



MCKENNA

Memorandum

TO: New Carlisle
Donovan Smith, AICP, Principal Planner

FROM: Hillary Taylor, Senior Planner
Ethan Senti, Assistant Planner
Paige Brodeur, Assistant Planner

SUBJECT: Public Workshop and Walking Tour Results Summary

DATE: May 8, 2025

On Wednesday, May 7, 2025, New Carlisle, along with McKenna, hosted a Public Outreach Event for their Zoning Ordinance with a focus on Land Use and Development. The Town also took McKenna on a Hayride Tour to discuss various areas and gain insight. Below are the results of various discussions, activities, and surveys done.

PUBLIC WORKSHOP

At the Public Workshop, residents were invited to express their thoughts and ideas on preference boards. Each board was intended to walk residents through some of the Zoning Ordinance update processes as well as allow for space to gather their insights. The following are summaries of each board and their comments:

Assets & Opportunities

The Assets & Opportunities board asked residents to share their thoughts on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the Town. They were asked what makes the Town a great place to live. What challenges do they face as residents, business owners, or other stakeholders?

- **Strengths**
 - Historic charm
 - Small Town values
 - Safe community
 - Small Town, safe place
 - Good neighbors
 - Community – residents, organizations, Town staff
 - Recreation – plenty of space for ball fields and parks
- **Weaknesses**
 - Cost of living
 - No room to grow
 - Poor access to area east of viaduct, for pedestrians
 - Bicycle travel
 - More bicycle lanes are needed
 - US 20 traffic
- **Opportunities**
 - Improved pedestrian access
 - More retail



- Trails-connectivity
- Preservation opportunities
- More parkland
- Blend of historic past and future vision
- Improve walkability
- Bicycle lanes
- Green initiatives
- **Threats**
 - Turning into a “Gary IN”, loss of small-town feel
 - Expensive (taxes, utilities, etc.)
 - Increased vehicle traffic, since SR2 construction projects
 - Property tax increases, nonstop, too high!
 - Industry traffic

Zoning Ordinance Housing Types

Participants were then asked to vote on their preference of various housing types. Many of them were considered Missing Middle Housing, which is known as a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types that fill in the gap between single-family homes and apartments to offer more diverse and affordable housing options. The following are the votes for each housing type:

- Traditional Single-Family Homes: 7
- Duplex/Quadplex: 5
- Accessory Dwelling Unit: 6
- Townhomes: 10
- Apartments (10 units or less): 3
- Apartments (10+ units): All no's

Residential Uses

This board explained what residential uses are currently permitted in each residential district and asked them to share their thoughts. It then went on to ask if and where ADUs should be allowed. The following are the participants' comments:

- **Detached ADU:**
 - R1 – Single Family: 4 votes permitted, 3 votes special
 - R2 – Single and Two Family: 3 votes permitted
 - MF – Multiple Family: 1 vote permitted
- **Attached ADU:**
 - R1 – Single Family: 2 votes special
 - R2 – Single and Two Family: 5 votes permitted
 - MF – Multiple Family: no votes
- **Attached (above garage) ADU:**
 - R1 – Single Family: 2 votes permitted, 1 vote not permitted, 4 votes special
 - R2 – Single and Two Family: 1 vote permitted, 1 vote special
 - MF – Multiple Family: 1 vote permitted



- **Interior (basement) ADU:**
 - R1 – Single Family: 1 vote special
 - R2 – Single and Two Family: 1 vote permitted
 - MF – Multiple Family: 1 vote permitted
- **Interior (converted garage) ADU:**
 - R1 – Single Family: 1 vote special
 - R2 – Single and Two Family: 2 votes permitted
 - MF – Multiple Family: no votes
- **General Comments:**
 - Will ADUs have the same standards as the principal structure?
 - The owner should be warned of their responsibilities (noise, safety, liability, etc.)

Commercial Design Standards

This board explained the current commercial design standards and asked for participants input on them. It also went on to explain each zoning district and left room for comments there as well.

- **LB – Local Business District:**
 - There should be window and door standards
 - Accessing these businesses is tricky due to the ‘lawn’ islands. Do it differently
- **TC – Town Center:**
 - Parking uptown is hazardous. What should be done to make it safer?
 - Need special guidelines that historical building preservation in the Town center
 - Maintain brick facades – window openings to match or resemble existing historical businesses
- **CB – Community Business District:**
 - Require landscaping
 - Should be window and door regulations

Current Use Table

The Current Use Table board laid out the current table along with the zoning map to allow for residents to review and share thoughts on permitted uses. One person commented that they would not like RVs permitted anywhere.

What’s your Big Idea?

The last board left space for participants to put any lasting comments or big ideas for zoning and development in the Town. They are as follows:

- Redevelop more attraction building for retail/co-op incubator space
- Increase retail vibrancy downtown
- Downtown parking is problematic. Limit on size of vehicles?
- There needs to be temporary housing (hotel), preferably in the former trailer park area
- Change angle of diagonal parking downtown to be smaller

HAYRIDE TOUR

Housing & Residential Development

- **ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units):**



- Currently allowed in some districts.
- Openness to allowing them in more districts.
- No permitting process currently exists—some unauthorized situations need to be addressed via a zoning ordinance update.
- **Apartments & Multi-Family:**
 - Apartments near Billy Goat Golf Course (2-story, with yards) better align with the Towns character than the 4-story Prairie Ridge units, which lack common spaces and are surrounded by parking lots.
 - Prairie Ridge Apartment Complex: Eight 4-story buildings on the south side of Town; privately owned.
 - Filbert and Chapman: New duplexes, generally well-liked; some committee members prefer designs that de-emphasize garages in favor of porches.
 - Two senior facilities in the area.
- **Single-Family Subdivisions:**
 - **Indian Meadows Subdivision:**
 - Built in the 1970s.
 - Ranches and split levels.
 - Several empty lots.
 - **Edge of the Woods Subdivision:**
 - Second-newest development.
 - Large modern homes.
 - Sidewalks on both sides of the street.
 - **Wintergreen Meadows:**
 - Latest residential development.
 - Large modern homes approach \$600K.
 - Adjacent lot owned by Steve Corman; son-in-law has proposed New Urbanism-style concepts for this land.
- **Other Notable Developments:**
 - 8 lots purchased by a developer—potential cottage court development.
 - Field gate Village:
 - Small development off Race Street.



- Not liked by the Steering Committee.
- Not a PUD; variance through planning commission.
- Does not meet subdivision design standards.
- **Short-Term Rentals:**
 - Some Airbnbs are operating without permits.
 - No permitting process currently exists for short-term rentals.

Community Facilities & Parks

- **Bourissa Hill Park:**
 - New pickleball courts are coming.
 - Nearby land owned by Steve Corman.
 - Old well head near the park is decommissioned; potential site for Brownfield redevelopment (dog park suggested).
- **Memorial Park:**
 - Located in the center of Town.
 - The former site of the old high school, torn down in the 1980s.
- **Community Reserve Building:**
 - Run by the Wesleyan Church.
 - Provides free clothes, furniture, and household goods.
 - Located in a residential area—not a retail store.
- **Spray Pad:**
 - The new installation costs the Town \$70,000/year in water expenses.
- **Events:**
 - **Hometown Days:** Late July the wiffleball tournament draws 96 teams and spectators from out of state—potential event for community engagement.

Planning, Zoning, and Infrastructure

- **Design & Character:**
 - Desire to move away from 4" vinyl siding in favor of wider, more durable materials.
 - Some members favor traditional architectural styles (e.g., porches instead of garages in front).



- Interest in applying downtown-style zoning to “Frogger Zone”/West End of Michigan Street (zero lot lines, mixed-use, minimum 2-story).
- **“Frogger Zone” / West End:**
 - Michigan Street’s west end is referred to this way due to sidewalk interruptions by driveways and parking lots.
 - Steering Committee supports form-based standards for redevelopment.
- **Vacant Properties:**
 - No vacant property ordinance currently exists.
 - Most vacant properties are commercial.
 - Steve Corman owns 70–80% of vacant land in Town, which causes some tension with the community.

Future Development

- **East of Town:**
 - IEC and GM are expected to open soon.
 - A large 9-foot-wide trail is planned through the Town.
 - The Steering Committee supports development north of Dunn Street on the east side—this land is not owned by Steve Corman.
- **Housing Needs:**
 - Town needs to free up older, smaller homes for younger families.
 - Older residents are not downsizing or are moving to South Bend.
 - Suggestion: Provide more downsizing options like apartments, villas, or townhomes.