

CITY OF BERNE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MARCH 2023



City of Berne



RESOLUTION 2023-8-1
A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR
THE CITY OF BERNE, INDIANA

WHEREAS, the City of Berne, Indiana, (the “City”) is a duly formed municipal corporation within the State of Indiana, governed by its duly elected Mayor and Common Council (“Council”); and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive plan serves as a roadmap for the future growth, development, and conservation of a municipality; and

WHEREAS, the Council has the duty and authority to review, amend, and approve amendments to the City of Berne Comprehensive Plan adopted and certified by the Bene Advisory Planning Commission (“Plan Commission”); and

WHEREAS, after significant public outreach, consultation with experts, and comprehensive review, the Plan Commission has finalized and presented the proposed Comprehensive Plan for the City of Berne;

WHEREAS, the Plan Commission held a public hearing on August 28, 2023 for Resolution No. 2023-8-1, “2023 City of Berne Comprehensive Plan”, as required by law pursuant to Indiana Statute 36-7-4-500 series; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Commission has found said “2023 City of Berne Comprehensive Plan” to be in accordance with the promotion of public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, and/or general welfare for the sake of efficiency and economic in the process of development of the community and has certified to the Council its adoption;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Common Council of the City of Berne Indiana hereby adopts the following:

Section 1:

The City of Berne, Indiana, hereby adopts the 2023 City of Berne Comprehensive Plan, as presented by the Berne City Planning Commission, as evidenced by Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated by reference herein.

Section 2:

All prior adopted resolutions and exhibits or parts thereof in conflict herewith are repealed and deemed to conform to the provisions of the 2023 City of Berne Comprehensive Plan.

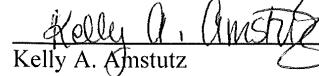
Section 3:

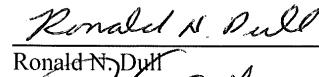
This Resolution shall be in full force and effect immediately upon passage.

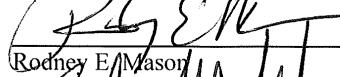
Passed and adopted by the Common Council of the City of Berne, Adams County, Indiana, on August 28, 2023.

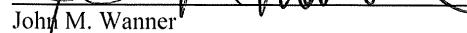
COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERNE


Curtis L. Wurster, President

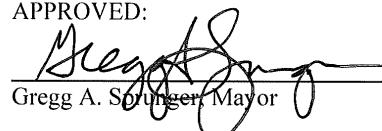

Kelly A. Amstutz


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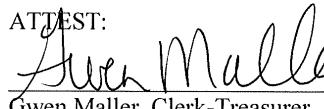

Rodney E. Mason


John M. Wanner

APPROVED:


Gregg A. Spangler, Mayor

ATTEST:


Gwen Maller, Clerk-Treasurer

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Gwen Maller, Clerk-Treasurer
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Kurt Dailey, Work Force Manager (City of Berne)
Justin Haines, Bern Associates (Local Business)
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Zane Martens, Marquis Builders (Local Business)
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Shannon Smitley, Building and Planning Director (City of Berne)
Linda Steury, Board of Zoning Appeals (City of Berne)
Curtis L Wurster, Berne City Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Berne Comprehensive Plan began in March of 2021. The plan includes several long-term projects and recommendations that will help strengthen the future of the City of Berne. A Steering Committee oversaw the plan development and maintained frequent contact with the project team. The plan involved several public engagement opportunities at Berne Swiss Days, conversations with community stakeholders, and online surveys. An existing conditions report analyzed the community's strengths and challenges and is available in the appendix.

In addition to the recommendations, this plan also outlines some additional actions such as:

- Updates to the zoning and subdivision ordinance
- Downtown workshare space development
- Geneva-Berne trail connection
- Downtown gateway implementation
- Lehman Park Phase I improvements

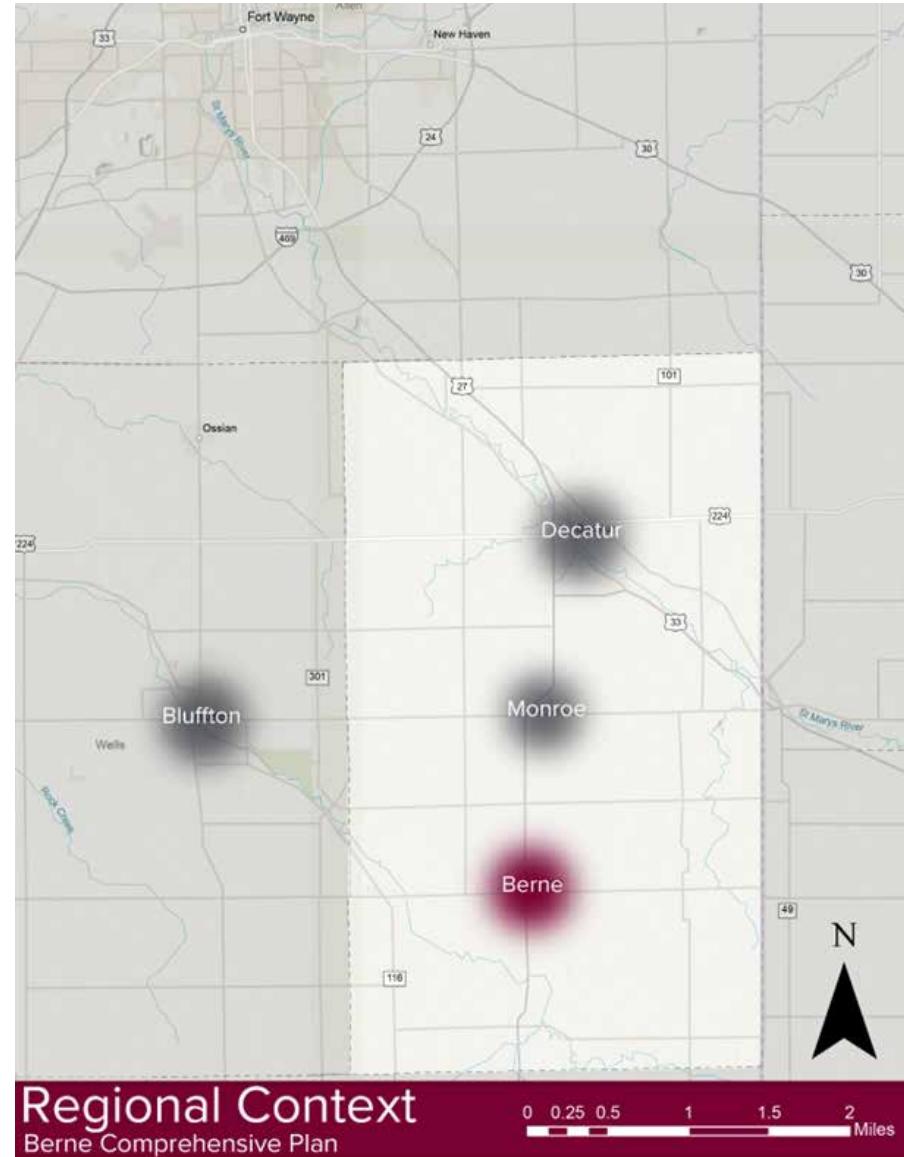


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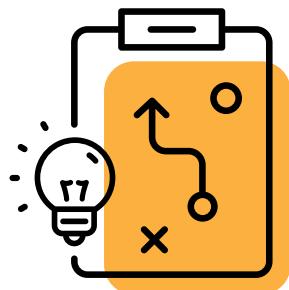
INTRODUCTION

Berne is a rural community in northeast Indiana fond of its Swiss and Amish heritage. Located in Adams County, Berne is ten minutes from the Indiana-Ohio border and 45 minutes from Fort Wayne. Swiss immigrants began settling in existing Adams County in the late 1800s. When the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad constructed a rail line through Adams County in 1871, it marked the beginning of Berne. Berne, named for Bern, Switzerland, is rooted in its Swiss heritage, which is seen in the building styles downtown and cultural assets such as the Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower and the Swiss Heritage Village & Museum. Berne and its surrounding areas have also been historically home to the Amish community, which utilizes city facilities such as Lehman Park. A small rural community, the City of Berne, has a rich culture and sense of place that separates it from other small rural communities.



Berne's location in northeast Indiana and its comparison communities.
Source: ESRI.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?



**ACTION PLAN
FOR A COMMUNITY'S VISION
OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS**
.....
PEOPLE • ECONOMY • PLACE

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a strategic guide containing policy statements for effective decision-making in private development projects and community initiatives for the public good. The plan's purpose is to guide the community through the realization of its vision. A comprehensive plan is a roadmap for a community's vision and growth over the next 20 years. It provides a snapshot of the current point in time and a vision for the future, guiding long-term investment, growth, and development.

A comprehensive plan assists policy, land use, and infrastructure decisions. The planning process gathers input from various sources to build consensus around the plan and its vision for the future. To increase the chances of success, a comprehensive plan should be treated as a living document that the City should update as changes occur in land use, transportation, infrastructure, resources, demographics, and priorities within the community.

Although the plan contains zoning components and future land use, it is not a rezoning document. Any future zoning changes within the city must follow standard Indiana law and the city's process for rezoning a property, updating, or amending, the text of the ordinances. The plan is used as a reference when future decision-making occurs, but its contents are not binding. Recommendations within the comprehensive plan may require further, in-depth studies to provide the best possible solutions to specific issues.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The City of Berne Comprehensive Plan is a long-term strategic guide to help the community manage and facilitate stable and desired economic growth to achieve the vision determined by the community. The plan is designed to showcase the existing conditions of the community, specify the desired goals and objectives, and illustrate appropriate strategies to achieve the overall vision. In addition to guiding local government officials, the plan also serves to guide other non-government community organizations, leaders, and all citizens in designing the future of their community. Strategies and goals in the plan can be used in support of winning grants and other funding to better the community.

An updated plan will allow the City of Berne to apply for state and federal funding for proposed projects. A comprehensive plan demonstrates a community's apparent intent to carry out projects they request for funding. The comprehensive plan also acts as a policy guide by outlining the most planned changes a community is looking to implement. The planned changes outlined in the plan give residents and stakeholders plenty of notice of what may happen and how they can react. One aspect of the comprehensive plan is economic development. By coordinating the actions of multiple agencies and organizations, the comprehensive plan helps to provide public services and infrastructure efficiently. The plan also recognizes the best areas for certain types of growth, whether residential, commercial, or industrial, and what would be best for the community, which makes the city resilient and financially flexible.

A ROADMAP
FOR THE
FUTURE



A LIST OF
PRIORITIES



A PLAN OF
ACTION



QUALIFYING
FOR FUNDING





DID YOU KNOW?

Communities may adopt comprehensive plans described by the Indiana Code to promote public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, or the general welfare and the sake of efficiency and economy in the development process.

Indiana Code 36-7-4-500 series sets forth the standards for developing and evaluating a comprehensive plan. Required elements include the following:

- A statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction.
- A statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction.
- A policy statement for developing public ways, places, lands, structures, and utilities.

PLANNING PROCESS

PHASE 0 PROJECT INITIATION	PHASE 1 INFORMATION GATHERING	PHASE 2 DRAFT PLAN DEVELOPMENT	PHASE 3 IMPLEMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal Project Kick-off• Data Transfer• Establishing Steering Committee (Meeting #1)• Project Website and Branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current Conditions Assessment• Steering Committee Meeting #2• Stakeholder Meetings• Public Open House and Survey #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft Goals, Objectives, Strategies• Steering Committee Meetings #3 and #4• First Draft of Plan• Completion of Lehman Park Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical Path Strategies• FINAL Draft Plan• Plan Adoption

The planning process took place throughout four phases. Phase 0 involved setting up and kicking off the project. Phase 1 focused on education, information gathering on existing conditions, and public outreach. Phase 2 focused on incorporating the information learned in Phase 1 to format the draft goals, objectives, and strategies. Phase 3 involved implementing the goals, objectives, and strategies established in the previous phase and guiding the plan through adoption.

HOW IS THIS DOCUMENT ORGANIZED?

The organization of this document loosely follows the timeline of the four phases described in the previous section. Firstly, an existing conditions report was created, providing pertinent information about the City of Berne and its people. The complete Existing Conditions report is included in the Appendix, with key trends discussed in the following section.

This document identifies the goals and objectives from the public input received through the Explore Phase of Berne's Comprehensive Plan development. An overview of the public engagement process and its results is discussed in the Community Engagement Overview section. This document describes the vision statements that act as guiding principles for each goal section of the Comprehensive Plan. Following that, the goals and objectives are provided. The goals and objectives aim for broad guidelines to achieve the community's vision.

Following the goals and objectives is the implementation section of the plan, which includes best practices, recommendations, and critical path strategies. These identified objectives are relatively low in cost, quick to complete, or require fewer human resources. Critical path strategies include direct, actionable steps, an estimated timeline, and an estimated cost.

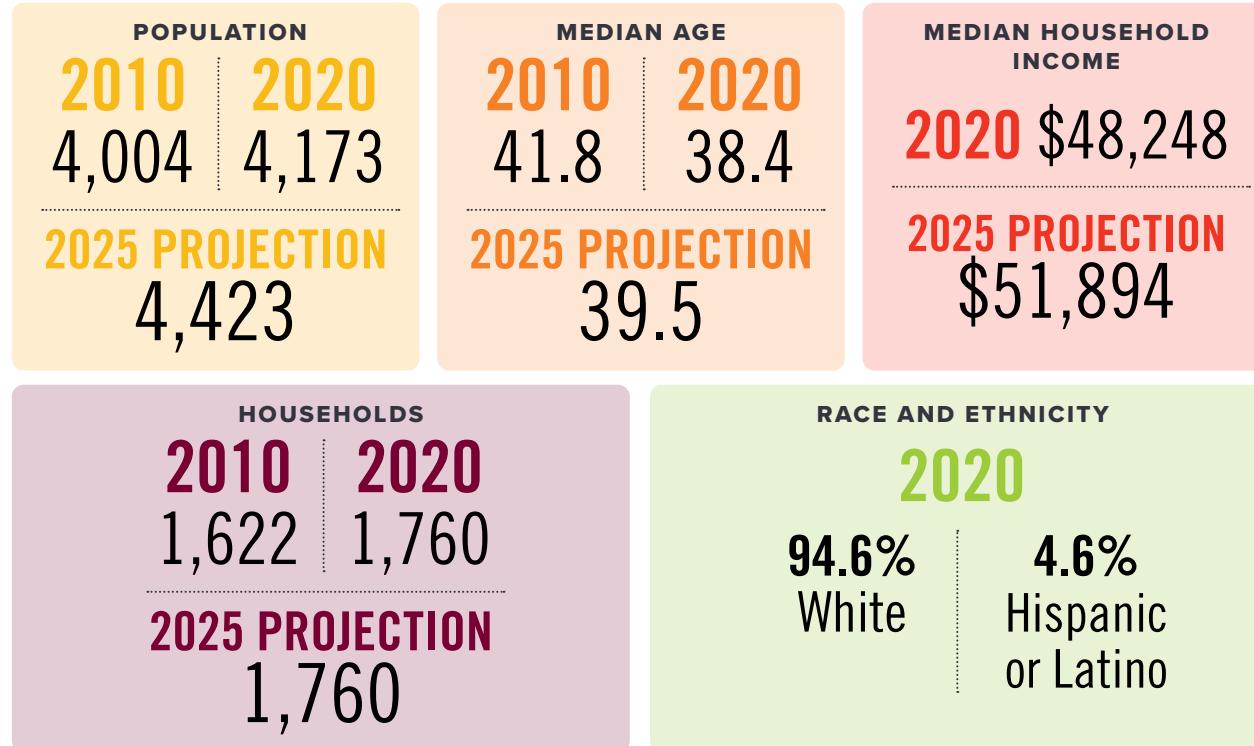
EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

The existing conditions report was completed at the beginning of the planning process to document existing demographics, trends, and facilities in the community. The complete Existing Conditions report can be found in the Appendix.

KEY TRENDS

The key trends were developed by evaluating linkages and correlations in demographic, geographic, and stakeholder data. A demographic summary shows the major demographic trends from 2010 to 2025.

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



BERNE IS A STRONG RURAL COMMUNITY.

Communities of rural character are an attractive destination for those seeking a life away from the city and suburbs. While a rural lifestyle is appealing for some, rural communities experience slow growth rates coupled with an older population. Rural communities also offer older individuals the opportunities to age in place.

Located 45 minutes from Fort Wayne, Berne allows residents to experience rural home life with the option to visit or work in larger cities or suburbs nearby. While more opportunities are available for aging-in-place initiatives, Berne has an existing retirement community, Swiss Village, on the city's west side.

Unfortunately, having an older population requires more services, such as senior living facilities, healthcare, and emergency services. Distance and low accessibility to major roads and employment markets are other hurdles to living in a rural community. Residents travel outside the city to obtain certain goods or services, spending money outside Berne. Berne may be able to draw residents from nearby employment centers such as Decatur and Fort Wayne.

To sell its attractiveness as a community, Berne will need to continue to support quality of life initiatives to attract the demographics it needs, such as workers and younger residents

PROS	CONS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attractive destination for specific lifestyles.• Opportunities for aging in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slow growing.• Limited market reach.• High ages require higher service demands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to support quality of life initiatives to attract workers and younger residents.

THE CITY HAS A PROMINENT CULTURAL IDENTITY.

Berne has several districts throughout the city and downtown, with strong unifying cultural ties to the city's Swiss heritage. While these districts may be disconnected in some areas, this only presents a further opportunity to strengthen the existing distinct sense of place for more of the community. The city's cultural and historical Swiss aspects present opportunities for tourism, such as the clock tower, Swiss Heritage Village and History Museum, and events like Swiss Days. However, little is in place to regulate and secure the Swiss identity the city has created. The City does not have architectural standards to regulate new buildings and businesses to have a Swiss façade; the existing buildings and businesses were built with Swiss architecture out of choice.

Strategies, recommendations, and critical path strategies discussed later in this document indicate opportunities for Berne to strengthen and improve its existing cultural identity. One of these opportunities is identifying projects for vacant sites in existing corridors that could enhance the current districts if infilled. Updates to development ordinances can also be made to provide more explicit guidance for future development while protecting existing assets.

PROS	CONS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City core displays solid unifying themes.• Opportunity for tourism.• Established sense of place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Little in place to protect and secure this identity.• Districts are disconnected.• Lack of identity or gateways in some neighborhoods or districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify projects for vacant sites that unify the corridor.• Update the development ordinance to provide more explicit guidance.• Continue place-making efforts and urban design in other neighborhoods and districts.• Implement a procedure for new and renovated commercial buildings along US 27 and Main St. requiring the owner to meet with the architectural control committee before the building permit is issued.

BERNE IS BUILT ON A SOLID MANUFACTURING BASE.

Berne has historically had a strong manufacturing industry. Manufacturing is known for its good wages and attracts an influx of workers daily who may spend money on goods and services in Berne. Vital industries rely partly on robust transportation systems. Access to significant state roads, highways, and railroads is a pro to attracting new businesses and keeping existing businesses from relocating. Berne's Amish community also presents a unique opportunity for source labor and specialist industries such as hand-crafted furniture.

Unfortunately, most of the existing industries are in suboptimal areas. Industrial areas within the city are within areas of conflicting land uses. Industrial sites on the city's northeast side have further access from state highways. However, limited areas exist for new industrial sites as Amish landowners surround the city.

Some of the implications of the comprehensive plan include having a diverse housing stock, land banking for expansion of sites, and extending services to new potential industrial areas. If Berne wants to attract more industries and employees, the city will require a more diverse housing stock. The city can exploit existing sites by banking land to expand the inner-city industrial areas. In the meantime, the city should look to extend services to new potential industrial sites.

PROS	CONS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides an influx of workers who may spend money locally.• Source of labor for specialist industries (Amish-made furniture).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existing land use conflict in the city center.• Some underutilized properties exist on the city's northeast side and are further away from highways.• Workers require a diverse housing stock.• Limited areas in the city exist for new industrial sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start banking land for expansion of center city sites.• Look for and extend services to new industrial sites.

PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

Part of the planning process involves revisiting past planning efforts from the city, county, and region. Past plans provide an insight into what was essential to the community and how it has changed. The goals and objectives discussed in the following sections were partly developed based on goals from previous plans.

Several plans and studies were completed in the community that revealed Berne's desire to prepare for the future and improve the community's quality of life. Each past planning effort is unique and offers a particular perspective on the desired goals and outcomes of the city. Below is an overview of past plans to better understand their content, purpose, impact, and relevance to this plan.

PLANNING DOCUMENT

1966 BERNE COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

DECATUR-ADAMS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION 5-YEAR MASTER PARKS PLAN

NORTHEASTERN INDIANA REGIONAL COORDINATION COUNCIL

GOALS

- Implementation of a 20-year CIPP.
- Establishment of an effective zoning ordinance.
- Adjacent neighborhoods, each with distinct character.
- A variety of distinct residential neighborhoods with a broader range of housing types.
- Distinct areas where commerce, industry, and public uses can flourish, complementing each other and serving residential areas.
- Roadways adequate to the needs of a larger and more diversified Berne of the future.

- Improve the potential for funding opportunities in the future.
- Collaboration with the public and state and federal agencies to establish realistic goals for the park.
- Prioritize the needs and wants of the community to help guide the park system's development and spend funds where they will have the biggest impact.
- Develop a capital improvement plan.

- Develop a safe, cost-effective transportation system that ensures mobility to all persons, enhances the quality of life in the region, supports planned growth, promotes economic development, and preserves the integrity and enhances the vitality of the human and natural environment.
- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Compact and mixed-use development supported by a multi-modal transportation network should be principal considerations for new development and redevelopment projects in the urbanized area to promote walkable, sustainable, and efficient development patterns.
- Support and promote transportation improvements in central business districts that enhance livability, tourism, and other economic development opportunities.
- Increase the safety of the transportation system that remains secure and operational during natural and artificial disasters.
- The transportation system will have convenient and efficient multi-modal access within and through the metropolitan area.
- Improve the safety and convenience of multi-modal transportation options to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips.
- Apply sustainable principles to transportation planning and engineering activities that promote environmental stewardship and energy conservation.
- Provide users with an integrated transportation network that provides access to and between street, trail, transit, sidewalk, rail, and air transportation infrastructure and ensures connectivity within and between the various networks.
- Minimize travel impedance and maximize available system capacity through well-maintained infrastructure and efficient operations to ensure reliable service.
- Maintain the existing transportation infrastructure and capital resources to maximize and exceed their expected useful life.
- Minimize damage from disasters and reduce stormwater runoff and its environmental impacts.
- Maintain a multi-modal transportation system that affords mobility and access to alternative travel modes for visitors to the metropolitan area.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

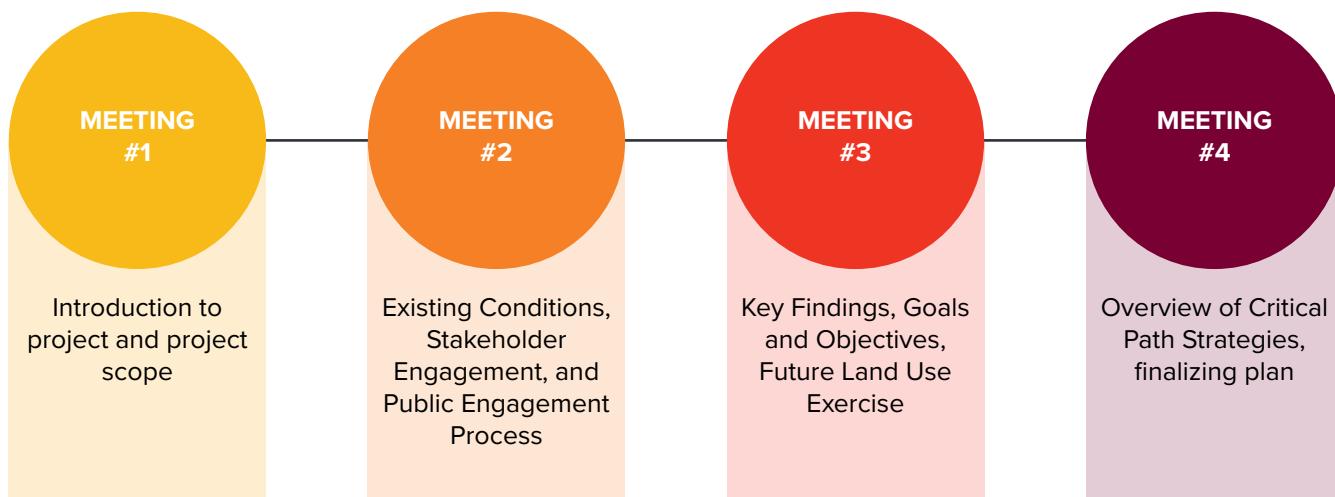
Community engagement is a vital part of the planning process and guides the development of the comprehensive plan along the way. Engagement consisted of steering committee meetings, stakeholder conversations, surveys, and public workshops. The goals and objectives discussed in the next section were heavily influenced by what was heard from the public during the community engagement activities.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee is a coalition of local leaders who work together with the project team, guiding the process, providing immediate feedback, and deciding the final character of the plan. Members were selected by Berne City staff based on their roles in the community and the perspective they brought regarding its future. The Steering Committee consisted of the following members and their respective organizations:

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS	
MAYOR GREGG A. SPRUNGER	Member, Mayor of City of Berne
DAVID BAUMGARTNER	Member, Berne Community Development Corporation
DAVE BURSON	Member, Smith Brothers of Berne
KURT DAILEY	Member, City of Berne Workforce Manager
JUSTIN HAINES	Member, Bern Associates
KENT LIECHTY	Member, First Bank of Berne
ZANE MARTENS	Member, Marquis Builders
EDWIN MILLER	Member, Community Representative
SHANNON SMITLEY	Member, City of Berne Building and Planning Director
LINDA STEURY	Member, City of Berne Board of Zoning Appeals
CURTIS WURSTER	Member, Berne City Council

Throughout the project, the Steering Committee met four times and reviewed all project materials before they were released to the general public. The Steering Committee helped suggest community stakeholders to meet with, provide insight on local public events and happenings, refined goals and objectives, and drafted the future land use plan. A timeline shows the meeting dates throughout the process and the significant discussions at each meeting.



STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

A critical part of the success of the planning process is the participation of property owners, residents, business owners, and other stakeholders in the community. The project stakeholders are individuals who represent a wide array of community interests, including major employers, developers, community organizations, and leadership. Ten stakeholder interviews were conducted in October of 2021. The interviews ranged from in-person to virtual meetings.

STAKEHOLDER VIEWPOINTS

- Need for additional entry-level housing.
- Increased communication between the City and City partners.
- Desire to infill former school lot at the intersection of 27 and 218.
- Better ordinance enforcement.
- Need effective infrastructure improvements.
- Additional programming for children and adults and community events.
- Provide more support for local businesses and those wishing to start a business.
- Beautification, maintenance, and improvement of amenities downtown.
- Increased wayfinding.
- Retention and engagement of youth.
- Higher quality and quantity of internet providers.
- Some incentives and guidance for development.
- Increased quantity and quality of parks and recreation.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public outreach was held to gather input from the community and spread awareness about the comprehensive plan and the Lehman Park Master Plan efforts. The project team gathered public input at Swiss Days in July of 2021. Several surveys were also made available and advertised to the public to gain their thoughts about the City and its future and Lehman Park. Detailed survey and public outreach data can be found in the Appendix.

COMMUNITY VIEWPOINTS

- More youth activities.
- Promote new neighborhood development.
- Update sidewalks and create more walkways throughout the city.
- Need more restaurants, entertainment, and grocery stores.
- Improved streetscapes and downtown activities.
- More ordinance enforcement.
- Update and maintain facilities and buildings.
- Implement historic preservation.
- Development of the old school lot into another public space.
- Implementing a recycling program in the city.
- Preserving natural features and lakes.
- Expanding the trail system and connecting to Geneva.
- More activities and events oriented towards adults and parents.
- Increased quality, quantity, and variety of parks.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Goal statements describe what the community wants to accomplish. Each statement works to identify the desired outcome or condition focused on a big idea. Objectives further define goals into actionable tasks. Strategies are concrete initiatives intended to carry out a vision, goal, or objectives identified within the plan. High-priority strategies are identified and described in further detail in the Critical Path Strategies section. These statements are aspirational to guide the community towards its future goals and vision. These statements were created using a variety of inputs. The goals and objectives were crafted from the following sources:

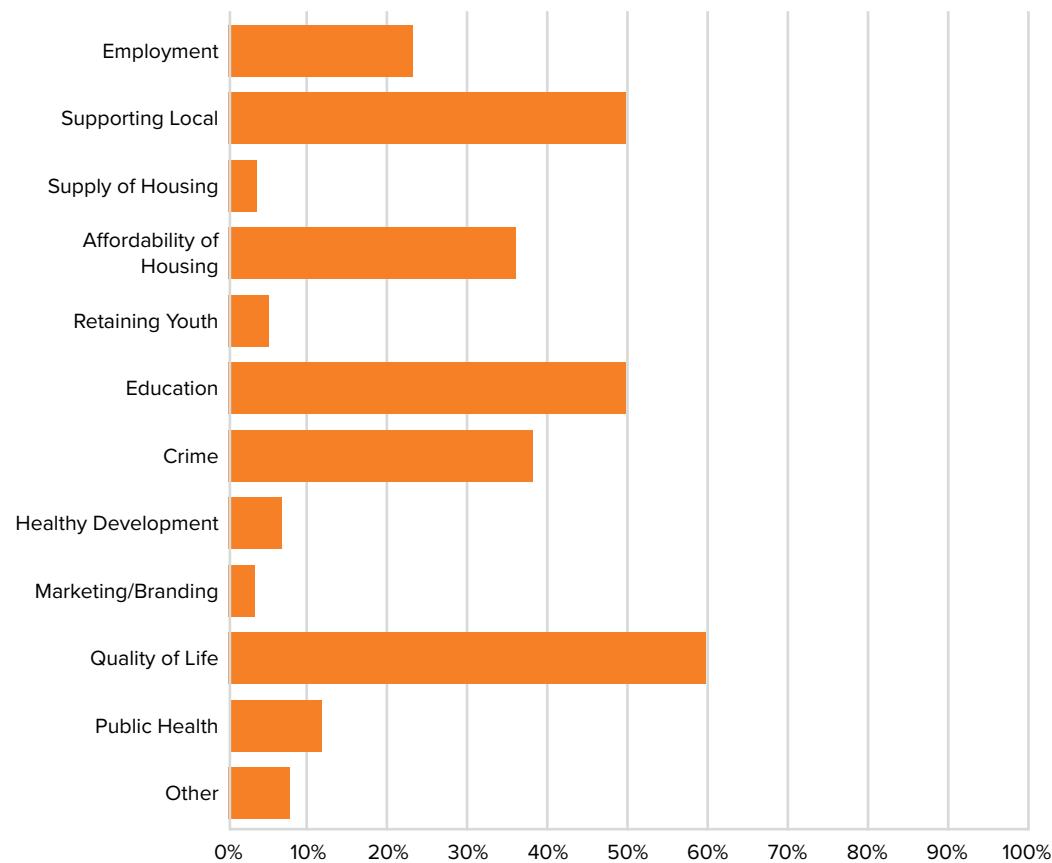
- Past planning documents from the community;
- Public input from public workshops and online surveys;
- Input from the Steering Committee;
- Discussions with various Stakeholder groups;
- Existing and projected data trends;
- Best practices and nationwide trends;
- State-mandated goals.



REMEMBERED
AGAIN

LIVABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Livability is the attention to and growth of spaces that promote the community's health, happiness, well-being, and quality of life. The city's continued success will expand on the community that Berne offers and the characteristics of its history and people. Focusing on the community's existing wants and needs will promote growth and population retention.



Berne's Greatest Assets.

Source: Berne Comprehensive Plan Survey, July 26, 2021.

WHAT WE HEARD

- Sixty percent of respondents said the quality of life was one of Berne's best assets.
- Berne has a unique atmosphere and small-town feel.
- Sixty-four percent of respondents marked retaining youth as one of Berne's biggest challenges.
- Community members would like to see more parks, trails, and recreation programming.
- Many responded that they would like to see improved plantings and streetscaping as well as beautification of the downtown.

Promote compatible, dense, village-style land uses between the downtown and the clock tower that continue to reflect the downtown's Swiss characteristics in new development.

- Extend the Swiss village style of downtown Main Street to the Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower.
- Implement an architectural review committee with a pre-approved design style to ensure the Swiss village development style continues in new developments.
- Improve streetscapes downtown by continuing to create a safe and welcoming environment.

Support and provide mobility alternatives that promote health and socialization.

- Develop and support safe alternative transportation methods that help ensure mobility for all people.
- Promote walkability in and around downtown and connections to community facilities such as Lehman Park.

Work to attract new residents and tourists while preserving existing residents' current quality of life.

- Coordinate with the Decatur-Adams County Parks and Recreation Department to develop more parks and recreation facilities and activities within Berne and the surrounding region.
- Maintain and update existing infrastructure and facilities such as sidewalks, trails, parks, and recreation facilities.
- Focus and improve upon existing assets such as Lehman Park, Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower, and the downtown.

Promote city-wide beautification while maintaining and restoring cultural and historical assets.

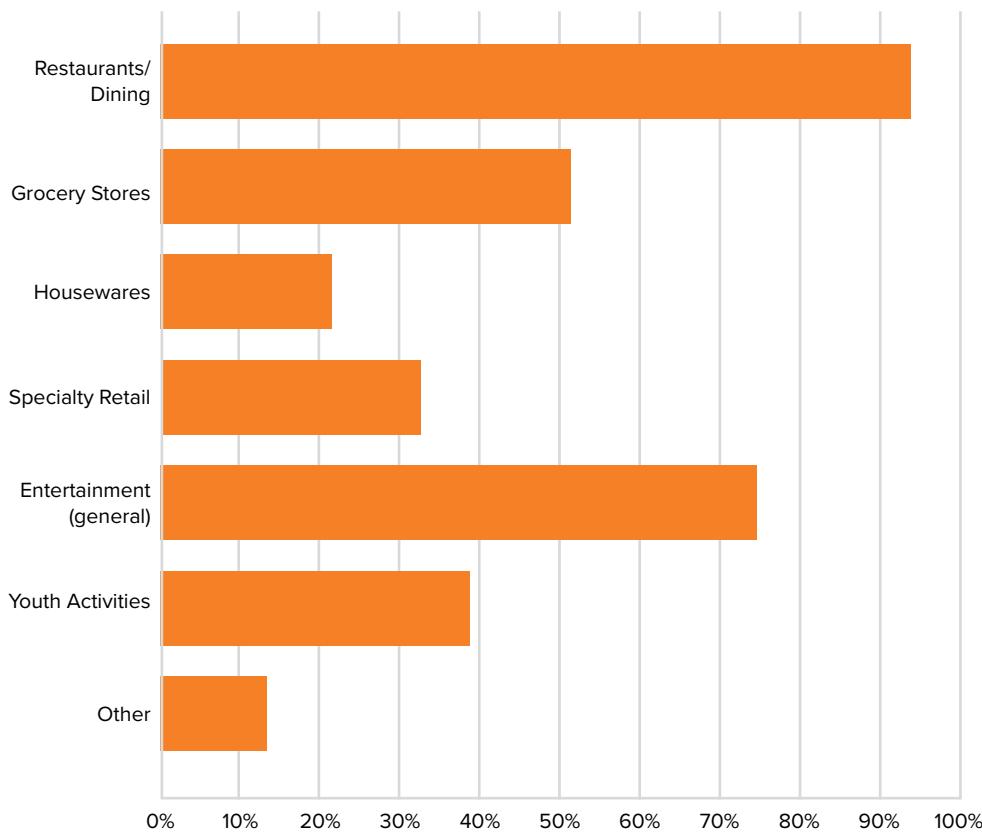
- Strengthen and enforce the city's ordinance to remove or refurbish areas of distress.
- Update and maintain buildings and facilities.
- Protect buildings and places designated as having cultural or historical significance.

Promote new development that offers a variety of housing types for existing and new residents that accommodates different income levels and lifestyles.

- Diversify the types of housing created by new developments to include housing types for middle and lower-income populations.
- Include more housing types and services that will allow older residents to age in places such as townhomes or condo developments.
- Require new developments to include features that will increase residents' quality of life, such as sidewalks, bike paths, trails, open spaces, or other community facilities.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

One of the most significant drivers of population growth is the availability of high-quality jobs. While jobs can bring people to an area, providing for the safety and comfort of residents and populations is what keeps people interested in a community. Growing Berne's commercial and industrial diversity will go hand-in-hand with developing the city's workforce and population. Industries are attracted to places with a high quality of life, diverse economic activity, adequate infrastructure, and shovel-ready sites. Public infrastructure keeps the city moving and functioning smoothly. High-quality, efficient, and proper infrastructure is needed to address the needs of both existing and future residents and businesses.



What does Berne need that you have to go elsewhere to find?

Source: Berne Comprehensive Plan Survey, July 26, 2021.

WHAT WE HEARD

- Many people are leaving the community to spend money elsewhere.
- Update sidewalks and improve infrastructure.
- Promote diverse businesses.
- Diversify employment base.
- Create opportunities for jobs for high-skilled workers.
- Thirty-six percent of respondents listed employment as one of Berne's biggest challenges
- Fifty-seven percent of respondents worked in the City of Berne.

Maintain and improve infrastructure to serve current and future residents, businesses, and industries.

- Direct growth and development to result in contiguous neighborhoods and districts with distinct characters and compatible uses.
- Focus and allot funding to aspects of transportation infrastructure by partnering with the state and state agencies.
- Prioritize utility and infrastructure expansion in areas of growth that will lead to further development.
- Maintain the existing transportation infrastructure and capital resources to maximize and exceed their expected useful life, minimize damage from disasters and reduce stormwater runoff and its environmental impacts.

Encourage and support economic vitality and growth within the downtown and surrounding areas.

- Work with the county and existing industries within the city to establish a local entrepreneurship program and facility.
- Utilize mixed-uses downtown to promote an urban village-style environment.
- Attract and support new and existing industries and businesses along existing corridors of parallel development.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Administrative action goals reflect actions that heavily involve city staff and services. Focusing on Downtown Redevelopment will bring life and economy back to the center of Berne. A continued focus on infill development, pedestrian-oriented commercial uses (such as restaurants and shops), and local amenities contribute to a strong community.

WHAT WE HEARD

- More ordinance enforcement.
- Clean up and beautify the city.
- Protect historic buildings and sites.
- Berne has a unique environment and atmosphere downtown that should be preserved.
- Update sidewalks and improve walkability and biking infrastructure in the city.

Minimize conflicting land uses by requiring compatible uses in new development areas and creating transition areas between incompatible uses.

- Update the existing zoning code to reflect present-day best practices and prevent future areas of incompatible uses.
- Update the zoning map to include transition zones and prevent future areas of conflicting land uses.
- Pursue learning opportunities to explore alternatives to traditional zoning and incorporate alternative zoning methods in areas of particular interest.



MUENSTERBERG PLAZA.



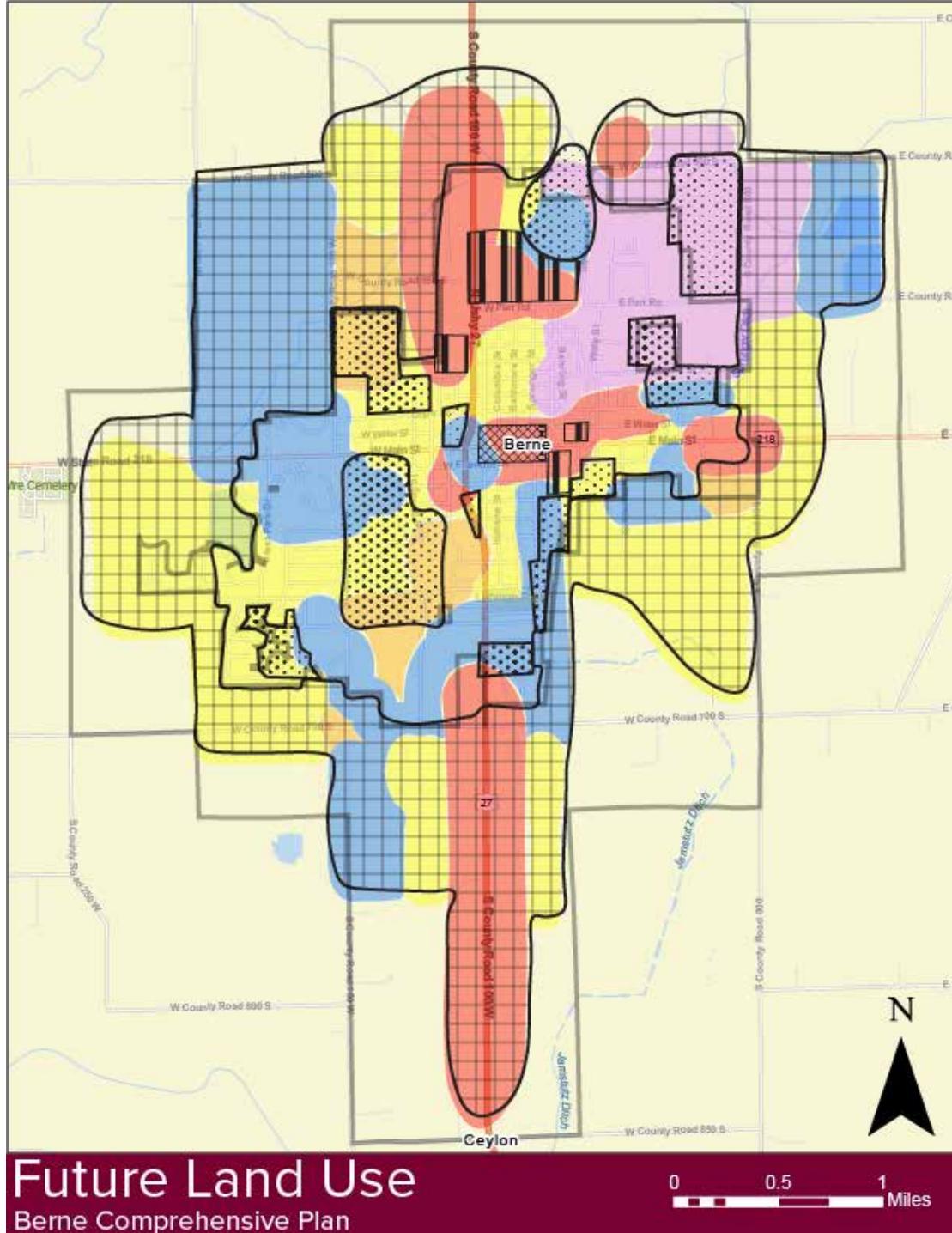
Future land use plan for the City of Berne and surrounding areas in the planning area.

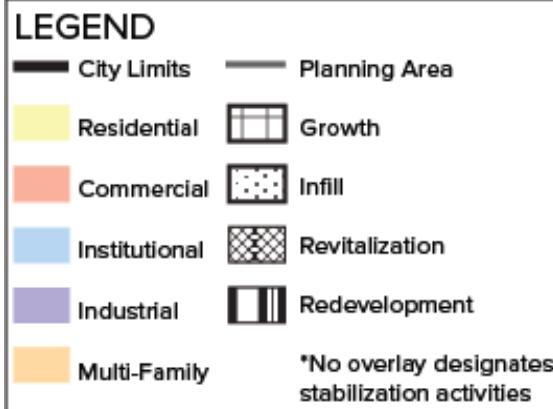
Source: ESRI.

Future Land Use

Berne Comprehensive Plan

0 0.5 1 Miles





FUTURE LAND USE

LAND USE

The future land use plan is meant to guide development over the next 10 to 20 years and complement the plan's goals and objectives. The future land use map serves as a visual representation of the city's intended future development, redevelopment, and reinvestment. The recommended land use plan promotes the integration of compatible land uses, infill development, city-wide growth, thoughtful downtown redevelopment, and place-making qualities.

The map should be considered when applying land use recommendations to specific sites or districts. The future land use map builds upon current development patterns within Berne with a focus on infill and investment within the strategic corridors of SR 218 and US 27. The land use plan highlighted growth outside the existing city limits and the planning area.

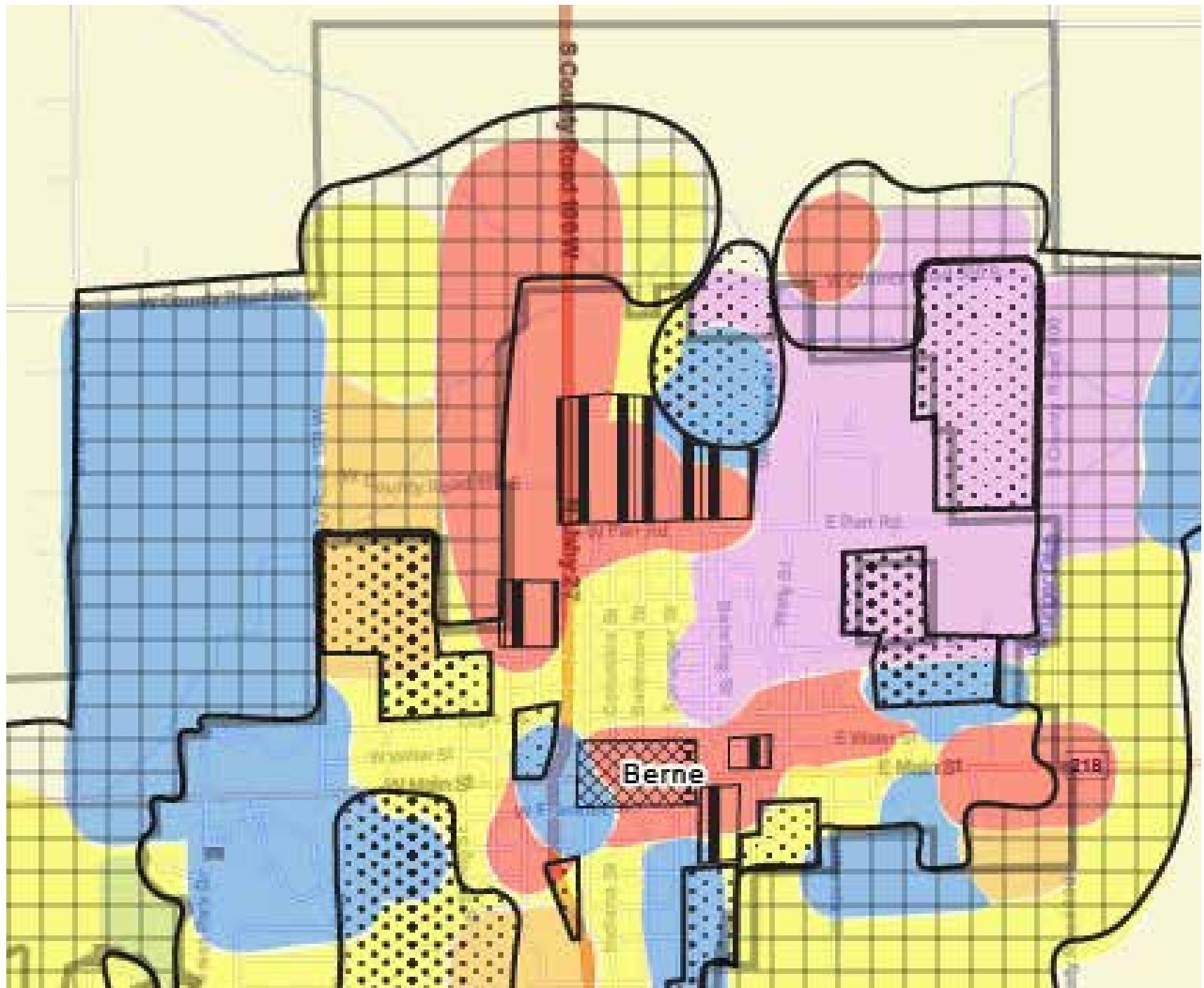
The recommended future land use plan was developed after calculating the city's projected growth over the next 20 years. During one of their meetings, the Steering Committee was tasked with allocating the projected land uses throughout the city and the planning area. The land use exercise that the Steering Committee provided the project team with an understanding of which spaces were open for certain types of development and what land uses should be prioritized around the city. The future land use map prioritizes growth to the south and around the outside borders of the city. Infill and redevelopment were highlighted in many of the existing areas within the city. Following the adoption of the comprehensive plan, the city should regularly review the future land use plan and the land design and policy types to ensure that the land uses reflect the community's goals and needs.

LAND USE CATEGORIES

Areas within Berne's existing city limits and the planning area were classified into five land design categories and land policy categories. Land design refers to the designated land use (e.g., residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, and multi-family). In contrast, land policy refers to the type of development focused on a specific area (e.g., growth, infill, revitalization, redevelopment, stabilization). This approach allows for greater flexibility regarding future land use decisions and emphasizes how a place should be developed to achieve the desired land use.

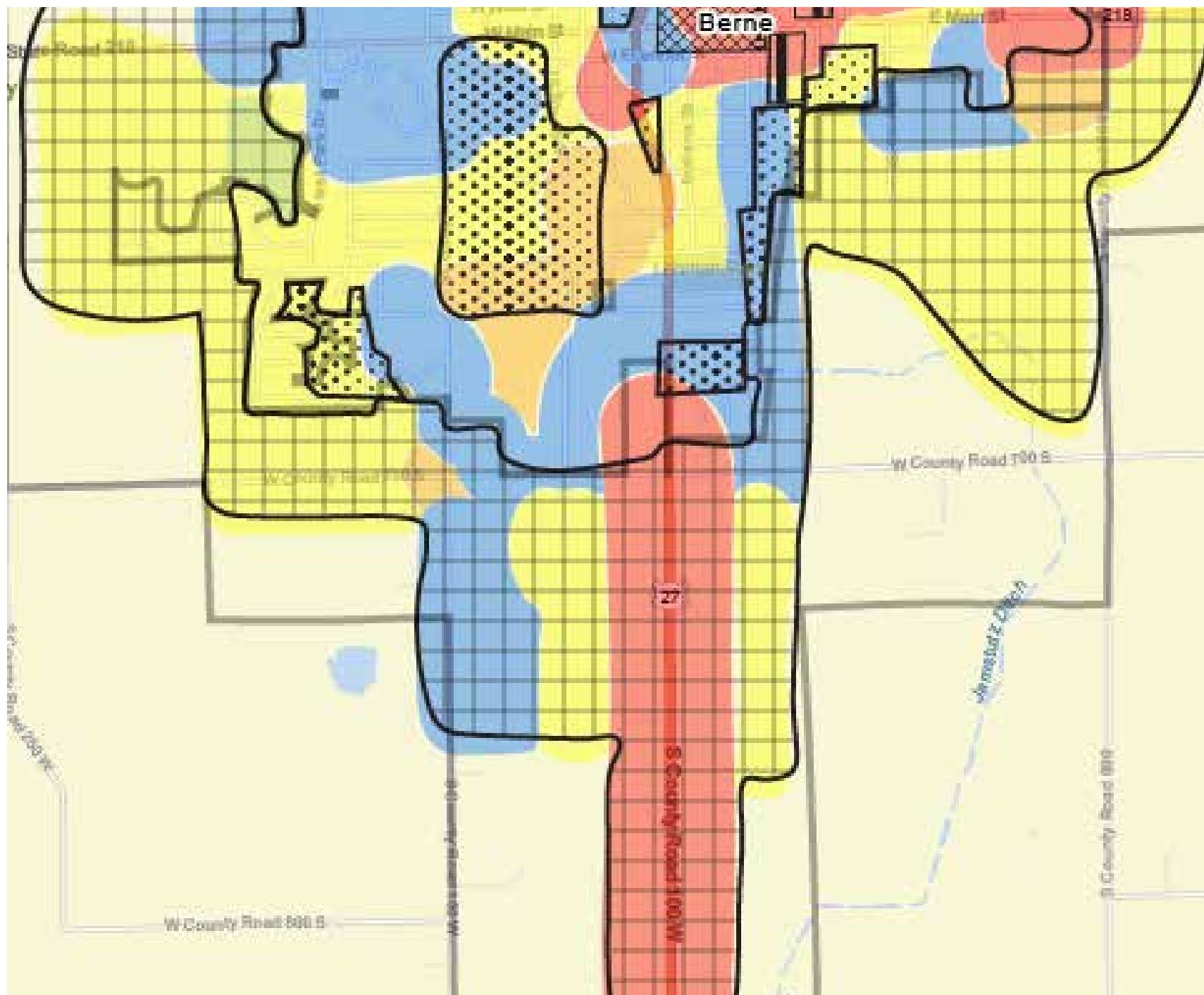
LAND DESIGN CATEGORIES

Land design refers to the designated land use of an area. The associated land design categories included residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, and multi-family. A brief description of each land design type, examples of potential uses, and a description of the location in the city are described in the following sections. More land uses exist than what is described below. However, these categories are used in the future land use map to reflect areas of development. Other land use types include agricultural, mixed-use, parks and open space, and utilities.



Expanded view of future land use plan for the City of Berne and surrounding areas in the planning area.

Source: ESRI.



RESIDENTIAL

The residential land use category includes medium to low-density residential neighborhoods and is shown in yellow on the future land use map. This land use should transition between rural and high-intensity use areas such as commercial or industrial corridors. These areas could offer newer housing in the form of more extensive, single-family detached housing units on lots more prominent than those found within the core of Berne. Typically, this land use is developed in larger subdivisions supported by city utilities.

Potential uses include single-family detached residential units as the primary housing types and single-family attached housing units such as townhomes.

COMMERCIAL

The commercial area is primarily located along highly traveled corridors which serve as primary entry points into the city and is shown in red on the future land use map. Commercial districts primarily operate as shopping districts for residents and visitors by providing a mix of everyday essential and specialty goods and services. The intensity and scale of the commercial development vary by zoning district and are not specified in this map.

The range of uses includes retail, service businesses, restaurants, professional offices, and medical-related uses. More specifically, this can consist of restaurants, cafes, bars, including franchise and drive-through restaurants, day-to-day retail and consumer services businesses such as grocery stores, salons, convenience stores, specialized retail and service businesses such as hardware or office appliance stores, professional and medical offices such as branch banks, and auto-oriented uses such as gas stations and auto-repair shops. Commercial land uses should generally be located away from or buffered from residential districts due to their high volume of traffic, potential to generate noise, late hours, intrusive lighting, and other adverse constraints.





INSTITUTIONAL

Institutional land use includes uses that serve and meet community needs through a wide range of facilities and is shown in blue on the future land use map. Institutional uses include city utilities, medical campuses and clinics, local, state, and federal government buildings, residential care facilities, hostels, disability housing, childcare centers, cultural facilities such as churches or places of sacred and religious affiliation, cemeteries, hospitals, civic or religious uses, schools, public or private, and colleges and universities. Institutional uses also include city parks and recreation facilities.

Parks and open spaces should be located throughout the community and serve as crucial destinations and amenities to the city. Parks and open spaces also include land for nature preservation, protection, passive recreation, and active recreation. Specific uses include public parks, recreational areas, open areas for sports, indoor or outdoor recreational facilities, natural areas, forest preserves, native conservation areas, retention areas, lakes, golf courses, and greenbelts.

INDUSTRIAL

Industrial land use includes areas deemed appropriate for light to heavy industrial uses incompatible with residential development. It is shown in purple on the future land use map. The scale and intensity of these areas could vary greatly and provide opportunities for local and regional developments. Industrial sites should be appropriately screened and buffered from adjacent incompatible uses. Since many of Berne's industrial areas are located near the downtown and residential neighborhoods, a thoughtful approach to development and site design should be applied within these areas to reduce the impacts on community well-being, which reflects the goals and objectives of this comprehensive plan.

Industrial uses include light-to-heavy manufacturing for compounding, processing, packaging, and assembling of products, warehouses, shipping, and logistics facilities that provide storage for shipping, research and development, laboratories, testing facilities, home and corporate offices with larger planned campuses, general offices, call centers, storage facilities, electricity, gas, and water services such as power plants, sewage treatment plants, and landfills.

MULTI-FAMILY

Multi-family residential includes medium-to-high density residential land uses and is shown in orange on the future land use map. Multi-family residential areas should be walkable and include community parks and facilities within walking distance. Due to their medium-to-high density nature, multi-use trails rather than sidewalks should be considered for multi-family residential neighborhoods. This category includes areas of existing multi-family residential neighborhoods that may traditionally be older, such as the mixed-use buildings downtown. However, there are also areas designated for new multi-family residential development.

Uses included in the multi-family residential category include townhomes, condos, duplexes, fourplexes, and apartments. Mixed-use type buildings, such as the historic buildings in downtown Berne, can also offer upper-story apartments.



LAND POLICY CATEGORIES

Land policy refers to the type of development focused on a specific area. The associated land policy categories include growth, infill, revitalization, redevelopment, and stabilization. A brief description of each land policy type and an overview of the application areas in the city is described in the following sections.

GROWTH

The growth category designates areas presently defined as primarily agricultural, vacant, or forested areas and is shown in a grid pattern on the future land use map. The growth category highlights areas that have not yet been developed. Most of these areas are outside the existing city limits but within the planning area.

INFILL

Infill development “refers to building within unused and underutilized lands within existing development patterns, typically but not exclusively in urban areas.”¹ Infill development is an essential tool that cities can use to accommodate growth and become more environmentally and socially sustainable. Infill development also helps create a more fluid and connected urban environment. The infill category is shown on the map by a dotted pattern. Some areas designated for infill development include the previous railroad tracks across from Lehman Park, vacant lots, and parking lots downtown.

REVITALIZATION

Revitalization involves taking an underutilized or “dying” area and bringing it back to life. The previous site can be modified in many cases to serve a new or similar use. Revitalization helps provide support to struggling areas and remove blight. One of the critical strengths of revitalization is the prioritization of maintaining the existing building and neighborhood character. Shown on the map in a diagonal-gridded pattern, downtown is the main area identified for revitalization.

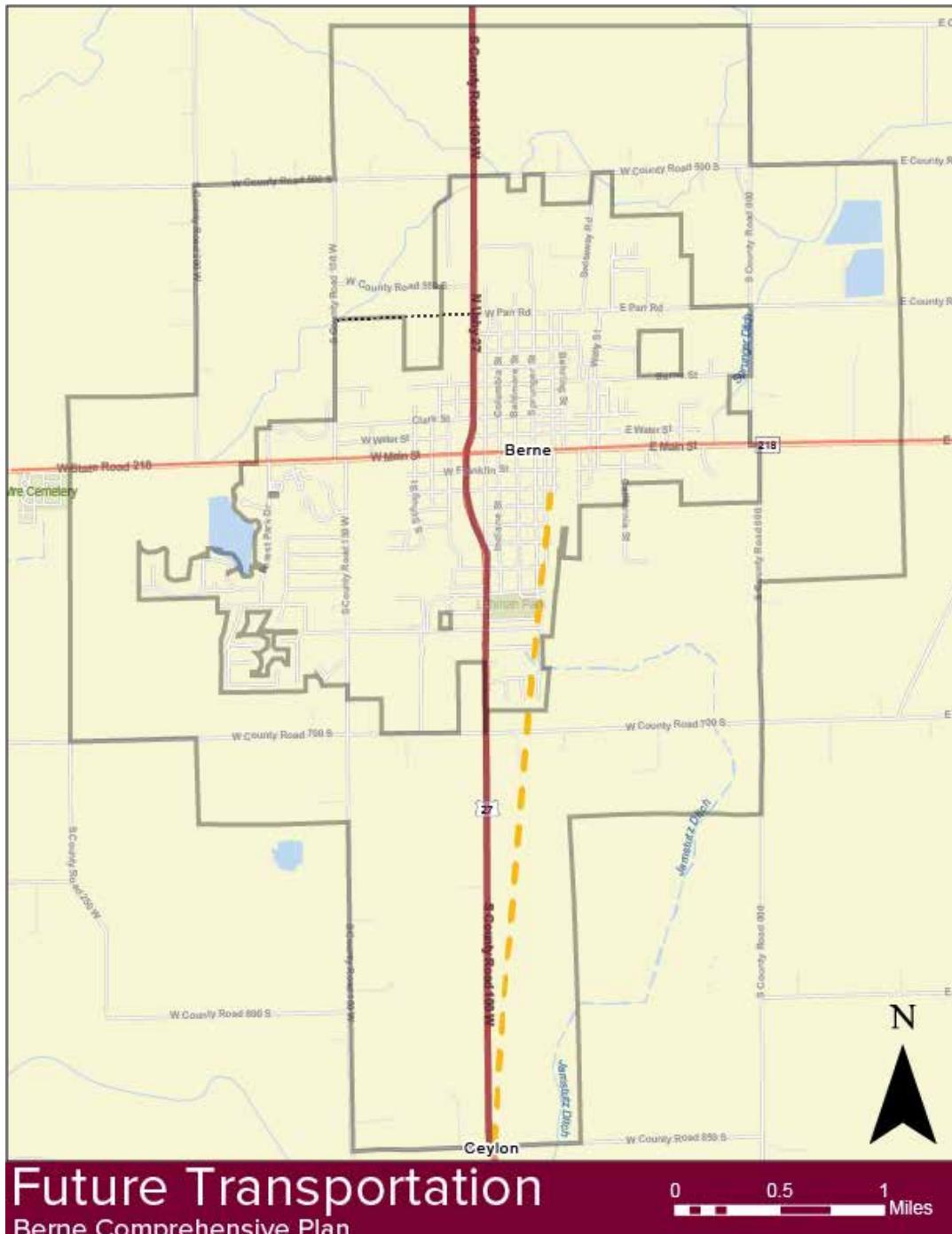
REDEVELOPMENT

Redevelopment is defined as developing something again or for different use. It is shown on the map with the vertical thick-lined pattern. Redevelopment in the future land use map designates existing areas of conflicting land use and offers the proposed change. Some of these areas include existing industrial developments near residential neighborhoods.

STABILIZATION

Stabilization designates areas that will remain secure in their land use. In other words, there is no proposed change or change in development patterns in places that do not have a pattern overlay. That includes areas like the schools, Lehman Park, and Swiss Village.

¹<https://opr.ca.gov/planning/land-use/infill-development/>



Future Transportation Berne Comprehensive Plan

*Future transportation plan for the City of Berne.
Source: IndianaMAP, INDOT.*

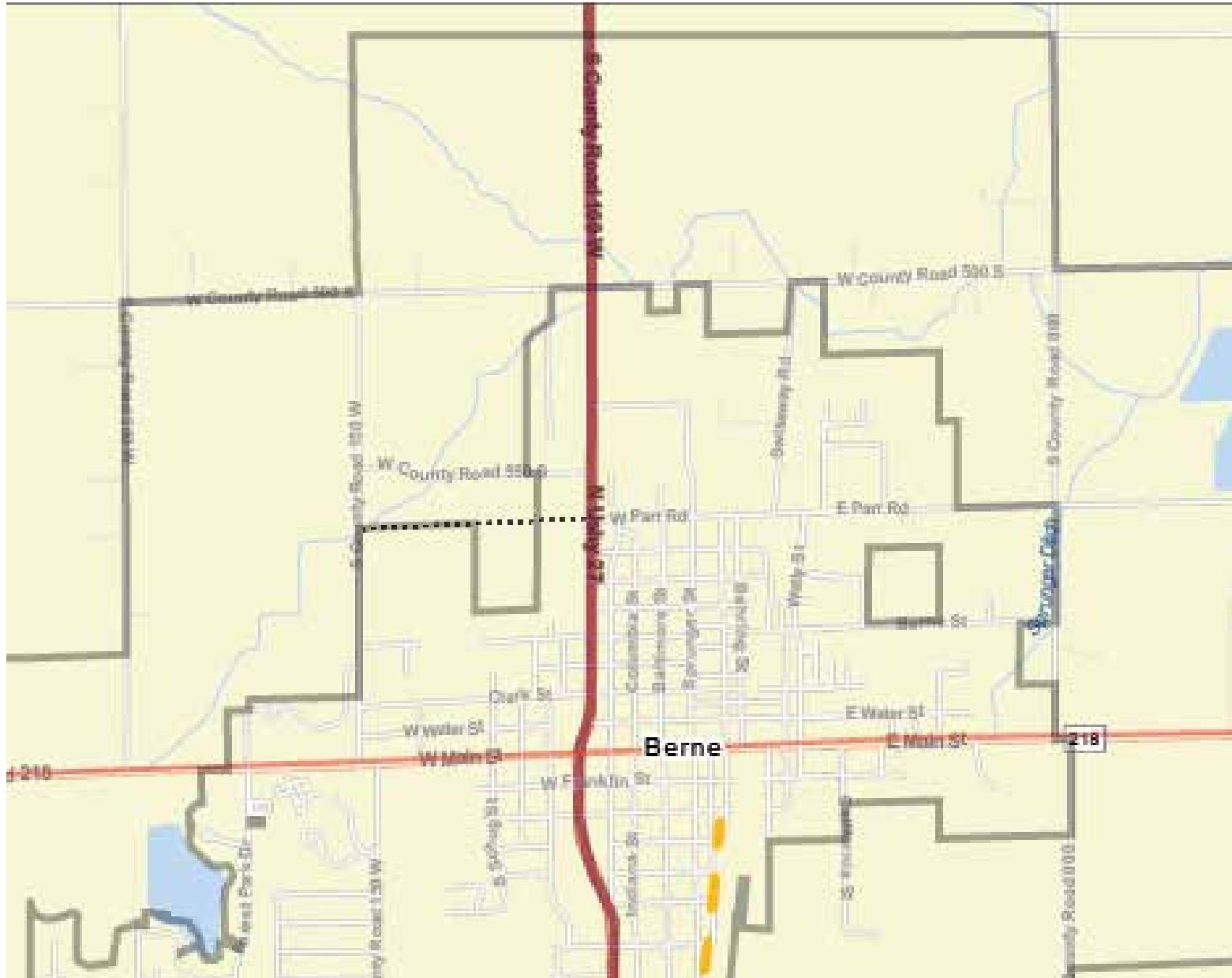
IMPLEMENTATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following sections include recommendations for transportation, urban design, sustainability, resiliency, livability, administrative, and critical path strategies. The recommendations described in the following paragraphs are intended to put action towards the goals mentioned earlier in the document.

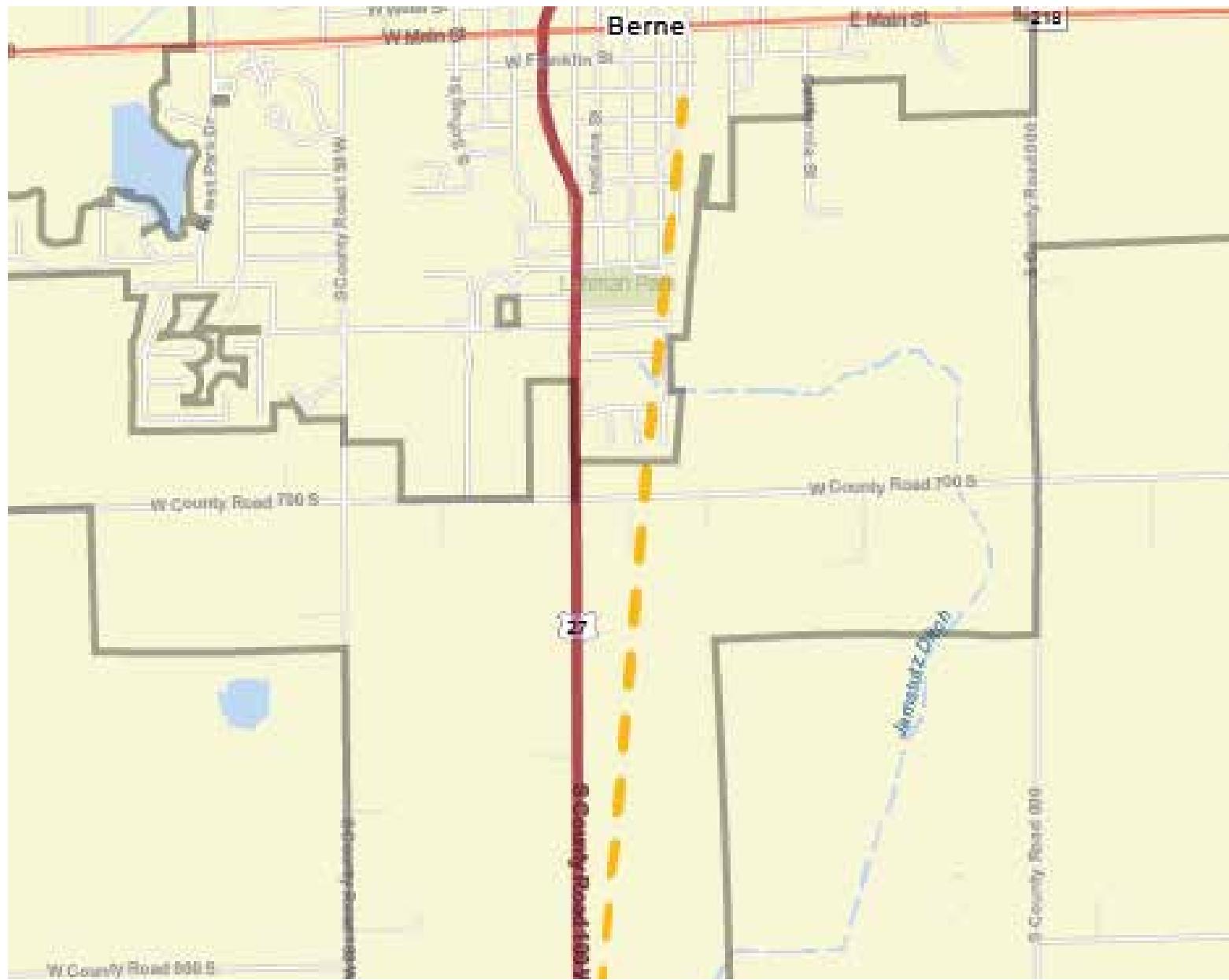
TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY

Connectivity includes all forms of transportation that move a person from one space to another. The future transportation component of the plan focuses on enhancing the connections throughout the city for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, public transportation, and other forms of travel. Transportation is not only vital for daily life but is an essential consideration for future growth, environmentalism, and resiliency.

The future transportation map shows a proposed route to help avoid traffic at the intersection of SR 218 and US 27. The proposed route would not only bypass this main intersection in the city but also increase connectivity and ease of access. The future transportation map also includes a portion of the trail connecting to Geneva. The future transportation map was developed with the Steering Committee and the future land use map.



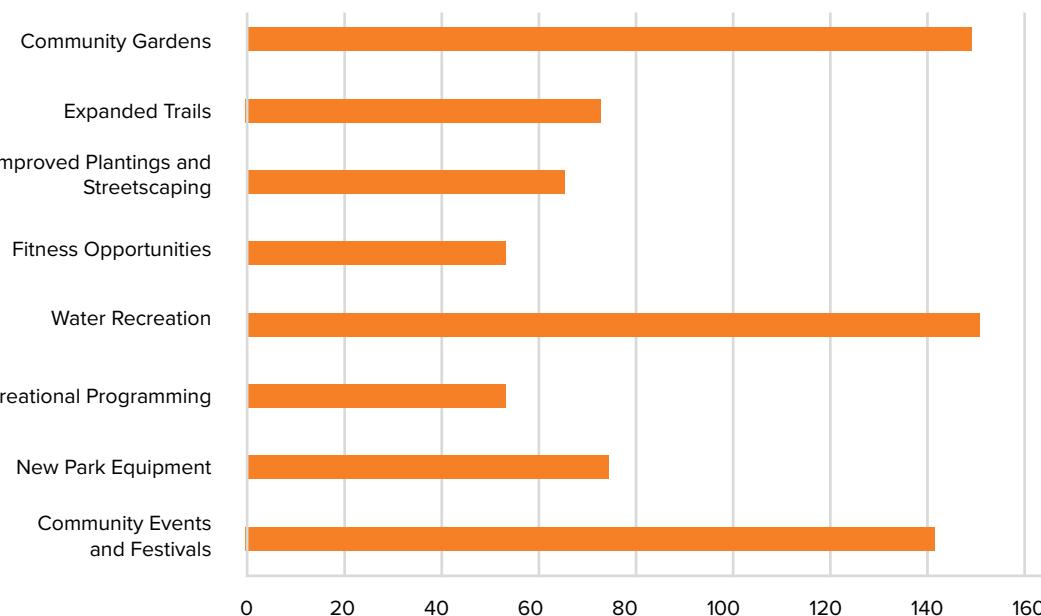
Expanded view of future transportation plan for the City of Berne.
Source: IndianaMAP, INDOT.



ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

Alternative transportation includes transportation such as bikes, walking, buses, etc. Berne did not have a strong presence of alternative transportation in the city. Although many people in the city stated they walked around town, much of the city lacks sidewalks or has areas where sidewalks are damaged. No bike lanes existed in the city either. A need for improved sidewalks, additional trails and connections, and bike lanes was also expressed by residents through public engagement.

An existing walking trail, created along an old rail line path, heads north through Geneva and ends at the Wabash River. The route is planned to extend from the Wabash River to Berne's Lehman Park. The connection to Berne would create roughly five miles of dedicated trail for bicycles and pedestrians. The trail also connects to the Wabash River trail, which loops around the Wabash River and connects to Limberlost Park outside of Geneva. Additional trails around the community could be pursued in the future to create a city-wide trail system.



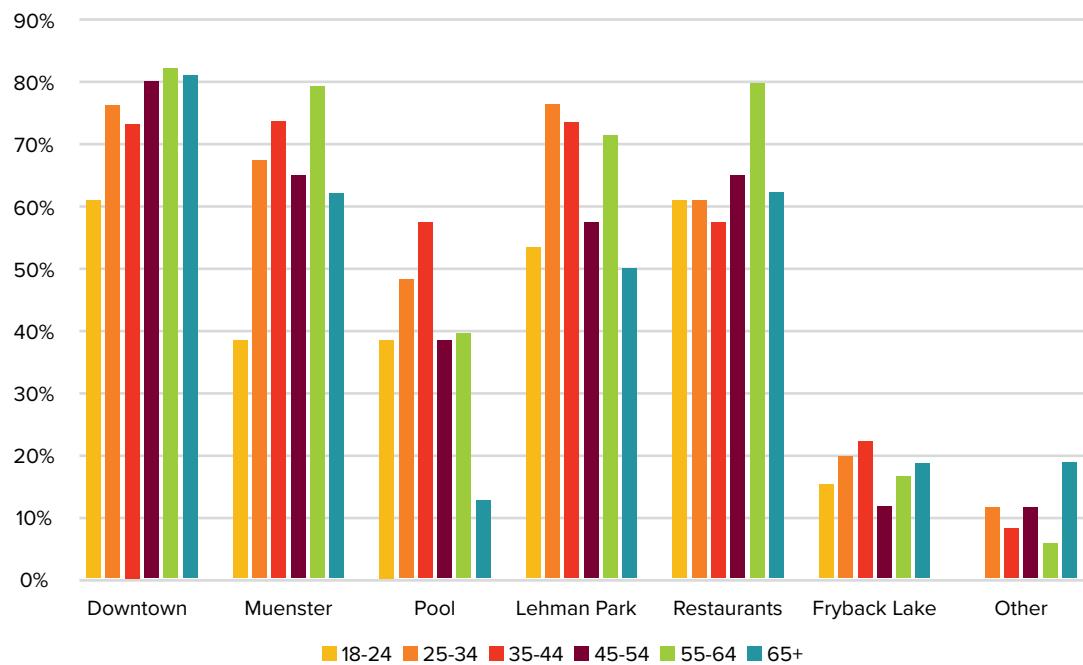
What residents think Berne should focus on for the next five years.
Source: Berne Comprehensive Plan Survey, July 26, 2021.

WHAT WE HEARD

- Update, fix, and expand sidewalks throughout the city to encourage people to walk or bike more often.
- People enjoyed visiting the bike path in Geneva and existing walking paths within Berne but wished they were connected.
- 58.8 percent of respondents selected expanded trails as one of the critical items Berne should focus on over the next five years.
- Many people also traveled around the city in golf carts.

URBAN DESIGN²

Urban design connects people, places, and the natural and built environment. The fundamental principles of urban design focus on place-making (i.e., creating a “sense of place” or identity), environmentalism, social equity, and economic viability to create a site with distinct beauty and individuality. Urban design can be achieved by creating recognizable neighborhoods with unique identities, designing safe and engaging spaces and buildings, and giving form and framework to the urban environment. Some of the common implemented elements of placemaking and urban design include lively commercial spaces, mixed-use development (with an emphasis on ground floor retail), human-scale design, safe and attractive public areas, branding, and beautifying aspects of the public realm such as streets, sidewalks, and open spaces.



Destinations visited by age.

Source: Berne Comprehensive Plan Survey, July 26, 2021.

²<http://www.urbandesign.org/>

WHAT WE HEARD

- Many respondents expressed a desire for city-wide beautification and place-making, including sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure improvements.
- More activities downtown and at public spaces like the clock tower and plaza.
- Suggestions for a Biergarten downtown or at Swiss Days.
- Restaurants, shops, entertainment, and other activities downtown should be available in the evening.
- Improved plantings and streetscapes.
- Consistent signage, street lights, benches, signage, and branding.
- Downtown and the clock tower and plaza were one of the most visited destinations in Berne for many age groups.
- Twenty-nine percent of respondents said improved plantings and streetscaping were necessary for Berne to focus on in the next five years.



A collage of Berne's downtown spaces.
Source: American Structurepoint.

DOWNTOWN

Downtown Berne's boundaries are loosely defined by the SR 218 and US 27 intersection to the Main Street and Monroe Street intersection. The Ruheplatz resting place in downtown Berne is an excellent example of creating a sense of place and implementing a good urban design. This downtown pocket park provides a quiet place for downtown visitors to rest, read, eat, and socialize. The downtown's historic and unique Swiss architectural style is also an important urban design element. The downtown comprises commercial buildings with upper-story residential, although it is unknown how many upper levels are occupied for residential use. The clock tower and plaza provide many aspects of placemaking and urban design, such as cultural assets, gathering spaces, landscaping, sidewalks, and open space for public use. Downtown holds festivals and events such as Swiss Days.

Aspects such as gateways, signage, wayfinding, street treatments, distinctive architecture, and street treatments can help foster a unique sense of place. Those aspects, together, make a site stand out and have its own identity outside of belonging to the City. Downtown Berne is the most prominent district within the city. Elements include the clock tower, Ruheplatz, planters, and Swiss architecture. Not only do those elements work to foster a sense of place and identity, but they also promote street life. Wide sidewalks ornamented with pavers and plantings encourage walking and activity throughout downtown. Outdoor dining is another way to promote street life and foster an inviting space.

SR 218 DOWNTOWN CORRIDOR

SR 218 is a major collector that travels east to west through Berne's downtown. SR 218 intersects with US 27 at Berne's gateway to downtown. This key corridor is crucial to the downtown entryway and should promote a walkable urban environment. In its existing state, the corridor lacks placemaking elements such as gateways, street front development, street life, and crosswalks.

The rendering shows how the 218-corridor through downtown Berne could look if lanes were narrowed to make room for bicycle and pedestrian traffic. There would still be enough room for cars to navigate safely. The graphic also includes colored crosswalks prioritizing pedestrian safety at downtown crossings.

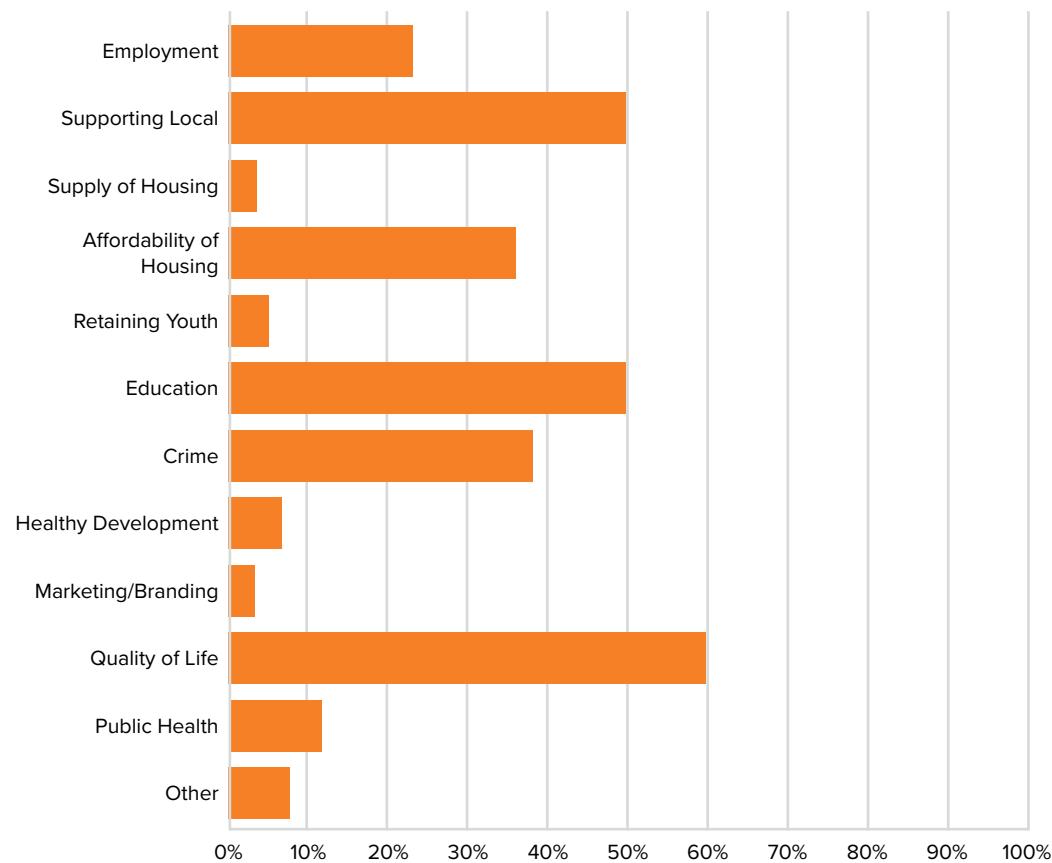




Potential urban design features implemented on East 218 in Downtown Berne.
Source: Lisa Dunaway, American Structurepoint.

LIVABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Livability is the attention to and growth of spaces that promote the community's health, happiness, well-being, and quality of life. Accessibility is the built environment's attribute that allows all residents to go about their daily lives as unimpeded as possible. The city's continued success will expand on the community that Berne offers and the characteristics of its history and people. Focusing on the community's existing wants and needs will promote growth and population retention.



Berne's Greatest Assets.

Source: Berne Comprehensive Plan Survey, July 26, 2021.

WHAT WE HEARD

- Sixty percent of respondents said the quality of life was one of Berne's best assets.
- Berne has a unique atmosphere and small-town feel.
- Sixty-four percent of respondents marked retaining youth as one of Berne's biggest challenges.
- Community members would like to see more parks, trails, and recreation programming.
- Many responded that they would like to see improved plantings and streetscaping as well as beautification of the downtown.

AGING IN PLACE^{3,4}

Aging in place is when residents can live and age in the community of choice for as long as possible, ideally staying active for as long as possible. According to a national survey on housing and home modifications issues, 82 percent of respondents would prefer to stay at their residence as long as possible.⁵ However, many communities have had difficulty creating livable communities for all ages. Physical and non-physical barriers may make staying at home a poor option or even impossible. Municipalities need to minimize or eliminate these barriers and create housing options that enable citizens to be independent and thrive at all ages. If residents can age in place, it not only benefits them, but it benefits the social and economic fabric of the community.

Housing issues are not limited to the home but are interdependent with neighborhood and community design, access to food and transportation, affordability, and safety. Housing is a variable in social interaction. It is a multifaceted issue that requires interdisciplinary approaches to create successful solutions. Solutions to consider include “universal design,” the design of neighborhoods, social support, affordability, and safety.

³<https://planning.org/blog/blogpost/9142364/>

⁴<https://planning.org/blog/blogpost/9124763/>

⁵<https://www.aarp.org/home-garden/housing/info-2000/aresearch-import-783.html>

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

- Ron Mace, one of the founders of Universal Design

Homes designed according to the principles of Universal Design (also known as barrier-free design) would meet the behavioral needs of the majority of the population in our society, across the range of ages and abilities. Current standards generally do not include a broad range of ages, abilities, heights, and people's senses, resulting in spaces that unnecessarily disable residents.

Housing not designed to meet people of any age and ability increases the risk of accidents because of the gap between the built environment's demands and a resident's abilities. For example, falls are the leading cause of injury and death for older adults and have a direct cost to society of over \$30 billion annually. Falls and other safety concerns can be addressed by available design features such as a zero-step entry into the home, a zero-step shower, non-skid flooring, high lighting with low glare, grab bars, and a clear and accessible path. Other human-made barriers are narrower doorways for wheelchairs, walkers, and bathrooms accessed only by stairs.

Universal Design features have been formalized in ordinances and policies that promote housing features such as zero-step entries, no-threshold showers, a bathroom on the first floor, and 36-inch wide doorways. These solutions have been successfully built in all housing types in every climate in the US and, therefore, could be implemented in Berne's housing stock.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR HOME IMPROVEMENTS ARE⁶:

US Department of Agriculture's Rural Development

The US Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program offers loans of up to \$20,000 and grants of up to \$7,500 to low-income homeowners in rural areas who need to renovate. To qualify, you must have a family income below 50% of your area's median income. The interest rate is capped at 1.0 percent. Grants are available only to homeowners who are 62 or older. Younger borrowers are eligible only for loans.

To apply, contact your state office of the US Department of Agriculture. [A state-by-state list is available on the USDA's website](#). You can also find lenders in your area who specialize in USDA loans.

Fannie Mae and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA)

FHA renovation loans for homeowners and buyers are not explicitly designed for borrowers with disabilities but can be used for necessary adaptations. [Fannie Mae's HomeStyle program](#) is available for buyers who want money to buy and renovate a home in one loan or those who wish to refinance their home loans and get cash for renovations. The [FHA's 203\(k\) renovation loan](#) is similar to Fannie's but has more flexible qualification requirements. To qualify, you'll need to gather the necessary documents and information on your assets, credit, and debt to [apply for an FHA loan](#).

Refinancing

Refinancing when interest rates are low is an excellent way to use a home's equity to pay for projects like a home renovation. First, contact several different lenders to see who offers the best rate, then secure a preliminary mortgage approval, and finally, choose your lender.

Getting Help From Non-profit Organizations

Non-profits can be a source to choose which home repairs are needed and how to pay for them, and some include:

- [Rebuilding Together](#) works with dozens of affiliated organizations nationwide to complete some 10,000 projects a year. They help low-income homeowners, requiring applicants to fall under income guidelines, which vary depending on location.
- [The National Resource Center on Supportive Housing and Home Modification](#): Headquartered at the University of Southern California, the center aims to encourage aging in place and promote home modifications. The National Resource Center provides training, education, technical help, and an information clearinghouse.
- [Local Independent Living Center Affiliates](#): This is a directory of independent living centers compiled by the Independent Living Research Utilization Program, a non-profit organization. The guide lists centers that train people with disabilities to live independently, where 51% of the staff and the board of directors have disabilities.
- [Local Easter Seals chapters](#): Easter Seals and real estate brokerage Century 21 launched the Easy Access for Easier Living Program, which includes educational brochures, resources, and tips for making a home accessible.

NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN

Universal design also applies to neighborhoods. Universal Design is a way of designing an environment to be used and understood “to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.”⁷ Suppose every environment is designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. In that case, everyone can benefit from that design and not just a minority of the population because “if an environment is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits.”⁸

Considering a large diversity of needs and abilities throughout the design process leads to the most significant number of users possible. Universal design is good design.

When Berne adds new or renovates public infrastructure, building universal design considerations into every process step is a great way to maximize the number of future users. Universal Design works best when applied at the beginning of the design process and not seen as an “add-on” to the process.⁹ Reaching out to the disabled community in the area and involving them in planning decisions from the beginning is also vital for designing genuinely inclusive spaces.

The National Disability Authority notes that “Universal Design is not only applicable to the needs of people with disabilities but to everyone, regardless of age, size, ability or disability. Secondly, Universal Design is not a list of specifications; it is an approach to design that considers the varied abilities of users.”¹⁰ The term “Universal Design” is different from compliance with the ADA standards. ADA prohibits discrimination based on disability, while Universal Design standards include the ADA’s requirements but go beyond them to make the built environment accessible to even more users.¹¹

One example of a universal design improvement is building or repairing the ends of driveways to meet the street with as little slope as possible. Many drivers have experienced “bottoming out” their car at the end of a driveway. Those situations can be precarious for people with limited mobility and wheelchair users. By addressing where the driveways meet the street in a more universally designed way, residents who use wheelchairs can more safely roll onto the road. And, it is also easier for everyday pedestrians and drivers.

⁷<http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design>. Copyright© 1997 NC State University.

⁸<http://one.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/research/pub/hs809012.html>

⁹universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/

¹⁰The Center for Universal Design (1997). The Principles of Universal Design, Version 2.0. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State University. projects.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_ud/udprinciplestext.htm.

¹¹universaldesign.ie/what-is-universal-design/the-10-things-to-know-about-ud/10-things-toknow-about-ud.html.



Source: <https://planning.org/planning/2018/feb/inclusivemobility>



Source: <https://planning.org/planning/2018/feb/inclusivemobility/>

SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

While aging in place and community may have advantages of familiarity and maintaining one's connections, it may also set older adults and disabled persons up for social isolation, particularly if they have limited mobility or access to other people. Social isolation and loneliness have been shown to affect health and well-being negatively. Density does not automatically ensure social interaction. Can residents get to a senior center or other places for interaction? Get to medical services? Can an aide take a bus to serve a senior at home? Understanding transportation issues from varied perspectives will assist Berne with addressing these and creating housing options that work for residents' needs. Barriers to accessing support services are created when one can no longer drive to a location or afford to own a vehicle. This barrier may also be an obstacle to receiving services at home, regardless of whether one rents or owns.

AFFORDABILITY

Creating programs to address a lack of market-rate affordable housing is an undertaking in many communities across the US. However, as stated in the "Attracting New Residents" section, Berne is a highly affordable place to live. Three crucial issues regarding housing affordability must be considered:

- **Cost to Build and Develop.** Land, development fees, and prices for wells and septic (in rural areas) can make it challenging to offer good quality housing options to persons who do not qualify for subsidized housing.
- **Indirect Impact on Service Costs.** When accessing housing one can afford, it may be substandard housing, which can result in higher expenditure on energy costs, as well as negatively impact health and well-being.¹²
- **"Drive to Qualify."** As stated above, barriers to accessing support services are created when someone is no longer able to drive or cannot afford to own a vehicle. Another obstacle is the ability to receive services at home, whether someone rents or owns.

SAFETY

At the scale of a neighborhood, safety includes benches to enable walking, shade and shelter for refuge from the weather, smooth and well-maintained sidewalks year-round, good lighting, orientations that encourage informal surveillance and social interactions, human-scale design, layers of public versus private space that support territoriality, and a lack of dark nooks to give shelter to possible predators.

¹² Ball, M.S. (2014.) "Aging in Place: A Toolkit for Local Governments."

RESILIENCY¹³

Resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a municipality to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks are experienced. Like illnesses, chronic stresses—high unemployment, poor or overtaxed infrastructure, water shortages—weaken cities and social systems. Acute shocks are the devastating occurrences that often get conversations about resilience started, e.g., earthquakes, floods, disease outbreaks, and terrorist attacks. In the public survey, some residents expressed concerns related to resiliency, such as reducing the city's carbon footprint and “cleaning up” the city. Below are some methods to address those concerns.

WHAT WE HEARD

- Clean up the city and protect the environment.
- Implement a recycling program in the city.
- Attracting new residents and retaining youth were two of the obstacles listed as Berne's biggest challenges.
- Sixty-one percent of respondents said Berne should add more parks or greenspaces to the community.

¹³ <https://www.planning.org/blog/blogpost/9124762/>

ATTRACTING NEW RESIDENTS^{14,15,16}

As more communities are negatively affected by changes in temperature, some people may want or need to move to cities that will be more resilient to the changes. Berne could attract these migrants by creatively marketing to them.

Berne would make a terrific haven for these migrants, and the reasons are numerous. First, people prefer to live in a temperature “niche,” where the average annual temperature is 50 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit. Berne is currently within that range and will likely remain so during the anticipated rise in global temperatures.

Migrants will need to move to places where the cost of living is affordable, like Berne. Bestplaces.net reports Berne’s cost of living is 26.8% lower than the US average. Berne is even more affordable than average in Indiana, scoring 73.2 out of 100 compared to Indiana’s score of 82.1. Berne also suffers fewer natural disasters than other US areas, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and wildfires. It is also far from the coasts and should not be affected by sea level rise. Consequently, these factors will help the cost of homeowners insurance to stay low for Berne residents.

Berne will also not suffer as much from future energy supply changes as other cities because it is close to natural gas supplies, solar energy production, and wind farms. The area does not have the water shortages that many regions of the US are experiencing. There are also many career opportunities in Berne, either within the city itself or within a reasonable commute. The average commute time in Berne is 17.5 minutes, compared to the national average of 26.4 minutes. And Berne does not have the significant shortage of housing that other cities do, meaning climate migrants could move in more easily. As a bonus, the housing in Berne costs around 53% of the national average, making it a very attractive place to live, especially for those forced to move after a natural disaster.

¹⁴ PBS Terra. This is the Safest Place to Live as the Climate Changes.

¹⁵ <https://projects.propublica.org/climate-migration/>

¹⁶ https://www.bestplaces.net/cost_of_living/city/indiana/berne

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND WATER PLANNING^{17,18}

“Green infrastructure” is stormwater management systems that preserve, emulate, or restore a site’s natural hydrology. It is sometimes called “urban stormwater control” or “low-impact development.” It has become a popular way to manage stormwater runoff as it is less expensive than traditional “grey” infrastructure (i.e., vast systems of pipes and sewer lines).

By using green infrastructure, regulators can encourage more stormwater to infiltrate into soils, to help refill aquifers, or be taken up by plants and filtered for pollutants. Additionally, it is more beautiful because it uses plants instead of pipes (see Figure 1). Using those same plants can benefit the local ecosystem by providing food and habitat for wildlife and pollinators. Green infrastructure reduces the flow and pollution in a water body during rainstorms or snowmelt. Snowmelt runoff has the potential for higher pollutant loadings to waterways because of the sudden release of pollutants trapped in the snow. It may also become a more significant water-quality threat as climate change increases the number of freeze-thaw cycles during increasingly warmer winters.

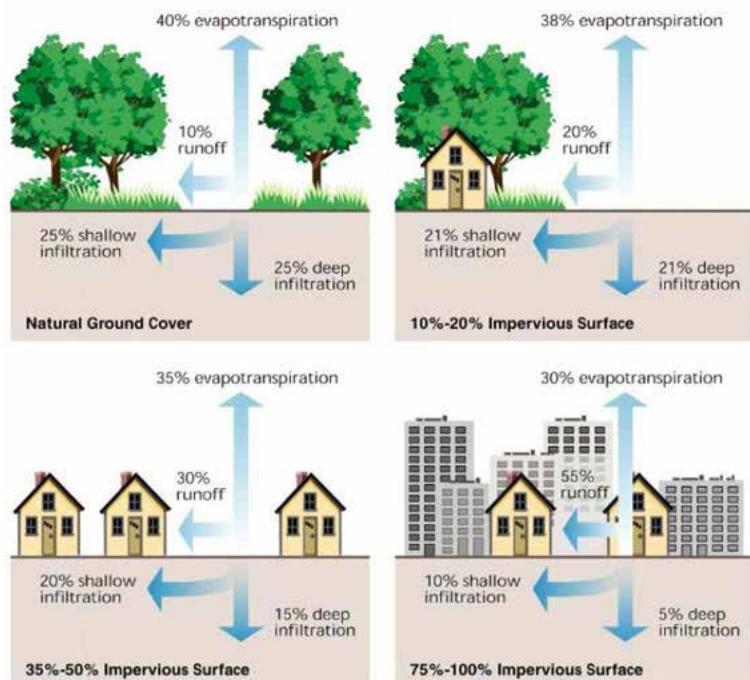
Stormwater runoff contributions to urban streams increase with the amount of impervious surface in a watershed (see Figure 4). For example, the Center for Watershed Protection found that stream quality is affected when only 10 percent of an urbanized watershed consists of impervious surfaces, such as roofs and paving. Also, streams become severely polluted when impervious surfaces in a watershed exceed 25 percent.



Green infrastructure captures stormwater runoff in Seattle, WA.
Source: www.wikipedia.org.

¹⁷ <https://planning.org/pas/memo/2012/may/>

¹⁸ <https://planning.org/planning/2021/summer/integrating-land-use-and-water-planning-for-a-sustainable-future/>



Changes in hydrology from the increased impervious surface.

Source: www.planning.org.

The US Environmental Protection Agency has been championing green infrastructure as part of its Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) permit program. Smart Growth advocates have also promoted these practices as their low-impact development initiatives. Local regulators need to know how to evaluate green infrastructure when it is proposed to replace conventional infrastructure in a new development or when it is intended to retrofit existing stormwater management systems to address existing water pollution and flood-hazard risks.

Castle Rock, Colorado, is one of the fastest-growing communities in the United States. In 2006, the City planning department and the local water utility partnered to address how to conserve water best while still accommodating growth. As part of their plan, the City set up financial incentives, regulatory changes, and behavioral service strategies to utilize water more efficiently. For example, the City gave financial incentives to developers in exchange for the developers being required to meet professional certification requirements for water efficiency. Although Midwestern cities like Berne sometimes have too much water instead of too little, managing water during floods and droughts is essential.

There are many methods for tackling water conservation on the American Planning Association's website, planning.org. Some ideas include requiring only plants native to Indiana to be planted in new developments and upgrading aging stormwater management infrastructure with green infrastructure. Although the law does not mandate all water-related planning, residents and utilities can still find ways to collaborate. More specific local plans can include water supply and wastewater infrastructure plans; hazard mitigation and resilience plans, like floodplain and stormwater management; demand management; watershed processes and health; and interagency coordination and collaboration plans. If those variables feel overwhelming, Berne can look to peer communities for best practices. Although every city is different, no one needs to reinvent the wheel.

CITY REFORESTATION^{19,20}

To shield against rising temperatures,²¹ the City of Cleveland, Ohio, began a tree reforestation project to increase the amount of shade in the city (see Figure 5). Cleveland was once known as the “Forest City,” but since the 1950s, it has lost about half of its tree canopy and continues to lose 75-100 acres of tree cover every year. Residents were losing trees faster than they were planting them. Urban trees keep neighborhoods cooler, lower energy bills, capture carbon, capture stormwater runoff, improve air quality, and raise property values. Residents in areas with more urban trees tend to have lower asthma and heart disease rates.

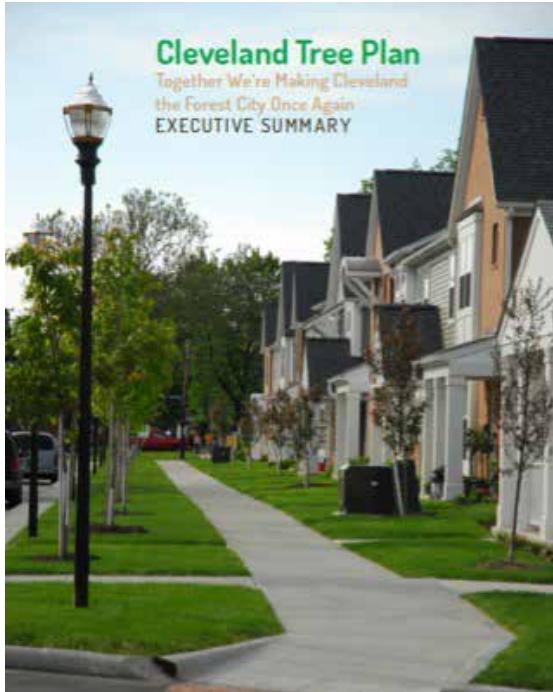
“Heat islands” in urban areas can be up to 20 degrees hotter than heat islands in suburban areas because the suburbs usually have more trees overall. Trees have been shown to cool the air by as much as 10 degrees Fahrenheit. Trees currently shade 18 percent of the city, and urban areas hit a “tipping point,” where the benefits of the trees become apparent, at about 30 percent canopy cover. Cleveland’s plan would allow them to achieve a 30 percent cover by 2040. It will require a city-wide effort, starting with the areas that need trees the most, like downtown.

Since 2015, over 40 public and private organizations have joined Cleveland Tree Coalition. Residents were given trees funded by county grants and trained to care for the trees for their establishment period. Trees can be planted on public land, private property and yards, and even on vacant lots.

¹⁹ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/can-urban-reforestation-help-lower-rising-temperatures>

²⁰ <http://www.clevelandtrees.org/cleveland-tree-plan/>

²¹ <https://planning.org/planning/2021/summer/integrating-land-use-and-water-planning-for-a-sustainable-future/>



The Cleveland Tree Plan.
Source: <http://www.clevelandtrees.org/cleveland-tree-plan>.

Trees chosen for a restoration project should be native to Indiana because they provide the most benefits to the local ecosystem, and more information can be found at indiananativeplants.org.²² According to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, trees good to plant are those species that are commonly found in Central Till Plan Flatwoods because that natural community type is “in peril” in Adams County.²³ Appropriate tree species are White Oak (*Quercus alba*), Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*), Beech (*Fagus spp.*), Basswood (*Tilia spp.*), and Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*). For more poorly drained sites, Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*), Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*), and Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) would be appropriate choices.

²² <https://indiananativeplants.org/>

²³ https://www.in.gov/dnr/nature-preserves/files/np_adams.pdf

RECYCLING PROGRAM²⁴

This section intends to provide information for starting a Recycling Program for the City of Berne. Whether the community is urban or rural, a recycling program plays a vital role in diverting materials from the waste stream. Because of this, it is essential to understand the community waste stream and to make sure that the community supports the recycling program by creating a solid and well-supported recycling program. During public outreaches conducted during the creation of the Comprehensive Plan, residents mentioned how beneficial a local recycling program would be for their community. Based on what was heard at the events, this section was created to help address this topic.

Recycling can benefit communities and the environment. That is collecting and processing materials and turning them into new products. There are many benefits of recycling; for example, recycling reduces the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators, conserves natural resources such as timber, water, and minerals, prevents pollution by reducing the need to collect new raw materials, and saves energy. It helps create jobs in the recycling and manufacturing industries in the United States. These are only a few global benefits that a recycling program can help implement. The city of Berne can propose a recycling program; in this section, information from the Environmental Protection Agency is discussed to inform the City of Berne about ways to achieve an effective recycling program.

As mentioned above, this section summarizes the steps listed by the EPA website on how to design an effective recycling program properly. The City of Berne can utilize this summary to understand some of the steps that need to be taken when considering developing a recycling plan. The adoption of a city's recycling program is significant because it is an excellent way for cities to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, prevent pollution, and reduce the need to harvest raw materials. The City of Berne can act and create a recycling program; this can help the city strengthen its economy by creating more jobs, and recycling can educate its residents, as described in the following steps.

²⁴Municipal Government Toolkit (epa.gov)

STEP 1

Key Elements to Establish First: select a recycling team/coordinating team; this implies the city is selecting a group of people that will be responsible for overseeing the entire program operation. The creation of this program has many components; therefore, it is essential to designate a recycling team that can collaborate during data collection of equipment, meeting with contractors, and analyzing project budgets. Step one must consider other tasks before developing a solid recycling contract.

The city shall identify its assets and programs supporters; this means identifying organizations dedicated to recycling initiatives, such as the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. Also, it is essential to create networks with local and state leaders that could guide funding resources. The city shall identify the scope and assess the community's waste by identifying any resources available, such as the location of drop-off centers, budget, current recycling programs in the city, or partner with neighboring towns to neglect collection costs. To determine the waste stream it is necessary to conduct a waste assessment. What is a waste assessment? This assessment helps the city identify the type of potential recyclables the community generates and which ones are generated the most. This assessment is not necessary if the city decides to recycle materials such as glass, aluminum, paper, plastic, and steel. After conducting the waste assessment, the city shall decide on appropriate waste reduction activities for the community. The city shall also encourage communities and businesses to support waste reduction and recycling.

STEP 2

Develop and Write a Strong Contract: a well-written contract shall provide plenty of details as the services required are outlined. That shall include incentives like revenue sharing, collection techniques, equipment techniques, capacity and residue management, and any other information that will be helpful to get the recycling program approved.

STEP 3

Establish Contact with the Markets: cities shall research and contact reprocessors that could potentially help the program's efficiency or improve their collection technique. The EPA website link in the footnote lists some resources that cities can contact during this process. Also, staying in contact with the state recycling office and attending relevant conferences are essential.

STEP 4

Identify Collection Techniques: to create an efficient recycling program, keep in mind that when offering pick-up services, the city should provide full-size recycle bins for curbside collection. "Communities looking at establishing a curbside recycling program must provide at the very minimum an 18-gallon plastic bin for each household to collect recyclables. Communities looking at establishing a drop-off recycling program will need to look at some trailer or similar drop-off collection system. The general rule is to have one drop-off location every 3,000 to 3,500 people."²⁵

²⁵ Municipal Government Toolkit (epa.gov)

STEP 5

Build Community Support: community support is essential to maintain the program moving. The city shall identify the neighborhoods/residents that will easily recycle and those neighborhoods that will need a little more support. Reaching out to environmental organizations and beautification committees such as Keep America Beautiful is a way to obtain community support and participation.

STEP 6

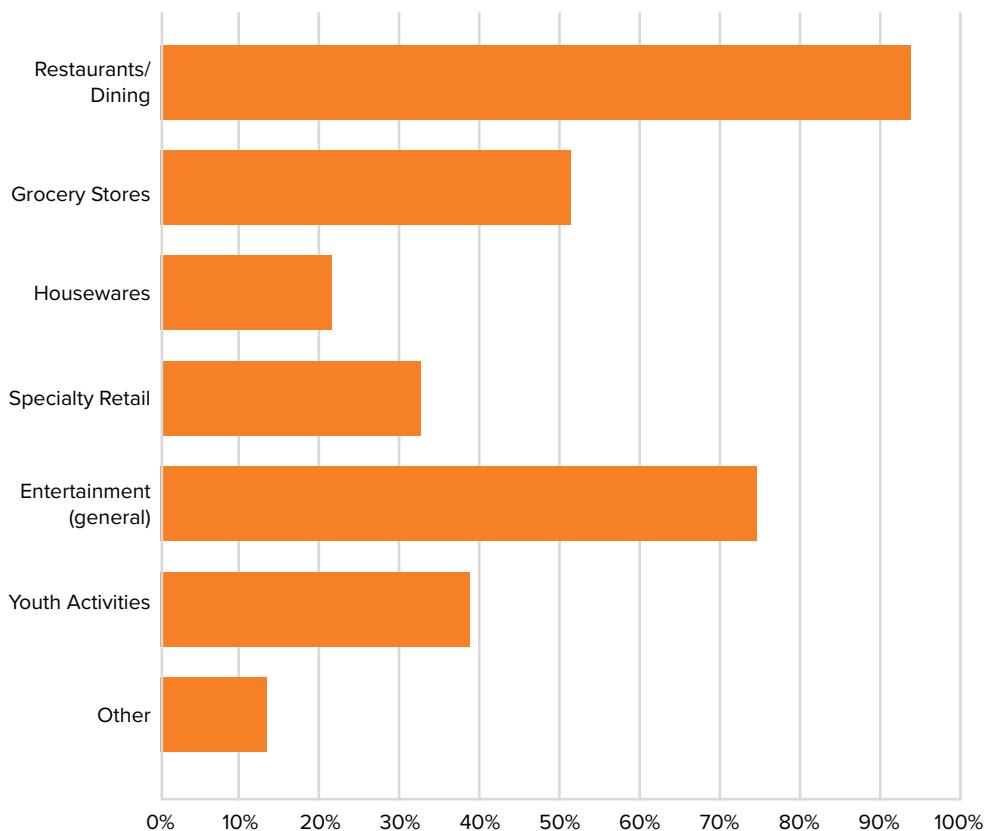
Build Support from Elected Officials: creating a network with community-level officers is essential because it opens a recycling program to succeed. When beginning the program, consider the following: what the current state of recycling is, recycling positively impacts the local and regional economies, and where the recycling businesses are located in your area. It is helpful to educate the public on the importance of recycling, how recycling is a growing industry, and how recycling helps the environment and the economy tax revenue by creating more jobs.

Grants:

Grants are available for recycling programs. Some examples include [Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grants](#), [The Community Recycling Grant](#), and [The Recycling Market Development Program](#). Other grants can be found on the [Indiana Department of Environmental Management website](#).

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

One of the most significant drivers of population growth is the availability of high-quality jobs. While jobs can bring people to an area, providing for the safety and comfort of residents and populations is what keeps people interested in a community. Growing Berne's commercial and industrial diversity will go hand-in-hand with developing the city's workforce and population. Industries are attracted to places with a high quality of life, diverse economic activity, adequate infrastructure, and shovel-ready sites. Public infrastructure keeps the city moving and functioning smoothly. High-quality, efficient, and proper infrastructure is needed to address the needs of both existing and future residents and businesses.



What does Berne need that you have to go elsewhere to find?

Source: Berne Comprehensive Plan, Survey, July 26, 2021.

WHAT WE HEARD

- Many people are leaving the community to spend money elsewhere.
- Update sidewalks and improve infrastructure.
- Promote diverse businesses.
- Diversify employment base.
- Create opportunities for jobs for high-skilled workers.
- Thirty-six percent of respondents listed employment as one of Berne's biggest challenges.
- Fifty-seven percent of respondents worked in the City of Berne.

ATTRACTING TALENT AND DIVERSIFYING THE EMPLOYMENT BASE

Challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in other long-term issues for many cities, such as attracting talent and expanding and diversifying the local employment base. Attracting employers and workers boils down to several key factors, such as quality of life, affordability, and amenities. Some cities, such as Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Greensburg, Indiana, have even created programs to attract new residents with financial incentives for moving into the city.^{26,27}

NEXT LEVEL JOBS

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development (IDWD) created the Next Level Jobs – Employer Training Grant to assist with job placement and training for Indiana Based Business. The program provides businesses with up to \$5,000 per employee trained, hired, or retained for six months. Employers may receive a maximum of \$50,000 (ten employees). More than 100 occupations are eligible for the grant in various industries.²⁸

BROADBAND

Broadband provides access to high-speed internet. The Covid-19 pandemic proved the need for broadband in rural communities. As a result, many positions are now available for remote work, which allows workers to choose where they want to live instead of living where they work. Broadband capabilities need to be expanded to make Berne an attractive community to other employment bases and remote workers. As broadband expansion has become a hot-button issue, many grants are available to create broadband access in rural communities. Several grants are available through the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA).²⁹

- [OCRA](#)
- [Next Level Connections Grant Program](#)
- [Broadband Readiness Planning Grant](#)

²⁶ <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/31/1090068026/cities-like-tulsa-in-oklahoma-are-paying-people-to-move-there>

²⁷ <https://www.makemymove.com/get-paid/greensburg-indiana>

²⁸ <https://www.in.gov/dwd/business-services/etg/?industry=agriculture>

²⁹ <https://www.in.gov/ocra/additional-resources/rural-broadband/>



An aerial of Greensburg's historic downtown with its famous courthouse tree tower.

Source: MakeMyMove.

CASE STUDY: GREENSBURG, IN

Located halfway between Indianapolis and Cincinnati, Greensburg is known for its small-town feel with access to big-city amenities. In 2021, the City began offering an incentive package to encourage remote workers to choose Greensburg. Remote workers who move to Greensburg could take advantage of a relocation package that includes:

- \$5,000 to offset moving expenses
- A year's membership to the local co-working space and YMCA
- Gift cards to the seasonal farmers' market
- Tickets throughout the year to productions at the local playhouse
- Hosted visits to Lake Santee beach and other amenities
- A concierge team to help with facilities relocation
- An invitation to join community leaders at their organizations' tables for annual events such as the Hospital Gala, the Chamber Annual Dinner, the Decatur County United Fund Annual Auction, and "Grandparents on Demand."

All in all, the moving incentive package was valued at \$7,000. Eligibility requirements included relocating to Greensburg within 6 to 12 months, having a remote position or being self-employed outside of Greensburg, being at least 18 years old, being eligible to work in the US, and being selected by the program.^{30,31}

³⁰ <https://www.makemymove.com/moving-living/greensburg-in>

³¹ <https://www.npr.org/2021/10/24/1048790487/an-indiana-town-is-wooing-new-residents-with-on-demand-grandparents>

DIVERSIFYING BUSINESSES

Entrepreneurs are often the heart of a community's downtown. Local businesses give consumers diverse shopping options and the feeling of supporting a local business owner directly but are also excellent sources of community development. A healthy local business often has a ripple effect on other businesses. Consumers visiting one shop or eating out at one local restaurant will likely take time to see another business downtown while they are there, and local businesses tend to source their materials locally. The e-commerce effect discussed in the retail gap section has changed how consumers shop for goods. A local good or service can provide consumers with a unique experience of finding a product that would not be offered online and supporting a business owner within the community.

Local businesses and entrepreneurs also provide a unique opportunity to fill underserved retail NAICS market areas. Local businesses often serve a niche for the community or the retail environment that big box stores cannot. Based on stakeholder discussions and the retail gap analysis, consumers want more local restaurants and boutiques—both optimal opportunities for entrepreneurs to take on.

Being an entrepreneur is difficult—having an established local business often takes time, money, and hard work. The city should establish incentives to encourage business development downtown to mitigate the entrepreneur's risks. Incentives could include sponsoring an infrastructure improvement plan to update and make downtown buildings more attractive to building owners. The city should continue utilizing and providing more opportunities such as workshops, networking events, and entrepreneurship classes in this space.

One of the easiest ways to diversify businesses is by promoting business types such as food trucks, test kitchens, maker's spaces, co-working spaces, and pop-up shops. Sponsoring a “food-truck Friday” or weekend pop-up show is a relatively low-cost, low-effort effective way to promote diverse businesses throughout the community and give residents a chance to experience new retail opportunities.

A traditional co-working space is not the only tool to encourage or support entrepreneurial efforts. Other examples encompass the same idea as a co-working space but for different retail sectors, including food halls, test kitchens, and maker's spaces. Like a traditional co-working space, a maker's space offers more options to support small-scale manufacturers, artists, and even small, light industrial developments.³² Food halls or test kitchens are similar to a mall food court, except they offer cuisine from local restaurants or chefs, usually rotating restaurants monthly instead of chains. Food halls give those interested in opening a restaurant a place to start and are often incubators for new local restaurants, providing what could be considered a dining pipeline.^{33,34,35} Two of Crawfordsville's highlighted leakages from the retail gap analysis, stakeholder meetings, and survey themes included local restaurants offering different cuisine types and clothing stores/ boutiques.

³²<https://www.madjax.org/about>

³³https://www.sunkingbrewing.com/hrf_faq/you-have-a-food-hall-located-at-sun-king-spirits-in-carmel-in-what-is-a-food-hall/

³²<https://fisherstestkitchen.com/the-story/>

³³Cushman & Wakefield. *The Food Hall Model*. 2020.

FOOD HALL CASE STUDY: FISHERS TEST KITCHEN, FISHERS, INDIANA



Source: *Fishers Test Kitchen* on Twitter.

The Fishers Test Kitchen hosts three culinary entrepreneurs launching their restaurant concepts in the completely built-out test kitchen. The chefs remain in the test kitchen for a year to test ideas and build their menus. The time in the food hall also gives them time to gain a following from local diners. The test kitchen also partners with Sun King Brewery in Carmel to provide diverse local dining options from test kitchen chefs. Chefs rotate every few years, with the goal being that once chefs have gained enough following, built their menu, and learned how to run a kitchen, they can start their restaurant in the community after their time in the test kitchen. The test kitchen supports local culinary entrepreneurs while creating a more vibrant and exciting local food culture for the district to enjoy.³⁶

³⁶ <https://fisherstestkitchen.com/the-story/>

POP UP SHOPS CASE STUDY: SOHUD COLLECTIVE, COLUMBUS, OHIO



"SoHud Collective" Pop-Up Shop in Columbus, Ohio, with iconic bus pop-up shop and local rotating vendors (2021).

Source: SoHud Collective, Facebook Page.



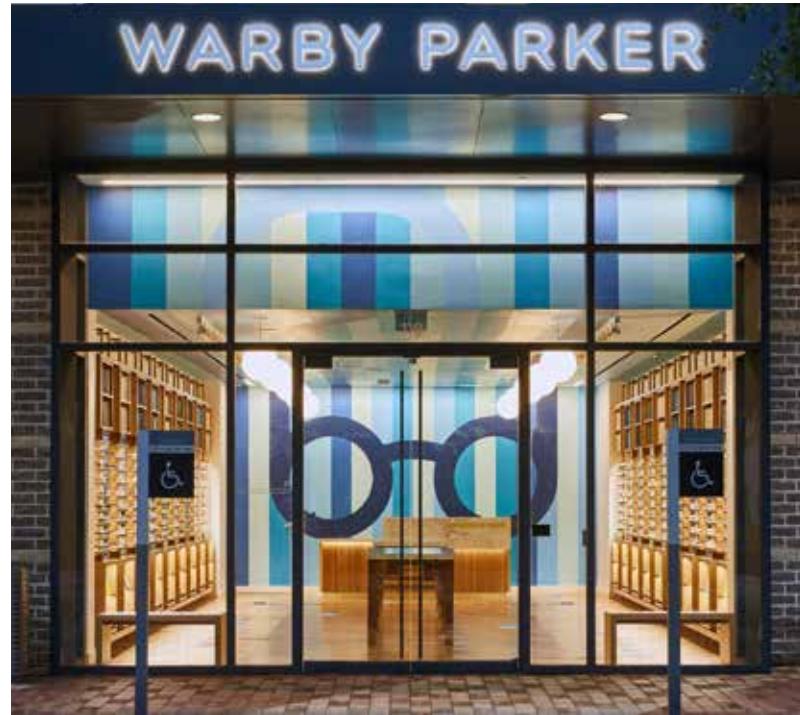
Original SoHud Collective pop-up shop when first starting its monthly pop-up in an underutilized surface lot (2020).

Source: The Lantern, Taylor Grindle.

A pop-up shop is a temporary store or vendor. A pop-up shop can take the form of a tent, temporary structure, shipping or storage container, a rotating mall space, a vehicle, or a brick and mortar store. One of the easiest ways to encourage pop-up shops in a city is by hosting a public fair or festival where vendors can rent their own booth space. Pop-up shops feature all kinds of goods from fashion, jewelry, arts, and glasses frames to collectibles and handmade items such as soaps and candles. Pop-up shop opportunities allow local businesses to show their face to the public and get recognition for their product while also increasing city activity and street life.

The “SoHud Collective” is an example of a seasonal outdoor pop-up shop in the South Hudson neighborhood of Columbus, Ohio. Known for the iconic bus that houses one of the reoccurring pop-up shops, the market originated during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic to promote safe open-air shopping. The pop-up shop has since increased in popularity and has continued to be a staple of summer weekends in the South Hudson neighborhood. The pop-up shop offers a rotation of local vendors who sell clothing, home goods, jewelry, arts, and plants. Located in a previously underutilized surface lot, the SoHud Collective pop-up shop has brought a new life into the space and often attracts many weekend visitors and vendors to participate in the local pop-up shop. The increased street life and attraction to the pop-up shop has also led to increased business and development in the neighboring shops along Summit St.^{37,38}

In some cases, pop-up shop businesses go on to become brick and mortar stores in the community. The now national retailer, Warby Parker, originated as a pop-up shop selling glasses virtually and in select temporary locations. Warby Parker now owns physical stores in cities such as Boston, Los Angeles, and New York City.³⁹



A Warby Parker pop-up store in Houston.

Source: Midway.

³⁶[https://www.thelantern.com/2020/06/
new-pop-up-thrift-business-to-host-sale-on-hudson-st-saturday/](https://www.thelantern.com/2020/06/new-pop-up-thrift-business-to-host-sale-on-hudson-st-saturday/)

³⁷<https://614now.com/2020/culture/sohud-collective-provides-fresh-stylish-open-air-experience>

³⁸<https://www.latimes.com/fashion/alltherage/la-ig-warby-parker-20130728-story.html>

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Administrative action goals reflect actions that heavily involve city staff and services. Focusing on Downtown Redevelopment will bring life and economy back to the center of Berne. A continued focus on infill development, pedestrian-oriented commercial uses (such as restaurants and shops), and local amenities contribute to a strong community.

WHAT WE HEARD

- More ordinance enforcement.
- Clean up and beautify the city.
- Protect historic buildings and sites.
- Berne has a unique environment and atmosphere downtown that should be preserved.
- Update sidewalks and improve walkability and biking infrastructure in the city.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines or design standards can be utilized in a city's zoning code to ensure conformity and character between buildings. Berne's historic and unique Swiss character is vital to the city's identity and should be protected and encouraged as future development occurs. Implementing design guidelines and architectural standards is one way to require or promote parallel development. Adding design standards or implementing an architectural review committee can add extra work for city staff. However, design guidelines can be encouraged by bypassing the architectural review committee and strongly encouraging developers to implement design guidelines to receive incentives. Historic overlay districts can also be implemented to enforce certain design guidelines in specific city areas, such as downtown Berne.

CASE STUDY: CITY OF FRANKENMUTH, MICHIGAN

Frankenmuth, Michigan, is a small city, just shy of 6,000 people, known for its Bavarian heritage and architecture. To ensure the future and security of its Bavarian heritage, traditional small town appeal, and strong downtown development pattern, the City utilizes design guidelines in its zoning ordinance. The city's design guidelines require buildings to have similar front facades and materials compatible with adjacent buildings.³⁹



Bavarian downtown of Frankenmuth during the Christmas season.

Source: Country Living Magazine.



The clear Bavarian architecture and attention to detail, roof details, flower boxes, canopies, and landscaping help reduce the bulk and size of the building and complement the surrounding area.

Source: City of Frankenmuth, Michigan Zoning Ordinance.

³⁹ <https://cms6.revize.com/revize/frankenmuthmi/Chapter%2051.pdf>

INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Infill development involves revitalizing underutilized buildings and vacant lots to align with community needs. Underutilized sites include uses such as surface parking lots in urban or downtown areas, grayfield, brownfield, or empty greenfield lots. Identifying new uses for underutilized land helps provide opportunities for more uses that will create health, social, economic, and environmental benefits. When implemented strategically, infill development can increase access to local destinations, expand economic development opportunities, and ensure that the built environment remains connected and addresses community needs. Incentives can be used in the zoning ordinance to encourage developers to invest in new infill developments. Regulations and incentives can also prevent new underutilized lots by removing parking requirements and increasing mixed-use buildings.⁴⁰

LAND BANKS

“Land Banks are public authorities or non-profit organizations created to acquire, hold, manage, and sometimes redevelop the property to return these properties to productive use to meet community goals, such as increasing affordable housing or stabilizing property values. Land banks can play a number of different roles depending on a community’s development goals, including (a) providing a mechanism for assembling parcels of tax-delinquent or abandoned properties for redevelopment; (b) acquiring and holding strategically valuable properties until the community can develop them as affordable housing, and; c) acquiring properties to convert to other uses such as retail, parks, or open space for flood mitigation. In addition to acquiring and holding land, land banks can maintain, rehabilitate, demolish, and lease or sell property.”⁴¹

⁴⁰ <https://www.planning.org/blog/9227414/infill-development-supports-community-connectivity/>

⁴¹ <https://localhousingsolutions.org/housing-policy-library/land-banks/>

PARKS AND RECREATION

While not a perfect guide to the amount of parkland a community should support, the averages reported by the [National Recreation and Parks Association \(NRPA\)](#) provide some direction for assessing the adequacy of local parkland supply. For communities with fewer than 20,000 people, the NRPA median community park acreage is 12.9 acres per 1,000 residents, which with Berne's 4,100 residents, translates into about 53 acres of parkland. The first quartile figure (meaning that fewer than 25% of communities in this population category are lower than this) is 5.2 acres per 1,000 residents, translating into about 21 acres of parkland. With Lehman Park having about 12.5 acres, the swimming pool having about 2.5 acres, Meunsterberg Plaza having 1.3 acres, and the downtown Ruheplatz resting place having perhaps a quarter of an acre, the resulting ~16.5 acres falls well below these thresholds.

The State of Indiana's "[Statewide Outdoor Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#)" goes beyond the NRPA's rates to endorse 20 acres per 1,000 residents (page 4), which would impute to over 80 acres of parkland for the City of Berne. Again, Berne's parkland acreage of 16.5 acres does not come close to this figure. Indeed, 357 acres of parkland in Adams County as a whole falls substantially short of the 713 acres it would need to meet this standard. This important finding implies that the City cannot rely upon other communities or the County to compensate for its shortfall in recommended acreage. Notably, this analysis excludes recreational facilities in neighborhood school playgrounds. Those facilities might be "low-hanging fruit" if an agreement between the City and the school corporation can be reached.

By most standards, the City of Berne, like the surrounding communities, falls short on park acreage depending on the source of comparison, with the gap ranging from 5 to 75 acres. To be sure, quantity is not necessarily a substitute for quality. The recreational activities provided by the City are top-notch, ranging from baseball/softball programs to swimming and a modern splash pad. Also, with the City's focus on revitalizing Lehman Park, other park development efforts should take a back seat until that project is complete.



*The Ruheplatz "Resting Place" pocket park in downtown Berne.
Source: American Structurepoint.*



*Clock tower and plaza marks the entrance to downtown Berne.
Source: American Structurepoint.*

Still, there is room for exploration of mini-parks in other areas of the city, particularly in the northeastern quadrant north of the downtown. Mini-parks of one acre or less can substantially improve local recreational opportunities in underserved areas, with typical facilities including playgrounds, benches, and bodyweight exercise structures.

A few options would meet the necessary criteria for a larger (~10-acre) outdoor recreational complex. Some areas off of South CR 150 W near Parkway Street, north of the school complex, are sufficient in size but are not immediately accessible off of US 27 without acquiring residential properties; the surrounding land uses and roads are somewhat incompatible with this use as well. Some sites off of Berne Street in the city's northeastern quadrant are surrounded by industrial uses and may conflict with planned development and trigger environmental concerns. The most feasible sites with the fewest detrimental transportation impacts are located just outside the northern City boundary, around CR 500 S and US 27.

While external funding for the development of park facilities is available through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), these sources typically require the development of a five-year parks and recreation master plan conducted following IDNR's standards. That, in turn, presumes the existence of a parks board that can adopt the Master Plan. Based on criticality, then, the following actions are recommended:

- Finish scoping improvements at Lehman Park, including conducting preliminary engineering and design for improvements identified in the already-completed conceptual Master Plan.
- Develop a Parks Board that is formed per Indiana Code 36-10-3-4.
- Open discussions with the South Adams School Corporation on possible utilization of school recreational facilities during after-school hours.
- Conduct a master planning process under IDNR's requirements (found at <https://www.in.gov/dnr/state-parks/files/outdoor-recreation/or-planningguidelines.pdf>). That could include a more detailed feasibility evaluation of an outdoor recreation complex.
- Conduct a scoping and site selection study for one or more mini-parks and, if desired, an outdoor recreation complex.

CRITICAL PATH STRATEGIES

The process of producing the comprehensive plan generated many ideas about improving the community. This section lists the first cohort of projects, called “Critical Path Strategies,” for the City to advance, along with reasonable action steps and resources to put them in place. Critical path strategies are relatively short-term (e.g., less than three years) activities that help to maintain the energy of the comprehensive planning process as it transitions into implementation. They were selected from the list above based on their impact, expected delivery timeliness, and the ability to maintain a sense of momentum for implementation. The strategies are listed in no particular order.

STRATEGY 1

Updates to Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance

RATIONALE

Zoning and subdivision ordinances are powerful tools for implementing land use policy. Yet, the City's regulations have been unchanged since the City's planning and zoning split off from the County. A general update is overdue.

DISCUSSION

Several issues should be addressed in the scoping and administration of the update.

- It may be desirable to consolidate the zoning and subdivision regulations into a single Unified Development Ordinance.
- Setback requirements in residential zones seem to exceed the allowances in existing residential areas and, therefore, may impede redeveloping residential properties in existing neighborhoods.
- The districts are primarily single-use and do not explicitly accommodate mixed-use or multi-use areas, such as Downtown Berne.

POSSIBLE TASK LIST

- Secure local funds necessary for the task.
- Identify members of a consultant selection committee, including representatives from the Plan Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals.
- Issue an RFP or RFQ commensurate with the services and implement the selection procedure.
- Identify a committee to work with the selected consultant on developing the regulatory updates.
- Implement design guidelines into the updated zoning ordinance that will protect and encourage the Swiss architectural character of the downtown. Provide incentives to encourage developers to implement Swiss architectural features to match the character of existing buildings.
- Create a historic preservation overlay district to protect historic buildings and places throughout the downtown and other areas of the city.

PROJECT SPONSOR

City of Berne Plan Commission

ESTIMATED COST

\$75,000

TIMEFRAME

Short (6 months to 1 year)

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Local

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Berne Board of Zoning Appeals

STRATEGY 2

Streetscape improvements along Main Street

RATIONALE

Main Street has recently been the subject of high-profile improvements, including the Clock Tower Plaza. The gap between the plaza and the rest of the downtown represents an immense opportunity to upgrade the city center's look and feel. The presence of a significant development opportunity at the northwest corner of Main Street (SR 218) and US 27 will help future anchor prospects (see separate CPS for that site below).

POSSIBLE TASK LIST

- Have the Chamber of Commerce convene a lunchtime meeting of corridor property owners to discuss the potential and interest for the project. Based on participation and interest, form a committee of property owners to oversee a solicitation process.
- Identify underutilized parcels or downtown developments that can be used for infill development.
- Provide proper updates to sidewalks throughout downtown.
- Consider development standards supporting connectivity and urban design, such as reduced setback requirements, parking requirements, and increasing alternative transportation downtown.

DISCUSSION

The focus should be on identifying and securing a “look and feel” for the corridor that integrates existing uses while identifying properties that can be improved. The presence of Moser Motor Sales in this corridor represents a design challenge but perhaps can be mitigated with some suitable design features on the north end of the show lot.

PROJECT SPONSOR

City of Berne

ESTIMATED COST

Dependent on types of improvements, but starting budget of \$250,000

TIMEFRAME

Medium (2 to 3 years)

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Local, OCRA

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Berne CDC, Chamber of Commerce

STRATEGY 3

Downtown Workshare Space Development

RATIONALE

Although telecommuting has been an option for employees over the past decade, the COVID pandemic increased the need for the option to work from home. A market has coalesced around individuals who telecommute yet want to be able to have a change of environment or secure reliable broadband services. Many downtowns in Indiana and the Midwest have started offering these services.

POSSIBLE TASK LIST

- Form an exploratory committee of interested partners, including but not limited to the ones listed.
- Identify example downtown workshare spaces in the States of Indiana and Ohio and conduct a mobile tour of them. Interviews with administrators of these spaces should be undertaken to determine successful development/promotional strategies and feasible market rents.
- List the characteristics of the workshare spaces visited that were seen as desirable.
- Survey Downtown Berne for possible opportunities for implementation. First-floor vacancies, prominent locations, broadband service, and local amenities should all be considered.
- Develop cost estimates for implementation and compare leasable square footage to identify capital and operating fund gaps.
- Research and discuss potential funding opportunities with appropriate State agencies (for example, OCRA).

DISCUSSION

Downtown Berne provides a good location for a new workshare site and might be the type of project that could inject new life into the local Chamber of Commerce. Generally, the increased foot traffic in the Downtown resulting from a coworking space would help support Downtown businesses.

PROJECT SPONSOR	City of Berne
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ESTIMATED COST	\$200,000
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TIMEFRAME	Medium (1 to 3 years)
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SOURCE OF FUNDS	Local, OCRA (State Community Development Block Grant)
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POTENTIAL PARTNERS	Chamber of Commerce
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STRATEGY 4

Solicit developers for the old-school site

RATIONALE

The intersection of US27 with SR218 (Main Street) is a prominent gateway into the city and its downtown. The sizable vacant property detracts from the overall aesthetic when approaching the clocktower from the west.

POSSIBLE TASK LIST

- Work with the community and local partners to identify the best use for the site, whether public or private.
- Connect with parks and recreation departments to identify opportunities to establish a park or redevelopment project on the site.
- With assistance from a communications company, develop marketing brochures, and associated information.
- Adams County EDC to issue Invitations to bid for the property.
- Host a developer's breakfast and tour of the site.

DISCUSSION

Resources are for developing a marketing piece that would be used to solicit interest from developers.

PROJECT SPONSOR

City of Berne

ESTIMATED COST

\$10,000

TIMEFRAME

Short (6 months to 1 year)

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Local

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Adams County Economic Development Corporation, Berne CDC, Decatur-Adams County Parks and Recreation Department, City of Berne Park Board

STRATEGY 5

Finish Geneva-Berne trail connection

RATIONALE

The Geneva-Berne trail connection is identified by IDNR as a planned rail-to-trail project. The survey revealed the need for more parks and recreation activities, with connecting Lehman Park to the Geneva-Berne trail noted as a priority. Over half of the respondents indicated that they would like to see Berne focus on expanded trails in the next five years.

POSSIBLE TASK LIST

- Coordinate with identified potential partners to begin development and fundraising for the project.
- Secure the funding needed to complete necessary upgrades and improvements by identifying grants and other potential funding sources.
- Apply for a rails-to-trails grant through the [Transportation Alternatives](#) federally funded program and identify other potential funding sources such as [federal and state programs](#).
- Connect the Geneva-Berne trail to other parks and recreation amenities such as Lehman Park.
- Plan for a diverse range of users and consider variations in physical abilities, perceptions of safety, trip types, and trip purposes for different users.
- Coordinate with the Town of Geneva and South Adams Trails to ensure a smooth and consistent connection between the two communities.

DISCUSSION

The Geneva-Berne trail connection will provide several miles of a mixed-use path for recreational activities and strengthen the connection between Berne and Geneva, providing a more robust gateway into Berne.

PROJECT SPONSOR City of Berne

ESTIMATED COST \$3,500,000

TIMEFRAME Short (6 months to 1 year)

SOURCE OF FUNDS Local, federal, and state grants

POTENTIAL PARTNERS South Adams Trails Corporation, Town of Geneva, City of Berne Park Board, Decatur-Adams County Parks and Recreation Department, Berne CDC

STRATEGY 6

Gateway Implementation Downtown

RATIONALE

Berne's downtown is a crucial asset and destination in the community. Over 75 percent of residents said they enjoyed spending time in downtown Berne but also indicated that they would like to see beautification improvements.

POSSIBLE TASK LIST

- Distinguish specific areas for a potential gateway on Main Street's east and west sides.
- Identify potential stakeholders, such as local downtown businesses, who would be most affected by additional downtown gateways and meet to discuss the possible project.
- Propose several potential gateway designs and treatments ranging in cost in-house or hire a consultant by issuing an RFQ.
- Identify and acquire funding through a variety of sources.

DISCUSSION

Gateways identify different areas in a community and help promote unique placemaking and identity throughout the community. East and west gateways in Berne's downtown would mark the site as an individual district in the community and encourage more visitors while promoting the placemaking and identity of downtown.

PROJECT SPONSOR

City of Berne

ESTIMATED COST

\$10,000 - \$30,000 depending on gateway design

TIMEFRAME

Short (6 months to 1 year)

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Local

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Berne CDC, Adams County Economic Development Corporation, Local Downtown Businesses

STRATEGY 7

Lehman Park Improvements Phase 1: Perimeter Roadways

RATIONALE

In August of 2022, the City of Berne completed a conceptual master plan for Lehman Park, which identified updates and improvements to the park and developed phasing for the project. Public outreach revealed the city's need for more parks and recreation opportunities. The public also specified updates and additional amenities they would like to see added to Lehman Park.

DISCUSSION

Phase 1 is the first of four updates to Lehman Park. A critical and obtainable first project may consist of milling and resurfacing adjacent roads as necessary to create an organized street parking network. The roadway to the south, which is one-way, proposes a new right-of-way configuration with angled parking and a 10-foot sidewalk from the back of the curb.

PROJECT SPONSOR

City of Berne

ESTIMATED COST

\$115,000 - \$175,000 (Prices will vary based on location, variability, and current road condition).

TIMEFRAME

Short (6 months to 1 year)

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Local

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

City of Berne Park Board, Berne CDC, Decatur-Adams County Parks and Recreation Department.

POSSIBLE TASK LIST

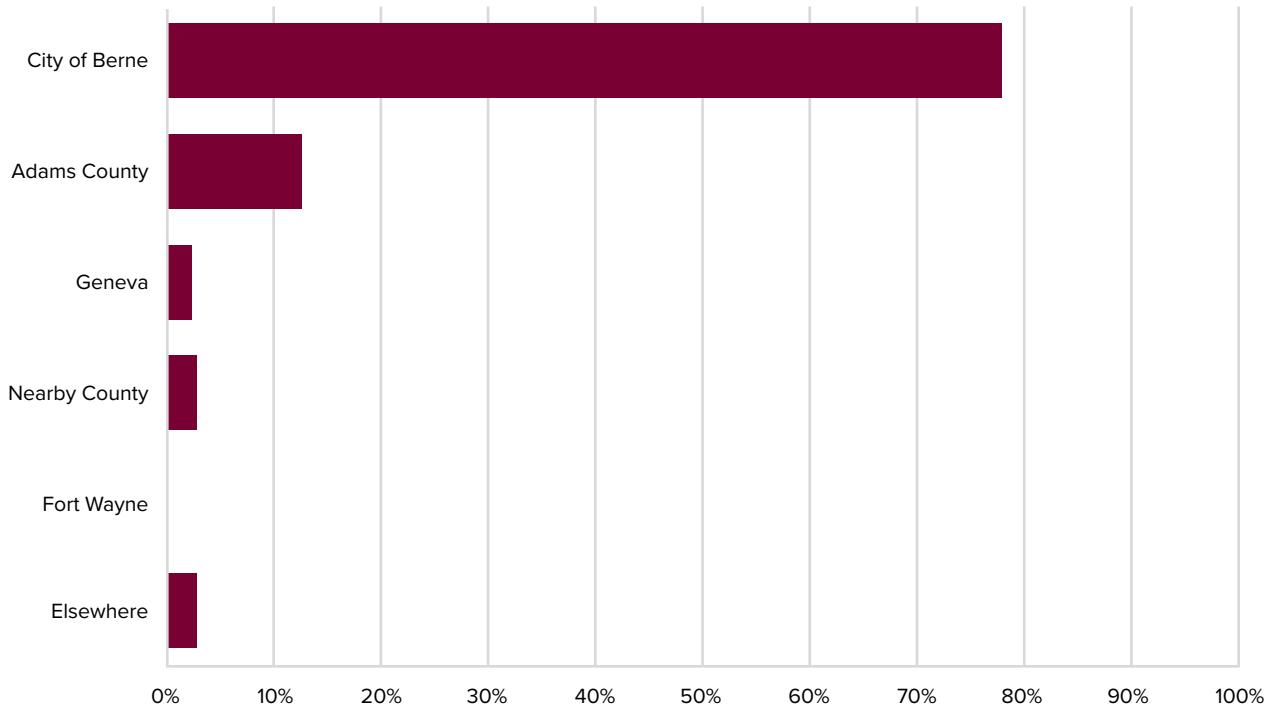
- Mill and resurface adjacent roadways to organize a network for street parking and peripheral pedestrian connectivity.
- Repurpose the existing Lehman Park sign and begin preparations for an improved park entrance to the north.
- Propose a new right-of-way configuration with angled parking and a 10-foot sidewalk on the one-way road to the south of the site.
- Hire a survey team to geographically map essential features such as landmarks, utilities, topography, existing vegetation, and other areas of concern.
- Identify potential sources for funding, such as the [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#) and other [state and federal programs](#) through the department of natural resources.
- Coordinate with potential partners to form an advisory or steering committee to oversee the development of the conceptual Lehman Park Master Plan and transition between phases and implementation.
- Continue to support facilities and programming that enhance and promote Lehman Park and other cultural destinations within the city.

APPENDIX

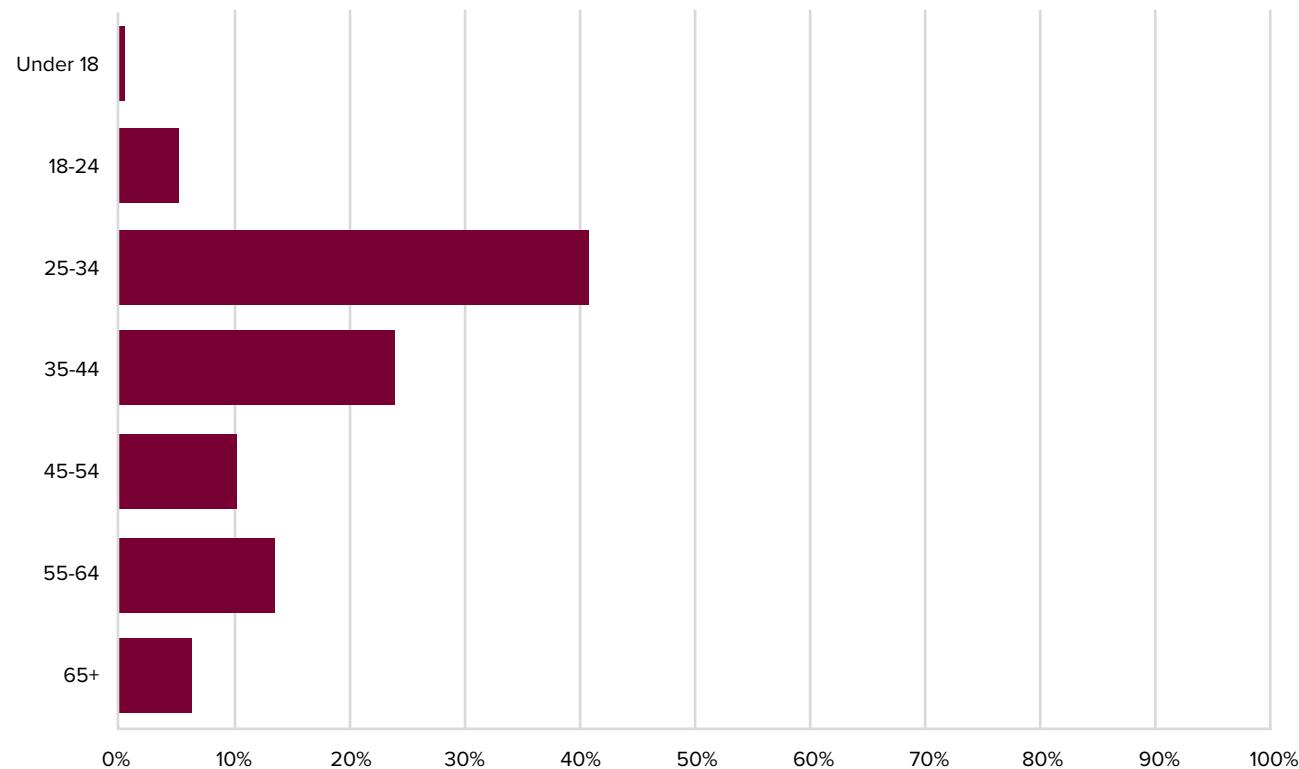
ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

The survey was available for roughly two months and was advertised by the City and the local paper. Project team members also heavily advertised the survey at Berne Swiss Days and were available to answer additional questions or comments about the project. Overall, the survey received 258 responses.

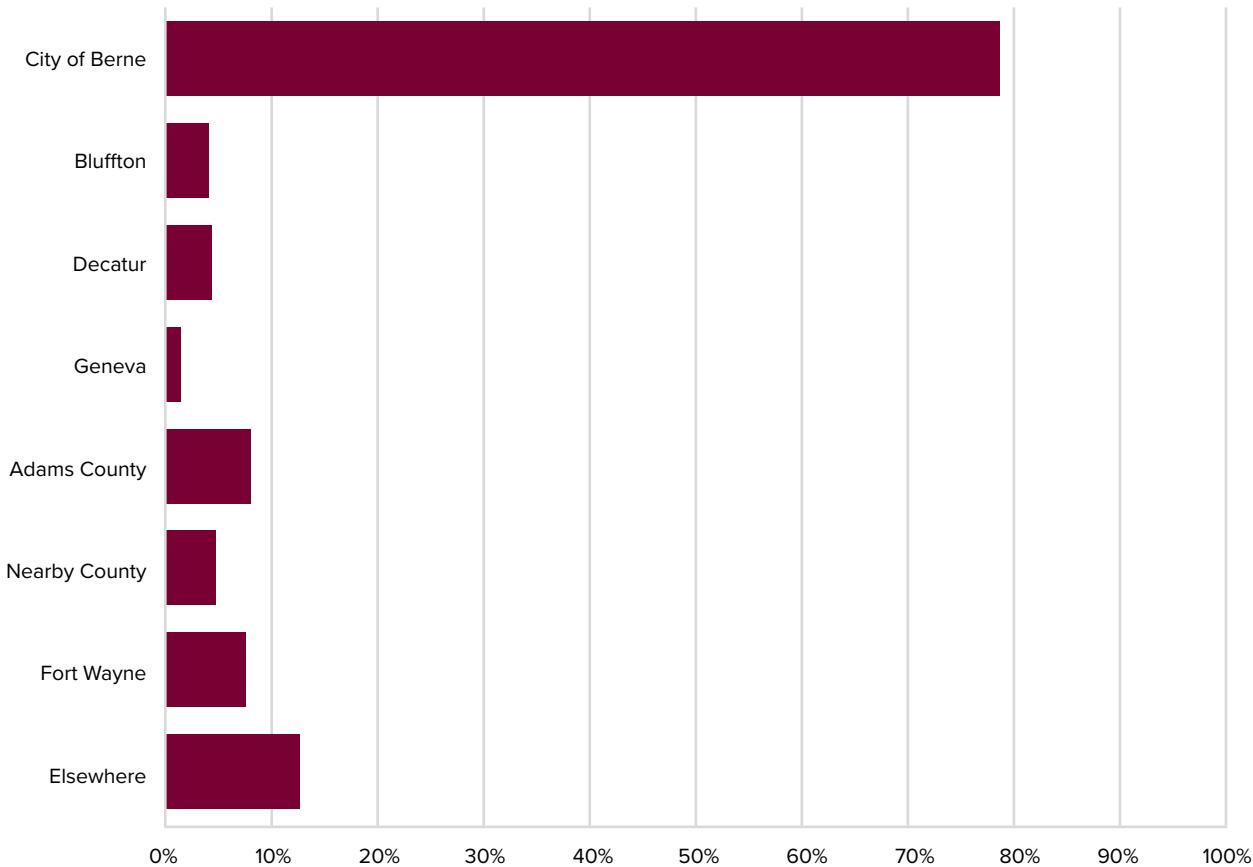
ARE YOU A RESIDENT?



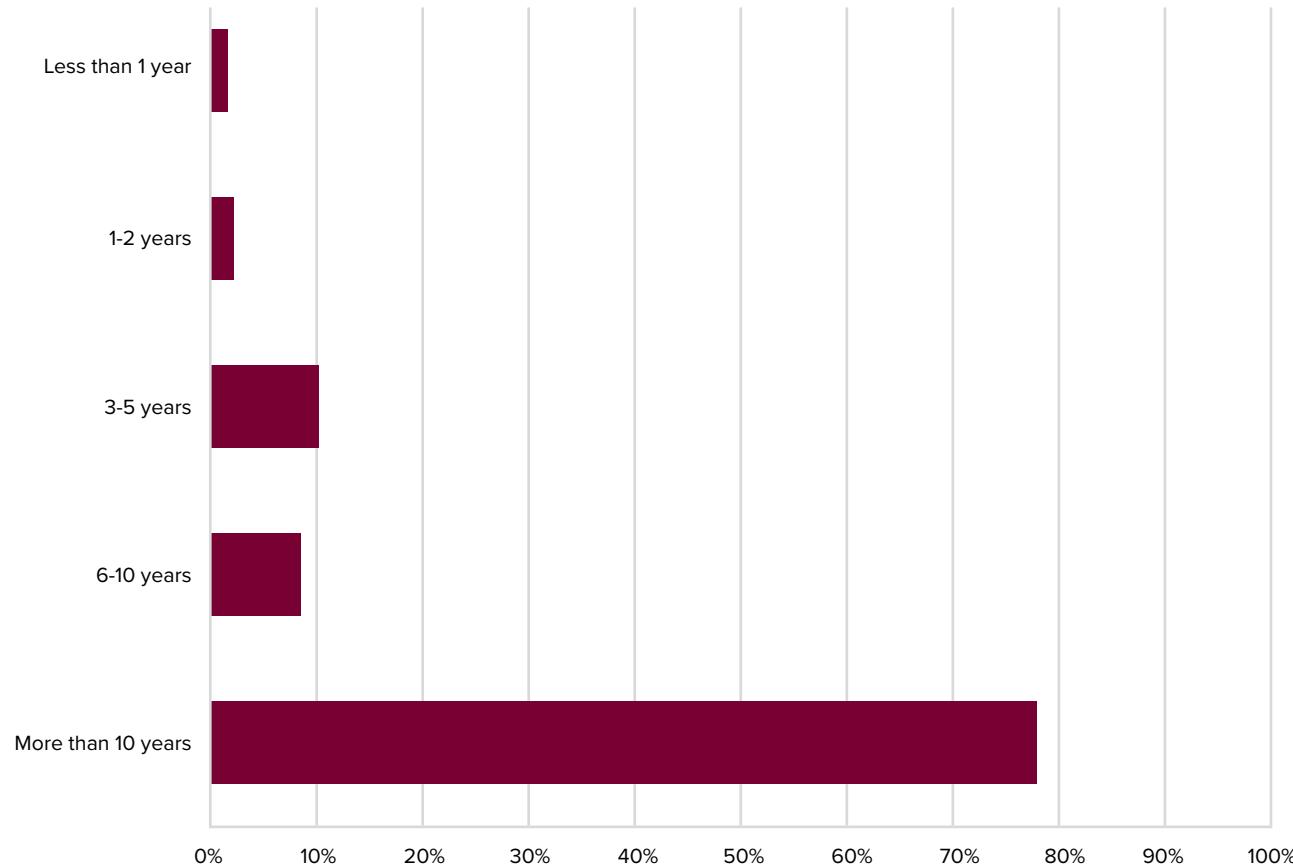
HOW OLD ARE YOU?



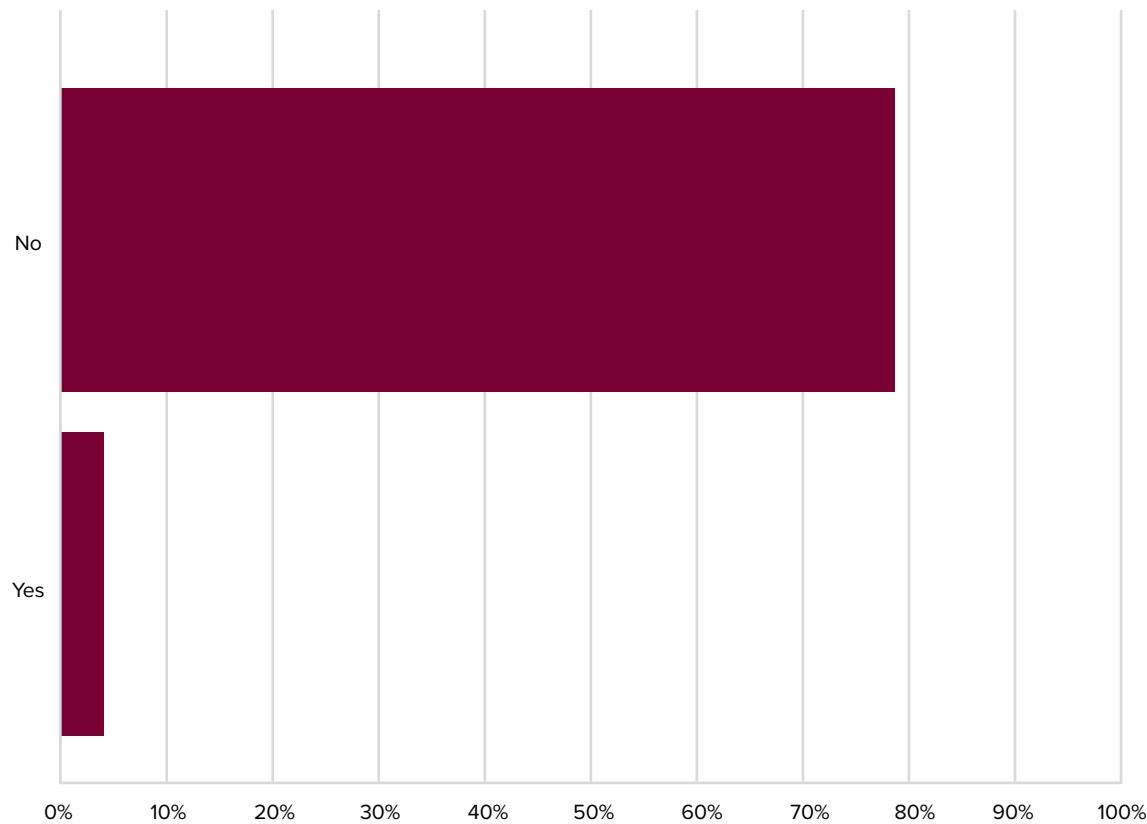
WHERE DO YOU WORK?



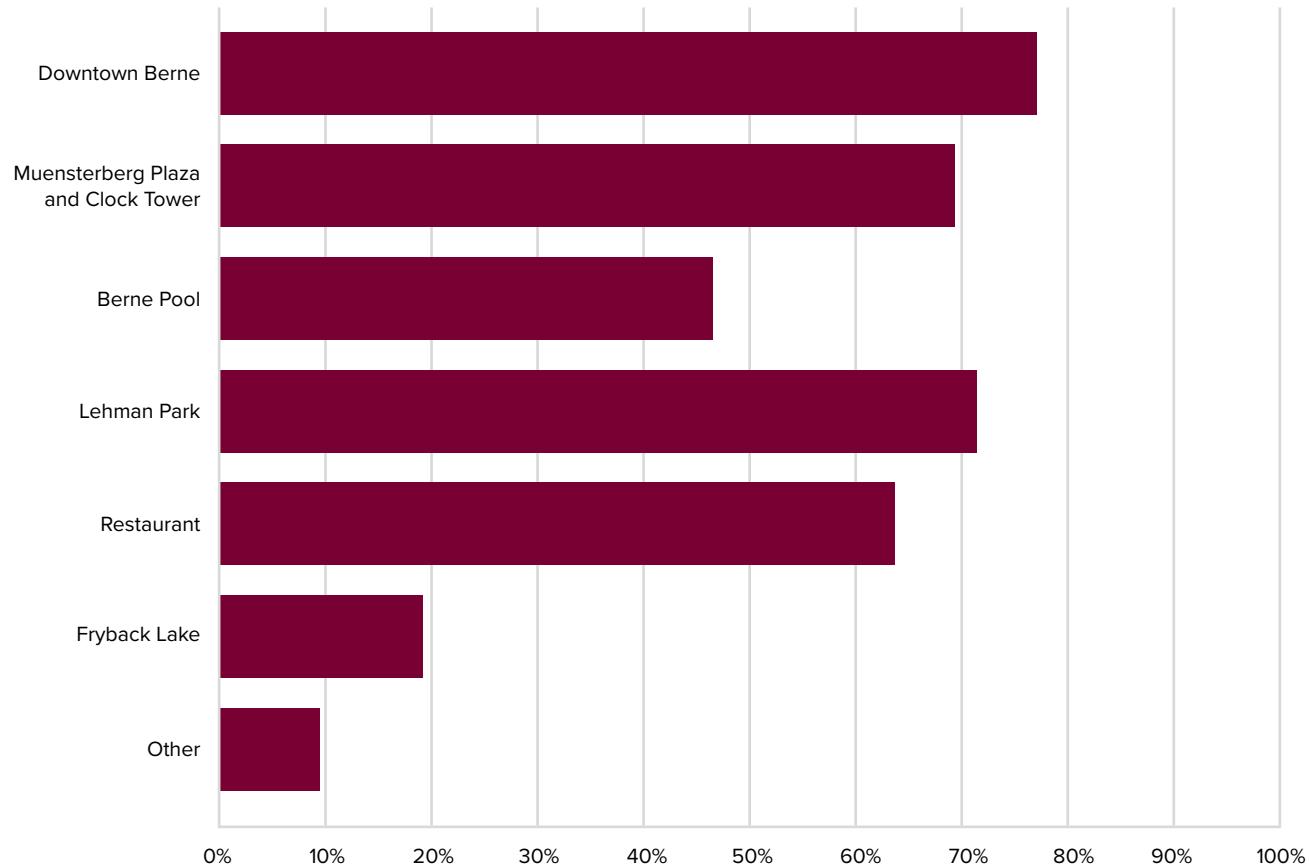
HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THIS COMMUNITY?



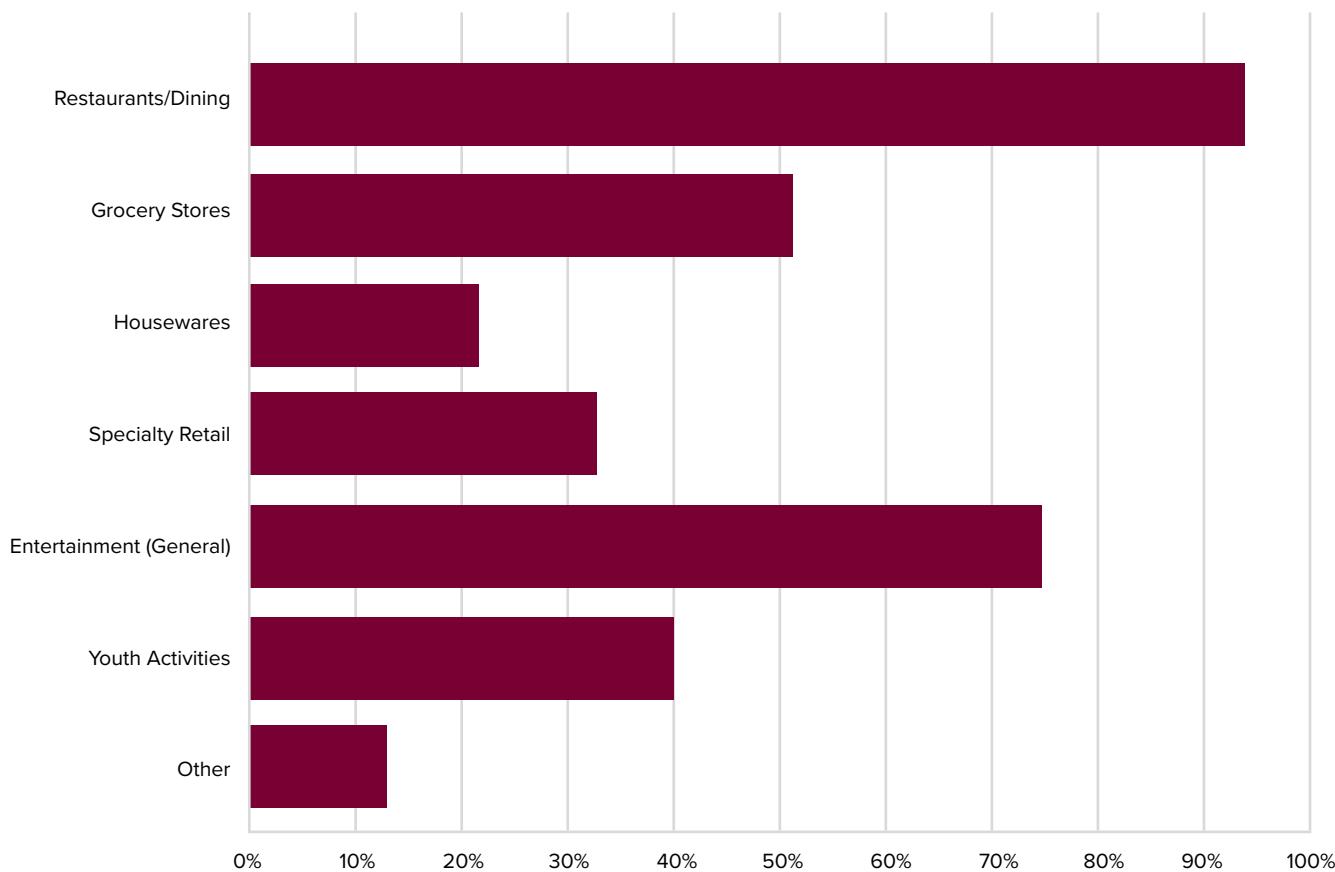
**DOES ANYONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAVE A PHYSICAL,
COGNITIVE, OR PERCEPTUAL LIMITATION?**



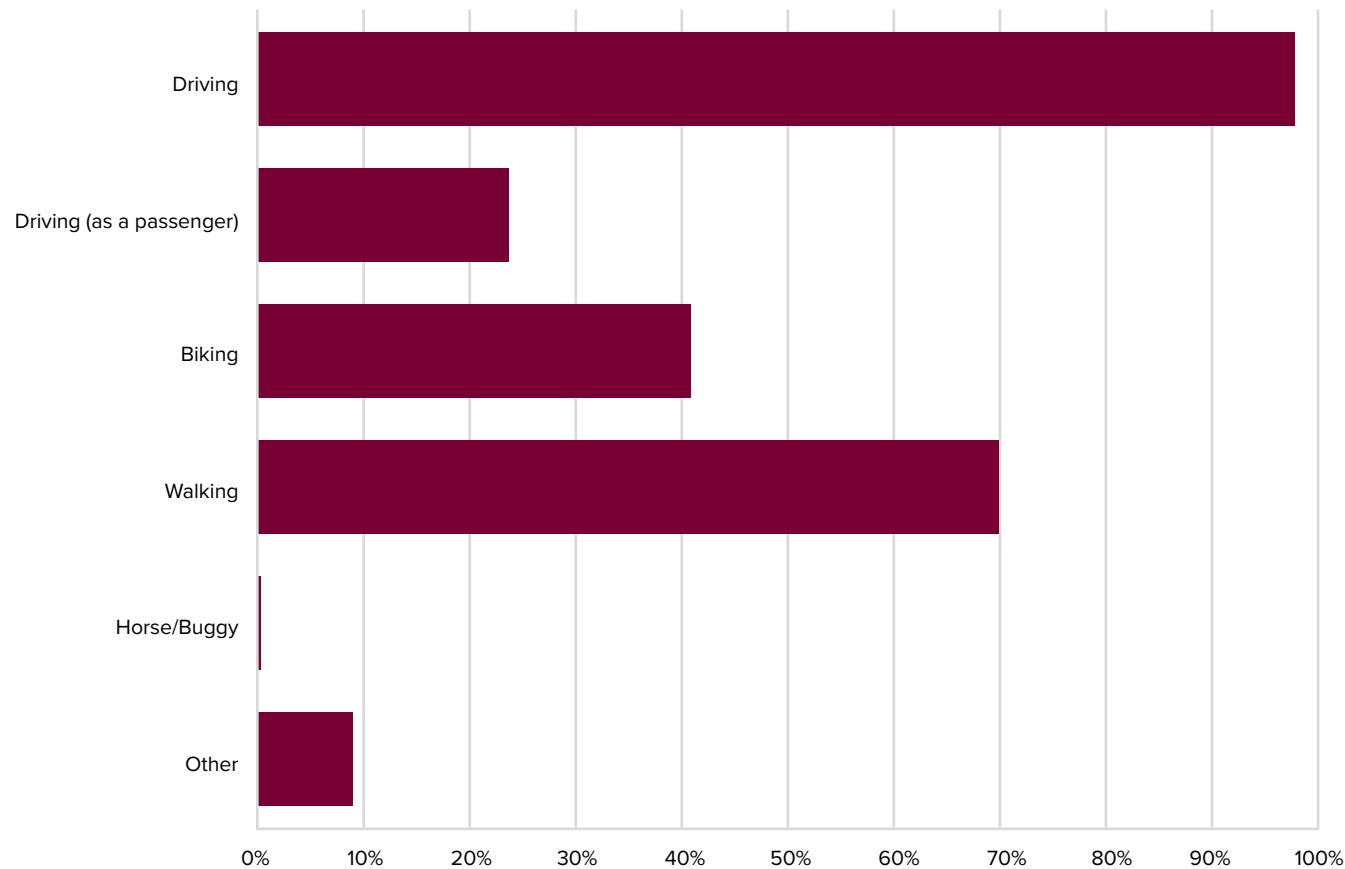
WHAT PLACES DO YOU ENJOY VISITING IN THE COMMUNITY?



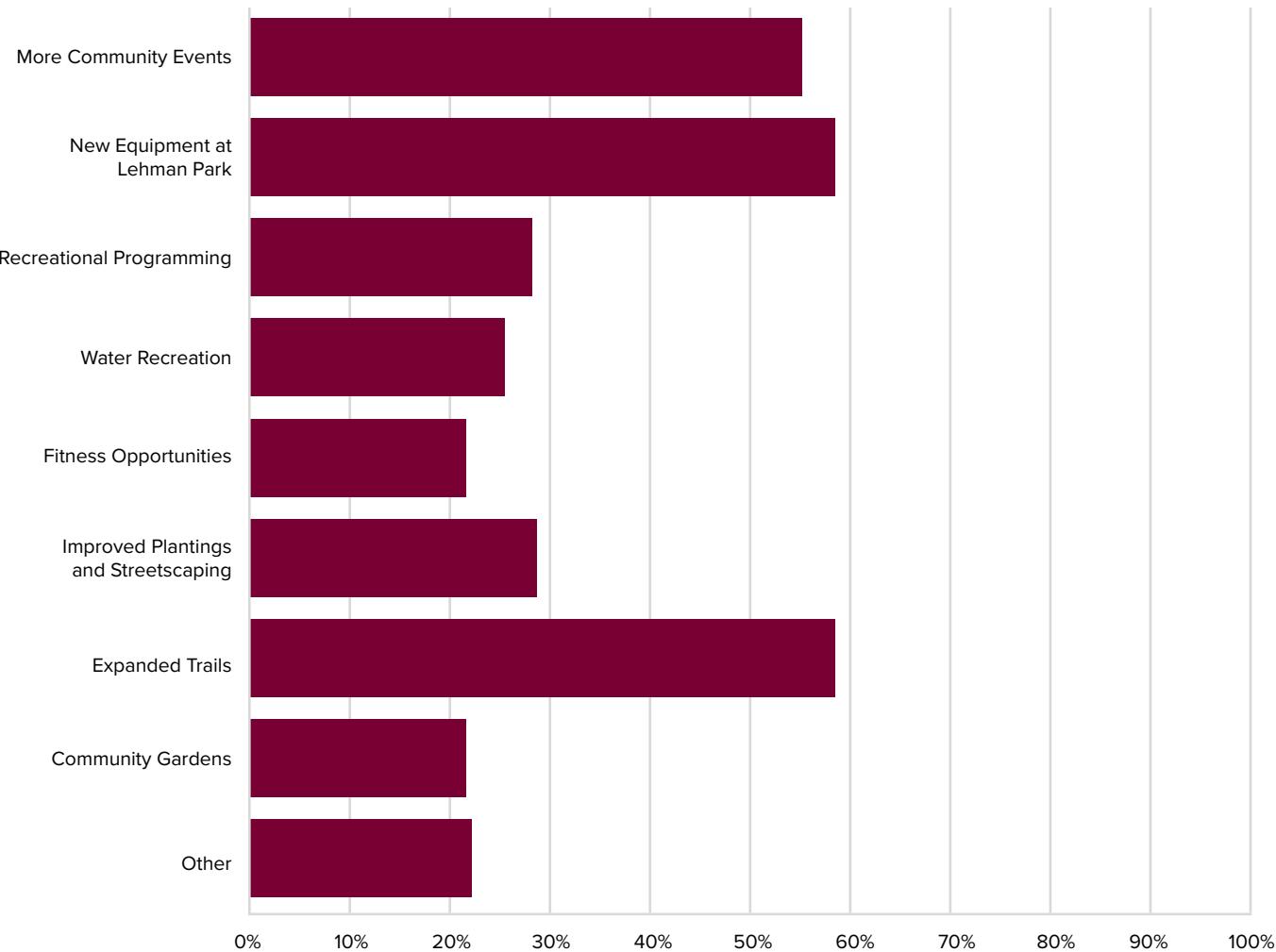
WHAT DOES BERNE NEED THAT YOU HAVE TO GO ELSEWHERE TO FIND?



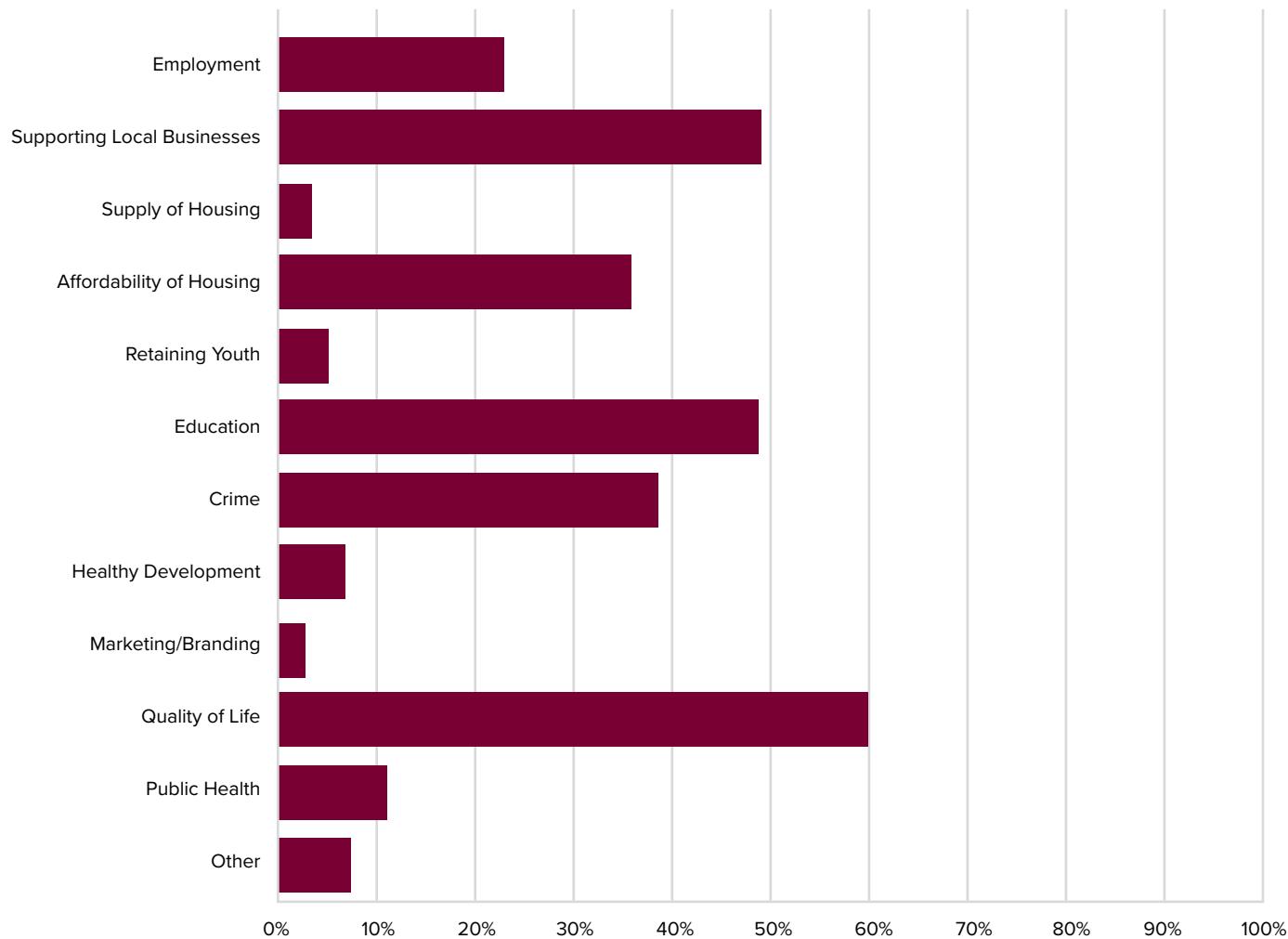
HOW DO YOU MOVE AROUND BERNE?



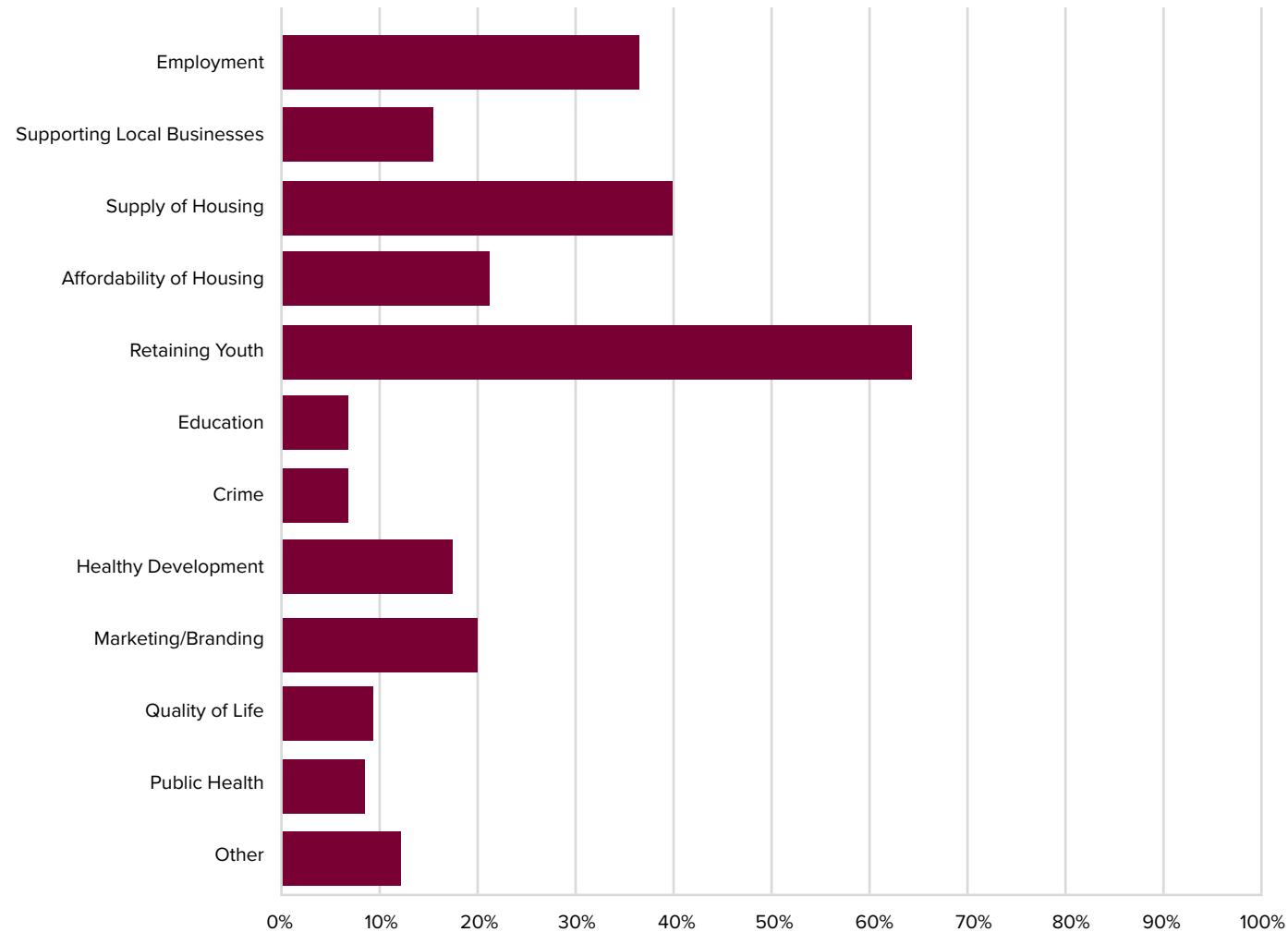
WHAT SHOULD BERNE BE FOCUSING ON OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?



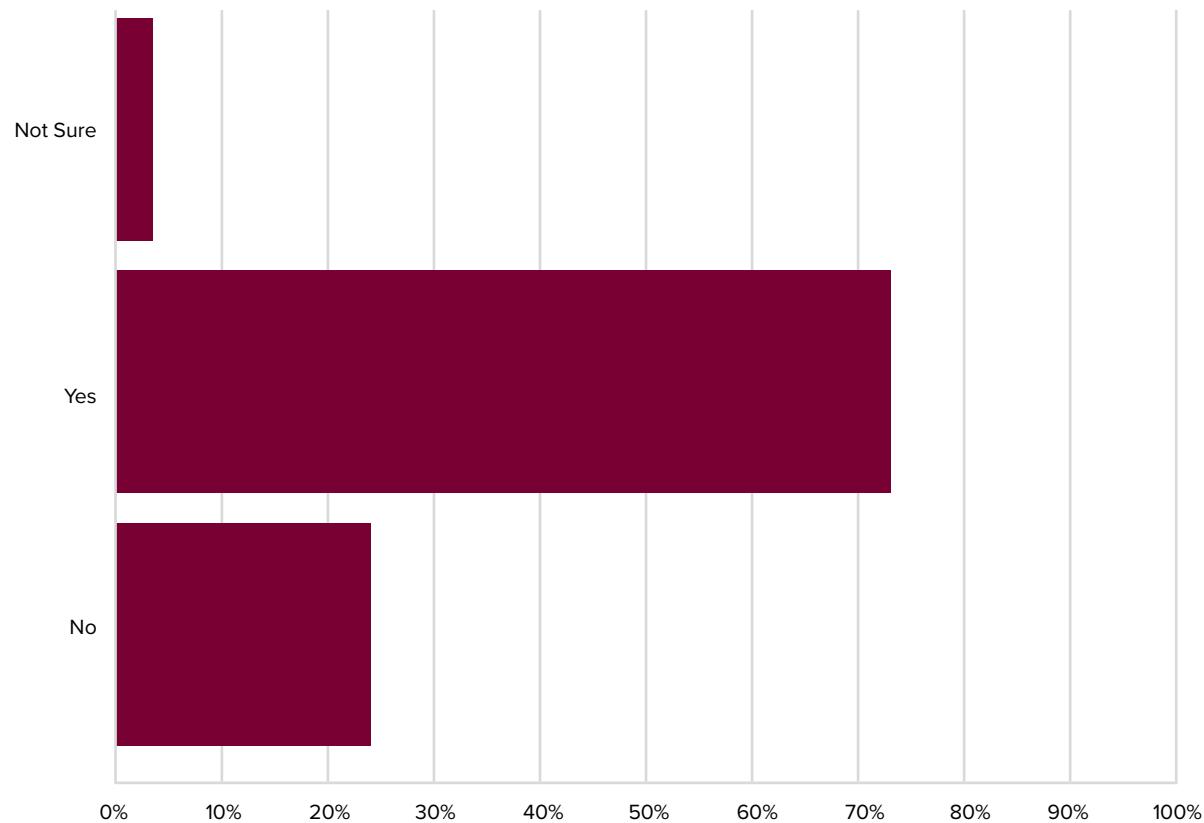
WHAT ARE BERNE'S GREATEST ASSETS?



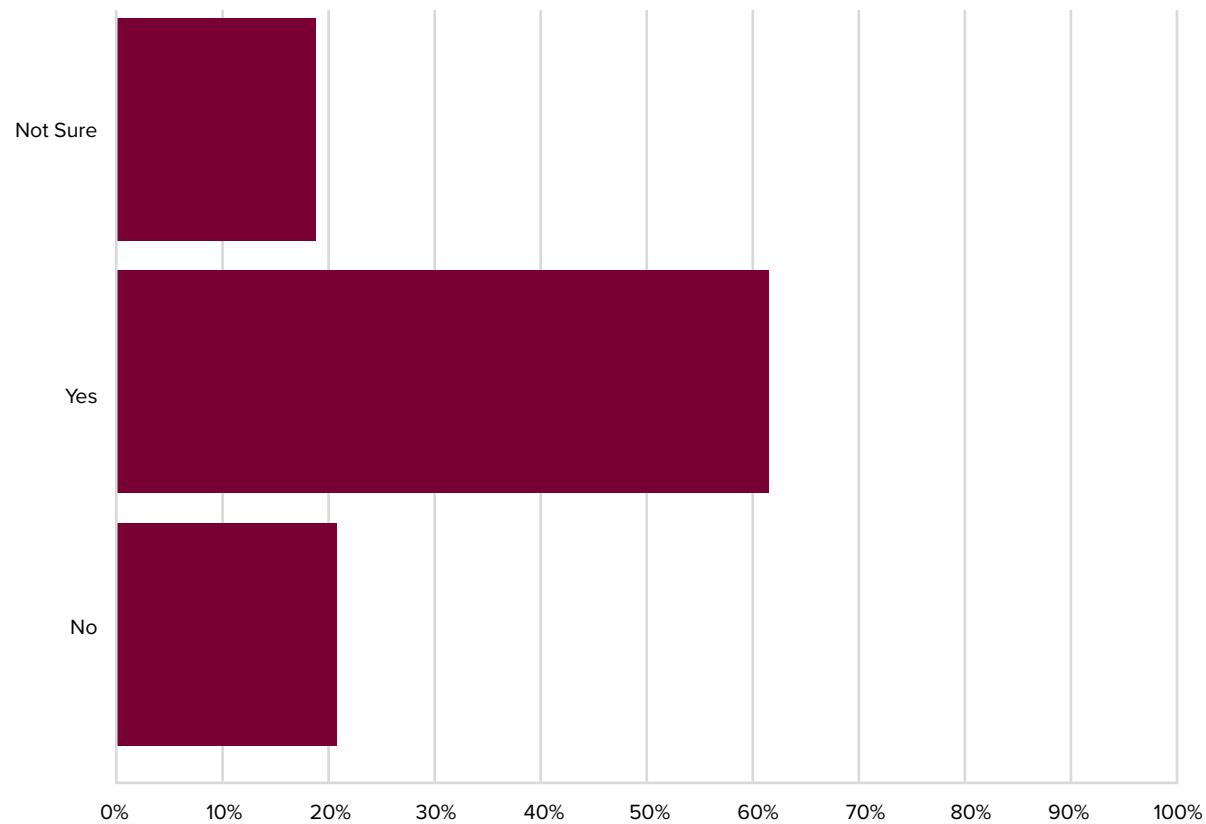
WHAT ARE BERNE'S BIGGEST OBSTACLES FOR THE FUTURE?



**HAVE YOU USED THE CITY OF BERNE'S FACILITIES
FOR PERSONAL EVENTS, SUCH AS LEHMAN PARK?**



SHOULD BERNE EXPLORE ADDING ADDITIONAL PARKS TO THE COMMUNITY?



PUBLIC OUTREACH RESULTS

Public outreach was held for two days at the Berne Swiss Days event in July 2021. The public could comment on boards of Lehman Park and the city about things they wished to see in the future or existing challenges or assets. Project team members were available at the booth for additional questions and comments from the public. People who visited the booth were also encouraged to take the online survey.



Public comments regarding Lehman Park at Berne Swiss Days event.
Source: American Structurepoint.



Public comments regarding the City of Berne at the Swiss Days event.
Source: American Structurepoint.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

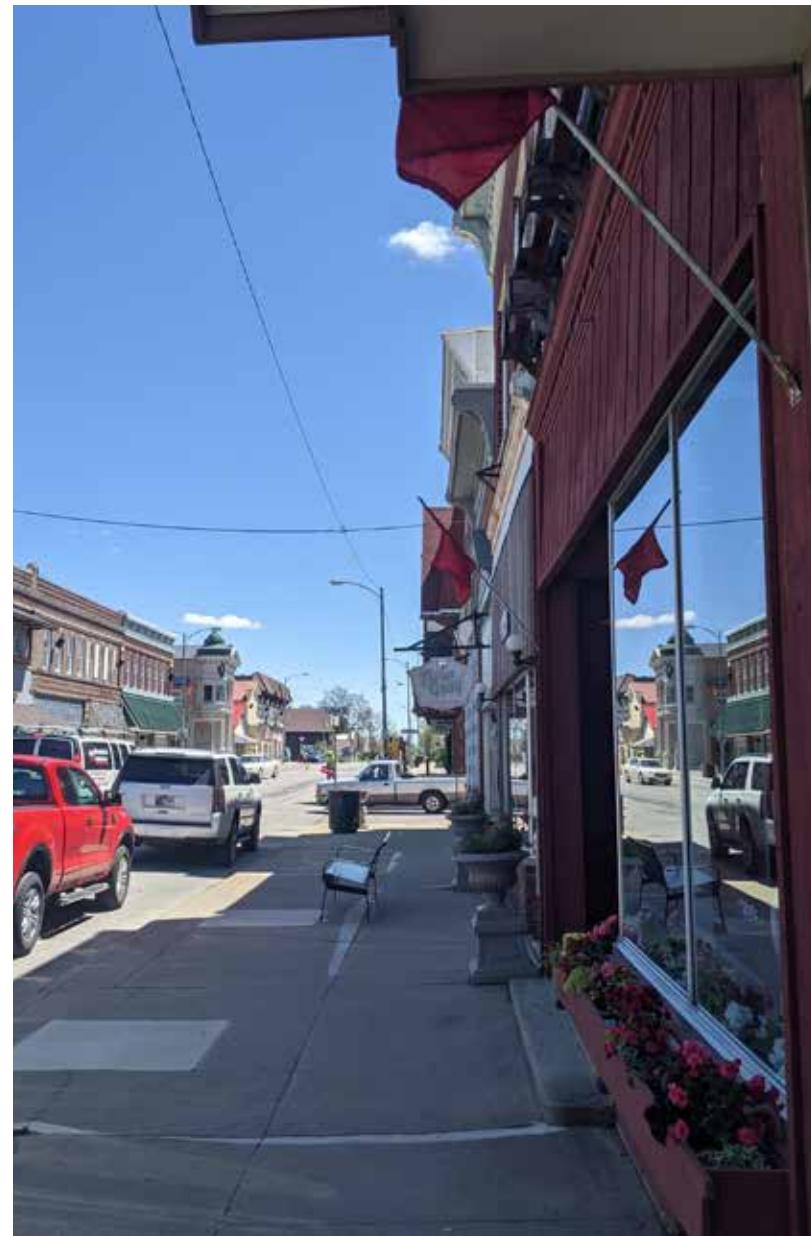
DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS¹

OVERVIEW

In 2020, Berne's total population was 4,173, and the US Census Bureau projects its population to grow by 2.98 percent and reach 4,423 by 2025. Overall, the city's population has increased 7.3 percent since 2010. The city's median age decreased slightly from 41.8 (2010) to 38.4 (2020).

Individuals between the ages of 15 and 34 make up 25.7 percent of Berne's population. This age group has increased by 3.3 percent since 2010 and is also consistent with population trends statewide. On the other hand, Berne has seen a 5.2 percent decrease since 2010 in its population of individuals 75 years and above. Individuals 75 years and above comprise of 10.2 percent of Berne's total population.

¹All data was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and ESRI Business Analyst.



KEY FINDINGS

Berne's demographics align with similar trends in Bluffton, Monroe, Decatur, and Adams County. Overall, the median age in Berne is 38.4 years old, which is consistent with Decatur and Bluffton. 95 percent of Berne's population is Caucasian non-Hispanic, similar to Decatur and Bluffton, whose populations are 93 percent Caucasian non-Hispanic. Adams County was 96 percent white. 5.0 percent of the Berne population is of Hispanic origin, followed by 2.1 percent who are of two or more races, 1.7 percent who are of some other race alone, 1.4 percent who are Black alone, and 1.1 percent who are Asian alone. American Indians are the remainder of the population at 0.1 percent.

ESRI's Diversity Index illustrates a geographic area's racial and ethnic diversity as a factor from 0 (lowest diversity factor) to 100 (highest diversity factor). The city's diversity factor in 2012 was 14.1. That number increased to 18.4 in 2020 and is expected to increase to 20.6 in 2025.

The number of households in Berne increased 8.51 percent to a total of 1,760 households in 2020. The total number of households in Berne is expected to increase by 3.35 percent by 2025. The average household size in Berne has remained consistent at 2.3 persons per household, which is comparable to Bluffton and Decatur.

Berne had seen a slight increase in its young adult population of 7.3 percent since 2010. 25.7 percent of Berne's population falls between the ages of 15-34, a 3.3 percent increase since 2010. High school graduate or equivalent is the highest level of education in Berne, Decatur, Monroe, Bluffton, and Adams County. Those who have obtained a bachelor's degree are the second-highest percentage of Berne's population, at 17.6 percent, and some college but no degree is the third-highest, at 15.8%.

Demographic Summary				
	2010	2020	2025 Projection	Percent of Change (2010-2020)
Population				
State of Indiana	6,483,802	6,808,577	6,982,252	5.01%
Adams County	34,387	36,032	36,811	4.78%
Berne	4,004	4,173	4,423	7.27%
Decatur	9,388	9,459	9,539	0.76%
Monroe	846	921	955	8.87%
Bluffton	9,899	10,322	10,538	4.27%
Median Age				
State of Indiana	36.9	38.5	39.2	-
Adams County	33.9	34.7	35.4	-
Berne	41.8	38.4	39.5	-
Decatur	37	38.9	39.4	-
Monroe	34.5	32.6	33.3	-
Bluffton	38.1	39.4	40	-
Median Household Income				
State of Indiana	-	\$57,268.00	\$62,880.00	-
Adams County	-	\$52,846.00	\$55,296.00	-
Berne	-	\$48,248.00	\$51,894.00	-
Decatur	-	\$47,206.00	\$50,474.00	-
Monroe	-	\$56,547.00	\$59,682.00	-
Bluffton	-	\$41,514.00	\$44,519.00	-

Note: “-” means not applicable to this category.

Demographic Summary				
	2010	2020	2025 Projection	Percent of Change (2010-2020)
Households				
State of Indiana	2,502,154	2,654,711	2,724,438	6.10%
Adams County	12,011	12,630	12,918	5.15%
Berne	1,622	1,760	1,819	8.51%
Decatur	4,011	4,123	4,183	2.79%
Monroe	312	341	355	9.29%
Bluffton	4,113	4,330	4,436	5.28%
Race and Ethnicity				
Berne, IN				
White	96.50%	94.60%	93.60%	-1.90%
Black	0.50%	1.10%	1.40%	0.60%
American Indian	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%	0.00%
Asian	0.50%	0.80%	1.10%	0.30%
Pacific Islander	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Some other Race	1.40%	1.60%	1.70%	0.20%
Two or more Races	0.90%	1.70%	2.10%	0.80%
Hispanic or Latino	4.00%	4.60%	5.00%	0.60%

Note: “-” means not applicable to this category.

EMPLOYMENT²

LABOR FORCE/PLACE OF RESIDENCE

The median household income in Berne was \$48,248 and is projected to increase by 7 percent by 2025. Decatur's median household income is most comparable to Berne's at \$47,206 and is expected to increase by 6.5 percent by 2025. Similarly, the poverty rate in Berne is decreasing. Berne's poverty rate fell from 14 percent in 2010 to 11 percent in 2018, measured by the 2018 American Community Survey.

WORKFORCE/PLACE OF WORK³

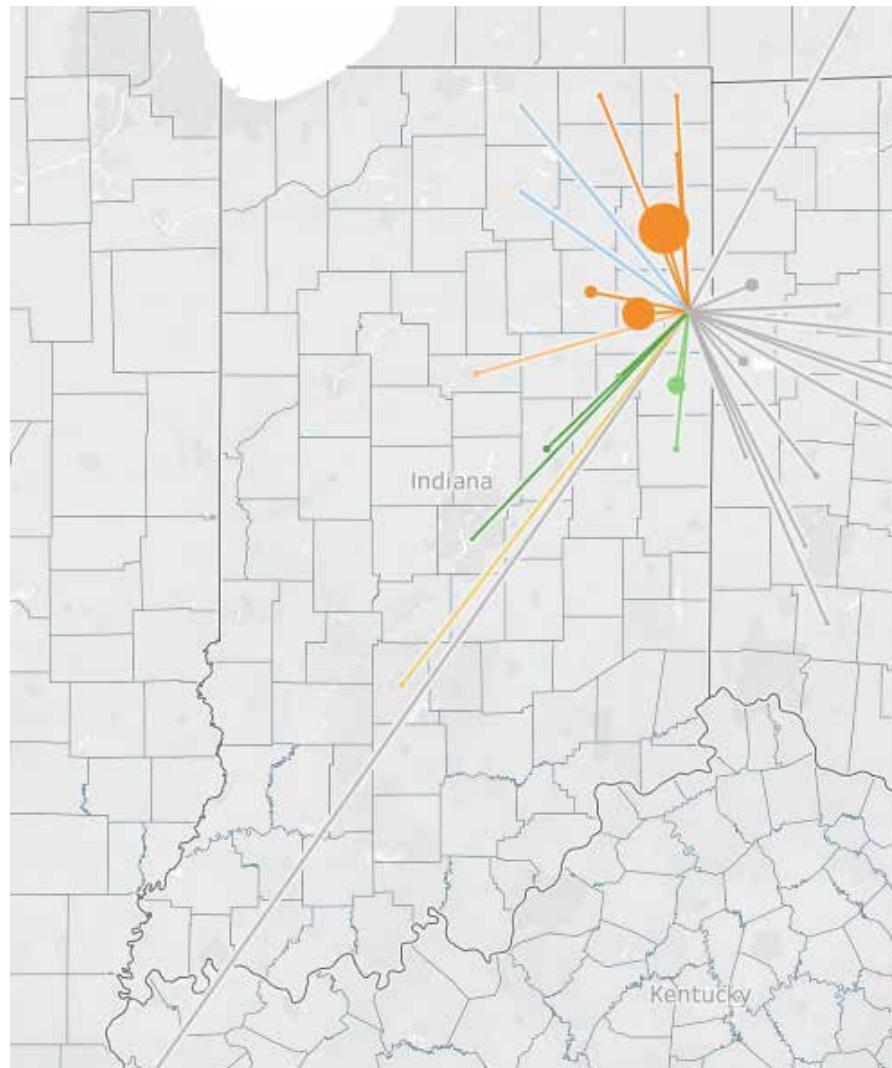
Berne had a high portion (48.8 percent) of the workforce engaged in office work, clerical, administrative, sales, professional, and technology (i.e., "white-collar" workers) categories. Those with professional occupations were the largest portion of the white-collar sector at 18.3 percent of Berne's workforce.

35.7 percent of the workforce was employed in production, craft, artisanal, and repair occupations such as machine operators and inspectors; transportation and moving occupations; handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers (i.e., "blue-collar" workers). The production occupation is the largest workforce in the blue-collar section, with 15.9 percent of Berne's workforce. Manufacturing was the second-highest employed industry, comprised of 31.6 percent of the workforce. The remaining workers were employed in the service industry categories, including police and fire, animal care, personal caregivers, janitorial, housekeepers, cooks, food servers, and healthcare employees.

Berne and the surrounding areas had a high unemployment rate of 11.6 percent for individuals over 16. While Berne had an unemployment rate of 11.6 percent in 2020, Adams County was at 12.2 percent. The high unemployment rate in these areas is likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

²All data was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and ESRI Business Analyst.

³desktop.arcgis.com/en/arcmap/latest/extensions/business-analyst/essential-business-analyst-vocabulary-terms.html



Destination of Adams County labor force.

Source: stats.indiana.edu.

Commuting Patterns

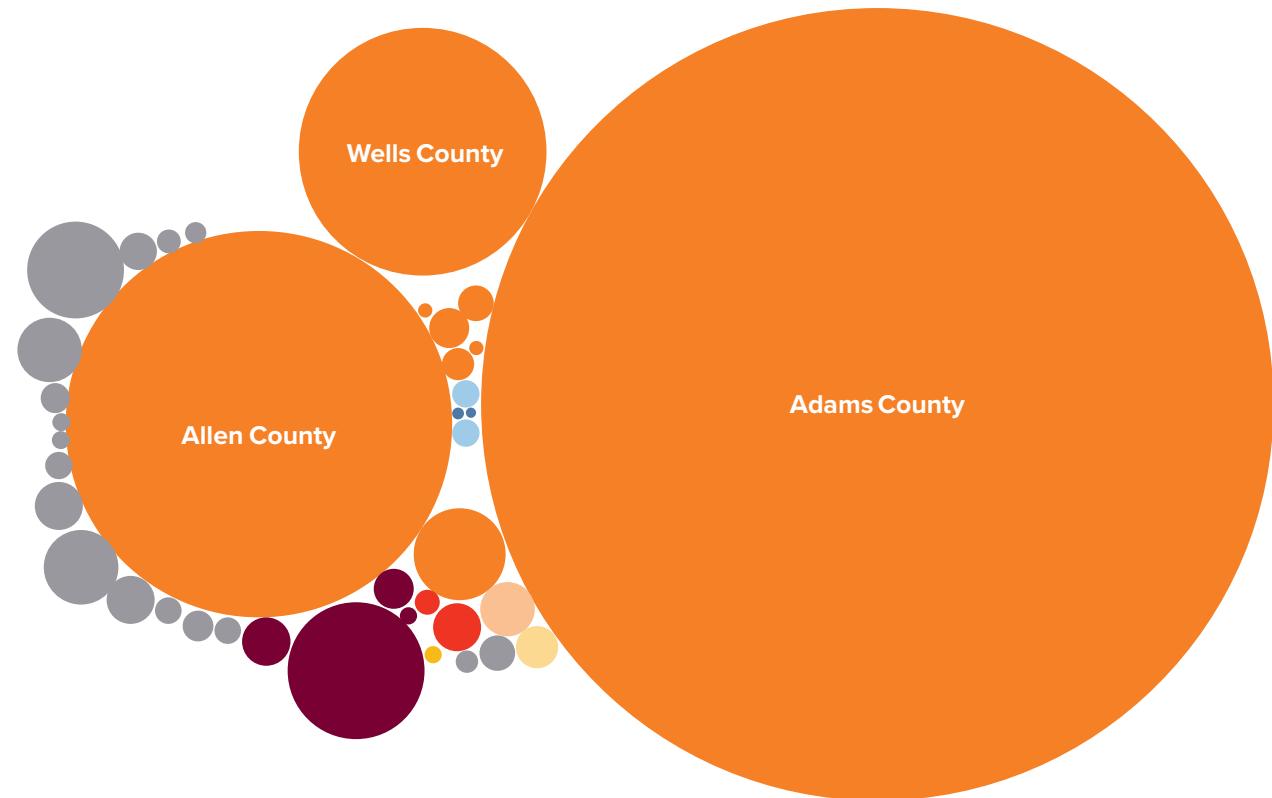
Allen County (Fort Wayne) was both the top origin point for those commuting to work in Adams County and the destination of those commuting from Adams County. Wells County is second to Allen County for in-and-out commuters. Many commuters coming to work in Adams County are from Ohio. Commuters who appear to come to the county from long distances or residents who work far away are likely to be remote employees.

Workers

- 10
- 500
- 1,000
- 1,500
- 2,000
- 2,340

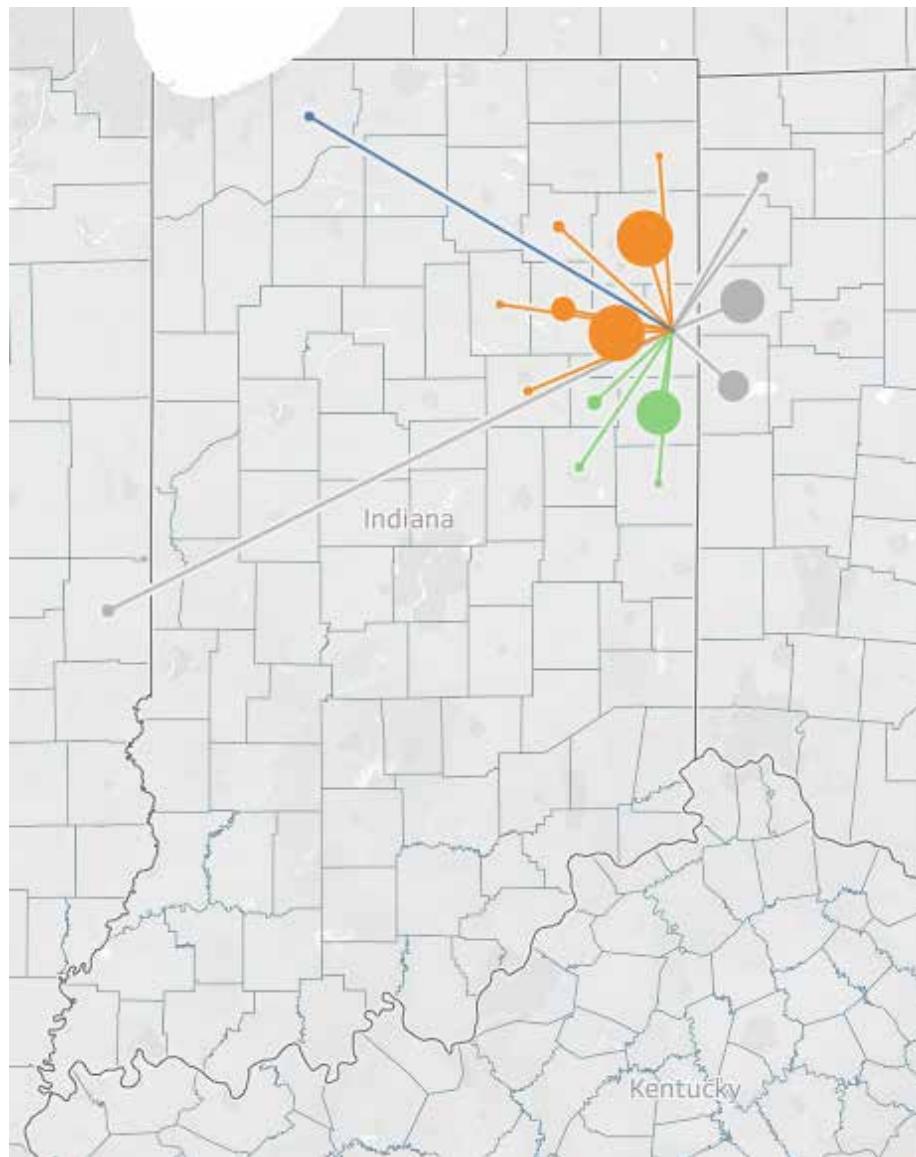
Economic Growth Region

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 8
- Out of State



Where Adams County Residents Work.

Source: American Community Survey 2014-2018 via stats.indiana.edu.



*Origin of the Adams County labor force.
Source: OpenStreetMap.*



Where Adams County Workers Live.

Source: American Community Survey 2014-2018 via stats.indiana.edu.

HOUSING

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

ESRI's housing affordability index (HAI) measures the financial ability of a typical household to purchase an existing home in an area. HAI indexes of 100 represent an area that, on average, has sufficient household income to qualify for a loan on a home valued at the median home price.⁴ An index greater than 100 suggests the average area resident can easily afford a home. An HAI of less than 100 indicates that homes are less affordable. ESRI's home value estimates cover owner-occupied residences only. Berne has an HAI of 258, which suggests the average area resident can easily afford a home.

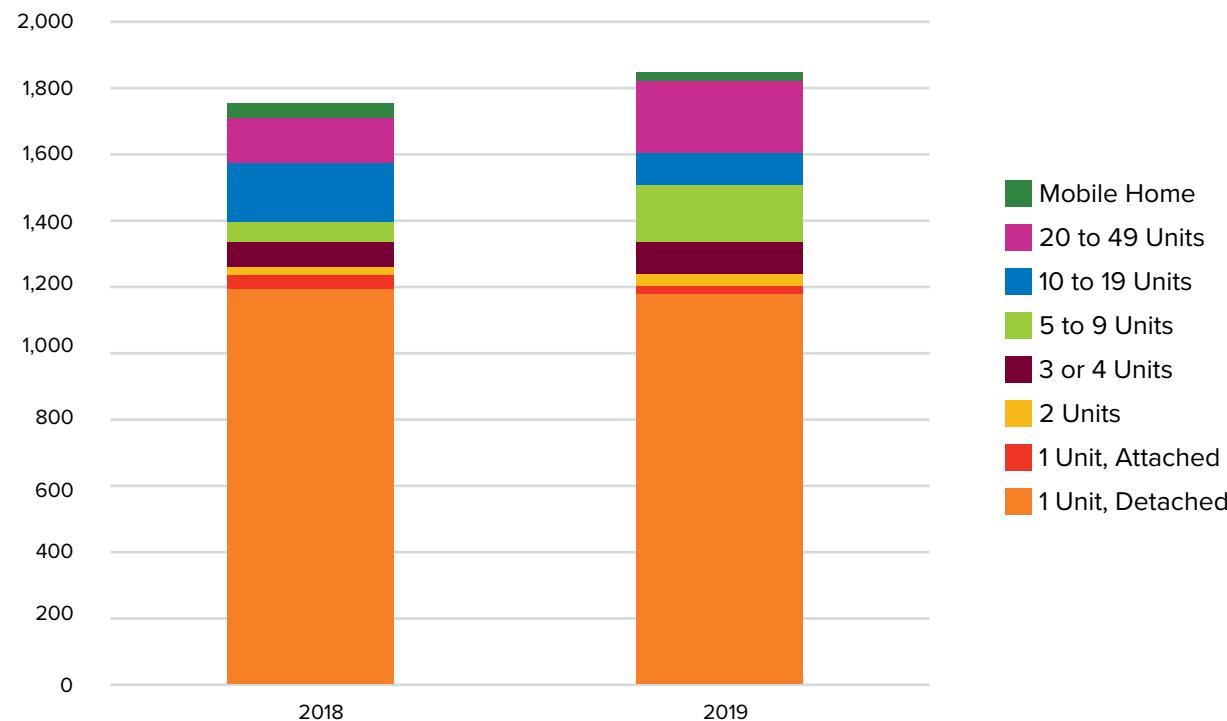
ESRI's Wealth Index compiles the average household income and average net worth. The concept of wealth is defined by more than above-average household income. Wealth also includes the value of material possessions and resources. ESRI captures both income and the accumulation of substantial wealth (the abundance of possessions and resources) in identifying the wealthiest areas in the country. The index represents the wealth of an area relative to the national level. Values exceeding 100 represent above-average wealth.⁵ Berne had a wealth index of 59 in 2020. Berne residents spent an average of 9.3 percent of their income on home mortgages. 23.2 percent of households own their home outright, 42.6 percent of households have a mortgage, and 34.2 percent are renter-occupied.

⁴ESRI: Housing Affordability in the U.S.

⁵Essential Vocabulary.

TYPE

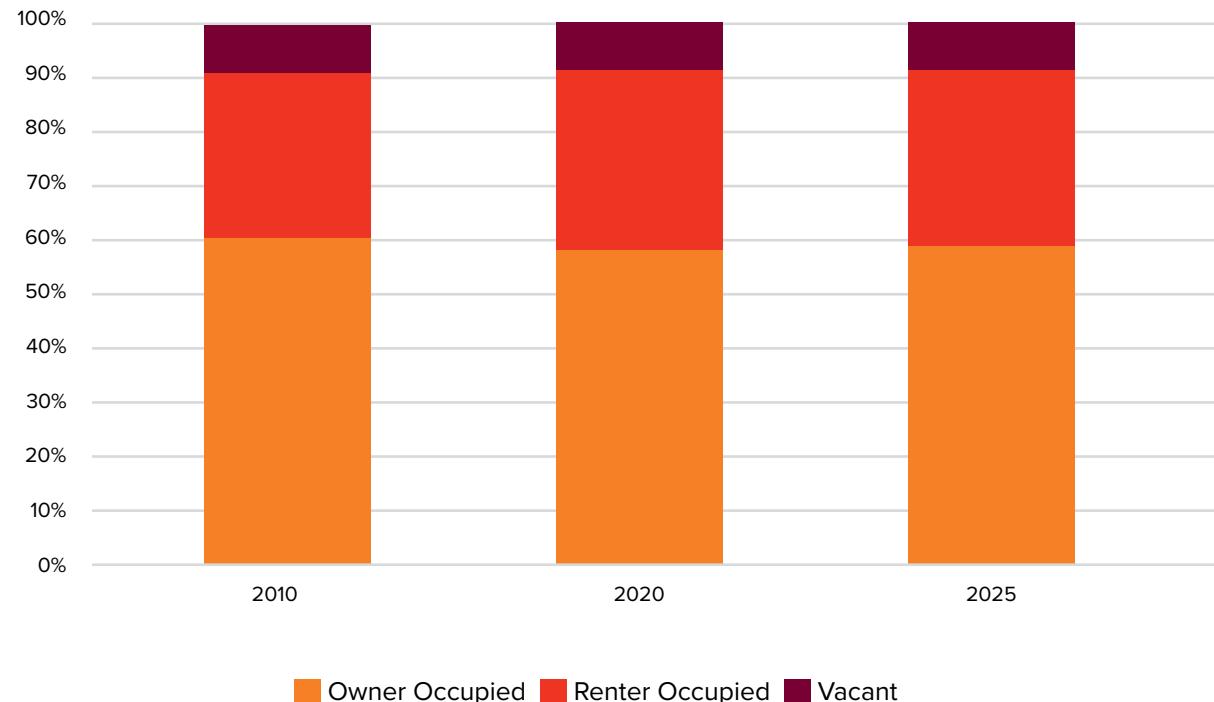
The largest number of homes in Berne are single-family homes, as shown below. The number of single-family homes decreased very slightly between 2010 and 2019.



Number of units in buildings containing homes.

Source: US Census Bureau and 2019 American Community Survey.

Most homes in Berne are owner-occupied, with the number of homeowners increasing between 2010 and 2020. The portion of renters decreased slightly in that same timeframe, and the number of vacant homes has stayed relatively consistent.



*Number of owner- or renter-occupied housing units, plus vacant homes.
Source: US Census Bureau and 2019 American Community Survey.*

HOUSING MARKET⁶

The total number of housing units in the city increased by 139 (8.5 percent) from 2010 to 2020. Overall, the percentage of owner/renter dwellings in Berne remained consistent from 2010 to 2020. Dwelling units steadily increased throughout the county by 5.15 percent. The average household size in Berne, Decatur, Monroe, Bluffton, and Adams County also remained consistent. Berne's average household size was 2.38 persons in 2020 and 2.35 persons in 2010. The average household size in the city is similar to the average household size of Bluffton, which was 2.32 persons in 2020 and 2.34 persons in 2010.

At 58.6 percent of the housing stock, most units in 2020 were owner-occupied. Berne's owner/renter breakdown is similar to Decatur's. The percentage of renter-occupied homes in Berne increased by about 3 percent from 2010 to 2020. The renter-occupied rate was 30.9 percent in 2010 compared to 33.2 percent in 2020. However, 9.2 percent of the housing units in Berne were vacant in 2020, which was higher than Adams County's vacancy rate (7.7 percent).

Housing values in Berne and the surrounding area are increasing. \$107,037 was the median home value in Berne in 2020 and is expected to rise to \$111,927 by 2025. 40.3 percent of the homes in Berne have values between \$50,000 to \$99,999.

⁶All data was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and ESRI Business Analyst.

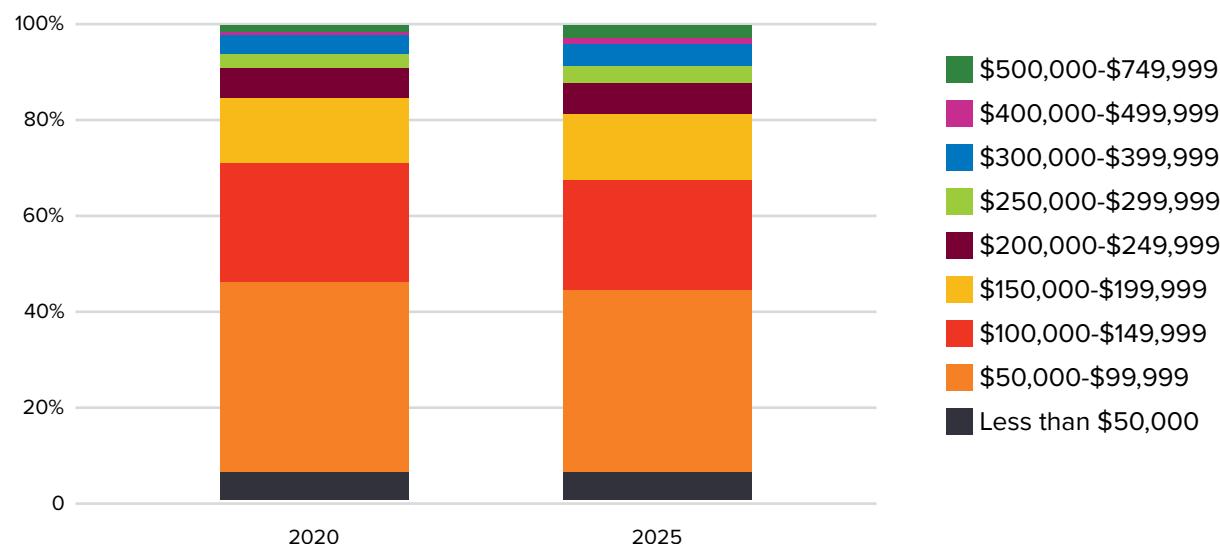
TRENDS

Building Permits

Since 2016, the city has issued 194 building or remodeling permits. The types of permits were either residential or commercial. They included a four-season room, additions, patios, decks, barns, cabins, a carport, a horse buggy shed, a cell tower, dugouts, new homes and garages, additions, factory expansions, and remodels to homes, churches, and barns, among other types of construction.⁷

Value⁸

Overall, the value of the housing stock in Berne grew from 2010 to 2020. The number of units valued at \$50,000 to \$99,999, the largest segment, decreased. The general percentage of each class of housing will stay the same from 2020 to 2025.



Owner's estimation of the value of their home.

Source: US Census Bureau and 2019 American Community Survey.

⁷Shannon Smitley, Building and Planning Director. Email: 7/26/2021.

⁸U.S. Census Bureau and 2019 American Community Survey.

RETAIL MARKET CONDITIONS⁹

Examining Berne's 2017 retail market potential reveals a "surplus" of \$8,031,803 when only considering the revenue generated from residents within Berne's corporate limits. Surpluses in a local market show that supply exceeds demand. In other words, more money is spent at local businesses than expected from the local population, which is shown as a negative value. Typically, a spending surplus has one of two meanings:

- Residents do not have enough disposable income to support the number of businesses in a local market
- Area businesses are attracting shoppers from outside their local market.

In Berne, further analysis indicated that local businesses were experiencing extra spending from outside the city limits. Expanding Berne's retail market for those living within a 10-minute drive shows a "leakage" (money spent on goods and services somewhere besides Berne businesses) of \$41,937,823. Observed additional spending from non-Berne residents represents an opportunity for Berne businesses to increase their market share of local and regional dollars. Further analysis of individual retail categories indicates a need for increases in grocery, restaurant, and general merchandise stores for residents living within this 10-minute drive time boundary.

⁹ ESRI Business Analyst Online, 2019 data.



COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL CORES¹⁰

Berne's retail analysis shows that the City of Berne has a more robust local retail market than its smaller neighbors of Monroe and Geneva. However, Berne's larger neighbors of Bluffton and Decatur have a more robust retail market than Berne. Currently, local businesses meet the demands of Berne residents. However, shoppers living outside of the city limits go elsewhere to purchase goods and services. One solid market category worth noting is specialty grocery stores.

¹⁰ ESRI Business Analyst Online, 2019 data.

EXISTING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

LAND USE BY CATEGORY¹¹

As seen in the land use map, the majority of uses in the incorporated boundary of Berne are single-family residential plots. However, there are many vacant lots throughout the overall planning area.

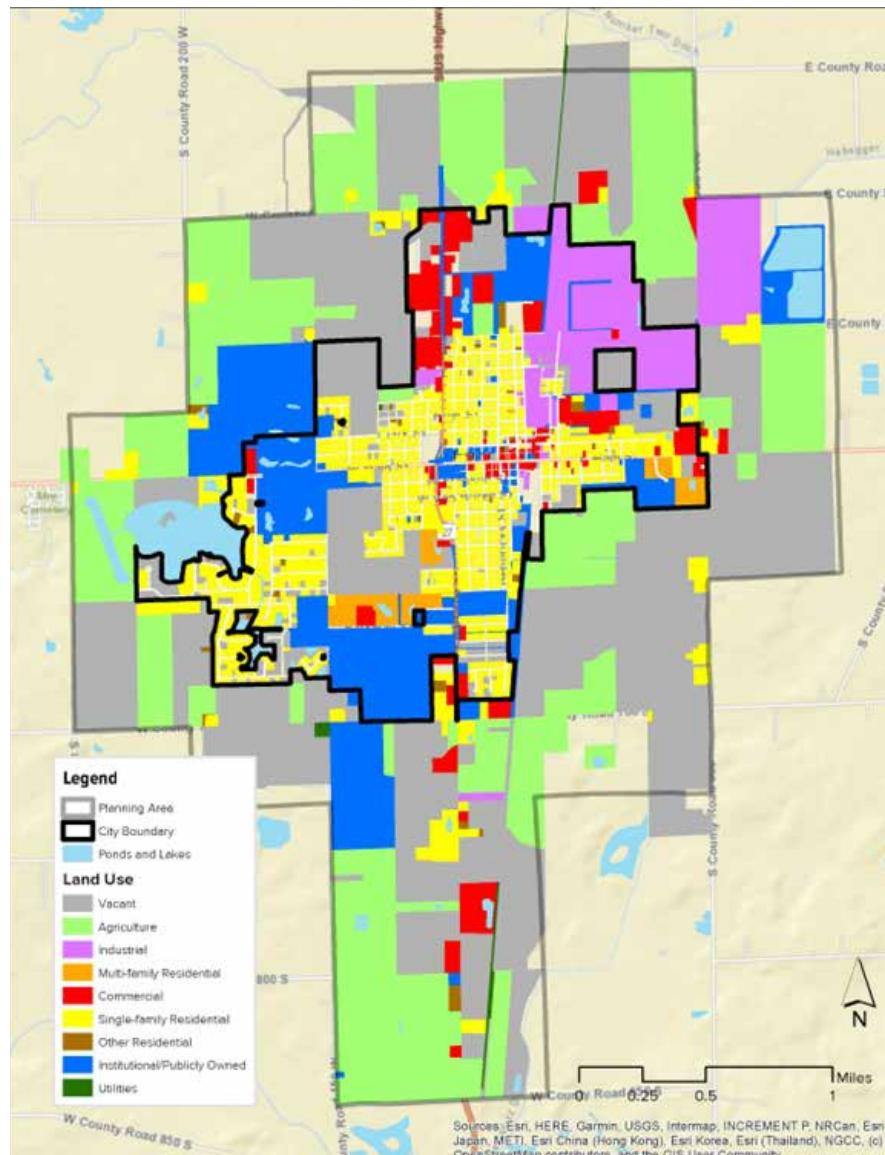
Industrial uses are clustered in the northeastern corner of the incorporated boundary due to the proximity of a now-inactive railroad (see Transportation and Mobility below for more detail).

The city also has many institutional/public-owned plots. The community's schools are in the southwest corner of the planning area boundary, near Lehman Park. This lot includes the city's elementary, middle, and high schools. Several of these large plots were used for agricultural purposes.

		CITY		PLANNING AREA	
Land Use	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	
Agriculture	13.1	0.9 %	1,277.1	25.2 %	
Commercial	127.3	8.5 %	177.7	3.5 %	
Industrial	206.5	13.8 %	296.5	5.9 %	
Institutional	356.2	23.7 %	629.0	12.4 %	
Multi-family	55.0	3.7 %	55.0	1.1 %	
Other Residential	12.0	0.8 %	22.8	0.4 %	
Single-family	400.7	26.7 %	512.4	10.1 %	
Utilities	0.4	0.0 %	13.0	0.3 %	
Vacant	329.0	21.9 %	2,083.4	41.1 %	
Grand Total	1,500.4	100.0 %	5,067.0	100.0 %	

Land Uses by Type.

¹¹County Assessor's Office via Indiana Map.



Land use by category.
Source: IndianaMAP, ESRI.

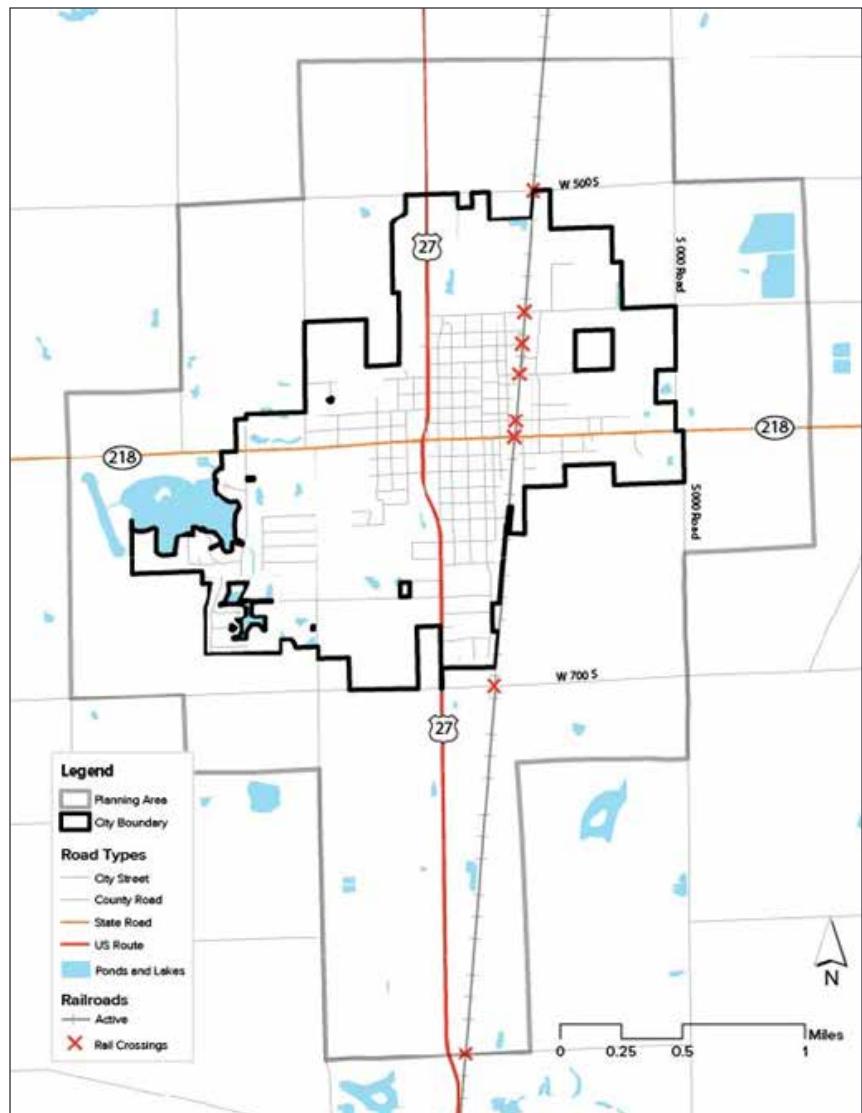
FORM-BASED CODE/DESIGN STANDARDS/ HISTORIC PRESERVATION REQUIREMENTS

While an Architectural Review Committee has been established in Berne, the committee has not met or operated. The purpose of the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) is to ensure that the exterior appearance of buildings, structures, and improvements would follow standards intended to recreate the feel of a traditional Swiss city. However, the ARC has not been employed, and the Swiss architecture found throughout the city was constructed voluntarily by property owners and not by government mandate. Details about the architectural standards and the review committee can be found in the city's ordinance and the architectural review committee matrix.^{12,13,14}

¹² Berne, IN Code of Ordinances | 152.233 Design Recommendations.

¹³ Berne, IN Code of Ordinances | Appendix D | Architectural Review Committee Matrix.

¹⁴ Shannon Smitley, Building and Planning Director. Email: 7/26/2021.



Transportation Map of Berne.

Source: Indiana Map.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOVEMENT

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

This section provides an overview of the city's transportation systems, including roads, rail, and alternative transportation. The most prominent mode of transportation in the City of Berne is vehicular. An inactive rail line also intersects through the city: the southernmost portion has been proposed to develop a greenway/path to connect to the Town of Geneva. The closest regional airport is Fort Wayne International Airport.

MOTORIZED ROADWAY NETWORK

Roadway classifications determine traffic patterns, volume, and development patterns. Existing roadway classifications include interstates, arterials, collectors, and local roads. Interstates serve the highest traffic volumes at the highest speeds to the furthest destinations. Arterials also serve high traffic volumes at high speeds but mostly facilitate cross-community or cross-county travel. Arterials can be further defined into two types: principal and minor. A principal arterial carries a higher volume of traffic at higher speeds than a minor arterial and may consist between two to four lanes. A minor arterial provides more rural access and supports cross-community travel. Collector roadways have a lower traffic volume and lower speed than arterials. Collectors connect travel between arterial roadways to local roads. Local roads have the lowest traffic volumes and speeds and are intended for property access.

US 27 is a principal arterial that runs north to south, intersects SR 218 and connects Berne to its neighbors of Geneva and Monroe. SR 218 is a major collector that runs west through Berne's downtown, intersects US 27 and connects Bluffton via SR 1. South 000 Road is a major collector that runs north to south just outside of the city limits. Berne has several minor collector roads, including Village Way, Parkway Street, West 700 South, Hendricks Street, Sprunger Street, Parr Road, West and East 500 South, and South 200. I-69 is located further west, also creating access to Fort Wayne and south to the Indianapolis region.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Berne currently does not have any public transportation. Adams County, however, does offer transportation for aging individuals through the Adams County Council on Aging program.



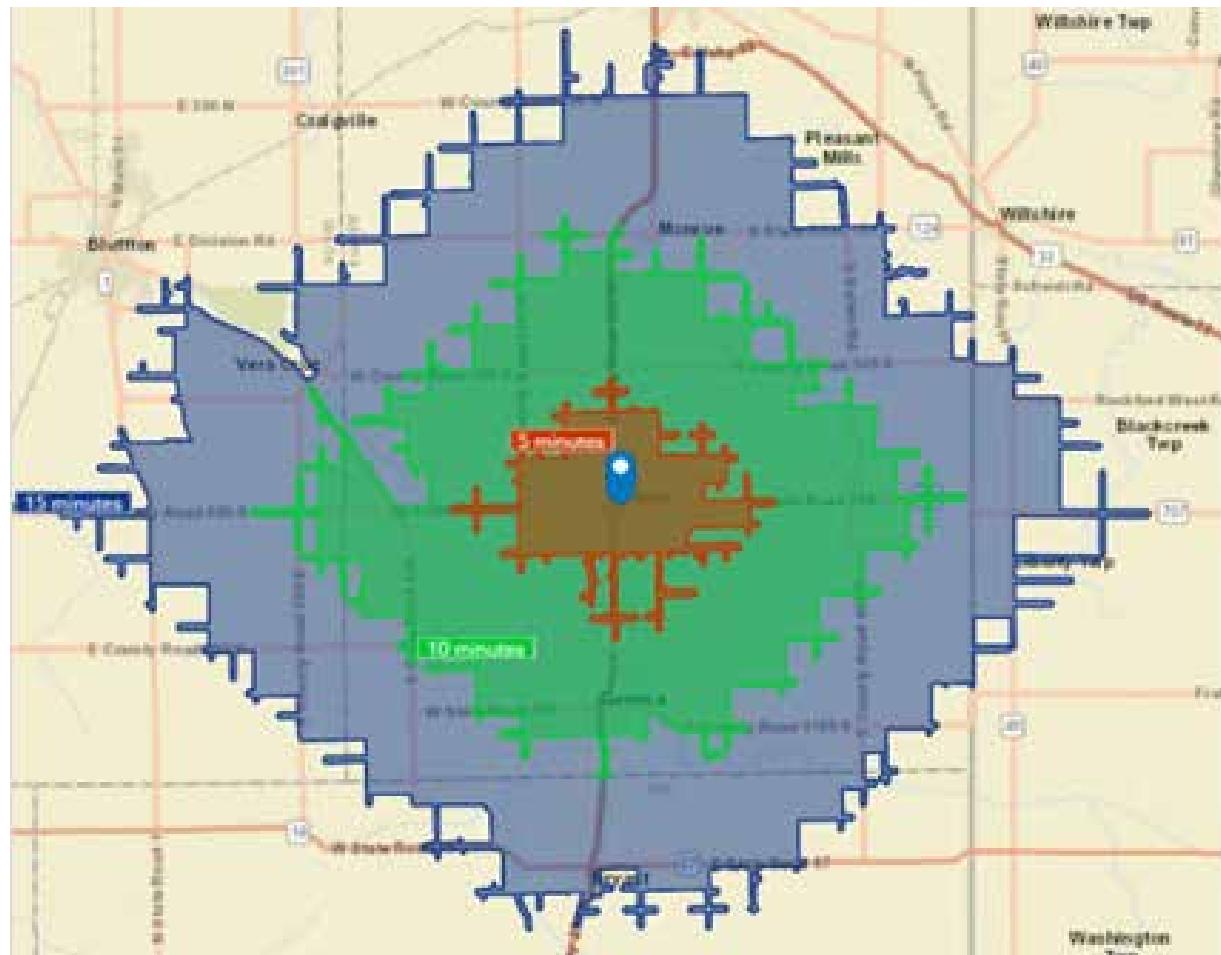
NON-MOTORIZED TRANSIT

One asphalt rail-to-trail greenway runs from Berne to Geneva managed by South Adams Trails, Inc. This ADA-accessible trail is open to pedestrians but does not permit horses. The planned start of the trail in Berne is across from Lehman Park.

The city has a well-developed sidewalk system throughout the downtown and its nearby neighborhoods. Many of these sidewalks are in good condition and are also ADA accessible. However, the sidewalk system is not comprehensive throughout the entire city. US 27 lacks sidewalks outside the downtown, creating unsafe crossing conditions for residents on the west side of the street. Because of this, residents on the west side of US 27 may have limited pedestrian infrastructure to connect them to assets such as Lehman Park and the school.

TRAVEL TIMES

Figure 10 shows travel times by drive times from the City of Berne in 5, 10, and 15 minutes. Downtown Berne and surrounding rural areas can be reached within a five-minute drive. Within ten minutes, drivers can get to Geneva, Monroe, and the edge of the Ohio border. In 15 minutes, drivers can reach the outskirts of Bluffton and Decatur.



*Travel times in Berne.
Source: ESRI Business Analyst.*

TRAFFIC VOLUMES¹⁵

US 27 and State Route 218 are the main roads that connect the City of Berne. The annual average daily traffic along US 27 was measured to be 10,163 vehicles north of SR 218 and 8,152 vehicles south of SR 218. SR 218 measured 5,737 vehicles west of US 27 and 4,818 vehicles east of US 27.

ANTICIPATED IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

The Indiana Department of Transportation currently has several state and local projects planned for transportation improvement in Adams County from 2020 to 2024.¹⁶ None of these projects are in Berne's city limits or on the major roadways that run through Berne.

¹⁵ Indiana Department of Transportation via Indiana Map.

¹⁶ Indiana Department of Transportation Online Project Viewer.



UTILITIES

WATER¹⁷

Berne owns its water utility department. The City of Berne Water Department services over 4,000 citizens within the city boundary. A new 500,000-gallon water tower is located at the end of Berne Street to increase water storage and supply water to the Volunteer Fire Department. The city maintains two wells that supplement its water storage. The city also has an agreement with the City of Decatur to provide an additional water source if ever needed in the event of an emergency.

SEWAGE

The City of Berne operates and owns its own Wastewater Treatment Plant.¹⁸

STORM WATER

Berne is a Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) community, meaning stormwater overflows and sewage overflows through the same outlets into watercourses such as streams and rivers. The city's Department of Storm Water Management handles the collection and disposal of stormwater within the city's corporate limits.¹⁹

ELECTRIC AND GAS

Berne's electricity is provided by Indiana Michigan Power or American Electric Power. NIPSCO is the primary gas provider.

PIPELINES

ANR Pipeline Company operates an interstate natural gas pipeline that runs east of Berne, crossing State Road 218 just west of County Road 75. It is a 30-inch diameter pipe.²⁰

¹⁷ City of Berne | Water | 2011.

¹⁸ City of Berne | Sewage | 2011.

¹⁹ City of Berne | Stormwater | 2011

²⁰ Indiana Map.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

There are currently no wind turbines or solar installations in Berne.²¹

COMMUNICATIONS

Broadband Internet

Adams County and the City of Berne are currently working to increase the availability of broadband coverage throughout the community. Now, Xfinity is the leading internet provider in Berne but is only 56.7 percent available in the city's limits and speeds up to 1,200 Mbps. HughesNet is the second leading internet provider with 100 percent availability in the town and speeds up to 25 Mbps.²² Other service providers such as Brightspeed, Viasat, Community Fiber Solutions, and WATCH are also available in Berne.

Cellular Phone Towers

There is one cellular phone tower on E Parr Road.



²¹ Indiana Map.

²² Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission via Indiana Map.



WASTE DISPOSAL

Trash, Hazardous Waste, and E-waste

The Berne Sanitation Department handles weekly residential and business trash pick-up, heavy trash pick-up twice a year, and dumpster rentals when requested. As established by the city ordinance, trash must be placed curbside by 7:00 am on the pick-up day in a leak-proof container of 30-gallon capacity with a maximum weight of 60 pounds when full. Hazardous materials and e-waste are not allowed in the heavy trash pick-up, including TVs, computers, screens, tires, timbers, and railroad timbers.²³

Recycling

Currently, the City of Berne does not offer curbside recycling. However, Berne's Recycle Center, operated by Adams County Solid Waste, offers recycling for cans, plastics, newspapers, and cardboard. E-waste collection is no longer available.²⁴

Compost

The City of Berne maintains a compost site at our Wastewater Treatment Plant northeast of Berne on Rd 550 S. Compost material is free for Berne residents' personal landscaping needs. They may shovel available material anytime the compost site is open. If they need a larger quantity, a city employee can assist with loading Tuesday and Thursday from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm, and Saturdays from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm from April through October. No personal loading equipment is allowed. Acceptable materials are shrubs, grass, and other lawn vegetation, but no manufactured products are permitted.²⁵

²³ City of Berne | Sanitation.

²⁴ City of Berne | Compost & Recycling.

²⁵ City of Berne | Compost & Recycling.

CIVIC SERVICES

Public Library

The Berne Public Library seeks to serve the educational, informational, and entertainment needs of its patrons. Accordingly, the library maintains a collection of materials covering various topics, viewpoints, formats, and age and reading levels.²⁶ The library has been active since 1935 and was last renovated in 2000 to add the children's room and heritage room in the lower portion of the library. It is located at 166 Sprunger Street.

South Adams Senior Center

The Senior Center is located in the southeast portion of Berne, across the street from Lehman Park. They serve the needs of the adult population living in the south half of Adams County, including Berne, Geneva, Linn Grove, and Monroe.²⁷



²⁶ www.bernepl.lib.in.us/mission

²⁷ saseniorcenter.com/#about



HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

Physicians

Berne has local physicians and medical offices. The Berne Medical Center is located at 1521 W Main Street, and Berne Outpatient Convenience is at 1350 W Main Street in the Swiss Village Retirement Community.

Hospitals

Adams Memorial Hospital is located at 1100 Mercer Ave in Decatur and is the closest hospital to Berne being about a 15 minute drive. Bluffton Regional Medical Center is located at 303 S Main Street, Bluffton, Indiana and is the second closest hospital to Berne. IU Health in Jay County is at 500 W Votaw Street in Portland is 23-minutes by car. IU Health in Blackford County is at 410 Pilgrim Boulevard in Hartford City is a 42-minute drive.

Rehabilitation & Retirement Communities

The Chalet Village Health and Rehabilitation Center is located at 1065 Parkway Street. It provides Berne skilled nursing care and rehabilitation services, including respiratory, physical, occupational, and speech therapy.²⁸ The Swiss Village Retirement Community is on 1350 W Main Street. It is a not-for-profit corporation committed to providing affordable retirement living facilities without regard to race, religion, gender, or handicap.²⁹

²⁸ www.inhcf.com/chalet-village/home

²⁹ www.swissvillage.org/about-us

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES AND PARKS

OPEN SPACES

Lehman Park serves as the central open space for the residents of Berne. Lehman Park provides many recreational assets to the city, including baseball, softball, swimming pool, sand volleyball, basketball, horseshoes, and a playground. Many residents also use the park as a walking track, although the park currently does not have a walking path in place. Many Amish frequent Lehman Park after church and utilize the picnic tables and horseshoe sets. The Park also provides hitching posts to make the area accessible to the Amish Community. During weekends, the park is a popular destination to watch baseball and softball games, host family reunions, or enjoy local music on the pavilion. The Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower is another sizable public space located downtown at the northeast corner of US 27 and State Route 218. Open air concerts and family movies are held at the plaza throughout the year.

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

The continental divide travels through the city. The divide crosses US 27 at Park Avenue, then immediately travels northeast across the older residential area of Berne. Elevation in the area remains consistent at 850 ft.

NATURAL FEATURES

As shown to the right, the hydrology of Berne and the surrounding areas is varied, containing lakes, wetlands, and a floodplain. The east-west continental divide is located in Berne and affects the drainage flow of runoff water in the city. Water south of the continental divide flows into the Wabash and Mississippi Rivers, while water north of the continental divide flows into the St. Mary's River, Great Lakes, and St. Lawrence Seaway.

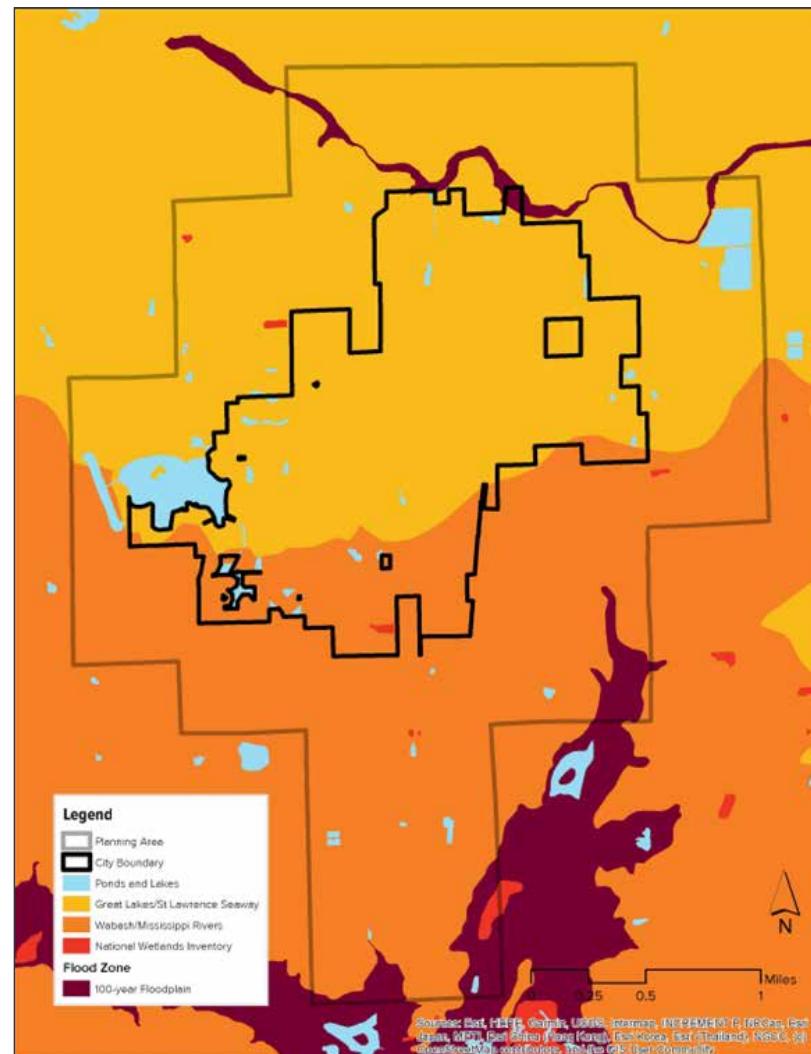
Several small lakes and ponds are scattered in and around Berne. Fryback Lake, outlining the city's western boundary, is the largest lake within the planning region. There are also several large ponds to the planning area's eastern border. Many ponds throughout the city and within the planning area appear to be constructed and are most likely retention ponds.

Wetlands

There are several emergent wetlands outside of the city boundary towards the east. Several forested areas and shrub wetlands are located to the south along the Wabash River. Smaller wetlands are scattered throughout the planning area.

Floodplains

The Wabash River to the south has a large floodplain that extends into the southern boundary of the planning area. Another floodplain intersects the northern edge of the city and planning area. This floodplain stems from the St. Mary's River, which lies north of Berne and runs through Decatur and across the Ohio and Indiana State line.



Hydrology of Berne and surrounding areas.

Source: IndianaMAP, ESRI.

PHYSIOGRAPHY

Physiography is another term used to describe physical geography. Physiography consists of topography, soil, land cover, prime farmland, and impervious surfaces.

Topography

Topography is a term used to describe the elevation or slope of a surface. A topography map is read by observing the contour markings on the map. The closer the contour markings are together, then the steeper a slope is. Topography is an important feature of an area's geography because it can limit which land uses can be applied to the city. For example, agricultural land uses are best suited in flat areas.

However, there are no steep slopes in Berne. Berne is in an area that has a relatively consistent elevation of 850 feet. The southern portion of the planning area has more slopes than the rest of the planning area.

Land Cover

Land cover indicates the physical land type, such as forests or open water.³⁰ Classes of land coverage include physical types of land such as forest, grasslands, open water, impervious surfaces, etc. Most of the land cover in Berne is cultivated crops. Developed land ranging from open space to low intensity is also a prominent land cover within the city limits. In Berne's downtown area, there are several groupings of developed land of medium and high intensity. There are land covers of open water, pasture or hay, and mixed forest throughout the planning area.³¹

³⁰ <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/lclu.html>

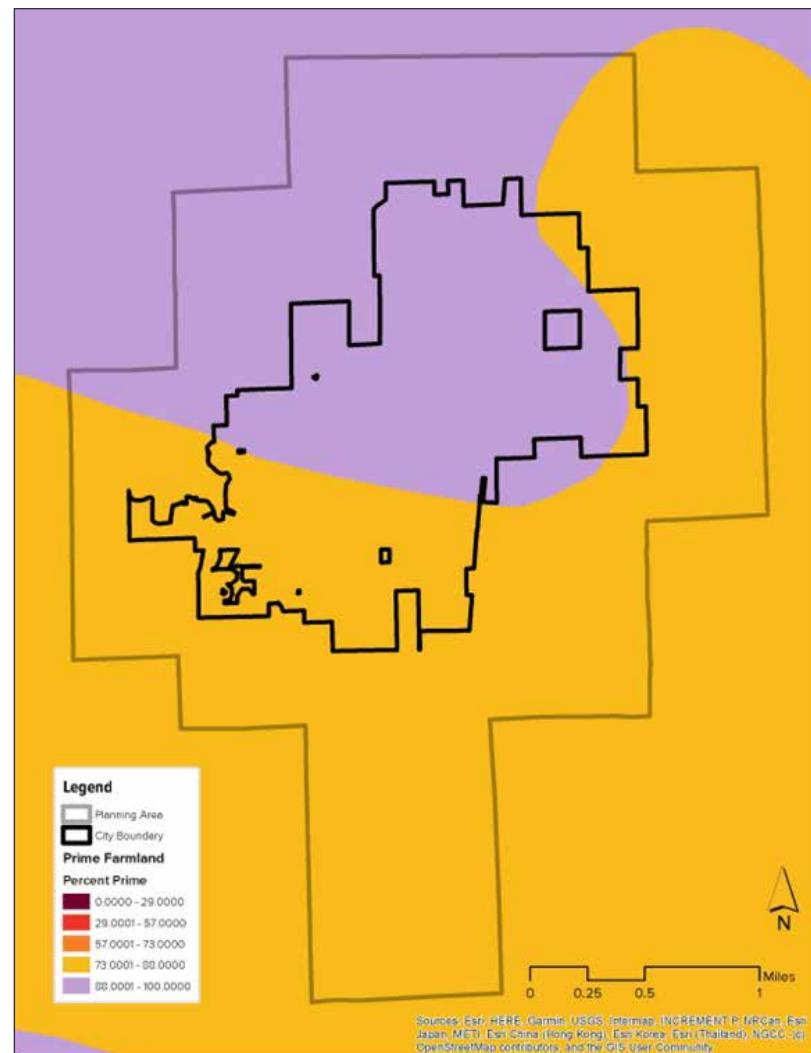
³¹ <https://maps.indiana.edu>

Soils

Soil types are essential to know for building and farming purposes. Certain soils are better suited for agricultural purposes, while other soil types are necessary to identify when building new development.³² Berne has two soil types. To the north of Berne, the primary soil type is Blount-Pewamo-Glynwood and is documented as 97% prime farmland. Blount is a soil that produces a finer textured till and has a slower permeability. Pewamo is a soil type typically found in depressions and is found much deeper than Blount and Glynwood soil types. Glynwood soil is more clay-like and is moderately well-drained.³³ The second combination of soil types in Berne is Blount-Glynwood-Morley and is 79% prime farmland. Morley is a soil type that is usually found very deep and is moderately well-draining soil.^{34,35}

Impervious Surfaces

Impervious surfaces are a type of land cover. They are surfaces that do not allow water to penetrate the surface.³⁶ These surfaces can be classified as surfaces made by human development. Impervious surfaces include surfaces such as roadways, pavement, sidewalks, and parking lots. Impervious surfaces are an important feature of the environment because they affect drainage. Since Berne is not a large, developed city, it does not have a high number of impervious surfaces. The areas in Berne with the highest number of impervious surfaces are located mainly in the downtown area, where most of the development throughout the city takes place.



Prime farmland area in Berne.

Source: IndianaMAP, ESRI.

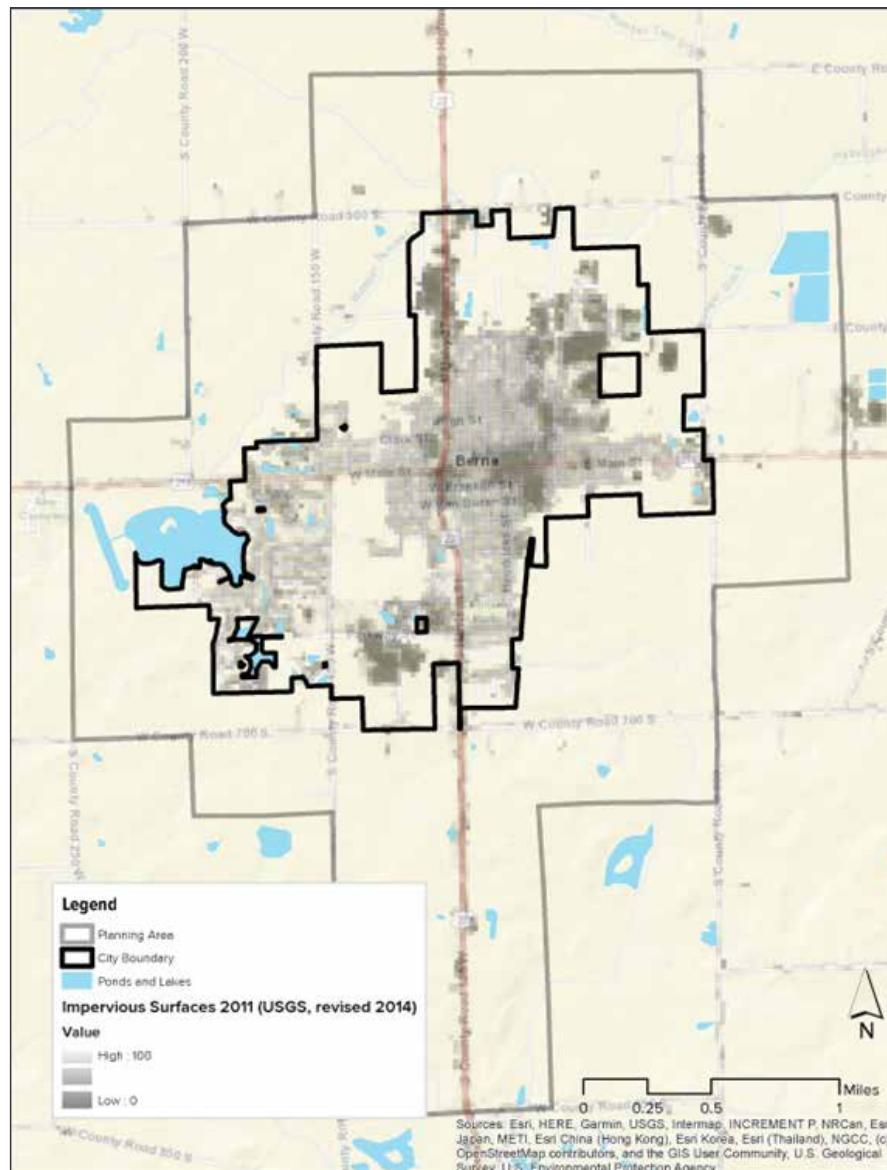
³² <http://safesportsfields.cals.cornell.edu/physical-properties>

³³ <https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/ID/ID-72-W.pdf>

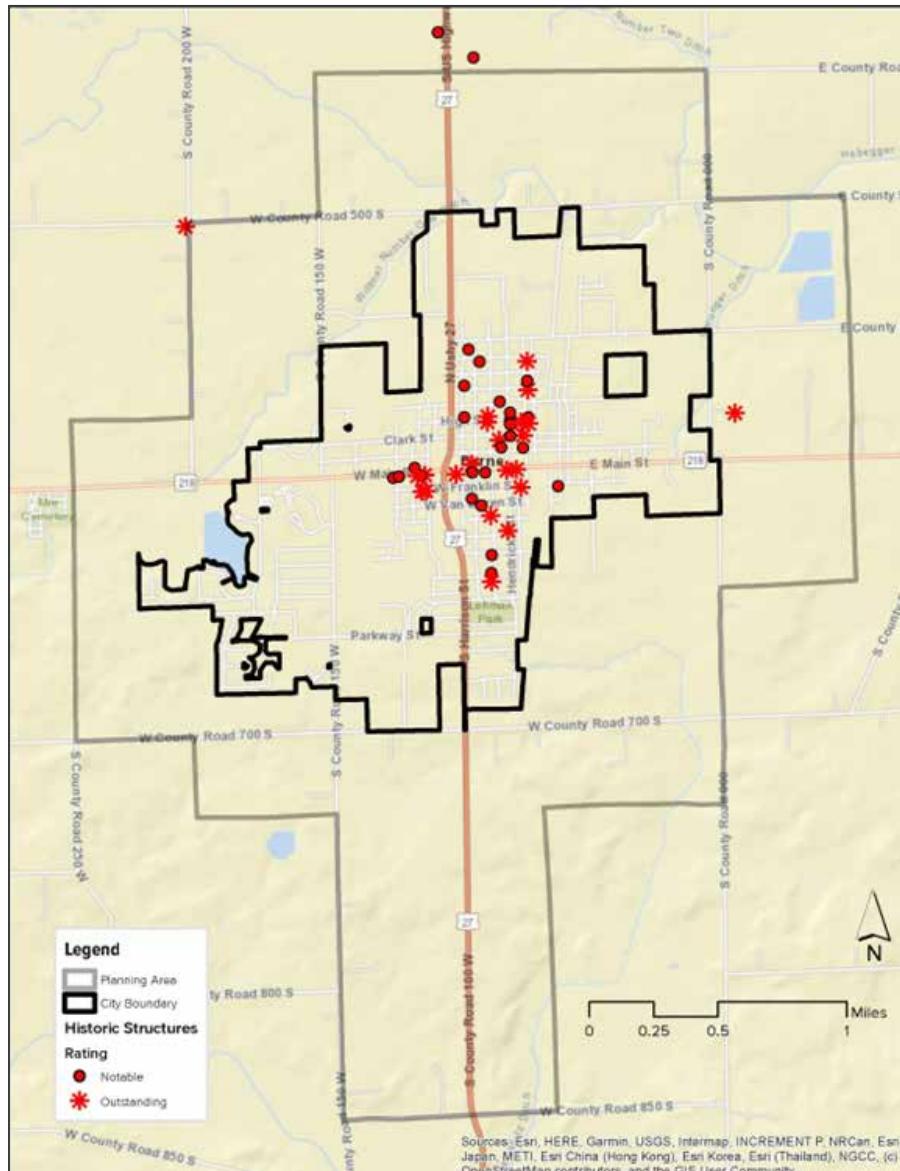
³⁴ https://soilseries.sc.egov.usda.gov/OSD_Docs/M/MORLEY.html

³⁵ https://maps.indiana.edu/metadata/Environment/Soils_STATSIGO_Prime_Farmland.html

³⁶ <https://www.lakesuperiorstreams.org/understanding/impervious.html#:~:text=Impervious%20surfaces%20are%20surfaces%20that,roads%2C%20parking%20lots%20and%20sidewalks.>



Prevalence of impervious surfaces in Berne.
Source: IndianaMAP, ESRI.



Historic structures in and around Berne.
Source: IndianaMAP, ESRI.

HUMAN-MADE, HISTORICAL, AND CULTURAL FEATURES

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL FEATURES

As seen in Figure 14, there are many structures of historical significance in and around Berne. The Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower, located at the corner of US 27 and State Road 218, is a historical tribute to Berne's Swiss heritage and a gateway to the downtown. The Berne Clock Tower is a replica of the Zytglogge, a Switzerland clock tower found in the city's Switzerland namesake. The clock tower is a cultural community asset and enhances community pride. The clock tower has a working glockenspiel with twelve figures depicting the history of Berne. The clock tower plaza also offers a splash pad, pavilion, canton tree, and quilt gardens: allowing residents a public space that connects them to their cultural heritage and downtown.

Not only does the town's architecture and storefronts reflect Swiss styles, but the city also is home to a Swiss Heritage Society and holds a community-wide event to celebrate their heritage called Swiss Days.

The Swiss Days event began as a sidewalk sale to promote downtown businesses 50 years ago.³⁷ As the community has continued to support this event, Swiss Days have expanded and include more local businesses. The event consists of over one hundred food and craft vendors, including many local downtown businesses, Swiss-style music, and Swiss-style games such as steintoss. Many residents also come adorned in historic Swiss costumes. The event is a wonderful way to celebrate the city's history and promotes the downtown and local businesses in Berne.

The Swiss Heritage Museum and Village is another historical and cultural asset to Berne. The museum and village consist of twelve historical buildings that guests can walk through to learn about the lives of the original Swiss settlers. These structures consist of the Luginbill House, Sweitzer Barn, Schoolhouse, Log Cabin, Summer Kitchen, Sawmill, Cider Press, Doctor's Office, Cheese House, Baumgartner Church, Barber Shop, and Smoke House.

³⁷ swissdaysberne.com

AMENITIES

Pine Lake Water Park is west of downtown Berne off State Route 218. Open seasonally, it is ADA accessible and features slides, paddleboats, splash pad, and other amenities.^{38,39}

CONTAMINATION CONCERNS

Brownfields

A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. It is estimated that there are more than 450,000 brownfields in the US. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties increases local tax bases, helps job growth, uses existing infrastructure, takes development pressures off undeveloped, open land, and improves and protects the environment.⁴⁰

According to the state's database of brownfields, as of August 2020, there were two inactive brownfield sites in Berne: one at State Route 218 & County Road 150W and one on S Brown Street.⁴¹

Superfund sites

Thousands of contaminated sites exist nationally due to hazardous waste being dumped, left out in the open, or otherwise improperly managed. These sites include manufacturing facilities, processing plants, landfills, and mining sites. In response, Congress established the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) in 1980. CERCLA is informally called Superfund. It allows EPA to clean up contaminated sites. It also forces the parties responsible for the contamination to perform cleanups or reimburse the government for EPA-led cleanup work. When there is no viable responsible party, Superfund gives EPA the funds and authority to clean up contaminated sites.⁴²

As shown to the right, there is one Superfund site in Berne that the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has cleaned, located at 406 Parr Road.⁴³ The EPA's Superfund program is responsible for cleaning up some of our nation's most contaminated land. The annual BestPlaces Superfund Index gives a score of 1 to 100 for superfund sites, with the least-contaminated sites scoring a 100. The Berne area's average is 92, compared to the US average of 87.92 out of 100.⁴⁴

³⁸ Pine Lake Waterpark.

³⁹ pinelakewaterpark.com.

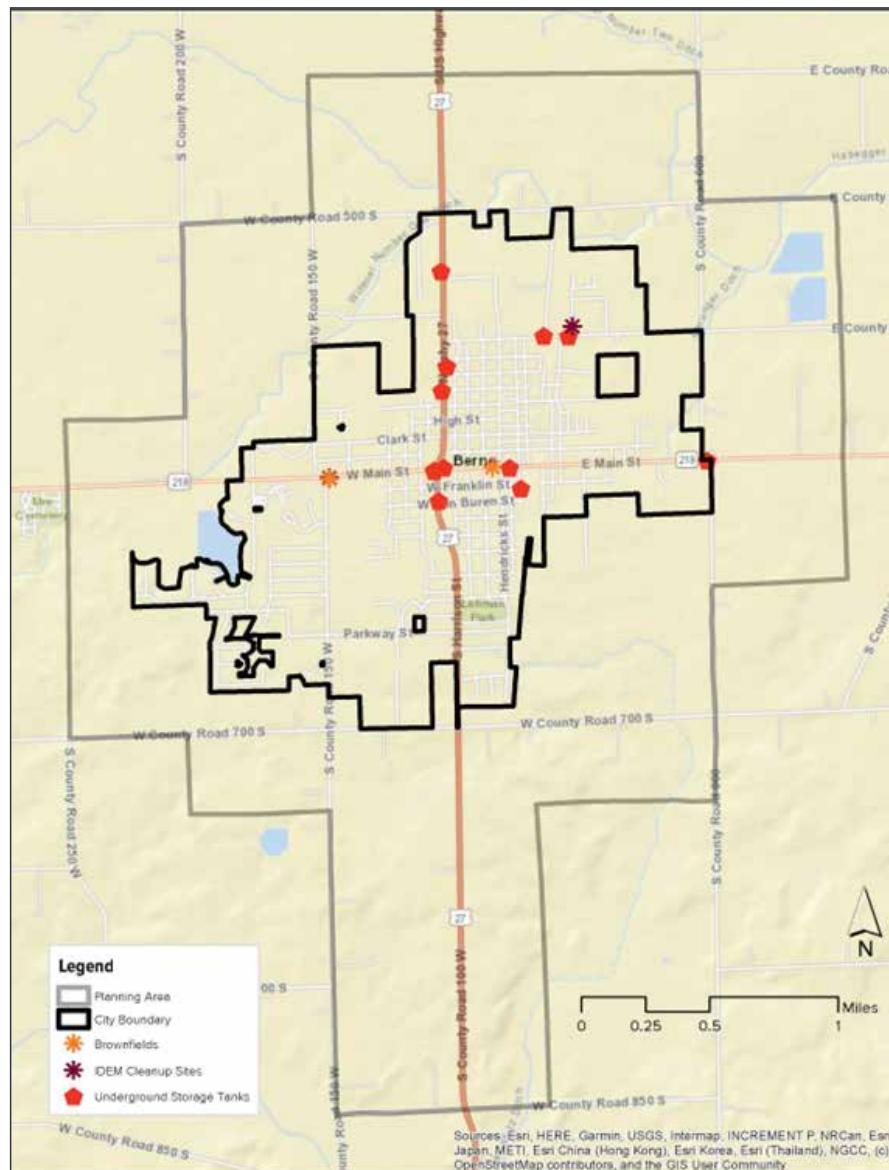
⁴⁰ Overview of EPA's Brownfields Program

⁴¹ Indiana Brownfields Program Site List.

⁴² EPA | What is a Superfund?

⁴³ Berne, Adams County, IN Environmental Hazards Report - Superfund Sites.

⁴⁴ Berne, Indiana Health – Best Places.



Areas of environmental concern in Berne.
Source: IndianaMAP, ESRI.

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

The City of Berne currently does not have a parks department. The Berne Park Board, which consists of seven volunteers appointed by the mayor, is currently responsible for recommending rules governing park and recreational facilities, facilitating operation costs and programs, and hiring custodians for Lehman Park.



LEHMAN PARK	
Acreage	11.5
Park Type	Neighborhood
Address	212 Park Ave, Berne, IN
Programs	N/A
Inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Playground• Picnic area• Pavilion• 2 Baseball/Softball Fields (lighted)• Sand Volleyball• Basketball• Pool• Horseshoes• Concessions• Restrooms• Hitching Posts for Amish
Maintenance Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basketball Court
Other Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lacking walking trails• Lacks general park lighting
Accessibility Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lacks inclusive playground equipment• Lacks sidewalks



MUENSTERBERG PLAZA AND CLOCK TOWER

Acreage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A
Park Type	Plaza, Established in 2010
Address	N Church Ave, Berne, IN
Programs	Family Events
Inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plaza• Splash Pad with Lighting• Canton Tree• Quilt Gardens• Pavilion• Restrooms (ADA accessible)• Picnic Tables• Glockenspiel• Clock Tower• Settlers Statue
Maintenance Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A
Other Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A
Accessibility Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No off-site parking (in progress)

DESIGN FEATURES

GATEWAYS

Berne has beautiful gateway signage with a Swiss flare on US-27 when driving into town from the north and south. Identical gateway signs are also located on the east and west sides of the city.

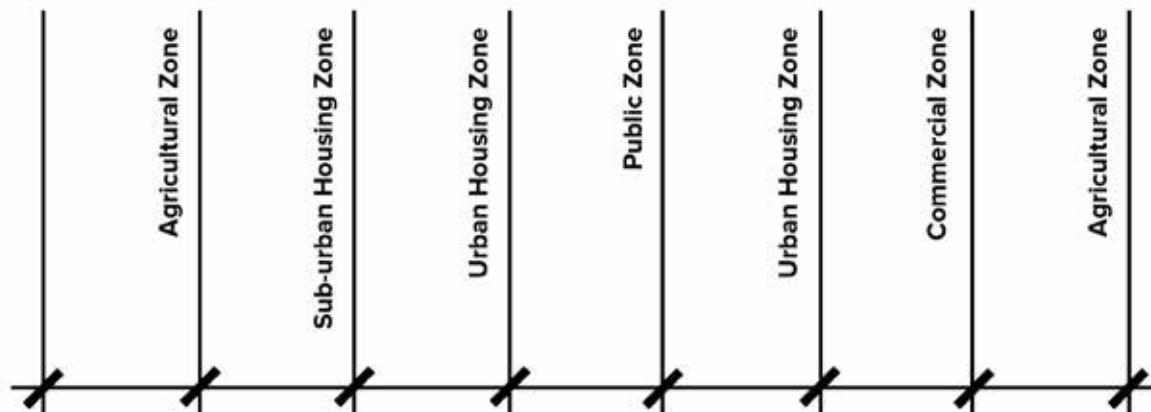


Welcome signage with a Swiss flair on US 27.
Source: flickr.com.

TRANSECTS

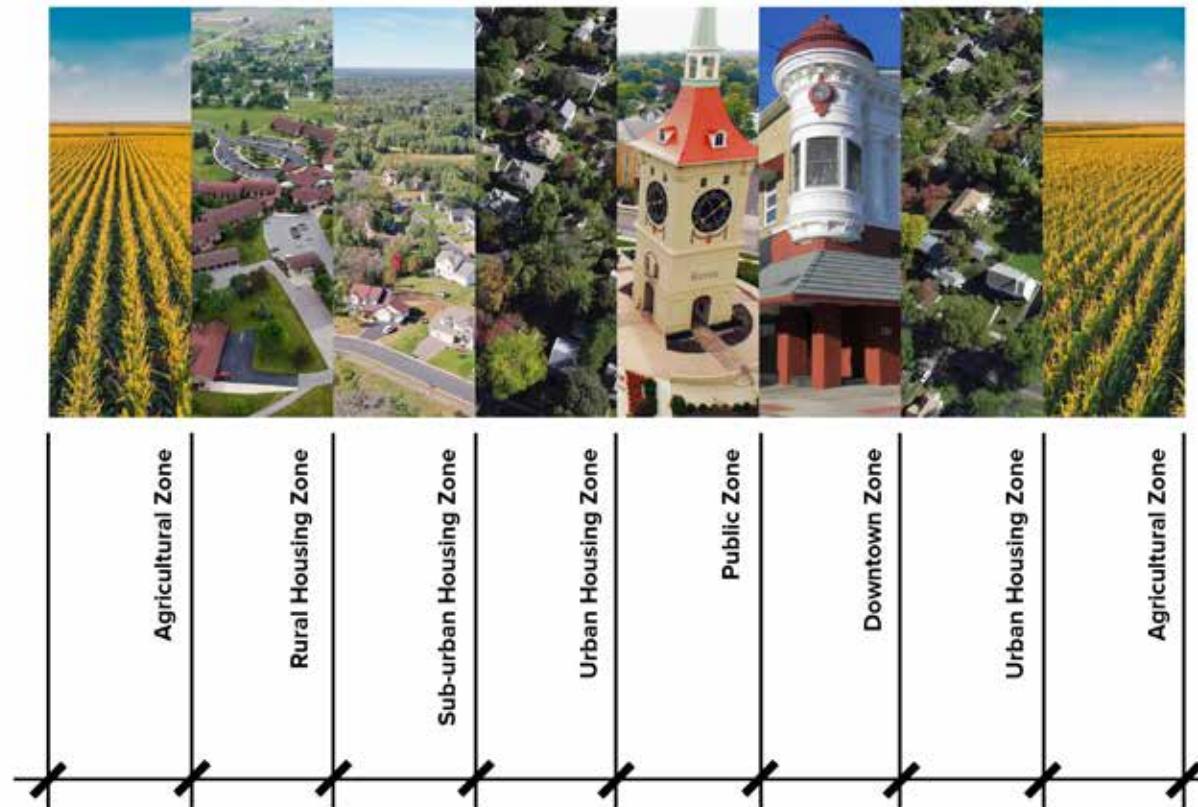
From north to south along US 27, the predominant land use is single-family residential. There are also large amounts of institutional land use in that area and some commercial, agricultural, and vacant land (as seen in the image below). There is one industrial parcel adjacent to US 27 just north of downtown.

US-27 TRANSECT NORTH TO SOUTH



From west to east along State Road 218, the land uses are similar to those along US 27 through Berne (as seen in the image below), with the addition of a multi-family residential parcel just east of downtown.

IN-218 TRANSECT WEST TO EAST





Entrance to the Ruheplatz in downtown.
Source: American Structurepoint.

PARKING

Based on the feedback gathered from stakeholders and residents, there does not seem to be a perceived shortage of parking in Berne, although the efficiency and spacing of parking supply may be improved upon. The downtown area includes free surface parking lots and ample on-street parking. Sprunger Street and Hendricks Street downtown could be modified to diagonal parking if necessary.

OTHER PUBLIC SPACES

Ruheplatz

A notable “pocket park” in downtown is the Ruheplatz resting place. It is a popular spot for visitors to sit in the shade while enjoying the shops along Main Street. It features such amenities as a table with an umbrella, several benches, and beautiful vegetation.

Berne Pool

Berne Pool is to the southeast of Lehman Park on Hendricks Street. It is a city pool open during the summer from 11:00 am to 8:00 pm. It features diving boards, a slide, and a concession stand. Children can take swimming lessons there, and the pool is available to book for parties.⁴⁵ It is busiest on weekends.⁴⁶

⁴⁵[Facebook: Berne Public Pool.](#)

⁴⁶[Berne Pool.](#)

IDENTIFIABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

Downtown

Downtown Berne is one block north and south of E Main Street between US 27 and Monroe Street. The Clock Tower and plaza anchor the western end of downtown. Along Main Street are notable local restaurants, a post office, churches, and boutique shops.

Southwest Berne

Southwest of State Route 218 and US 27 is the neighborhood of Southwest Berne. It stretches south to CR 700W and west approximately to Fryback Lake. While primarily residential in character, it also includes South Adams High School and the Swiss Village Retirement Community. Some of the top neighbor interests, according to the NextDoor app, are home improvement and DIY, gardening and landscaping, camping, volunteering, and pets.

Industrial Park

The Industrial Park neighborhood is northeast of the Clock Tower, bounded by E Main Street/W State Route 218, S 000 Road, E Parr Road, and US 27. It contains several local industrial businesses such as Smith Brothers, Micromatic, FCC (Adams), Poseidon Barge, and many residences. According to NextDoor, the local interests are like those in Southwest Berne, and reasons why residents love the area include that it is clean, family-friendly, has sidewalks, and is a good location.



Downtown Berne.
Source: American Structurepoint.

