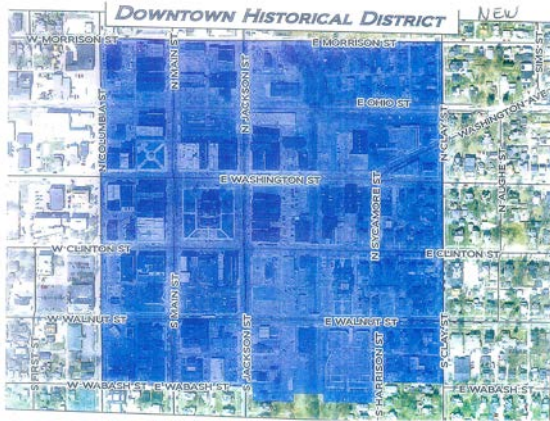


Enhancing the Value of Public Spaces

Need: Revitalization of Downtown Frankfort



Public spaces play a vital role in all our lives. They are the paths we bike on, the public parks we play in, and the town centers where we shop. Decisions about how to design and manage these spaces can have long-term impacts on the social, economic, and environmental health of our communities.

Locally, Frankfort’s Mayor Chris McBarnes, contacted the Clinton County Purdue Extension Director, after hearing about the success of *Enhancing the Value of Public Spaces* in Kokomo to investigate the possibility of hosting a workshop/public input session on the topic of downtown revitalization.

The Response: Local *Enhancing the Value of Public Spaces* Workshop

Purdue’s Public Spaces team—including Regional Community Development Educator, Steve Yoder, and Purdue Community Development specialists, Michael Wilcox and Kara Salazar—immediately mobilized to meet with Mayor McBarnes to collaborate on the project. After an initial meeting, we decided to invite more than 80 people to an *Enhancing the Value of Public Spaces* workshop at the Frankfort Public Library on May 14, 2015, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. About 60 people attended, giving input into a process that was intended to help determine the look, feel and purpose of Frankfort’s downtown. A follow-up work-group meeting, with 15 participants, took place on June 19, 2015. In July & August 2015, I worked with the team of specialists to finalize the data gathering, compilation, and analysis, from these two events. The next step, in September, will be for me to develop a high-quality plan that will assist the City of Frankfort in garnering support and grant funding for the renovation of old public spaces and the creation of new ones.

The Impact: A High-Quality Plan, Backed by Community Support

“It’s been great because stakeholders are around the table and we’re having that dynamic conversation,” says Mayor Chris McBarnes (as recorded on the video used to promote this program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-VbWlqftvo>). “We’re getting different points of view that we haven’t had before. We’re building consensus across the community so that when we create this bold new vision for the downtown that’s wrapped around the idea of quality of life and quality of place, we as a group will be able to effectively advocate for it.” As a research-based entity, Purdue Extension is in the perfect position to offer facilitation on these critical issues, and I (as an educator) look forward to documenting the long-term effects of this project in Clinton County. “Having a unified voice is so very important in terms of seeing this through to fruition,” says McBarnes. “I think this project is helping us accomplish that.”