (15%);
- Never (3%); and
- Almost never (1%).

Purpose of Trips

When asked why they currently come to Downtown Churubusco, the top reason given by residents surveyed was “shopping” (cited by 40%). The next most often cited reason was “eating in restaurants” (18%). Therefore, 58% of those surveyed said they primarily come to Downtown for one of those two reasons.

The remaining reasons cited by residents for their Downtown trips were:

- Banking (9%);

- Conducting personal business (7%);
- Work there (6%);
- Post office (6%);
- Using service businesses (5%);
- School activities (3%); and
- Other (6%) – live there, entertainment, library, newspaper office, walking, etc.

Shopping Area of Choice

Those surveyed were asked where they do most of their family shopping at this time, other than grocery shopping. The top location cited was Fort Wayne, mentioned by 42% of those surveyed.

Churubusco was the next most frequently cited location, mentioned by 33% of those surveyed. And, in third place was Columbia City, cited by 22% of those surveyed.

The remainder of those surveyed said they do most of their shopping in Kendallville (2%) and Auburn (1%).

When asked why they choose to shop in a particular area, residents cited the following top three reasons:

- Variety (32%);
- Price (30%); and
- Convenience (21%).

The remaining reasons cited by trade area residents for choosing to shop in a particular area were:

- Closeness to home (8%);
- Closeness to work (6%);
- Service (1%); and
- Other (2%) – prefer small businesses, the environment offered, to support local businesses.

Downtown Characteristics

Trade area residents and Downtown business owners surveyed were asked to rate a list of nineteen Downtown characteristics as being “good,” “fair,” or “poor” at this time.

Twelve characteristics were rated “good” by a majority or significant percentage of residents surveyed. Of those, ten were also rated “good” by a majority or significant percentage of business owners. The ten characteristics rated “good” by a majority or significant percent of both residents and business owners surveyed were:

- Helpfulness of salespeople (96% of residents, 91% of business owners);
- Feeling of safety (94% of residents, 83% of business owners);
- Knowledge of salespeople (88% of residents; 83% of business owners);
- Quality of retail goods (81% of residents, 78% of business owners);
- Quality of service businesses (81% of residents, 91% of business owners);
- Cleanliness of area (79% of residents, 78% of business owners);
- Quality of restaurants (76% of residents, 65% of business owners);
- Business hours (69% of residents, 78% of business owners);
- Variety of service businesses (51% of residents, 79% of business owners);
- Prices at restaurants (49% of residents, 79% of business owners).

And, the two characteristics rated “good” by a majority of residents, but not business owners, were:

- Attractiveness of buildings (70% of residents, 35% of business owners);
- Attractiveness of the area (66% of residents, 36% of business owners).

Finally, the three characteristics rated “good” by a majority of Downtown business owners, but not trade area residents, were:

- Price of retail goods (46% of residents, 55% of business owners);
- Variety of retail goods (43% of residents, 61% of business owners); and
- Variety of restaurants (42% of residents, 57% of business owners).

It is clear from the above that trade area residents surveyed were more pleased than business owners with the attractiveness of Downtown's buildings and the attractiveness of Downtown as a whole. In addition, all of the characteristics that received lower ratings from residents than from business owners involved variety and prices – prices at restaurants and retail shops and the variety of Downtown's restaurants, retail, and service businesses.

Downtown Improvements

When asked to rate a list of eighteen possible Downtown improvements as being "very important," "somewhat important," or "not important" at this time, both residents and business owners surveyed revealed that they are very pleased with Downtown's current condition.

Of the eighteen possible improvements, none were rated "very important" by a majority of residents surveyed. And, only one was rated "very important" by a significant percentage of residents. This was "improve traffic flow" (48% of residents, 38% business owners).

Only two Downtown improvements were rated "very important" by a majority or significant percent of Downtown business owners. These were:

- Improve convenience of parking (32% of residents, 52% of business owners);
- Improve availability of parking (34% of residents, 48% of business owners);

When residents were asked if anything else could be done to encourage them to come Downtown more often, they stressed the importance of improved convenience – extend store hours, improve snow removal at curb, improve traffic flow, improve parking.

When asked what types of businesses or activities would bring them Downtown, residents expressed a strong desire for three things:

- Add more/different restaurants;
- Add family entertainment/recreation; and
- Add retail variety.

Downtown Churubusco Tomorrow

IV. DOWNTOWN CHURUBUSCO TOMORROW

A series of discussions, focus groups, and meetings were held to define the community's preferred vision of Downtown Churubusco – as it would ideally exist in the year 2016. A compilation of the thoughts and preferences expressed during those sessions is shown below.

Today, Downtown Churubusco has good businesses, friendly business owners, good business variety, and distinctive small town charm. Five years from now, all of these attributes and assets would be alive and well in Downtown Churubusco. And, in the year 2016, Downtown would still be clean, safe, and have its older architecture.

Downtown would also be made more beautiful, with pavers added to sidewalk edges, street light poles of a design that “fits with our old architecture”, and buildings that are fixed-up “without losing Downtown’s history”.

Downtown trees would have lights in them and would be of a size and shape that does not hide storefronts, businesses, or business signs. Downtown would be filled with more flowers – possibly in small flower beds and hanging baskets – bringing more color to the area. And, Downtown’s flowers would be consistently well-maintained at all times.

Finally, a “wow factor” would be created in Downtown by stressing Downtown’s history and adding “something eye-catching” to The Point – which is where SR 205 and SR 33 meet – in order “to make people want to stop”.

The above beautification efforts would entice community members, area residents, and area travelers to come Downtown more often, stroll, linger, enjoy Downtown’s small town charm, and notice Downtown’s businesses.

However, Downtown’s enhancement would not stop with beautification and physical improvements. Instead, Downtown’s economy would also be strengthened over the next five years – so that Downtown’s businesses are able to attract more customers

and clients.

Making Downtown's economy stronger over the next five years would include:

- Ensuring that Downtown remains a mixed-use area;
- Broadening Downtown's current mix of uses;
- Broadening Downtown's current variety; and
- Marketing Downtown to a variety of potential customers and users.

In terms of the above list, Downtown would remain a mixed-use area that includes:

- Retail shops;
- Food establishments;
- Office businesses;
- Service businesses;
- Banks;
- Churches
- The library;
- Service groups;
- The park;
- The schools; and
- Residential units.

This current mix of uses would be broadened to include:

- An art gallery;
- Entertainment;
- A small historic museum; and
- A bed and breakfast inn.

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Downtown's variety would be broadened with:

- More retail shops;
- More and varied restaurants; and
- Family entertainment – e.g., a small movie theater, bowling alley, indoor recreation.

And, Downtown would be marketed to a variety of potential customers, including:

- Town residents;
- Residents living in proximity to the Town;
- Those who commute to Churubusco for work;
- Park-users;
- Lake-goers;
- Highway travelers; and
- Day trippers.

In addition, Downtown would have the kinds of businesses that appeal to local residents, so that they choose to shop locally and recycle their spending dollars within the community – which, ideally, will allow Churubusco to attract additional businesses.

The Town would continue to work with the Indiana Department of Transportation to keep Downtown as pedestrian-friendly and safe as possible. And, the need for adequate customer parking would be kept in mind.

Five years from now, there would be greater community awareness of “what’s going on in Downtown” and that would result in more community involvement, in terms of more community members coming to Downtown, doing things together in Downtown, and volunteering on Downtown projects and events. In part, this might be accomplished through a web site and by holding an annual, community Christmas event in Downtown.

Over the next five years, Downtown’s enhancement effort would be implemented with the following priorities:

- Beautify Downtown to “make it pop”;
- Keep Downtown’s buildings full, clean, painted, and historic;
- Hold events that bring people to Downtown; and
- Get the word out about Downtown activities, events, and businesses.

With the Town government, the business community, the non-profit sector, and the residents of Churubusco working together, the Downtown enhancement effort will result in creating the following image for Downtown.

A quaint, charming, and perfectly safe small town Downtown that

has a unique history – Turtle Town USA! –

is alive and lively, with lots of things going on through-out the year and lots of foot traffic,

has great businesses and friendly business owners who greet you with a “Hi” and a smile,

is fun and pretty and makes you say . . .

I want to stop and shop and eat here and come back as soon as I possibly can!!

Downtown Market Opportunities

V. DOWNTOWN MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

To ensure long-term economic results and success, Churubusco's Downtown enhancement effort must be market-driven. This means that the effort must be one that results in all of Downtown's investors – business owners, property owners, developers, patrons, the local government, etc. – being able to realize an increasing return on their investments. This can only be achieved via an enhancement effort that is based on a sound, realistic understanding of Downtown's economic potentials. The following chapter quantifies Downtown's economic potentials in terms of retail, office, and housing development.

Downtown Retail Opportunities

Retail Trade Area

Downtown Churubusco's primary retail trade area has been defined as the geographic area from which the majority of retail customers are currently drawn and the geographic area which presents the greatest opportunity in the immediate future for gaining additional retail customers. Based on current customer travel patterns, discussions with local business leaders and government officials, and the opinion of HyettPalma, Inc., Downtown's primary retail trade area has been identified as the area identified by the map presented on the next page.

Retail Economic Indicators

Downtown's primary retail trade area can be currently characterized by the following economic indicators.

THE PRIMARY TRADE AREA HAS AN ESTIMATED POPULATION OF 14,275 – WITH AN ESTIMATED 5,447 HOUSEHOLDS (Source: ESRI estimate)

THE AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE IS 2.6 PERSONS, WHICH IS SLIGHTLY MORE THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 2.59 (Source: ESRI estimate)

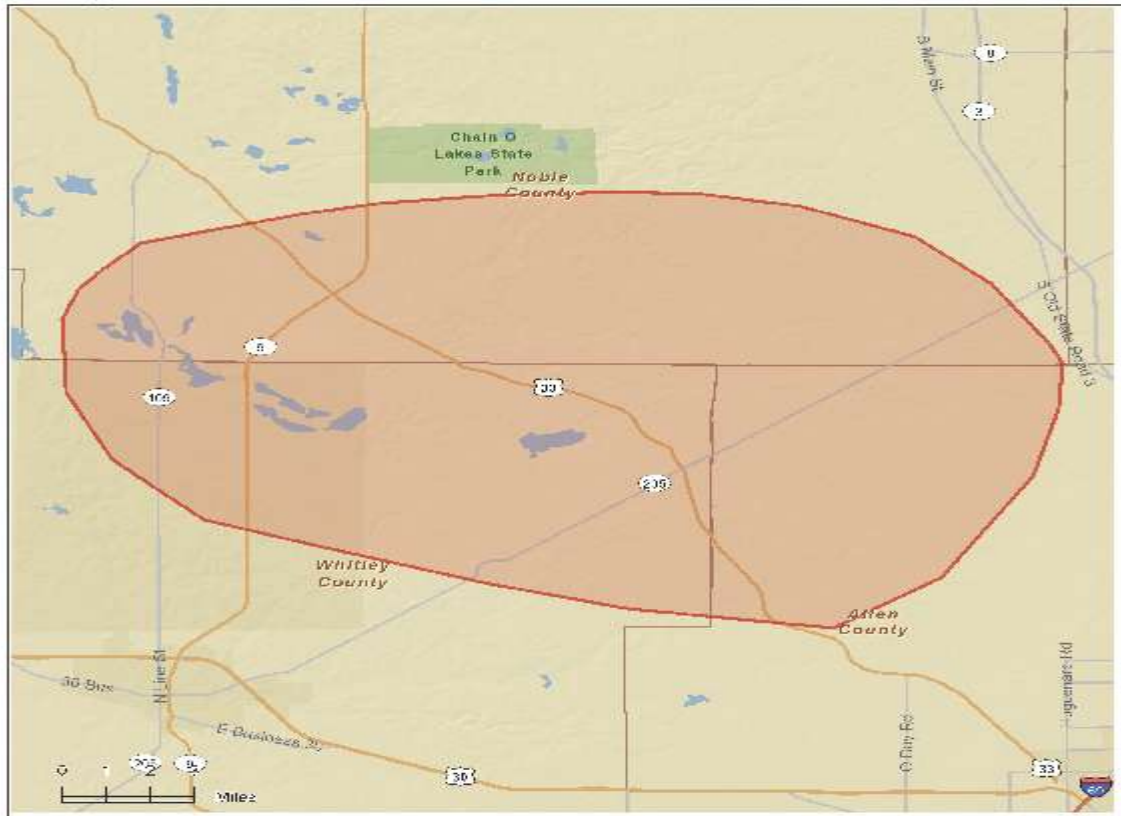
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Site Map

Polygon_1
Area: 128.28 Square miles
Custom Polygon



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1/26/2011

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THE TOTAL COMBINED INCOME OF HOUSEHOLDS WITHIN THE PRIMARY TRADE AREA IS APPROXIMATELY \$360,000,000 PER YEAR
(Source: ESRI estimate)

THE AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR THOSE IN THE PRIMARY TRADE AREA IS APPROXIMATELY \$65,982 AND IS PROJECTED TO INCREASE TO \$73,689 ANNUALLY BY 2015 (Source: ESRI estimate)

The characteristics of Downtown Churubusco's trade area further displayed by the table prepared by ESRI and presented on the next page of this ***Downtown Action Agenda***.

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Demographic and Income Profile

Polygon_1
Area: 126.28 Square miles

Summary	2000	2010	2015			
Population	13,400	14,275	14,722			
Households	4,967	5,447	5,848			
Families	3,827	4,103	4,228			
Average Household Size	2.69	2.61	2.60			
Owner Occupied Housing Units	4,437	4,816	4,999			
Renter Occupied Housing Units	530	631	650			
Median Age	37.1	40.3	41.1			
Trends: 2010 - 2015 Annual Rate	Area	State	National			
Population	0.62%	0.47%	0.78%			
Households	0.73%	0.54%	0.78%			
Families	0.60%	0.39%	0.64%			
Owner HHs	0.75%	0.58%	0.82%			
Median Household Income	1.64%	2.51%	2.36%			
Households by Income	2000		2010		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<\$15,000	404	8.1%	309	5.7%	257	4.5%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	534	10.7%	435	8.0%	352	6.2%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	634	12.7%	481	8.8%	389	6.8%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	834	16.7%	953	17.5%	709	12.5%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	1,351	27.1%	1,464	26.9%	1,621	28.7%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	712	14.3%	954	17.5%	1,047	18.5%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	409	8.2%	715	13.1%	1,070	18.9%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	69	1.4%	77	1.4%	120	2.1%
\$200,000+	44	0.9%	60	1.1%	85	1.5%
Median Household Income	\$51,157		\$60,505		\$65,622	
Average Household Income	\$56,666		\$65,982		\$73,839	
Per Capita Income	\$21,046		\$25,209		\$28,372	
Population by Age	2000		2010		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0 - 4	832	6.2%	880	6.2%	866	5.9%
5 - 9	997	7.4%	938	6.6%	952	6.5%
10 - 14	1,149	8.6%	974	6.8%	1,048	7.1%
15 - 19	1,010	7.5%	959	6.7%	934	6.3%
20 - 24	676	5.0%	709	5.0%	695	4.7%
25 - 34	1,565	11.7%	1,674	11.7%	1,643	11.2%
35 - 44	2,358	17.6%	1,918	13.4%	2,001	13.6%
45 - 54	2,142	16.0%	2,451	17.2%	2,162	14.7%
55 - 64	1,249	9.3%	2,050	14.4%	2,281	15.5%
65 - 74	855	6.4%	1,019	7.1%	1,398	9.5%
75 - 84	447	3.3%	534	3.7%	559	3.8%
85+	120	0.9%	169	1.2%	185	1.3%
Race and Ethnicity	2000		2010		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	13,175	98.3%	13,907	97.4%	14,293	97.1%
Black Alone	32	0.2%	37	0.3%	39	0.3%
American Indian Alone	48	0.4%	60	0.4%	66	0.4%
Asian Alone	25	0.2%	98	0.7%	119	0.8%
Pacific Islander Alone	3	0.0%	5	0.0%	6	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	20	0.1%	32	0.2%	40	0.3%
Two or More Races	97	0.7%	137	1.0%	159	1.1%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	98	0.7%	160	1.1%	199	1.4%

Data Note: Income is expressed in current dollars
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing. Esri forecasts for 2010 and 2015.

January 26, 2011

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Current Retail Businesses

Downtown Churubusco currently contains approximately 21 retail businesses, which occupy approximately 70,000 square feet of building space. The retail inventory was completed by the Downtown Churubusco Process Committee.

Downtown's Retail Potential

Downtown Churubusco's primary trade area currently has a total estimated demand for retail products of approximately \$106,256,403 per year. This demand is further described by the tables presented on the next page.

As a conservative estimate, it is assumed that Downtown Churubusco retail businesses now generate an average (blended figure) of approximately \$175 per year per square foot in retail sales.

Since Downtown currently contains approximately 70,000 square feet of occupied retail space, Downtown Churubusco may currently be generating approximately \$12,000,000 in retail sales per year.

By dividing the project area's estimated annual retail sales – \$12,000,000 – by the total estimated demand for retail products within the primary trade area – \$106,256,403 – it can be concluded that Downtown Churubusco may currently be capturing approximately 11% of the retail sales potential within the primary retail trade area. And, the balance of the demand is potentially being captured by businesses within other parts of the primary retail trade area and/or by businesses in other trade areas – including catalogue and internet sales.

Taking steps to further enhance Downtown Churubusco, and barring a significant decline in the national or regional retail economy, it is conservatively anticipated that Downtown may have the potential to increase its share of retail sales in its primary trade area from the current level of approximately 11% to between 12% and 13% by the year 2016. This should be considered a goal of the economic enhancement program.

DOWNTOWN CHURUBUSCO'S RETAIL TRADE AREA
 COMPUTATION OF TOTAL RETAIL PRODUCT DEMAND
 BY INCOME GROUP

PRODUCT	DEMAND
Food At Home	26,476,078
Food Away From Home	18,022,967
Alcoholic Beverages	3,216,567
Household Textiles	1,048,646
Furniture	3,620,584
Floor Coverings	477,106
Major Appliances	1,757,520
Small Appliances & Miscellaneous Housewares	931,481
Miscellaneous Household Equipment	6,238,046
Men's Apparel -- 16 and Over	2,828,797
Boy's Apparel -- 2 to 15	919,984
Women's Apparel -- 16 and Over	4,707,056
Girl's Apparel -- 2 to 15	933,741
Children's Apparel -- Under 2	757,192
Footwear	2,107,675
Other Apparel Services & Products	2,670,580
Prescription Drugs & Medical Supplies	3,727,947
Entertainment Fees & Admissions	4,872,655
Audio & Visual Equipment	6,073,040
Pets, Toys & Playground Equipment	3,141,121
Other Entertainment Supplies & Services	4,942,558
Personal Care Products & Services	4,041,241
Reading	948,912
Tobacco Products & Smoking Supplies	1,794,909
TOTAL DEMAND BY PRODUCT TYPE =	\$106,256,403

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Consumer Expenditure Survey; ESRI; and HyettPalma, Inc.

If Downtown Churubusco is able to increase its market share to between 12% and 13% by the year 2016, it is possible that the project area may be able to increase its total capture of retail sales to between \$13,000,000 and \$14,000,000 by the year 2016 – considered in constant 2011 dollars.

This increase in total retail sales could potentially support the development of between approximately 11,000 and 15,000 net square feet of additional retail space by the year 2016 – which could include expansions or sales increases by existing Downtown Churubusco retail businesses and/or the construction of some limited amount of new retail space.

It must be noted that Downtown's ability to gain a larger market share will be contingent on efforts to enhance its business climate, enhance and expand its existing businesses, and recruit additional retail businesses to the area. If such efforts are aggressively and diligently implemented – on an on-going basis – the actual growth in Downtown's market share could potentially be much higher than projected. Conversely, by the year 2016, Downtown Churubusco's market share could be much less than projected above if efforts to enhance the area and expand/recruit businesses are not diligently and continually pursued.

NOTE:

No attempt was made to determine the condition of vacant space. Therefore, no judgement is made concerning the marketability of space based on condition.

Retail Business Development

Based on the findings of this retail market analysis, the opportunity exists to enhance and expand certain types of retail businesses that are currently located in Downtown Churubusco. In addition, the opportunity also exists to attract additional businesses to Downtown. A list of the types of retail businesses recommended for potential enhancement, expansion, and attraction is presented in the chapter of this document titled ***Course of Action***.

Downtown Office Opportunities

Office Market Indicators

Downtown Churubusco's occupied office space currently serves the needs of those who live within the community and primary trade area, and an international marketplace which is served by C&A Tool.

The most significant concentrations of Downtown's offices range include professional services, manufacturing related, finance, and membership organizations.

Downtown currently contains approximately 17 offices which occupy approximately 85,000 square feet of building space. This inventory was completed by the Downtown Churubusco Process Committee.

Office Potential

It is anticipated that most of Downtown's office market growth will consist of office uses which serve, primarily, the personal needs of those who live in, or in proximity to, Downtown Churubusco's primary trade area. It is assumed that as C&A Tool continues to grow, they may continue to cluster their multiple office operations at a location or locations other than Downtown, since their opportunities for expansion in Downtown Churubusco are limited due to the lack of available land area and building space.

Communities nationwide have experienced the fact that – as improvements are made in the overall economic and physical conditions of their Downtowns – an associated increase in demand for office space normally follows. This is also expected to hold true for Downtown Churubusco.

Therefore, it is estimated that approximately 7,500 to 10,000 square feet of additional office space could potentially be supported in Downtown Churubusco between now and the year 2016. This should be considered an economic goal for the enhancement effort.

It must be noted that the actual growth in Downtown's office demand could be higher if Downtown is able to attract general offices, or back office operations from outside the area; to attract office occupants currently located elsewhere in the community; or to experience significant expansion by current Downtown office operations – including potential expansion of C&A Tool operations in Downtown Churubusco.

NOTE:

No attempt was made to determine the condition of vacant space. Therefore, no judgement is made concerning the marketability of space based on condition.

Downtown Housing Opportunities

The Downtown project area contains a total of approximately 19 housing units. This total includes:

- 15 apartment units; and
- 4 single-family homes.

These Downtown housing units are currently occupied by approximately 24 residents.

From discussions with the owners of Downtown's apartments, it appears that all available units are rented and that other units will be added in available space in the near future.

And, Downtown Churubusco is surrounded by people living in neighborhoods that are adjacent and in proximity to Downtown, who enjoy the convenience of being able to walk or drive a short distance to the heart of Downtown Churubusco.

As has been found throughout the nation during the half century plus – regardless of community size – as a Downtown's physical environment and mix of businesses is improved, it is very likely that the demand for housing in and near Downtown will increase. This can also be expected in Downtown Churubusco. Every effort should

be made, consistent with the implementation of the ***Downtown Action Agenda***, to introduce more quality housing in and in proximity to Downtown Churubusco.

As market conditions allow, every effort should be made to introduce:

- Additional loft apartments in the upper floors of existing structures throughout Downtown;
- Multi-family housing – market-rate and affordable – at the edges of Downtown; and
- Both owner-occupied and rental units.

A concerted effort should also be made to protect and enhance housing in Downtown's valuable adjacent neighborhoods. These units – many of which are historic - will always be home to extremely important patrons of Downtown Churubusco.

Rather than placing arbitrary or artificial limits on the number of housing units appropriate for Downtown Churubusco – and in neighborhoods near the commercial district – it is suggested that the absorption of units in the marketplace be used as the indicator of demand. And, that every effort be made to develop the greatest number of quality units possible in and near Downtown when market conditions allow.

Course of Action

VI. COURSE OF ACTION

Following is the specific course of action which should be implemented to further enhance Downtown Churubusco during the next five-years.

SPRUCE UP

Further Improve the Physical Appeal of Downtown's Buildings & Streetscape

1. Building Fix-Ups

A number of Downtown owners have improved the exteriors of their buildings. Some of those same owners would like to make additional improvements and other owners of Downtown buildings would like to follow suit. However, for many, the funding of such improvements is an issue at this time.

To address this issue, the Town of Churubusco should consider creating the following mechanism to encourage and assist Downtown owners in making needed improvements:

- Using a portion of its Economic Development Fund, the Town government should create a 50-50 matching grant program;
- The Town should allocate \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year to the Downtown matching grant program;
- Maximum grants of \$10,000 per building should be offered to Downtown owners;
- Owners should be required to provide matching funds, at a minimum;
- Façade improvements, business signs, and awnings should be eligible expenses under the program;
- In order to receive funds, grant applicants should be required to follow the ***US Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*** (attached in the Appendix of this document); and

- Since the Churubusco Chamber of Commerce has expressed an interest in becoming involved in this program, officials of the Town and the Chamber should discuss ways this might be accomplished.

2. Existing Streetscape

In the past, the Town government and the Churubusco Chamber of Commerce successfully partnered to bring about Downtown streetscape improvements, including improved walks, trees, flower pots, and trash cans. Now, the community feels the time has come to upgrade, freshen, and augment those improvements in order to “make Downtown pop”. This should be done in the following phases and through the following actions.

- **Phasing** – The streetscape upgrades outlined below should be completed in two phases:
 - Phase I should include Main Street, from Whitley to Tulley Streets; and
 - Phase II should include Main Street, from Whitley to Pleasant Streets.
- **Trees** – Having trees in Downtown can be a tremendous asset in making the area more inviting and more pleasant. However, trees that grow to block business signs or display windows are not the best type for a Downtown.

Therefore, in Downtown Churubusco, consideration should be given to:

- Selectively replacing those Downtown trees that have become problematic;
- Getting the professional advice of an arborist or landscape architect to ensure that a Downtown-appropriate tree type is selected; and
- Communicating to the public that Downtown’s trees are NOT being removed, but are merely being replaced.

- **Flowers** – By making maximum use of colorful flowers and greenery, great strides can be made in furthering Downtown’s small town quaintness and coziness, which is very much valued by the community.

Downtown now has sidewalk flower pots, of a very attractive design, that have been placed along Main Street. These pots can continue to be used in their current location or consideration might be given to clustering the pots at The Point.

In either case:

- The flower pots should contain colorful flowers in Spring, Summer, and Fall; and
- During winter months, they should be filled with greenery or removed from Main Street for that time period.

In addition, consideration should be given to:

- Adding flowers and greenery to Main Street’s tree wells; and
- Placing hanging baskets on street poles along Main Street.

Finally, to ensure consistency and quality, all Downtown plantings should be maintained by the Town.

- **Trash Receptacles** – Trash cans have been placed in Downtown. While these are a very important functional element of a Downtown, they can also be used to heighten Downtown’s image as being historic and quaint. To do so, consideration should be given to replacing Downtown’s current trash cans with trash receptacles that:
 - Are substantial and made of black metal;

- Are of a design that is compatible with, and complements, Downtown's older architecture; and
- Conceal all deposited trash from view.
- **Benches** – There has been talk of placing benches along Main Street, and the Churubusco Chamber of Commerce has had the foresight to earmark funds for this purpose.

As with trash receptacles, this Downtown streetscape element can perform both a functional and an image-building purpose. To accomplish this, benches of a design that is in-keeping with the trash receptacles described above should be placed along Main Street.

- **Banners** – Customized banners should be placed on street poles along Main Street. These should be creative in design and feature the community's Turtle Town legacy.
- **Signs** – The Town government is now in the process of completing an inventory of public signs in order to identify those in need of replacement. And, the Town intends to seek funds from the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) to implement the needed sign improvements. This is an excellent project, since many of Downtown's public signs – such as those related to parking and snow removal – are faded, difficult to read, and in need of replacement.

When considering replacement signs, the Town should discuss with INDOT the possibility of using creative signs in Downtown – along Main Street and Whitley Street – that depict, even if only in some small way, Churubusco's Turtle Town history.

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- **Lighting** – The community has expressed a desire for a heightened level of lighting in Downtown. Again, this functional aspect of Downtown can perform double duty by also heightening the appeal of Downtown’s streetscape and businesses. This should be accomplished with the following steps.
 - Small white lights should be strung in Downtown’s street trees. These should be turned on at the start of the holiday season and remain lighted until the start of spring.
 - The owners of every first floor business along Main Street should keep their display window lights on until at least 11pm each evening. And, the design of window displays and window lighting should be as creative as possible. Creative, attractively lighted windows will encourage window shopping, and hopefully, additional buying during business hours.
- **Mural** – Several outdoor murals are now in place Downtown, most notably on the side wall of Main Street’s hardware store and in the windows of Main Street’s video store. These should be augmented by a high quality, well-maintained, and highly visible on-wall mural that depicts the Town’s history. The mural should be designed and created through the involvement of area artists.
- **The Point** – The Point should be beautified to become the grand entrance to Downtown. This should be accomplished by the addition of:
 - Lavish, colorful flowers during clement weather and eye-catching greenery during Winter;
 - A “historic”-style town clock, which is desired by the community; and
 - A large, substantial, permanent, and high-quality sculpture – i.e., a piece of public art in the form of Oscar – that welcomes motorists and pedestrians to Downtown and depicts the Town’s Turtle Town legacy.

The Oscar sculpture should be designed and created through the involvement of area artists. And, the historic Oscar that is now located on The Point should be moved to another location within Downtown or placed in a local historic museum, if developed.

3. Future Streetscape Upgrades

As funds become available, the following upgrades should be made to Downtown's streetscape.

- Decorative pavers – not stamped concrete – should be placed along the sidewalk curb line of Main Street.
- Pedestrian-scale streetlights should be added to Main Street. These should be black, “historic” in style, and of a design that blends with Downtown's benches and trash receptacles.

The above improvements should be of a design and style that is easy to maintain, repair, and replace as needed over time.

4. New Main Street Buildings

Any new buildings constructed on Main Street must convey the image of quality and integrity so important to the community. Therefore, new Main Street buildings must appear to be permanent in nature. Main Street is not an appropriate location for temporary-looking buildings with metal façades – unless the façades of such structures, that are visible to the public, are faced with brick or stone.

The Town government has established a high level of quality in this regard, with its new water treatment plant, and the private sector should meet that standard with any new structures built on Main Street.

In addition, Main Street, between Whitley and Washington, is the portion of Downtown that remains pedestrian-oriented. It is only here that Downtown's older buildings, sitting up at the sidewalk line and encouraging pedestrian flow, still remain. North and south of this block, Downtown is auto-oriented – by virtue of new buildings that have been set back from the sidewalk, with parking lots in front.

Those participating in meetings held to define this **Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011**, expressed a strong desire to see Downtown's quaintness, uniqueness, and pedestrian-nature protected and enhanced. Therefore, any new structures built on Main Street, between Whitley and Washington, must be built at the sidewalk line and not set back.

Fill Up
***Further Build Downtown's Image, Business Variety, and
Customer Base for Even Stronger Businesses***

1. Traffic Flow

The resident survey, conducted as part of this project, revealed that the top Downtown improvement desired by those surveyed was "improve traffic flow". It must be understood that, since Main Street (SR 33) and Whitley Street (SR 205) are controlled by INDOT, the Town government has limited control over those roads. But, the Town has developed and maintains a good working relationship with INDOT, which is very important to continue.

While they are out of the Town's control, the Town can take the following two steps, regarding traffic on Main and Whitley.

- Two crosswalks are in place within the pedestrian-oriented portion of Main Street. The Town should upgrade these crosswalks, now on Main Street at Whitley and at Washington, by repainting and restriping them. And, given the high volume of traffic on Main Street, these crosswalks should be continually monitored to ensure that they are highly visible at all times.
- Although it might alleviate the "traffic problem" within Downtown, the Town government – and the community as a whole – should resist the creation of a road that would enable traffic to bypass Downtown. This is very important, since loss of traffic would be very detrimental to those Downtown businesses that need customer accessibility and visibility to survive. Such businesses – small retail shops, cafés, restaurants, art galleries, etc. – are exactly the types that Churubusco residents would like to retain and see more of in their

Downtown. And, they are also the types of businesses that will suffer the most if a bypass were to be built.

2. Parking

While not as important to residents surveyed, the business survey conducted as a part of this project showed that two improvements were desired by Downtown businesses – “improve the convenience of parking” and “improve the availability of parking.” These concerns should be addressed in the following manner.

- **On-Street** – Businesses located on Main Street, from Washington to Whitley Streets, now rely primarily on on-street parking to meet the needs of their customers and employees. Unfortunately, introducing angled parking on Main Street within this area is probably not an option, since Main Street appears to be too narrow to accommodate that type of parking. Therefore, limited options remain for maximizing both the use and the perception of on-street parking. First, Downtown business owners and employees should not park on Main Street. And second, Downtown business owners and employees should refrain from pointing out to customers that Downtown’s on-street parking is in short supply.
- **Off-Street** – The following actions should be taken to lessen customer demand for on-street parking on Main Street.
 - It is very admirable that Downtown business owners, managers, and institutions are voluntarily sharing spaces in their off-street parking lots with each other and with each other’s users. This cooperation should be continued and the availability of those parking spaces should be broadcast to Downtown’s current and potential customers.
 - It appears that the parking lot controlled by the library is not fully used during daytime hours. Therefore, the Library Board should be approached and asked to join the cooperative spirit that exists in Downtown by designating a handful of their off-street parking spaces for use by the general public.

- As funds allow, the Town government should consider building a public parking lot in Downtown. Optimally, this lot would be located to the west of Main Street, between Main and Mulberry, but not directly on Main Street. The new parking lot should be well-surfaced, lighted, and maintained.
- Signs should be erected that lead motorists to the new public parking lot. And, a sign placed at the lot's entrance should clearly mark it as being for use by the public.

3. Snow Removal

It is understood that, in general, snow removal is not a problem in Downtown. However, the winter of 2010 brought an exceptional amount of snow, which made it difficult for customers to access Downtown businesses from on-street parking spaces. Therefore, if Churubusco were to experience another winter of exceptionally heavy snowfall, the Town government should assist Downtown businesses by creating periodic access points in snow that builds up at the curb.

4. Home-Grown Business Development

From surveys conducted and meetings held as part of this project, it is clear that the community is generally happy with the mix of businesses now found in Downtown Churubusco. At the same time, those surveys and meetings revealed that the community would also like to see Downtown's current variety deepened with more retail shops, food places, art, entertainment, and opportunities for family fun.

Currently, Downtown is fortunate to include a number of business owners who have already expanded or are interested in expanding their businesses. And, very importantly, a good number of Downtown business owners have demonstrated an understanding of, and the ability to, transform their businesses to meet market challenges.

Given this situation, Downtown's current business owners should be given the first opportunity to meet the community's call for greater Downtown variety – before additional businesses are recruited for and to Downtown.

This “home-grown” business development effort should be conducted as follows.

- Every Downtown business owner should be given a copy of this ***Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011***.
- Discussions should be held with owners of Downtown’s retail and food establishments to determine their interest in adding variety within the walls of their current business or in additional Downtown first floor spaces – and to determine the types of technical assistance they might need to do so.
- Downtown business owners interested in taking advantage of the identified market opportunities should be put in touch with pertinent technical assistance sources.
- Downtown business owners should be urged to introduce the following types of variety within their current spaces or within additional Downtown spaces:
 - Art and crafts;
 - Downtown movie nights;
 - Outdoor cafes;
 - Entertainment in food establishments;
 - Additional types of food establishments;
 - “The Shack” (formerly Radio Shack) type electronics.

5. Additional Business Attraction

There is concern locally that some Downtown storefronts now stand vacant. Once the above home-grown business development effort has been implemented, the following steps should be taken to seek additional business owners interested in locating Downtown.

- ***Top List*** – The following types of businesses should be sought for Downtown, as a top priority.
 - Restaurants and Cafés

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- Electronics
 - Arts and Crafts
 - Antiques
 - Casual Clothing for Kids & Adults, in limited amounts
 - Family Recreation & Entertainment
 - Gifts
 - “Oscar” Souvenirs
 - Historic Museum
 - Bed & Breakfast Inn
- ***Finding Prospects*** – The best business recruitment tool in the industry is for a Downtown to have a collection of strong businesses. And, Downtown Churubusco – and Churubusco in general – contains an impressive collection of businesses and a broad range of business types. Therefore, continued efforts should be made to ensure that all existing businesses in Downtown continue to provide quality goods and services, maintain attractive and comfortable business spaces, and always provide exemplary customer service.

In the future, as additional businesses are desired, a concerted outreach effort should be made to scout for business prospects within at least a fifty-mile radius of Churubusco. Specific types of businesses which should be sought are those noted above.

Special emphasis should be placed on identifying appropriate independent businesses operating in more than one location – sometimes referred to as local or regional chains – like those establishments owned by Ft. Wayne restaurateur Don Hall. Local or regional chains tend to be owned by a person or persons who are interested or capable of opening a new business in a new location – having overcome the normal fear of such a business practice and not having to always maintain on-site control of operations.

Emphasis should also be placed, when appropriate, on identifying business owners of appropriate types of businesses who might be interested in either opening a second business in Downtown Churubusco or relocating to Downtown Churubusco.

- **Contacting Prospects** – The owners of businesses sought for Downtown Churubusco should be identified and then contacted in person, not by blind mailings or cold calls. These prospects should be informed of Churubusco’s Downtown enhancement effort, given information concerning available building space in Downtown, and invited to visit the community to consider opening a business in Downtown Churubusco.

In many cases, business prospects will also want to know something about the market potential of a Downtown before visiting. If this is the case, those scouting for the prospects should be prepared to present current and relevant market information, a copy of the **Downtown Action Agenda**, and any other information which might indicate business potential in Downtown Churubusco. And, if a prospect desires other information or assistance in making their decision to invest in Downtown Churubusco, every effort should be made to accommodate their desires to the degree possible and appropriate.

- **Landing Prospects** – Once a prospect is identified, continuous contact should be maintained with the prospect until a decision is made by the prospect concerning whether or not to locate in Downtown Churubusco. The ideal situation would be for one person from Churubusco to work with each prospect from initial contact until final decision. This will negate the potential for the prospect to feel the community is being too aggressive and ensure that clear lines of communication are maintained.

Fortunately, unlike in some communities of similar size throughout the nation, a “fire sale” is not going on in Downtown Churubusco. Great market potential exists in the community. Those seeking new businesses for Downtown Churubusco should not project an air of desperation, but an attitude of openness to new businesses of the types desired by local residents identified as appropriate for Downtown based on the findings of the market analysis. And, any and all incentives available for business development in Downtown Churubusco – financial and technical – should be offered to every

appropriate business prospect, just as they are being offered to existing Downtown businesses.

6. Incentives & Assistance

The following financial incentive and technical assistance should be used in both the home-grown business development effort and the new business attraction effort.

- The façade grants, recommended earlier, should be offered to interested Downtown business owners.
- When recruiting additional businesses to Downtown, the façade grant should be used to attract the types of businesses shown on the “top list”, above.
- Downtown’s current business owners and newly attracted business owners should be encouraged to take advantage of the Churubusco Chamber’s seminars, the Whitley County EDC’s Small Business Entrepreneurs Initiative, the Small Business Development Center’s business assistance, and any other pertinent technical assistance programs available.

7. Key Existing Main Street Buildings

The following three Main Street buildings present opportunities to increase the number of impulse-oriented businesses (e.g., boutiques, specialty retail shops, restaurants, cafes) within Downtown, which will act as additional Downtown draws.

- **Old Police Station** – Located on Main Street at Washington, this Town-owned structure should be sold to a private party and, thereby, be put on the tax rolls. The sale should include the condition that the purchaser either re-use the existing structure or build a pedestrian-oriented building on the site. This means the new structure would be located at the sidewalk line, to encourage pedestrian movement, rather than being set back with a parking lot in front. In no case should a parking lot that fronts on Main Street be constructed on the site.

- **Former Gas Station** – Located on Main Street at Pleasant, this structure has long been vacant. Therefore, the owner should be approached:
 - To discuss if there are any conditions that have hindered its sale;
 - To determine if the owner is interested in selling the building; and
 - To offer assistance to the owner in marketing and selling the building to a purchaser who will use it for, or rent it to, impulse-oriented businesses.
- **C&A Tool Building** – Located on Main Street just south of Whitley, this building is very much a Downtown asset, thanks to the investment, care, and commitment to the community shown by C&A Tool.

While the building is now used for C&A offices, C&A officials have expressed a willingness to consider selling Downtown buildings to purchasers who would commit to filling their buildings with strong businesses. Ideally, those would be impulse-oriented businesses that act as additional Downtown draws. Given their enlightened attitude, C&A officials should be approached to discuss marketing this building to a purchaser who will put it to such use.

SPEAK UP

Attract More Customers and Users to Downtown and Solidify Downtown's Image

1. Information Dissemination

Currently, the Churubusco Chamber of Commerce prints a resource guide, a business directory, and a newsletter. In addition, the Chamber also has a web site. And, the Turtle Days Association has a web site as well. All of these contain information that is about or that pertains to Downtown Churubusco.

In addition, the following steps should be taken to further get information about Downtown out to its current customers and potential customers.

- Information racks are needed in order to spread the word about Downtown – and about Churubusco’s north and south business districts and other attractions. The racks should be placed in Town Hall, the Government Center, the library, the school, the Downtown Historic Museum (when created), and all places that local residents and area travelers tend to frequent in large numbers (grocery stores, restaurants, pharmacies, gas stations, etc.). The racks should contain print pieces produced by the Chamber, Turtle Days Association, the Town, the Whitley County EDC, and any other entities that are promoting Downtown and the Town of Churubusco.
- An electronic marquee, owned by the Town government, is being placed at The Point. As planned by the Town, the marquee should be used to welcome people to Churubusco and its Downtown, and to announce Downtown and community events.
- A separate page about Downtown – its businesses, events, and attractions – should be included in the Chamber’s resource guide, business directory, and web site. The same could be done for Churubusco’s north and south business districts.
- In addition to the Chamber and Turtle Days Association, several other local organizations and institutions have web sites, such as Smith-Green Community Schools and the *Churubusco News*. Ideally, these organizations would all be linked through their web sites, to provide easy access to information that is of interest to the community.
- Those promoting Downtown should make maximum use of social media, such as Facebook and YouTube.

2. Shop Local Campaign

The Churubusco Chamber of Commerce has expressed an interest in launching a “shop local” campaign. It is suggested that this be done as a community effort – which includes not only the Chamber, but the Town, school, service clubs, etc. The

effort should stress the benefits realized by local residents when local dollars stay in town.

3. Downtown Events

Downtown should offer a well-rounded calendar of events that appeal to and draw area residents and area travelers, at a minimum. This is important in order to establish Downtown as the community's gathering place and to increase the visibility of its businesses. Downtown's event calendar should include the following.

- **Holiday/Family Events** – Consideration should be given to creating two holiday/family-oriented events in Downtown. These would be:
 - A Christmas celebration and tree lighting event; and
 - A Kids' Day, including activities for and BY kids, such as a kids' talent show, musical performances by kids, a show comprised of kids' art, etc.

In addition, the Halloween event now sponsored by the school and fire department should be expanded to include trick or treating in Downtown businesses.

- **Retail Events** – Downtown retailers have expressed an interest in holding Sidewalk Sales and a Customer Appreciation Day to attract and also to thank customers. Both types of events should be pursued. In addition, Downtown business owners should, jointly, discuss ways that they can tie into and take greater advantage of the holiday, family, series and signature events held in Downtown.
- **Series Events** – "Series" events are those that are held on a number of days, rather than once a year. In this category, a weekly Downtown Movie Night should be created in Downtown. During clement weather, the movies should be shown outdoors, on the side of a Downtown building. Downtown Movie Night could be continued in the winter – possibly on a once a month basis – if held in an existing indoor venue, such as the school auditorium.

In addition, the Downtown Farmers Market should be grown – in terms of number of vendors and customers – or it should be discontinued. To grow the market, it must be made into an event that is multi-faceted and fun. This should be accomplished by allowing the sale of prepared food, arts, crafts, and flowers along with produce. And, the market should include music and other family-oriented entertainment. Finally, the market must be well-managed and rigorously promoted.

- **Signature Events** – Churubusco is extremely fortunate to have one signature event for which it is well known: the Turtle Days Festival, which in 2011 will be in its 62nd year. And, Downtown Churubusco is fortunate to be a part of this special event.

In addition, consideration should be given to creating one or two other signature events that are held only in Downtown and for which Downtown becomes widely-known. Building on Churubusco’s legacy as Turtle Town USA, possibilities for these events might include:

- A Downtown Valentine’s Day event featuring turtle-oriented desserts – chocolate turtles, turtle cupcakes, turtle pies, turtle bars, turtle dessert pizza, etc. – (“Celebrate Valentine’s Day at Downtown Churubusco’s Death by Chocolate Turtle Day!”); and
- A Downtown “Oscar Party” – held around the time of the Academy Awards.

The new signature events created for Downtown should be unique, fun, and even a bit silly, in order to attract the participation of volunteers and attendees.

4. Image Development

Downtown’s image as a quaint, historic, family-oriented area should be promoted and reinforced through the following steps.

- **History** – The Town government and a number of business owners are now stressing the Town’s history by placing framed historic photos on their walls. Every Downtown business and building owner should be urged to do the same.

In addition, consideration should be given to producing a brochure that would allow interested individuals or groups to take a self-guided historic walking tour of Downtown. And, as a further step, the Downtown self-guided historic walking tour might be turned into a mobile phone app.

- **Story Placement/Press Releases** – It appears that those in Churubusco do a very good job at issuing press releases to promote community events. This should be continued. In addition, an effort should be made to get stories about Downtown’s events, attractions, revitalization effort, etc., placed with media throughout the region on a regular basis.
- **Official “Oscar” Souvenirs** – Currently, artistic turtles are on display at many Downtown businesses and turtle knick knacks can be bought at some. The time has come to consider creating official Oscar postcards and souvenirs – mugs, key chains, pens, etc. – that can be sold as a fundraiser for marketing Downtown and funding its special events. The post cards and souvenirs might feature the Oscar sculpture recommended earlier for placement at The Point.

Stand Up!

***Implement in Partnership, with Passion and Purpose,
and with Clear Roles & Responsibilities***

1. Main Implementers

For Downtown success, the main entities that must be and remain directly and actively involved in implementing the ***Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011*** are:

- The Town government;

- The Churubusco Chamber of Commerce; and
- Downtown's business owners and property owners.

2. Downtown Retail Committee

During the course of defining this ***Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011***, Downtown retailers expressed a desire to hold sidewalk sales, customer appreciation days, and other business-related events in Downtown. To accomplish this, it is suggested that a Downtown Retail Committee be formed as a standing committee of the Churubusco Chamber of Commerce. Doing so will create a mechanism through which Downtown's retailers can work together and with the Chamber on more fully marketing Downtown.

3. Downtown Partnership

At the start of the process used to define this ***Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011***, HyettPalma and IACT asked the Town government to form a Process Committee comprised of representatives from the private, non-profit, business, and public sectors. The purpose of that committee was to collect data, conduct surveys, and organize meetings needed to define the ***Downtown Action Agenda***.

Now, HyettPalma would suggest that an abbreviated version of the Process Committee – called the Churubusco Downtown Partnership – be kept in place during the implementation phase of the ***Downtown Action Agenda***. The purpose of the Downtown Partnership would be to:

- Ensure communication and coordination among the various entities involved in implementing the ***Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011***;
- Ensure that implementation of the ***Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011*** moves ahead steadily and remains on-track; and
- Jointly address and resolve any issues that might arise and hinder implementation progress.

The Churubusco Downtown Partnership should meet quarterly. And, at a minimum, the Partnership should be comprised of the:

- Town Council President;
- Town Clerk/Treasurer;
- Churubusco Chamber of Commerce President;
- Chair of the Downtown Retail Committee of the Chamber;
- School Superintendent;
- Turtle Days Association President; and
- A representative of Rotary.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

The entities shown in the table presented below should come together to discuss the roles they would like to play – and the responsibilities they are willing to assume – in implementing the **Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011**. To start that discussion, HyettPalma recommends that establishing the following roles and responsibilities be considered.

Action	Town Hall	Chamber of Commerce	Turtle Days Assoc.	Retail Committee of Chamber	Downtown Business/Property Owners & Institutions	Downtown Partnership
Façade Grants	X	X			X	
Streetscape	X	X			X	
Building Rehab	X	X			X	X
Traffic	X					
Parking	X				X	
Snow Removal	X				X	
Business Development	X	X			X	
Historic Museum		X			X	
Marketing	X	X	X	X	X	
Form Retail Committee		X			X	
Benchmarks	X	X			X	
Form Partnership	X					
Seek Funding	X	X		X		X
Adopt Action Agenda	X	X				X
Overall Coordination of Enhancement Effort						X

5. Funding

With the exception of future streetscape upgrades – which, as stated earlier, should be implemented as funds become available – the recommendations included in this document are not very costly. Therefore, it is believed that the ***Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011*** can be implemented by seeking funds from the following sources:

- Service groups;
- Foundations;
- Industry;
- State and federal grant programs; and
- Town government.

6. Benchmarks

The following benchmarks should be tracked on an annual basis as a way of measuring Downtown success:

- Public improvements made and their cost;
- Dollar amount of new private investment;
- Number of business openings;
- Number of business closings;
- Total number of businesses in Downtown;
- Number of new jobs created;
- Square feet of occupied retail space;
- Square feet of vacant retail space;
- Square feet of occupied office space;
- Square feet of vacant office space;
- Square feet of occupied residential space;
- Square feet of vacant residential space;
- Total number of housing units; and
- Total taxable value of property in Downtown.

Tracking these benchmarks each year will be of great help in efforts to attract investors, funders, and supporters for the Downtown enhancement effort.

7. Adopt

HyettPalma would strongly urge the Churubusco Town Council to adopt this ***Churubusco Downtown Action Agenda 2011*** as the Town's official guide for Downtown's continued enhancement. It is hoped that the Churubusco Chamber of Commerce would do the same. And, the Churubusco Downtown Partnership should also follow suit.

Appendix

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Standards (Department of Interior regulations, 36 CFR 67) pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior, related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.