

## FIELD TOUR NOTES: Etna Green, Indiana

### Overview

The information discussed during the field tour has been organized into four key categories to allow for easy review and comparison between communities. The categories are defined below:

#### General Considerations:

A portion of the information discussed during the field tour meetings was to provide general information the community, the history and the residents living and working within the area. Items that could not be included in the three categories below have been accounted for in this General Considerations category.

#### Aspirations:

Aspirations are the goals/ objectives/ projects that the community hopes to achieve during or after this planning process.

#### Strengths/ Opportunities:

Strengths are internal, positive attributes of your department and/or system. These are things that are within your control. Opportunities are external factors in your environment that are likely to contribute to your success.

#### Weaknesses/ Threats:

Weaknesses are negative factors that detract from your strengths. These are things that you might need to improve on to be competitive. Threats are external factors that you have no control over. You may want to consider putting in place contingency plans for dealing with them as/ if they occur.

## Summary

On Friday, March 5, 2021 members of the project team met with Jason Hanes, Town Council and Patricia Cook, Clerk-Treasurer to discuss the Town of Etna Green's existing conditions, aspirations, and overall needs. James Turnwald, Katie Clark, Scott Siefker and Alec Pormen were in attendance from the project team.

#### General Considerations:

- The Town of Etna Green has a population of approximately 580 residents and was established in 1854.
- The centerpiece of Town is Remembrance Park, which contains a fountain, gardens, seating, public art mural and the historic bandstand that once stood at the intersection of Broadway and Walnut Streets.
- The Etna Green Elevator Building is adjacent to Remembrance Park, and has been operational since 1907.

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- Heritage Park contains the Etna Green Museum and a 1934 caboose rail car. The park also contains a rental pavilion for both indoor and outdoor events. The covered outdoor area also includes a fireplace and picnic tables.
- Water and sewer capacity is currently okay, with some room for additional growth.
- The Town does not currently have a Parks Board or a Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- The Town is included as part of the Triton School Corporation.
- There is a local Amish population that regularly visits / does business at the Feed Store downtown.
- Public Safety: Town has a contract that pays Sherriff's office for 1-shift / week (500 hours total), which is not currently enough. The EMS is serviced by Tri County EMS, and the Town pays the township for this service. Fire is also handled by the township, the Town pays \$40,000 / year for this service, and does have a facility in-town.
- Bourbon, Indiana and Etna Green are considered sister cities.

### Aspirations:

- Would like to work with the K-21 Foundation to develop a cultural walking trail around the Town. As part of this initiative, it is desired that they identify gaps in the existing sidewalk system, however, there needs to be some research regarding available public right-of-way to construct new walk or path connections.
- There is a potential for new housing / residential development between the park and cemetery that is already property within the town limits.
- Would like to the explore the opportunity to create a Downtown Façade Enhancement Program, but they currently do not have a Main Street Organization to facilitate the program.
- The Town does not have a Redevelopment Commission; thus, they have no TIF areas in the community. They are interested in exploring those economic development options.
- The Town would like to see beautification efforts downtown, the façade improvements would be included within this goal.

### Strengths/Opportunities:

- Etna Green Café is the main social hub in the community, with opportunity to capitalize on additional downtown investment around that area and Heritage Park.
- The community does host a 4<sup>th</sup> of July event, co-sponsored by the Lions Club and Town, with a parade and vendors in Heritage Park.
- Etna Green is a member of the Warsaw/ Kosciusko County Chamber of Commerce, it was noted that there is an opportunity to strengthen relationships with staff and take more advantage of that membership participation.

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- There is a Nursery School in town sponsored by the Church of Christ, however they lack a safe walk to get from the church to Heritage Park.
- There is a strong sense of community. Many residents oversee and take care of elderly neighbors.
- There are two strong industrial users along the US 30 corridor. They have local access along Lincoln Highway.

### Weaknesses/ Threats:

- There is no actual electric back-up for utility service. The backup system that exists is routed to the same source. Have identified the need for some sort of Town generator to provide back-up utility service. It has been discussed that the K21 grant, available to local Towns, could be used for this infrastructure project.
- Maintenance on the water tower is needed.
- There is no senior housing in Etna Green, so residents typically have to move Plymouth or Warsaw.
- The Lions Club community building at the park offers a local facility. The club itself is struggling for membership, and is currently losing membership numbers.
- The J. Hooks on US 30 is difficult to access – concerned about the proposed INDOT improvement project on US 30, although there is an understanding that this project is currently paused.
- Local revenues from park rentals is down due to COVID-19.
- Potential improvements to the US 30 corridor could pose access challenges for the Town. The proposed J-turns have not been confirmed, but the idea does pose concerns for local leaders.
- There is no local, traditional grocery store.