

Building and Planning Department

Brock Hundt, Building Commissioner

Kenneth B. Prince, ASLA, AICP, City Planner

Overview

The Building and Planning Departments are responsible for overseeing all aspects of city planning and providing oversight and coordinating private construction within the City of Mishawaka. These departments also serve in a limited capacity to support the Community Development Department. The Planning Department also serves as the lead City department relative to economic development initiatives and services.

On a daily basis, the Building and Planning departments are responsible for the issuance of permits for virtually all new construction including residential, commercial and industrial. The Department also evaluates and approves smaller projects such as the modification of signs, fences, sheds, decks, and garages. Although separate departments, the Building and Planning Departments work together to efficiently provide the best possible service to our City.

Responsibilities and duties include:

- Work with developers who have an interest in developing projects in, or adjacent to the City. This includes working with developers in the design of site plans to ensure that they are consistent with the City's ordinances, goals, objectives, and policies.
- Issue and track all building permits, including electric permits, plumbing permits, HVAC permits and other miscellaneous permits. In addition, all Adult Care Homes are inspected annually.
- Provide information to the public on matters relating to zoning, rezoning, annexation requests, vacations of public right-of-way, subdivision regulations, sign control, historic buildings, and obtaining building permits.
- Work with the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG). The City Senior Planner serves as a member of the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee on transportation projects, including alternative forms of transportation.
- Preparation and adoption of long-range planning projects. Projects include various elements of the Comprehensive Plan including: land use, housing, historic preservation, transportation, capital improvements, annexation, and parks and recreation.
- Administer the issuance of Improvement Location Permits for construction within the City, including evaluating construction projects relative to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- Day-to-day administration of the zoning ordinance. The zoning administrator is responsible for interpreting City codes and ordinances related to development. The Department enforces the zoning and sign ordinances of the City including issuing citations and stop work orders.
- Preparation of fiscal plans associated with annexations. Fiscal Plans require coordination with all applicable Departments including utilities, police, fire, emergency medical, engineering, parks, and finance.

- Coordination with the Information Technology Department on the implementation and continual maintenance of the City’s Geographic Information System (GIS).
- Prepare revisions and updates to land use codes and ordinances. Responsible for preparing Historic Preservation Districts including ordinances, maps, preservation guidelines and standards.
- Prepare budgets, work program and annual report for the Department. Annual evaluation of the previous year, identification of development trends, identification of future projects and funding allocations.
- Work with industry and businesses on tax abatement requests and compliance reporting. Makes recommendations to the Mayor, Redevelopment Commission and Common Council concerning economic development issues.
- Provide staff support to the City Redevelopment Commission including the drafting of development agreements with other public and private entities. Review and prepare amendments to Tax Increment Financing Districts.
- Manages Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District funds. Works with the Mayor and City Engineer to determine funding priorities to be presented to the Redevelopment Commission concerning the expenditure of TIF funds on a yearly basis.

Building Department

Whether we are in our homes, workplaces, schools, or places of entertainment, we rely on the safety of the structures that surround us. This underscores the importance of modern building codes and their enforcement. The structural integrity of a building, the means of egress, fire suppression systems, smoke alarms, safe electrical wiring, proper sanitation, safe heating, and the energy efficiency of buildings are ensured by building code requirements.

Residential building codes are for the personal safety of your family and guests invited into your home and to ensure the economic well-being of the community by reducing the potential for spread of fire and disease, the conservation of energy and to protect future home purchasers who deserve reasonable assurance that the home they buy will be safe and secure.

Commercial building codes help to provide safe means of egress, structural integrity, reduced risk of the spreading of fire or disease and provide safety to all public who enter a commercial building. Most aspects of building construction, whether electrical, HVAC, plumbing, fire suppression or structural integrity represent a potential hazard to building occupants and users. Building codes provide safeguards to help reduce those risks. Although no code can completely eliminate risk, reducing risk to an acceptable level is the goal of building codes. The Building Department helps to ensure codes are followed and helps the builder, owner or tenant meet code requirements. Most of this is done through the inspection process.

In 2020, the Building Department conducted 2,651 inspections. This is just under the 2,703 inspections that were performed in 2019 despite the impacts and changes to construction activity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each inspector typically conducts 4 to 7 inspections per workday. Approximately 40 to 60 minutes are spent per inspection. Other building department duties include review of building design drawings and meetings with contractors, owners, and tenants to explain and help with building code interpretation and enforcement.

The Building Department continues to become more knowledgeable in the evolving building code. All inspectors have been trained to become combination inspectors, better serving the community and the public.

By enforcing building code requirements, the buildings and homes in the City of Mishawaka will be structurally and mechanically sound. The Building Department will continue to become more efficient in the inspection process, as well as more knowledgeable and accessible to our clients.

Building and Development Activity

The City of Mishawaka continued to grow in 2020 although at a slower pace. The City issued permits with a total estimated construction cost of \$61 million dollars. This is significantly less than the \$79.7 million dollars of 2019. In comparison, our largest construction year this past decade occurred in 2018 with a total estimated construction cost of 158 million dollars.

In 2020, permits were issued for 65 new single-family homes, up from the 58 new single-family home permits that were issued in 2019. As indicated in previous reports, this is still significantly lower than the number of single-family home starts that occurred prior to 2007. Our continued residential growth is still significant. This single-family home growth combined with the continued growth of multiple family housing that has grown over time contributes to a healthy and diverse housing market in the City.

Continued Commercial Growth

In 2020, commercial permits were issued with an estimated construction cost of 40.7 million dollars. This is much less than the 62.7 million dollars of commercial permits issued in 2019. This is also below our 10-year average for City growth as a whole. Although this number can fluctuate significantly from year-to-year based on the timing of when permits are pulled for a few large projects, 2020 was unique in that there no large projects started. By the numbers, 9 new commercial building permits were pulled for new freestanding buildings in 2020 which is identical to the 9 started in 2019.

The difference between years is based on the size of the projects started. The two largest permits pulled in 2020 were both remodels that occurred within existing buildings. The single largest permit was for the Dental Alliance at 112 Ironworks Avenue with an estimated remodel construction cost of 3.8 million dollars. Another large remodel project for 2020 included the St. Joseph Regional Medical Center that had an estimated construction cost of 3.6 million dollars. For comparison, the two largest commercial construction permits issued in 2019 were both new construction and combined had an estimated construction value of close to 30 million dollars.



*112 Ironworks Avenue – Dental Care Alliance
February, 2021*

The fees generated by the Building Department are intended to significantly cover the costs of administering development in the City. The City through its fee structure has determined that the fairest way to assess a fee is when a project is being constructed the administrative costs can be rolled into the project cost as a small percentage. In 2020 the Building Department collected fees totaling \$490,208. Since fees are based in part on the value of the project and not the number of inspections, this is significantly lower than the \$619,685 collected in 2019. On average, the fees charged by the Building Department represent less than one half of one percent of estimated construction costs for a given project.

Top 11 2020 Permits by Estimated Construction Cost		
Dental Care Alliance	112 Iron Works Ave	\$3.8M
St. Joe. Med Center	5215 Holy Cross Pkwy	\$3.6M
Bethel Training Center	705 Lowell Ave	\$3.3M
Medical Center	4020 Edison Lakes Pkwy	\$3.2M
Main St Village Rehab	5629 Sterling Dr	\$2.7M
All Secure Storage	255 Elmwood	\$2.2M
Johns Auto Spa	2315 Grape Rd	\$2.1M
Adventureplex	1018 Edison Rd	\$1.5M
Mission BBQ	5230 Main St	\$1.4M
Murphy Rice Law Office	303 First St	\$1.2M
Raising Cain	5212 Main St	\$1.2M

The Planning Department fee structure is designed to cover only a portion of the costs of running the department. Many of the functions of the department are directed at guiding individuals through the development process that the average person may have trouble navigating without professional assistance. In 2020, the Planning Department collected fees totaling \$51,354. This is up from the \$47,623 collected in 2019.

Year	Estimated Construction Value	Dollar Change	Percentage Change
2011	45.0 Million	+2.0 Million	+4.4%
2012	52.0 Million	+7.0 Million	+13.5%
2013	53.4 Million	+1.4 Million	+2.6%
2014	67.8 Million	+14.4 Million	+21.2%
2015	85.2 Million	+17.4 Million	+20.4%
2016	98.4 Million	+13.2 Million	+13.4%
2017	136.4 Million	+38.0 Million	+27.9%
2018	158.0 Million	+21.6 Million	+13.7%
2019	79.7 Million	-78.3 Million	-98.2%
2020	61.0 Million	-18.7 Million	-30.7%

10-Year Total 836.9 Million
 10-Year Average 83.7 Million +1.8 million / year -1.2% / year

Construction Activity Analysis

As a City, Mishawaka continues to reap the benefits of our geographic location being centered in the region. The City has promoted development with long-term strategic decision making such as the continued investments made downtown, the extension of infrastructure to the Exit 83 interchange of the Indiana Toll Road, and the creation of a medical hub with the relocation of the St. Joseph Regional Medical Center, the construction of the VA Clinic, and the Beacon Health System expansion on Beacon Parkway.

From 2013 to 2018 the City experienced five straight years of double-digit percentage growth from year to year. In 2019, the 79.7 million total estimated construction cost fell back to a level

consistent with dollar growth levels seen in 2014 and 2015 which was also consistent with the City’s 10-year average. In 2020, the 61-million-dollar total estimated construction cost is roughly 28% below our 10-year average. This drop in construction can at least be partly attributed to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Consistent with national trends during the pandemic, our residential activity remained steady with remodels even increasing slightly. This is consistent with the general population being home and undertaking projects based on time and/or need associated with working from home. At the same time, commercial businesses struggled and worked to stay open and provide services while protecting employees and customers. The most challenge fell upon service commercial businesses and restaurants. In 2020, commercial remodels dropped by almost 50% compared to 2019 permit activity.

Despite the downturn in Mishawaka’s construction numbers in 2020, the long-term forecast remains promising. As vaccinations occur and activities can be opened up without the social distancing and restrictions imposed by the pandemic, companies will reassess long term goals and expansion plans. Although numerous businesses have closed or have been left with less financial capacity, other sectors have grown and have seen record profits. Industry analysts estimate that many consumer behaviors have likely permanently changed as a result of the pandemic. In Mishawaka, we have seen many businesses make changes on the fly to deal with more drive through, curb side pickup, and delivery services as part of normal operations. In 2021 and beyond there will be a demand for reinvestment and growth as various entities will look again to make strategic investments.

Consistent with the pandemic, activity is expected to be slow at the start of 2021 and will likely pick up toward the end of the year. Knowing that there is both hardship and penned up demand in our market, we think it is reasonable to expect an average year of construction in 2021. The City’s planned stimulus bond issue should help insure a minimum level of construction in 2021.

2020 Planning and Building Permits

A summary of the 2020 permit activity is as follows:

Residential

- 20.3 million in estimated construction costs (\$3.3 million more than 2019)
 - 65 new single-family homes
 - 676 residential alterations/additions

Multi-Family

- No new permits occurred in 2020

Commercial / Industrial

- 40.7 million in estimated construction costs (\$22 million less than 2019)
 - 9 new commercial buildings
 - 107 alterations/additions (down from 209 in 2019)

New Single-Family Home Construction by Year	
2020	65 Homes
2019	58 Homes
2018	56 Homes
2017	78 Homes
2016	36 Homes
2015	47 Homes
2014	43 Homes
2013	39 Homes
2012	28 Homes
2011	22 Homes
2010	22 Homes
2009	32 Homes
2008	46 Homes
2007	112 Homes

Annexations

The City continues to grow in a steady and orderly fashion. There were five voluntary annexations, adding approximately 13.2 acres in area to the City in 2020. This represents an increase of 0.02 square miles. In comparison, the City grew by 6.6 acres in 2019. The existing area within the City limits, according to our Geographic Information System, is now 18.25 square miles.

2020 annexations included:

1. **Judy L. Davis (Owner) / The Plaza Phase III, LLC (Contingent Purchaser) – Part of 54655 Fir Road**
1.26 acres annexed and zoned C-1 General Commercial to allow for the expansion of the Plaza at Day and Fir office complex. The property is currently under development to provide additional parking and access to Fir Road and includes new landscaping, fencing, storm water drainage, and lighting improvements.
2. **RH Line, LLC – 52921, 52885, 52861 and 52841 Fir Road**
3.76 acres annexed and zoned C-1 General Commercial to allow for a mixed-use development to include a medical office, multi-tenant retail building, and continued use of an existing residential house. Immediate development plans have been approved for an approximate 7,500 sq. ft. medical building anticipated for construction in early 2021. The development will also include a parking lot, landscaping/screening, storm water drainage, and other related infrastructure improvements.
3. **CVA Development, LLC – 16813 Douglas Road**
1.07 acres annexed and zoned C-1 General Commercial for a future veterinary office. Construction on an anticipated 2,500 sq. ft. building is not planned until early 2025.
4. **AWT, Inc. – 1141 & 1241 E. Twelfth Street**
3.46 acres annexed and zoned I-1 Light Industrial for the expansion of an adjacent manufacturing business. Adorn Engineered Components occupies two existing structures on the property and has future plans to connect them via a building addition. No anticipated date for construction was given.
5. **Lionshead Development, LLC – 15165, 15195 and 15201 Cleveland Road**
3.4 acres annexed and zoned R-3 Multi-Family Residential to allow for the construction of a 64 unit multi-family residential townhome development. The property will be added to an adjacent 3 acre area annexed in 2016. The developer anticipates construction in three phases with the initial phase to begin in 2021.

Downtown Development

Mill at Ironworks Plaza

It has been over 5 years since the State of Indiana proposed an initiative to help thwart the on-going brain drain occurring in the State of Indiana. Specifically, the trend has been that a disproportionate number of Indiana's college graduates end up leaving the state to find work or pursue a career in cities such as Chicago and other large metropolitan areas. These young

professionals had been leaving not just to find work matching their education, they were leaving seeking a specific quality of life.

An outcome of this initiative was that Indianapolis based developer Flaherty and Collins received close to 5 million dollars of Regional City funds to construct the Mill at Ironworks Plaza. This mixed-use development with lower level commercial and higher end residential apartments features high quality amenities and common areas intended to attract a broad range of tenants, including the desired young professionals.



*The Mill – North Entry
& Leasing Area*



The Mill – Inside Courtyard

The building started leasing in late 2019. In 2020, the building continued to lease up well even during the pandemic. At the end of 2020, the residential units in the building were 90% occupied. Flaherty and Collins who owns many projects like these over multiple states indicated that this project in Mishawaka was one of their best performers during the pandemic. We heard multiple stories of those that were forced to work from home during the pandemic chose to leave metropolitan areas like Chicago for Mishawaka because of the availability of this type of new urban housing. We have been told by the developer that once the pandemic restrictions are lifted, they are close to signing restaurants for the end caps that will join the Kalon Salon and Jack's Donuts as commercial tenants.

Ironworks Plaza/Beutter Park ICE building

Beutter Park is already the City of Mishawaka's signature urban park with the beauty of sculptures, 30,000 plants, and cascading waterfalls in the re-established mill race of the factories that once stood here. It is the past home to the summer concert series and is the centerpiece of the City's park system located along the Mishawaka Riverwalk a multi-use path that connects thousands of homes and seven City parks.

For almost two decades in marketing downtown Mishawaka for redevelopment, one of the concerns that has been routinely brought up has been the apparent minimal activities that are available in winter. This is viewed as a negative, not only for Mishawaka's downtown, but for the region as a whole. We routinely hear that the one thing we cannot change is the weather. One thing we can change is our collective attitude toward the weather and its impact on how livable our region can be. Once completed, we believe that the Ironworks Plaza improvements and ICE

building will turn Beutter Park into a year-round attraction and will become one of the signature “things” do in the South Bend/Elkhart region.

The project as currently envisioned includes a variety of components:

Skating Path / Winter Activity Area

One of the challenges in this region is embracing outdoor winter activities. The Skating Path / Winter Activity Area not only provide an activity, but in connecting it to the Signature Café, the close location of other restaurants, the downtown, and the Riverwalk, the amenity has the ability to attract people even if they are not directly participating by skating. We love Elkhart’s NIBCO park, and wanted to use a similar theme but place it in an environment where diverse downtown uses add to the attraction. We are looking at this as a Mishawaka’s scaled down version of Rockefeller Center. The urban setting, the café’, the art, the immediately adjacent housing, the Riverwalk, and restaurants all contribute to the activity. The building required a sensitive design containing three distinct uses: a café, the rink functions, and an event center. The rink portion of the building will have lockers, warming area, skate rental, and room for maintenance, mechanicals, and Zamboni storage.

This proposed rink facility is intended to replace the City’s current rink in Merrifield Park which is at the end of its useful life. The event space was added to take advantage of the geographically prominent position of the building and to fulfill a need for event space that has been identified by the City Parks Department. Compared to other venues in our park system, this will be “high end” event space available for rental. This event space will provide perhaps the best views of the St. Joseph River and Beutter Park in the City.

Signature Café

One of the elements that separate the proposed Beutter Park improvements from other park venues is the type of café envisioned. Although the café building will be owned by the City, the space is intended to be leased to a private entity, likely at a below market rate in order to incentivize providing the desired unique eatery/coffee house/dessert/evening drink destination. A modern décor of glass, steel and wood with stone accents is envisioned. The Café will have its own outdoor seating area and will contain an indoor/outdoor fireplace contributing to the winter ambiance and activities.

Ironworks Plaza

The proposed plaza, set in the middle of Beutter Park off of Ironworks Avenue is set up as a pedestrian friendly open area with a modern pavilion/event tent area that in the summer will be used for a variety of activities including registration for runs, outdoor performances, markets, and even weddings. In the winter, the main portion of the plaza will be used for skating, and the small stage will be used to display the official City Christmas tree.

2020 Progress

In 2020, the City completed two phases of the construction of Ironworks Plaza that included the Picnic Area/Beer Garden/Picnic Space that has now been branded as the “Ball-Band Biergarten” and a series of infrastructure improvements to serve the redevelopment of the greater area.

Picnic Area / Beer Garden / Restrooms

The City felt that eating and drinking outside in an urban park was a critical component of our on-going park improvements. Serving liquor requires the area to be separated from the other areas during events, but on a year-round basis this area is open to the public to be used for picnics and seating. The overhead lighting and the architectural theme of the café included glass, steel, and wood with stone accents. This replaced the temporary asphalt area with picnic tables that the City constructed after the completion of the original park more than a fifteen years ago.



Ball-Band Biergarten – Summer, 2020

With the pandemic, our scheduled opening was moved from Memorial Day to the Fourth of July weekend. Our opening event honored and celebrated the life of former Mayor Bob Beutter who passed away in January of 2020. Bob’s wife, May, indicated that one of the first public events they held was having a root beer social, and we continued that tradition in Bob’s memory.

One of the unintended benefits of the space is that it provided a gathering spot where people could meet outside with social distancing in compliance with pandemic orders and guidelines.

Another part of our 2020 construction project included the entrance to the future Ironworks Plaza event area. The City was able to install our latest art in public places project. The stainless steel salmon sculptures are the creation of local artist Steve L. Depositar, Sr. The sculpture has been named by the artist as Mors magnus Piscium, which is Latin for” Big Steel Fish”. Each 100 lb. fish is formed from flat 11-gauge stainless steel. Shaped, welded and ground textured. This element adds to the visual transformation of this former industrial site and contributes to the established theme of Robert C. Beutter River Park. The artist’s intent was to create a visceral relationship between the visitor this land and waterway.



*Ironworks Plaza – Mors magnus Piscium Sculpture
Summer, 2020*

In the artist’s own words, “For millennia, generations have occupied this site and each transformation has contributed to our existence. The flowing waters and new landscape represent a moment in an ever-changing world. These gleaming sculptures represent life seldom recognized, but always running underneath these headwaters, unique and vital to our existence.”

Currently, the City Administration is working with the Common Council to issue a TIF bond in 2021 to fund the completion of this project and allow for its construction in 2021/2022. If the bond is approved, our current estimate is that this project will be completed and fully open in late 2022.

Front Street Opportunity Fund LLC

As reported last year, in 2018, the City Redevelopment Commission approved a development agreement with Front Street Opportunity Fund LLC. This is for the development of a mixed use commercial and residential building located on the block bordered by Front Street, First Street, Hill Street, and Spring Street (between Mill Street and Jesus restaurant). The development team includes J. Patrick Matthews who has had success with many projects including student housing adjacent to Notre Dame, Joe Grabill Sr. who has extensive local commercial real estate and development experience, and the Architectural design is being performed by Spalding Design Group of Mishawaka. We are excited about the potential project that will bring additional residential units and commercial storefront space to downtown Mishawaka. In 2019, at the request of the City, the developer worked on a modified design to allow for the widening of Hill Street. Although the project was supposed to break ground in 2020, it was delayed in part because of the uncertainties associated with the pandemic. Based on recent discussions with the development group, we expect that a revised development agreement will be presented to the Redevelopment Commission in early 2021, and that construction will start on the project later in 2021.

Barak Group Boutique Hotel

In 2018, the City continued a development agreement with the Barak Group concerning their interest to build a boutique hotel on the island property north of the City Police Station that used to house the former Uniroyal Power Plant and coal yard. Unfortunately, the pandemic dealt a crushing blow to the hospitality industry as a whole. In 2020, the developer continued to work on refining plans and negotiated with Hyatt regarding a change in branding for the Hotel. In January of 2021, the City Redevelopment Commission and the Barak group modified our previous agreement to provide the developer more time to complete the project. We now expect that construction will start in 2022.

To move the project forward, the City was required, per our development agreement with the Barak Group, to pipe the western portion of the former mill race that provides the water supply for Beutter Park before turning the site over to the developer for construction. From a regulatory perspective, the raceway, although manmade, was determined to be an integral waterbody to the St. Joseph River and is now regulated like it was a natural waterbody. As such, there was an extensive amount of work that needed to be accomplished. In addition to actual construction, compensatory mitigation was required to allow for the piping of the man-made raceway. Although obtaining the required permitting took longer than expected, this project moved forward in 2020. The City has viewed this piping project as essential to make the property viable for redevelopment, whether or not the proposed hotel proceeds, the redevelopment area will be shovel ready for redevelopment in the spring of 2021.

Riverwalk Apartments

The principals involved in the Riverwalk Apartment project met with the staff in 2020 and have indicated that they would still like to proceed with a reconceived project in 2021 despite being delayed in part due to the pandemic. When we last spoke, the developer desired to change the intended use from apartments to a condominium project. They believe that condominiums will be most successful in meeting current market demands. This project is located on a triangular shaped property south of Mishawaka Avenue, just west of where Sarah Street ends on the north side of

the river. We expect that a new development agreement will be submitted in 2021 that would allow for the change in use and update project timelines.

Murphy-Rice Office Building

Despite the pandemic, 2020 did see some construction resulting from a public/private partnership. In 2020, construction began and was substantially completed for a 1.2-million-dollar office building project on the northwest corner of the intersection of Spring Street and First Street. This is property that had been owned by the Redevelopment Commission for many years. Although it is a small parcel, the two-story modern office was the perfect complement to the block and our continuing efforts to revitalize downtown Mishawaka. As part of the City's master redevelopment plan for the downtown, the City purchased a series of homes and properties to create a parking area that was essential to give development potential to the former Carnegie Library. Without convenient parking, uses of the historic building would have been extremely limited. As part of the creation of this parking area, the City retained a small property for building on the east side of this parking area. The Murphy-Rice office was the perfect complimentary use to complete this redevelopment block because the office use does not have a need for parking on nights and weekends when the restaurant is the busiest.

Public Works Projects

The City is committed to serving the Mishawaka community through its support of various public works projects designed to enhance our citizen's quality of life. During 2020, the Planning Department was responsible for directing private firms and assisting other City departments on several significant public works projects.

Mishawaka Riverwalk

The Mishawaka Riverwalk continues to be the cornerstone for many of the City's redevelopment efforts. It connects neighborhoods and parks by taking advantage of the City's greatest natural resource, the St. Joseph River. The Mishawaka Riverwalk also adds value to existing homes and neighborhoods and will undoubtedly be a source of pride for Mishawaka's citizens for generations to come.

Riverwalk – Race Street to Cedar Street Bridge

In 2018, we worked with our consultant DLZ to apply to receive federal funding for the widening of the Cedar Street Bridge to accommodate a wider protected walkway on the west side of the bridge. We received word that the funding for this close to four-million-dollar project was approved. Since that approval, construction that had been estimated to start in 2024 has been moved up to 2023. In 2018, the City also began negotiating with property owners on the south side of the river between Race Street and Cedar Street on the south side of the river. A total of eight additional parcels are required to make this Riverwalk connection.

Over the course of 2020, the City was able to obtain three additional properties required for this connection. Acquisition of the additional two properties remaining is in process and is expected to be completed in the first half of 2021. Construction of this phase could begin as soon as the fall of 2021.

Battell Park – Veterans Plaza

In 2020 the City was able to fully complete and dedicate Veterans Plaza at Battell Park. Although the long term the plan is to build a memorial walkway, funding limitations narrowed the scope of this project to just the monument restoration and creation of the plaza. The project included relocating and restoring the Civil War Monument and creating a gathering place with a flag array honoring each branch of the military. The project started in the spring of 2019 and was substantially complete by Veterans Day 2019, with the exception of the monument. The estimated restoration time for the monument was approximately a year and our plan had always been to rededicate the monument and plaza as part of our Memorial Day parade in 2020. However, because of the pandemic, the Memorial Day parade was cancelled. We were able to rededicate the monument on Memorial Day thanks to a small group of dedicated veterans.

Founder’s Circle

In 2020, the City contracted with the Robert Henry Corporation to build Founder’s Circle in Beutter Park. When the park was designed and constructed in 2004, an area of the park was reserved for a future art installation. As constructed this area of the park had been lawn area that was surrounded by a circular crushed granite path. This path and area had remained unfinished until now.

Founder’s Circle was created to memorialize the founding of our city and memorialize key figures in our history. The City of Mishawaka’s early history was shaped by industrialists, politicians, and even the clergy. The most significant of them are memorialized in “Founder’s Circle” which will include plaques surrounded by a walk with benches. This is another special unique space that has been created within Beutter Park.

It is now also the now permanent home of the City’s Perkins Windmill which was previously temporarily displayed at the traffic circle at the intersection of Front Street and Spring Street. This space was chosen because the windmill was actually made on this site where the former Perkins Windmill factory once stood. This \$150,000 project will be completed in the spring of 2021 when the permanent plaques are put in place.

Central Park Picnic Area

In 2020, the City contracted with the Robert Henry Corporation to build the Central Park Picnic Area. When the City completed the Central Park Bandshell, the main concert venue for larger concerts shifted from Beutter Park to Central Park. With that move, there became a greater need for permanent seating with a view to the stage. This \$350,000 project created the permanent seating area at the north side of the concert lawn in Central Park. The picnic area is terraced in two levels to provide better views to the stage. The area was also designed to have restricted access during special concert events where alcohol can be served. The area is a special



Central Park Picnic Area – Fall, 2020

place with decorative furnishings, ornamental lighting, colored concrete paving, and contains charging stations for electronic devices.

Gleissners' Pointe

In 2020, the City completed a small fishing/seating area and garden on the south side of the river, just west of the cable-stayed pedestrian bridge. The project was completed as part of the infrastructure project, Phase 1 of Ironworks Plaza. The area was designated as Gleissners' Pointe in honor of the Gleissner family that has contributed many years public service to the City over multiple generations. Members of the Gleissner family's service included multiple City Councilman, firefighting, teaching, and service to the City's Park Department.



Gleissners' Pointe Dedication – July, 2020

Liberty Mutual – New Municipal Services Building

As was noted last year's report, in January of 2020 the City acquired the former Liberty Mutual call center building located at 100 Lincolnway West in the heart of downtown. The building was purchased to construct a new City Hall. At the time, we concluded that if acquired and renovated, the building would provide a unique opportunity to better serve the public by not only combining three separate buildings into one for efficiency (Moving City Hall, Police, and the Mishawaka Utilities Business Office), but it would also better serve the public simply by its central location. It is directly across the street from the County Services building and a block away from the public library in the heart of our historic downtown. It also has the ability to open up hundreds of formerly private parking spaces for public use which is becoming more critical as we redevelop and bring new events and activities downtown.



Liberty Mutual Building, 100 Lincolnway West – Summer of 2019

As part of the agreement with the City Council, the Administration agreed to list the building for sale once it was acquired on the chance that there was a large user that might be interested in the building that would bring a significant amount of investment and jobs to the City. The City listed the building with NAI Cressy for what had been its assessed value. After listing the building from February through May of 2020, there were no serious inquiries. At that time, the City took the building off the market and continued full speed on developing construction plans for the renovation.

In 2020, we worked with Alliance Architects and a talented group of consultants to create construction plans for the renovation. Given the size and complexity of the project, the plans were just completed in February of 2021. Also in 2020, following an open request for proposal process, the City hired Weigand Construction to be the Construction Manager as Constructor (CMc) for the project. The City Council also approved a bond issue for the Mishawaka Utilities Electric Division which included a significant amount of funding for the City Hall project as part of the planned replacement of the Mishawaka Utilities Business office in the new building. Construction should begin in spring of 2021 and the newly renovated building, once completed in 2022, will not only dramatically modernize and improve the image of downtown Mishawaka, it should increase activities that will benefit existing businesses and foster additional redevelopment.

2020 Activity of Commissions and Boards

Plan Commission

A total of 65 petitions were filed before the Plan Commission in 2020. This is 19 more than the 46 petitions received in 2019. In comparison our filings are still significantly lower than the peak of 104 petitions filed in 2007. Petitions for 2020 included 26 rezoning/annexation requests, 23 final site plans and 16 Plats/Re-plats.

2020 Plan Commission		
Matthew Lentsch	President	Mayor Appt.
Christopher Tordi	Vice President	Park and Rec. Board
Dale Freeman	Member	BPWS
Chris Jamrose, PE	Member	City Engineer
Murray Winn	Member	Mayor Appt.
Nick Troiola	Member	Mayor Appt.
Chris Nebalski	Member	Mayor Appt.
Kathy White Gadacz	Member	Mayor Appt.
Dale (Woody) Emmons	Member	Common Council

Board of Zoning Appeals

The Board of Zoning Appeals heard a total of 59 appeals in 2020. This is 8 more than the 51 appeals heard in 2019. Although this is a slight increase when compared to 2019, the activity of the Board has historically varied and is not directly related to construction trends.

2020 Board of Zoning Appeals	
Marcia Wells	Chair
Christopher Tordi	Vice Chair
Larry Stillson	Member
Charles Krueger	Member
Joel Dendiu	Member

City of Mishawaka Historic Preservation Commission

The Planning Department serves as the staff for the City of Mishawaka Historic Preservation Commission. The Historic Preservation Commission, established in 1991, is charged with preserving and promoting the historical past of Mishawaka. The Commission, a nine-member appointed board, is responsible for the designation of local single and multiple site historic

districts, the nomination of sites to the National Register of Historic Places, and the promotion of local historic preservation related activities and events.

An overview of the 2020 activities and accomplishments are as follows:

Three Certificates of Appropriateness were approved in 2020:

1. Addition of a detached 2-car garage and fencing, and the removal of pavement and landscaping at 318 E Third Street (Dodge Old People’s Home).
2. Replacement of garage doors at 624 W Mishawaka Ave (Webster Gering House)
3. Replacement of garage doors at 2402 Lincolnway East (Riviera Place)

The Normain Heights neighborhood, designated as a Conservation District in 2018, was successfully maintained as such at the three-year anniversary.

The Historic Preservation Commission, at the suggestion of Indiana Landmarks and following other local municipalities, created a process for removal of historic district designation, also known as de-designation.

In March, we had the opportunity to tour the four buildings that make up the St. Joseph Catholic Church Parish.

The April and May meetings were cancelled while City Hall was closed to the public because of the pandemic. However, the Commission was still able to distribute approximately 50 yard signs, promoting National Historic Preservation Month awareness. By August, we were able to be included in the Senior Night Out event, presented by the Parks Department.

Historic Preservation Commission Members	Advisory Members
Doug Merritt, Chairman	Alan Grzeskowiak
David Eisen, Vice Chairman	Thomas Morris
Mike Bultinck	Jason Stoller
Terry DeMaegd	
Jennifer Johns	
Shirley McAlister	
Nancy Seidler	
Faye Sullivan	
Kate Voelker (Common Council)	

Due to COVID-19, several educational opportunities were cancelled. Indiana Landmarks provided monthly educational sessions. In October, Secretary Christa Hill attended the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s virtual conference and shared the session on “Preservation Planning for Commissions and Community Nonprofits” with the full Commission for Certified Local Government credit.

Bethel University has been selected as the newest site for the location of a historical marker (our fourth in as many years). Formerly known as Bethel College, the University was founded in 1947 and renamed Bethel University in 2019. Previously the site of a horse farm for a local Buick dealer, Bethel University has been impacting the greater Mishawaka community for over 50 years.



(l-r): Dr. Gregg Chenoweth, - President of Bethel University; Alan Grzeskowiak - Mishawaka Historic Preservation Advisory Member; Faye Sullivan - Mishawaka Historic Preservation Commissioner; Kevin Blowers-Technical Services Librarian; Emily Sherwood-Director of Alumni Relations; Mayor Dave Wood.

Zoning Enforcement and Administration

Another responsibility of the Planning Department is the enforcement of our ordinances and responding to violations and complaints in a speedy and considerate manner. In addition to countless phone calls and personal contact with those in violation, the Department followed up by sending out letters addressing land use concerns, notices of violation and citation warnings. Welcome letters, with sign code information, were mailed to new businesses opening in Mishawaka. Because of the pandemic and the need for businesses to place temporary yard signs to identify if they were open or closed, or other drop off and pick up requirements due to the pandemic, the department did not enforce the provisions of the ordinance regarding temporary signs in 2020. Once the pandemic restrictions are predominantly lifted in 2021, the Department will provide notice to all businesses on when enforcement of these provisions will resume as normal.

Economic Development

The Planning Department is also responsible for organizing and implementing programs and initiatives aimed at retaining local businesses and assisting them to grow and benefit the greater community. In 2020, the City continued to work with the St. Joseph County Chamber of Commerce to better clarify roles and responsibilities to help respond to State leads and responses to requests. The Chamber serves as the Lead Economic Development Organization for St. Joseph County. In 2020, the Department continued to actively participate in the process for Regional Cities of Northern Indiana.

Tax Abatements

The City Planning Department is responsible for reviewing and administering the tax abatement program of the City. This includes performing annual compliance reviews and presenting applicable information to the Mishawaka Common Council.

The City of Mishawaka awards tax abatements on commercial real estate and personal property taxes to corporations involved in new capital investments and facility expansions that will further the economic development of the Mishawaka community.

Unlike other communities that use ordinances with metrics to determine when tax abatements are warranted, Mishawaka reviews each abatement individually. As part of this discretionary process, Mishawaka looks at the past history of our abatements for precedent. In addition, rather than just looking at a metric that uses a combination of new job creation and capital investment, Mishawaka also looks closely at the market area of the company reserving most abatements to those businesses who are competing outside the greater South Bend/Elkhart region. The City also uses abatement as a redevelopment tool to encourage capital investment in areas of the City that need incentives to realize full potential and be competitive. By comparison, Mishawaka is conservative on its granting of abatements and has historically approved fewer than our surrounding municipalities. No new tax abatements were submitted and approved in 2020.

Since 1986, the City has approved a total of 60 tax abatements for 40 different companies. Currently, there are 9 active abatements in the City including the following companies: BD Development LLC (St. Joseph Hospital Medical Office Building), Long Term Care Investments LLC, WellPet LLC, Barak River Rock LLC, Patrick Industries, River Walk Development Group LLC, Jamil Packaging Corporation, and Lippert Components. The City Planning Department is responsible for reviewing and administering the tax abatement program of the City. This includes performing annual compliance reviews and presenting applicable information to the Mishawaka Common Council.

COVID-19 Recovery

2020 proved to be a challenging year for the City, State, and Country. Most of the challenge came from, or were exacerbated by, the impacts associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

“Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is caused by a new coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Because it is a new virus, scientists are learning more each day. Although most people who have COVID-19 have mild symptoms, COVID-19 can also cause severe illness and even death. Some groups, including older adults and people who have certain underlying medical conditions, are at increased risk of severe illness”.

As of February of 2021, the United States has had close 28 million confirmed cases and a half a million deaths due to this global pandemic. Over the same period of time, Indiana has had over 650,000 confirmed cases and close to 12,000 deaths. St. Joseph County has had over 400 deaths that included some of our own Mishawaka extended family.

By March of 2020, it was clear that the disease could not be reasonably controlled without drastic preventative measures. This was in part dictated by fear associated with the unknowns of a highly contagious and potentially deadly virus.

At that time, schools shut down and started to go virtual. People began hoarding basic essentials like food and toilet paper. Federal, state and county directives and guidance came down that at times were unclear or in conflict with one another. At that time, decisions were made as to what was an essential business or activity. As a result, many businesses were temporarily shut down. Other essential businesses had to significantly alter how they did business.

Local government provides services that are as essential as any. Public safety is required no matter what the crisis. Utilities such as water, wastewater, and electric became even more valuable to those living in the City. To provide these services, all other City Departments still needed to function to support the other departments and basic governmental duties.

The City never closed throughout this period. To make sure that we were in compliance with all safety protocols, various buildings were open only to staff, sometimes with rotating shifts to ensure entire departments could not be shut down by a single outbreak. At City Hall, notices were posted that required appointments for service. This afforded time for each City Department to prepare a COVID response plan to develop procedures and precautionary measures to insure to the best of our ability that essential City services could continue without interruption.

To address the impacts of the crisis, Mayor Wood directed a multifaceted approach relative to our City's recovery and directed the Planning Department to lead these initiatives. The three steps the City undertook included:

1) Targeted allocation of federal funding

The City was responsible for administering a special allocation of CDBG CARE funds in the amount of \$282,298. We allocated all of these funds to the City's sub recipients who provide a significant portion of the City's social safety net. Although the City could allocate some of these funds to cover our administrative costs, we felt these funds were better prioritized directly to services. Normally, we are limited by HUD and can only distribute a maximum of 15% to our subrecipients. That requirement has been waived relative to the use of these funds. A big positive was that these organizations are familiar with the income requirements/limitations of recipients as well as the reporting associated with the use of these funds which can be significant.

Our subrecipients included:

- Real Services for food and utility assistance.
- The Boys and Girls Club to address staffing costs associated with the COVID 19 crisis.
- The YWCA for administration costs, food supplies, protective equipment.
- School City of Mishawaka for funding a portion of their food program and for providing protective supplies.
- The Mishawaka Food Pantry for food, supplies, and assistance.

2) Small Business Loan Program

The City worked with our consultants Barnes and Thornburg and Baker Tilly to develop a small business loan program. An integral part of creating such a program was identifying where the funding will come from. There was very little ability to reprioritize dollars in the City's General fund needed to run the City, particularly with the projected revenue shortfalls associated with this crisis. The City's Tax Increment Finance District, by extending the start date of identified projects or doing a bond issue, had the ability to provide a reprioritization of funding, but TIF funds being limited to only capital improvements and similar expenses within the district couldn't be used directly. Although other communities have directly used TIF funds for loan programs given the unique nature of the crisis, the plan that Mishawaka created was developed on the recommendation of our consultants which included refunding a few past capital projects that could have been considered TIF eligible at the time, but where the City used other funds (local income tax, Economic Development Revenues) to fund the loan program. Specifically, the City refunded past/recent Twin Branch Park improvements and a sweeper purchase that is used to clean the Riverwalk. The justification is that Twin branch is adjacent to Lincolnway which was included in the district when it was amended in 2014, even though the park was not, and thus defensible. The sweeper is mechanical equipment which we typically stay away from using TIF funding for because other communities have had issues funding items such as police cars which clearly have use that extend beyond the area that make any potential funding from TIF fractional at best and raises questions in general regarding the use. In this case, the Riverwalk is entirely located in the TIF district which made refunding the purchase defensible. The total amount refunded was \$934,209. This was the maximum amount that could be readily justified by our consultants and freed up a funding source not only for a small business loan program, but also for other unforeseen/unplanned City expenditures.

The specifics of the loan program were worked out on the fly. The City immediately reserved \$500,000 of the reprioritized funds for the loan program not knowing how many businesses might ultimately take advantage of the program. The City also partnered with Lake City Bank to administer the loan program. In general, the City's intent was to limit these loans to small businesses who were significantly impacted by the crisis.

The following are the key characteristics that defined the program:

- Small businesses were defined as those who have under 2 million dollars a year in business.
- The maximum amount of a loan was \$10,000.
- The loan did not require any repayment over the first six months, and then would be repaid back at 0% interest over two years.

Ultimately, the loan program was only marginally successful in that only 6 businesses received loans for just under \$60,000. We think that the limited interest in the loans was in part due to other programs, particularly at the federal level, that provided outright grants of money that did not require payback to help businesses deal with the

pandemic impacts. At the local level, we chose not to pursue granting local tax money to one business over another and felt that this type of grant is better addressed through higher levels of government.

3) Local Construction Stimulus

One of the impacts of the pandemic for the City of Mishawaka has been a drop in construction activity. Unfortunately, this drop in activity goes well beyond our borders. The pandemic has impacted construction activities across the country. In Mishawaka, many of the private sector construction projects that had been planned to begin in 2020 and 2021 that we were aware of have been delayed or have been cancelled.

Within our greater region, the University of Notre Dame has long been a stabilizing influence in economic downturns and has been able to proceed with large construction projects when others couldn't. Within the last 5 years it is estimated that Notre Dame invested roughly a billion dollars in its Campus Crossroads project. In addition to that project reaching completion, the pandemic has hit Notre Dame, school corporations, and other universities particularly hard financially. We know of few large capital construction projects that are moving forward at this time.

We have also heard that other government entities have pulled back spending and are holding projects given the uncertainties associated with the pandemic. As we discussed in the summer of 2020 when the small business loan program was created, we felt that the pandemic could have a negative long-term impact on construction trades because of the compounding effect of this lack of spending on capital projects. We saw this during the great recession where, based on market corrections, we lost many homebuilders and as a result many tradespeople were forced to change professions, retire, or move away from our region for work.

As part of the recovery for Mishawaka, we are proposing a stimulus bond through the City's consolidated Tax Increment Financing District. We feel that keeping the construction trades active will not only help them, but the activity will have a significant compounding effect on our overall economy. The suppliers, local restaurants, and service businesses will all see immediate and tangible benefits from this activity.

Choosing projects to move forward as part of the stimulus was not hard. We are proposing to accelerate projects to that have been in our capital improvement plans for years but have been waiting for us to assemble the cash to pay for them consistent with our past conservative practices.

Because of the slow down associated with the pandemic and the historically low cost of borrowing that exists right now, the City is proposing to undertake this stimulus bond issue to pursue 45 million dollars' worth of construction activity over the next two years. Although there is always a cost to borrowing, we believe the additional cost will be made up when you consider the inflationary costs of construction over time if we were to wait to assemble the cash to pay for these same projects.

Although this 45-million-dollar bond issue may be small in comparison to Notre Dame recently completed, if approved it will largest TIF bond ever issued by the City. Because of our past conservative approach, we also have the ability to reduce the length of the bond payback to under 15 years. Even with a shorter payback, because of the financial health of the district, the City still has additional bonding capacity should future projects require reprioritizing funds. For reference, it is more typical for communities to plan to payback bonds over a 20- or 25-year period. It is also important to note that because this is a bond being paid for from an existing revenue stream, this bond will not impact the City’s tax rate or increase property taxes as a result of the issuance.

The following projects are being considered for inclusion in the stimulus:

Stimulus Bond Issue - Proposed Projects	
Crawford Park Niles Avenue	1,993,000
Cedar Street - Mishawaka to Madison	2,141,700
Ironworks Plaza @ Beutter Phase 3 Café / Rink / Event	20,500,000
Battell Veterans Walk	2,000,000
Normain Park Master Plan/Restroom Replacement	250,000
Ironworks Plaza Sculptures, 4 Total	330,000
Crawford Park Phase 1	2,200,000
Riverwalk Restoration project, bank armoring	2,400,000
West Street Connector	770,000
Fire Station #2 Design and Construction	7,600,000
Cedar St. Motor Pool Reclamation / Infrastructure	4,000,000
Total Stimulus Bond Issue (No Contingency)	44,184,700