



**WABASH RIVER REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
2019 ANNUAL REPORT**

REPRESENTING KNOX, SULLIVAN AND VIGO COUNTIES

WABASH RIVER REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Wabash River Regional Development Authority (RDA) was established in 2015 in response to the Indiana Regional Cities Initiative. The Regional Cities Initiative has helped communities across Indiana come together to transform their regions into nationally-recognized destinations to live, work and play. With employers continually stressing the need for a large, skilled workforce, Indiana is building upon its strong economic foundation to create a quality of place that attracts and retains future generations of Hoosiers.

In an effort to improve the quality of life in the three county region of Knox, Sullivan and Vigo Counties, the Wabash River Regional Development Authority worked with local officials and community groups to create a Regional Development Plan to attract businesses, retain talent and improve tourism to the historic Wabash Riverfront.

The Wabash River region is at the forefront of unprecedented progress and change with great community leaders and organizations coming together for a common vision – to enhance the quality of life in Indiana’s historic riverfront communities.

Improved affordable housing, more sidewalks and bike trails, better parks, an appealing downtown and a revitalized riverfront create a more inviting place to call home. Many communities across the country have recognized the economic and social impact that can be gained by a riverfront community. Known as “game-changers” for communities, the riverfront can create a vital sense of place that significantly benefits the development of downtown areas, enhances the ability to attract businesses, creates a more desirable convention and visitor environment and provides a staging ground for hundreds of entertainment events enjoyed by visitors and residents.

Although the Wabash River Regional Development Authority did not receive funding through the initial Regional Cities program, the process was very beneficial as it raised the profile of a number of projects in the area and created many synergies that have spurred collaboration in the region. Public and private partnerships have worked strategically to secure funding and make significant progress on several projects. The following is a summary of projects that have been completed and those that are underway to spur economic development through waterfront revitalization.

**2015-2018 COMPLETED PROJECTS
TOTAL INVESTMENTS: \$63 MILLION**



**KIMMELL PARK & WABASH RIVERFRONT
REVITALIZATION
INVESTMENT: \$3,800,000**



**VINCENNES UNIVERSITY STUDENT CENTER
INVESTMENT: \$4,500,000**



**VINCENNES UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR SCIENCE,
ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS
INVESTMENT: \$25,000,000**



**OLD CHICAGO PIZZA & TAPROOM
(FORMALLY NEW MOON THEATRE ON MAIN STREET)
INVESTMENT: \$2,500,000**



**RIVERFRONT LOFTS
(FORMALLY THE ICON BUILDING)
INVESTMENT: \$23,000,000**



**INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY GIBSON TRACK &
FIELD COMPLEX
INVESTMENT: \$4,300,000**

2019 AND MOVING FORWARD

Board Members

Chair: Linda Waldroup, Vice President of Financial Services, Vincennes University

Vice-Chair: Gregory Goode, Executive Director of Government Relations and University Communications, Indiana State University

Secretary: James Exline, Executive Vice President, Wabash Capital

Board Member: Robert Baesler, Owner Baesler's Market

Board Member: Nichole Like, Executive Director, Pantheon Business Theatre

Vision Statement

*"The Wabash River Region is comprised of collaborative, diverse partners who are working to shape a region of prosperous communities, quality talent from our educational institutions, thriving industry and small business, and excellent infrastructure to support **growth.**"*

When the region developed its vision statement to guide their efforts, their goal was not only to promote economic growth but growth in many other areas that would come together to create a bright future for the region: population growth, growth in quality of life, growth in tourism, growth in infrastructure, growth in outdoor amenities, growth in affordable housing, and growth in educational opportunities. Investing in projects that promote these areas is a winning strategy for creating strong and lasting economic growth.

With many of the projects identified in the first Regional Development Plan well on their way to completion, the Wabash River Regional Development Authority submitted an updated Regional Development Plan to the Indiana Economic Development Corporation to carry on the momentum along the Wabash River and improve economic and workforce development for the region. What was once a clear lack of connectivity between communities and the riverfront is quickly becoming a vibrant region as it capitalizes on its historical and educational assets and the invaluable riverfront opportunities.

The plan was approved by the Indiana Economic Development Corporation and the Wabash River RDA received a \$1.5 million Business & Innovation Fund grant in March 2019 to support the projects outlined in the plan. The 2019 year was a reorganizational period for the Wabash River RDA as county government selected and appointed new Board Members from Knox County while Vigo and Sullivan counties confirmed reappointments. Some projects were on hold as the RDA awaited county decisions that would affect the projects in the Regional Development Plan. Several board meetings have been held in 2020 that have resulted in the allocation of grant funding to many projects in region.

Planning discussions, community meetings, design development, bidding processes, and construction are all underway. It may be difficult to see the tangible progress of some projects as ground has not been broken; however, others are well on their way to making positive impacts on their communities.

While nearly \$50 million in projects were included in the 2018 Wabash River Regional Development Plan, only \$1.5 million was awarded. The Wabash River RDA remains dedicated to ensuring that this limited funding is used in a way that, combined with additional funding sources, makes the biggest impact for our region.

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON PRESIDENTIAL MANSION & VISITORS CENTER

PROJECT COST: \$11.5 MILLION



Many organizations including Vincennes University, the Grouseland Foundation and the Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter have worked together to strengthen this project in efforts to secure the funding needed to bring it to fruition. Governor Eric Holcomb recommended the project to Lilly Endowment for their consideration in becoming a funding partner. Governor Holcomb cited the project as “one of the most historically significant projects our state has had the opportunity to bring to life.”

The Grouseland Foundation conducted its Living Legacy Capital Campaign for the restoration of the William Henry Harrison Presidential Mansion. Funds raised through the campaign were used to obtain a 2:1 matching grant from the Jeffris Family Foundation which resulted in a total of \$1,200,000.

The Wabash River RDA believes matching grants are a great way to maximize our funds and therefore allocated \$150,000 to the campaign.

Vincennes University recently hosted Lilly Endowment for a tour of the Harrison home and other Vincennes sites. Lilly Endowment has expressed interest in the project but has stressed the importance of obtaining other local and regional financial support. While the Harrison Mansion is one of the most notable historic locations in the region, it is in great company with the George Rogers Clark National Memorial, Spirit of Vincennes Rendezvous, Vincennes University, Indiana State Historic Sites, the Old Cathedral and Indiana’s first Main Street. Understanding that historic venues have the ability to draw visitors from all across the country and are an important part of tourism and economic development, **the Wabash River RDA recently allocated an additional \$250,000 to the project.**



FRENCH QUARTER HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT COST: \$25 MILLION



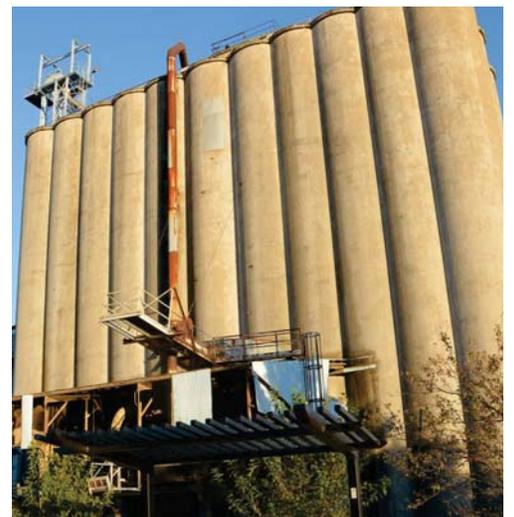
The “French Quarter” housing development underwent significant planning and development in 2019. Vincennes University procured all of the land needed for the project and prepared four city blocks for development. The design phases were completed and a groundbreaking for Phase I of the project was held in October 2019. Phase I includes 30 apartment units with 92 total bedrooms. Property amenities will include bike storage rooms, second-floor balconies, a parking space for each bedroom, a fountain, and open outdoor space. Vincennes University anticipates opening the first units for occupancy by August 2020. This project brings together what Vincennes University is proud to represent - community revitalization, economic development, and student recruitment.

RIVERVIEW LOFTS PROJECT COST: \$9 MILLION



The Riverview Lofts on the banks of the Wabash River in Vincennes and construction of 22 new single family homes throughout Vincennes spent the majority of 2019 undergoing approval levels from state authorities. The grain elevators on First Street were demolished in October 2019.

Both housing projects are funded with federal tax credits and the city's Redevelopment Commission funded the demolition of the grain silos. Construction is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2020, with the intent to begin leasing in early 2021. Once completed, the project will feature a three-story, riverfront affordable housing complex. The development will include 22 income based, 1-bedroom units and 10 market-rate units on its top floor as well as commercial space on the first floor.



PANTHEON: A BUSINESS & INNOVATION THEATER



The historic Pantheon Theater opened in 1921 and served as a center of entertainment and a hub of creativity. Located on the corner of 5th and Main Streets, the theater was originally designed to accommodate silent films, large road shows, and concerts with 1,200 seats. It became a regular stop for famous performers such as Vincennes-born Red Skelton, Duke Ellington and The Marx Brothers.

Local officials and business owners have worked to find a way to turn the unused and deteriorating theater into a space where entrepreneurial minds can flourish. The co-working space and small business incubator has received \$1.9 million from the City of Vincennes and the Knox County Commissioners for renovations as well as \$200,000 from local businesses for operational support. **Additionally, the Wabash River RDA recently allocated \$250,000 that the Indiana Economic Development Corporation has provided a \$250,000 matching grant.**



The co-working space and small business incubator will attract young entrepreneurs wanting to develop their own ideas and those wishing to start a business but without the financial resources for significant overhead costs. Through a partnership with Purdue University, the shared work space will also function as a direct artery to the Foundry, Purdue's own entrepreneurial center.

The overall scope of the work includes a full redesign of the theater's main stage as an event space, an open-concept shared workspace in the center and three offices available for rent around the perimeter, and construction of new restrooms on the main floor. **In 2019, much of the demolition was completed and construction, including a significant portion of the electrical and plumbing, had begun. The Business and Innovation Theater is set to open in May 2020 and co-working is to begin in July 2020. Once operational, the project will continue to seek funding to complete the remaining second and third floors.**

TURN TO THE RIVER

PROJECT COST: \$10.5 MILLION



Turn to the River is a multi-year project to reconnect Terre Haute’s downtown with the Wabash River through public art and design. It is a collaborative “quality of place” initiative focused on: physical land improvements, green spaces, health and wellness, public sculpture, and enhancing connectivity and access between the Wabash River, downtown Terre Haute and the Indiana State University campus. The focus area includes the 4-square block government campus that encompasses Terre Haute City Hall and Vigo County Courthouse.

A designed walking promenade will lead people through this area and the city’s parking lot to the river, where a city-owned property, “One Wabash,” will be redesigned as a public green space with an overlook and a flexible performance structure for public events.

Turn to the River is comprised of three projects that, when completed, will come together to create a new riverfront destination.

1. Riverside Green Space and Overlook: \$5 million
2. Walking Promenade: \$3 million
3. Revitalization of the Government Campus: \$2.5 million

The Wabash River RDA has allocated \$700,000 for the implementation of these projects.

1. RIVERSIDE GREENSPACE & OVERLOOK

A city owned riverside property, “One Wabash” at the end of Wabash Avenue, offers a prime location to connect the city’s downtown to the Wabash River. The project will include green space, public art and arts programming as well as a Wabash overlook that will offer a visual experience of the river.

ArtSpaces has gathered community input for the Riverside Green Space and Overlook. An architect presented an overlook concept in a public forum in Terre Haute in July 2019. Final determination of the site design will be accomplished with further community input once funding has been identified.

As part of various collaborative planning efforts within the city, ArtSpaces continues to discuss the project and possible funding sources for future phases with community leaders.





2. WALKING PROMENADE

A walking promenade will replace and widen the walkway from 3rd Street to the Wabash River. The walkway will give pedestrians the sense that they are approaching the river through its design, public art and placement of natural features.

The City of Terre Haute is working with engineers to integrate the event space and promenade to pass safely through the parking lot. An initial meeting between the city's engineering firm and Taylor Siefker Williams design group occurred in late June. Art Spaces intends to complete design development of the space in 2020. In the

meantime, a draft for a cultural programming plan has been prepared by the *Turn to the River* Committee – for potential community events to occur in the event space.

The portion of the promenade adjacent to the jail will be revisited for implementation in conjunction with the construction of a new county jail that is being relocated and expected to be completed in Fall 2021. Site work will best be accomplished after the inmate population is relocated.



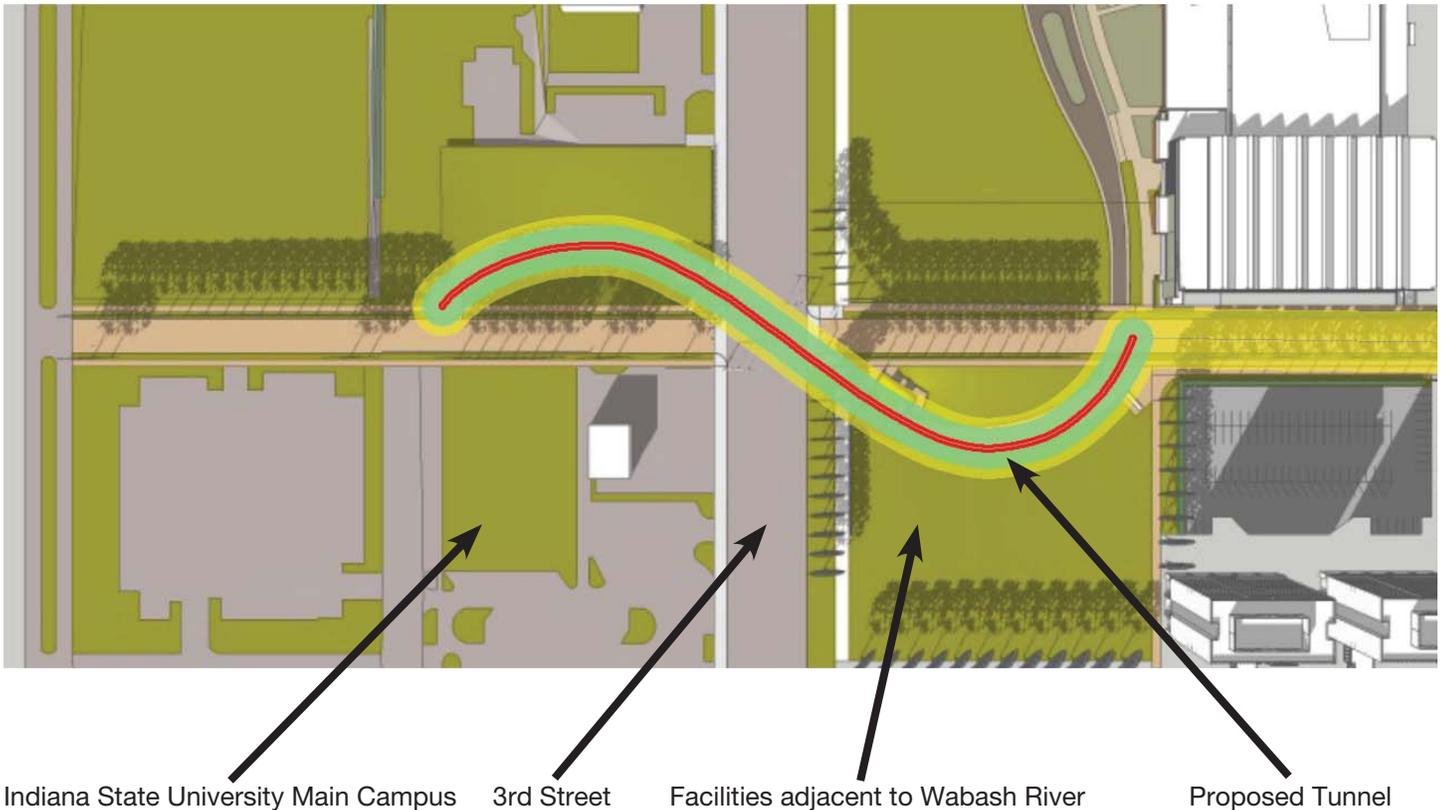
3. REVITALIZATION OF GOVERNMENT CAMPUS

The once sterile four-square block government campus which includes Terre Haute City Hall and the Vigo County Courthouse is the primary connecting area between the downtown and the Wabash River. Public art, event space, shaded seating, attractive wayfinding and amenities that integrate aspects of the city and county cultural history will animate the area. City Hall's parking lot will be utilized for public events such as the farmer's market, festivals and other community

happenings.

Art Spaces has selected finalists through a national artist search process and hosted each artist in early 2020 for presentations and meetings with stakeholders, members of the *Turn to the River* and selection committees, the Mayor of Terre Haute and county officials. Additionally, ARCdesign, the firm that recently designed the wayfinding for Terre Haute's Arts and Cultural District, has been selected to design the wayfinding for the *Turn to the River* project.

CHESTNUT STREET PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL



As momentum is building with the increased development activity along the Wabash River, Indiana State University is exploring options with state and local partners that would provide safe pedestrian access across the six lane 3rd Street (US 41). A pedestrian tunnel connecting the area near the Wabash River with Indiana State University is being explored and the University conducted a feasibility study to assess the prospect of building the tunnel.

The anticipated location of the project is at the intersection of 3rd Street (US 41) and Chestnut Street. The need for this pedestrian pathway is clear as approximately 34,000 daily motorized vehicles use 3rd Street to travel north and south adjacent to the University. The University is working with consultants and partners for a more complete pricing estimate of the costs associated with the proposed Chestnut Street Pedestrian Tunnel. Indiana State University continues to quietly assess the feasibility of this project that would connect the University campus with key, quality of place projects already completed and envisioned along the Wabash River.