



Town of North Liberty
300 South Main Street
North Liberty, IN 46554

North Liberty, Home of Potato Creek State Park (with park visitors of 1,085,879 in 2014), is the quintessential small town. Planters, benches, water fountains and decorative lighting highlight our main business district, which is a National Register District. The North Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce is a thriving, engaged organization and the North Liberty Main Street Association had the honor of becoming the 100th Indiana Main Street in 2010. Add our engaged citizens and you've got the perfect climate for collaboration.

North Liberty has just completed our Comprehensive Plan. Talking with residents and businesses owners and reviewing their surveys have given us a clear idea of the direction the community would like to see us move in and a list of their wants and needs.

As communities around us are losing population and projections see a continuation of that trend, North Liberty has seen a growth in population of 27% from 2000 population of 1402 to 1896 in 2010. In recent years a third second grade class was added to North Liberty Elementary, as young families realize the advantages of small town America. Currently there are several new homes under construction. North Liberty is fostering a community that will continue to attract new families and new businesses.

One of our main attractions is the award winning John Glenn School Corporation. John Glenn High School has a 97% graduation rate. In 2013 US News ranked John Glenn High School in the top 7.5% of high schools nationwide. The school's curriculum offers several college credit classes and Chinese as one of their foreign languages. Many students start college with college credits on their records. The building trades program builds homes in the communities of North Liberty and Walkerton and is currently building a new home in the Town of North Liberty.

As a community we are thinking regionally as well as locally. Two years ago the towns of North Liberty and Walkerton formed the Southwest St. Joseph County Economic Development Initiative, (see www.southwestsjcounty.com). The sole purpose of the organization is to spur development of housing, retail and manufacturing. We are currently formulating an aggressive campaign of advertising our communities and the benefits of locating here.

A new Emergency Facility for Liberty Township is currently under construction in the heart of downtown; taking advantage of the municipal water tower and fire hydrants and adding yet another new building to our ever changing landscape. In 1999, the Town took fire protection in consideration when constructing the elevated tower. North Liberty's water tower proudly displays the North Liberty Elementary Shamrock logo/mascot and the John Glenn Falcon School

Corporation mascot showing community unity. The Liberty Township Volunteer Fire Department and Ambulance services all of Liberty Township including the Town and approximately half of Greene Township. 2015 is the 100th anniversary of the Liberty Township Fire Department. Their continued dedication of the volunteers to the residents and businesses of the community is a great asset.

North Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce has grown and expanded to the point of hiring a new part-time employee and opening a new office in the business district, (see www.northlibertychamber.org).

The idea of North Liberty becoming a Main Street Community speaks to the attitude of our community which is “what can we do to help?” The Town had applied for an OCRA Grant for a Downtown Beautification project and missed getting funded by a few points. Upon hearing of our losing the grant a local business owner asked “what can we do to help”? The Town responded that becoming a Main Street Community would add additional points to the process. And, as usual, the community worked together to quickly form The North Liberty Main Street Merchants Association – the 100th Indiana Main Street in 2010. We were honored that Lieutenant Governor Skillman came to North Liberty to make the award. The Town applied again for the Downtown Beautification grant and was awarded \$500,000.

The Main Street process and the grant started partnerships that have resulted in excellent improvements to the Main Street district and the town as a whole. It is heartwarming to see how our businesses and residents respond when the town has a need. The downtown improvements helped spur growth, including the construction of the new Subway which was a huge win for the community. In the fall of 2014, the Main Street organization started doing “Pop-up Shops” with fantastic results, which encouraged more new growth. In late 2014 our bakery that had been closed for two years, found a new owner and Over the Top Bakery is now a thriving business. Following close behind came two new businesses, The Beans Coffee Shop and Art-tiques on the Creek, an arts/antique co-op, with many local artists exhibiting their wares. Another new restaurant will open in early spring. These are all locally owned businesses.

The Town of North Liberty has been very fortunate with award of INDOT, DNR Historic Preservation, and OCRA Grants along with some other funding sources to accomplish a great deal of improvements for our great community. These are just the first of many projects the community needs and desires to be the very best that we can be. As you will see from the list below, the proposed Stellar Projects are geared to benefit the whole community, mirroring the findings of our Comprehensive Plan

Our Stellar Communities application includes the following:

- 1. North Liberty Town Park Project 1: Phase II of 1936 WPA Stonework in the Historic North Liberty Park.**

This project would address the three stone structures that had to be left off the 2014 WPA Phase I Restoration along with a monument for the National Historic Preservation designation. This would preserve our park for generations to come.

Last summer the 1936 WPA Stonework at our beautiful National Historic Register Town Park was cleaned and rebuilt. An old fire-pit and cobble stone bench were reconstructed in the WPA renovation. Due to funding restrictions not all the structures were addressed and we would like to complete phase II of this project. The completion of this project would preserve the great craftsmanship of the WPA stone masons and add to the allure of our park – which is heavily used by the residents.

North Liberty Town Park Project 2: Construct a 40 feet diameter Spray Pad for Children:

In communicating with residents through the comprehensive plan surveys, the responses stated over and over “there is nothing for kids to do in Town”. A spray pad for the Town Park would be a huge attraction for families. The park is used extensively for family reunions, but we need more amenities to draw increased use of this facility. The new ADA sidewalks funded by INDOT through Safe Routes to School Phase 1 will make the Park more accessible and the start to our newly developed Healthy Trails North Liberty.

2. Phase II of Shamrock Estates Senior Housing:

The Town is desirous to complete an additional 5 duplexes to meet with the needs of our aging community. In 2010 our population was 42% elderly, showing a definite need. This project compliments the other local infrastructure, investment and our healthy living community with a walking path that ties to School Trail, Tamarack Trail, Safe Routes to School Phase I to the School and to the Town Park, (see map).

In 2014, Senior Housing Duplexes were completed with funding sources obtained by St Joseph County Housing Assistance Office for the construction. The Town paid for the infrastructure including utilities, streets and ADA curbs and sidewalks with General Obligation bonds for 10 duplexes and 5 First Time Home Buyer or Habitat Houses. The Town had previously purchased the land with HUD funds from management of the funds for The Meadows Apartments. Currently all 5 duplexes are senior occupied and there is a waiting list.

The Town would use the similar design of the current five duplexes to save design costs and shorten the length of time to get construction and eventual occupancy.

3. Trail to Potato Creek State Park:

One of the main request/concerns of our residents when participating in the Comprehensive Plan was to have a trail that would promote tourism and increased business for our Main Street Merchants. In addition it would promote healthy living for our residents.

Construct a multi-purpose trail between the Town of North Liberty, Potato Creek State Park, and MACOG signed bike routes: The Town is open to any route path desired by the State of Indiana and the DNR. One such route could be Osborne Road, closed when Potato Creek Park was constructed, but is still paved within the state park. There is a fenced gate at this location that could allow access to and from the park. Working with our partner, we have also identified other potential routes. The project matrix includes some construction within Potato Creek State Park. Once a final route is determined and costs compiled the project may need to be split into a couple of phases, in order to afford construction.

4. Marketing Downtown Business District Phase I – Home to Potato Creek State Park Campaign:

The North Liberty Main Street Merchants Association in partnership with the North Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce is looking for marketing assistance and technical assistance in marketing our community from the various departments within the State of Indiana Government.

As our business district grows, it becomes even more important to market our community to the visitors at Potato Creek State Park. Currently the Park is the third most attended State Park in Indiana, this becomes even more important. While we have made some effort in the past we have dramatically stepped up our efforts to attract those visitors to our business district.

Our community is very much in favor of a new inn at Potato Creek State Park. The inn would bring so many opportunities for the Town with tourism dollars and local jobs.

5. Phase II Marketing Downtown Business District – Façade Program

The Main Street Merchants is requesting \$50,000.00 for a 75% - 25% Match for façade improvements along the business corridor. The Main Street organization will consult with an architectural firm to set up guidelines that must be met by the businesses to take advantage of the Façade Program. Improving the facades of our older buildings will make them more attractive and viable, increasing tourist visits and bringing dollars to the community.

The Town of North Liberty has always been able to get volunteers and organizations to join the partnership for a project. The John Glenn basketball team painted a downtown exterior when the owner was unable to do the work himself. The Boy Scouts were going to build bat houses when there was concern about disturbing the bat population prior to the construction of the North Liberty Senior Housing. The North Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce and North Liberty Main Street have always supported the efforts of the Town.

The Town of North Liberty is confident the projects can be completed within the four year timeline. The only problem could be with the route for Potato Creek Trail.

The Town will fund matching fund requirements with property tax, CEDIT, CCD, CCI, and Major Moves dollars as long as there are no funding restrictions or cuts from the State legislature. Each project, identified herein, could be constructed in usable segments in order to accommodate the awarded funding. For example, Potato Creek Trail could be made into phases instead of one complete project depending on the approved route. The Senior Housing could be downsized to fewer units to match funding available. The Town will pay its last general obligation bond payment on August 1, 2017, so borrowing is also an option. The Town would work with state agencies for their recommendations on funding options.

Summary

The 2015 Stellar Committee has looked to impact our community with the spray pad for our children, additional senior housing for the 55 and older, and to help ensure our business community prosper.

The Stellar process has formed even stronger partnerships and community unity to work together to try to make North Liberty an even better place to live.

North Liberty SRTS Improvements Map



Not to Scale

Potato Creek
Approx. 3 miles

SRTS Phase Two - Future new multi-use path and pedestrian bridge over Potato Creek

SRTS Phase One - New walks on Mill Street and reconstructions on Jefferson and Market - 2014 construction

Proposed SRTS following completion of Proposed Projects

North Liberty Town Park

North Liberty Elementary School

North Liberty Public Library

Downtown Streetscape constructed in 2011 and included sidewalk construction with ADA curb ramps

North Liberty Senior Housing

Sidewalk improvement project under Transportation Enhancement funds - 2013 construction

North Liberty