



# impact

## JASPERcomprehensive plan

### Executive Summary

Impact Jasper Comprehensive Plan - Executive Summary  
Adopted 08/21/2019

# What is Impact Jasper?

Impact Jasper is a comprehensive planning document that articulates a direction or vision for the next ten years. It not only examines land use policy and objectives, it includes a broad view of Jasper including economic development, neighborhoods, transportation, community facilities, utilities & infrastructure, parks and recreation, environmental assets, quality of life, and more. The purpose of this effort is to make a positive IMPACT on the community by planning and creating change and growth versus reacting to change.

Officially the plan will be used to guide policy and other-related decisions, as well as identify various physical and programmatic enhancements to the make Jasper stronger. Implementation of this plan is expected to happen over-time through the help of local and regional partners, as well as governmental decisions that will occur such as budgeting, land use decisions, progress made by individual departments, and other policy development. This plan also serves as an update to the previous comprehensive plan, which was adopted almost a decade ago.

**“Our prosperous City has the potential to be better than we are now, and we are excited to be in control of our future.”**

**- Mayor Dean Vonderheide**

## What Did the Process Look Like?

This plan was developed over the course of 14 months, beginning in the summer of 2018 and was divided amongst three parts.



**Part One** included information gathering of existing physical, demographic and market conditions, as well as previous or ongoing planning efforts and community visioning. This part of the process created a foundation or starting point to determine the direction for the future.



The **second part** included vetting and finalizing a defined vision, overarching goals and strategies that would IMPACT Jasper tomorrow.



Finally, the **third part** of this planning process outlined an action plan for implementation of the goals and strategies to determine how Jasper will IMPACT the future.

## What Were the Key Takeaways?

At the beginning of the planning process, many of the comments began to form common themes or big ideas to address or leverage in Jasper. These big ideas include the following:

### Population & Talent Attraction

Growth in population is necessary to keep up with the growing economy and local job opportunities. Recently, Jasper has seen minimal growth, growing by approximately 500 people from 2010 to 2016 according to the American Community Survey. In comparison, the City grew by about 4,000 people from 2000 to 2010. The community survey also highlighted several community members stating that talent attraction and retention would be necessary for the survival of local businesses.

### Higher Education & Training

In addition to early education, creating a strong workforce was identified by community members as a need for the future. Existing educational institutions such as Vincennes University Jasper should continue to offer and expand educational tracts, and new opportunities for technical training. Professional development should also be considered to create a stronger and educated workforce.

### Shopping, Dining & Grocery

Many community members reported having to leave Jasper to shop and also reported not having enough restaurant and grocery options available in the City. Most were also concerned about recent store closures such as the Kmart that continue to make these conditions worse.

## Interstate Access

Interstate connectivity through projects such as the Midstates Corridor were also identified as a priority during this process. Although large transportation projects often take several years for planning and construction, preparation and planning begins early in the process. This connectivity can leverage both small and large business growth, and offer additional pedestrian amenities for community members.

## Public Transportation

The need for public transportation was identified for two distinct reasons. The first reason was to provide transportation for those without a vehicle, providing convenient access to jobs, healthcare, shopping and other daily needs. The second reason was to promote tourism in Jasper by connecting local attractions and destinations. While both serve two different purposes, these could also be addressed together depending on feasibility.

## Walkability & Bike-ability

To complement vehicular access, enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout Jasper were also highlighted throughout the visioning process. These ideas varied from local trails, bike lanes and sidewalks, to regional connections to nearby community such as Ireland and Huntingburg. Not only can these connections serve for recreational purposes, but also safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists to jobs and destinations.

## Substance Abuse/Mental Health

Two major topics related to health were identified during the visioning process to promote the overall wellbeing of Jasper. These topics included addressing substance abuse through prevention and treatment, and taking steps to remove the stigma attached to mental health diseases and disorders.

## Vacant/Underutilized Property

This topic describes all types of property including private (residential, commercial, industrial) and public uses. While development and growth will continue to expand beyond the city-limits on its own, it is important to community members to address existing vacant and underutilized structures in the City now. Redevelopment and rehabilitation of these structures would promote stronger neighborhoods, increase safety, and promote the overall aesthetics of the community.

## Affordable & Diverse Neighborhoods

Housing needs vary greatly depending on the residents age and stage of life. These include a range in housing size, type, price and maintenance that is required. The City current has 6,792 housing units, and in April of 2019, approximately 88 homes and vacant lots or 1% of those homes were listed for sale on realtor.com. Too few houses can lead to inflated prices, reducing affordability, and reducing the amount of options available for existing and new residents.

## Neighborhood Investment

According the American Community Survey, approximately half of the existing housing stock was built before 1970. Older homes contribute to the character of the City, however as the structure ages, regular maintenance and repairs are often more cumbersome than newer homes. Investment in local neighborhoods such as owner-occupied rehabilitation programs or neighborhood planning can help promote strong and beautiful neighborhoods throughout the City.

## Regional Focus

This big idea shifts the focus from addressing large challenges through a local approach, to combining efforts in the County and beyond to address challenges through a regional approach. Examples include regional connectivity such as public transportation, interstate access, a multi-use trail, or through other initiatives such as economic development.

## Opportunity for Public Engagement

The final big idea that emerged from community input was the opportunity for more public engagement in the decision-making process. This also included the opportunity for the youth to engage with the City to encourage them to remain and become the next generation of leaders.

## Activities for Teens & Families

Several parks and recreational amenities were highlighted as assets in Jasper such as the newly constructed Parklands, however many thought additional programming opportunities should be added to serve local teens and families. Community members also noted that programming opportunities for teens and families should be easy to access and affordable.

## Embrace Diversity, Newcomers & Change

Many citizens noted a strong German-heritage and celebration of that heritage within Jasper, but also highlighted a need to celebrate and welcome new cultures, change, and newcomers to the area. In many ways this relates to population attraction and the likelihood to retain population if they feel they have a connection to the community (family, friends, organizations, etc.). By continuing to celebrate multiple cultures, ideas, and new residents, Jasper can be known for its acceptance and become a place where people want to be.

## Opportunities to Provide Input

The City captured hundreds of comments and feedback from community members across a variety of platforms during the planning process. A more robust summary of public engagement can be found in Appendix A. Engagement opportunities included:

- Six steering committee meetings
- Two public workshops
- Two online surveys
- Community outreach event at Strassenfest
- One dozen focus group meetings
- Several key person interviews
- Mailed 200 surveys
- Interactive mobile display
- Youth engagement through school assignments
- Engagement through Facebook and the project website

# 706

Survey Participants

# 690

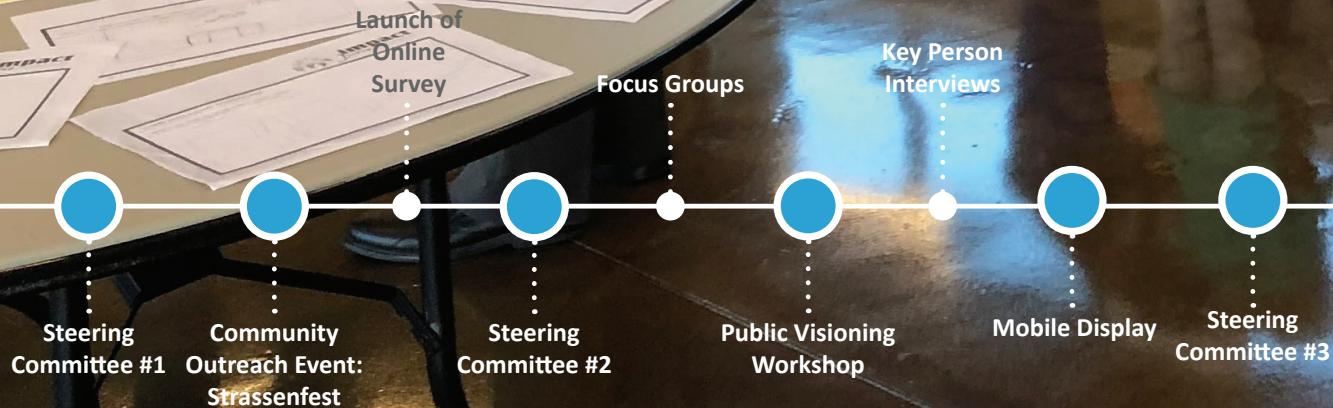
Unique Comments Collected During Public Workshops

# 34

Different Ways We Collected Input

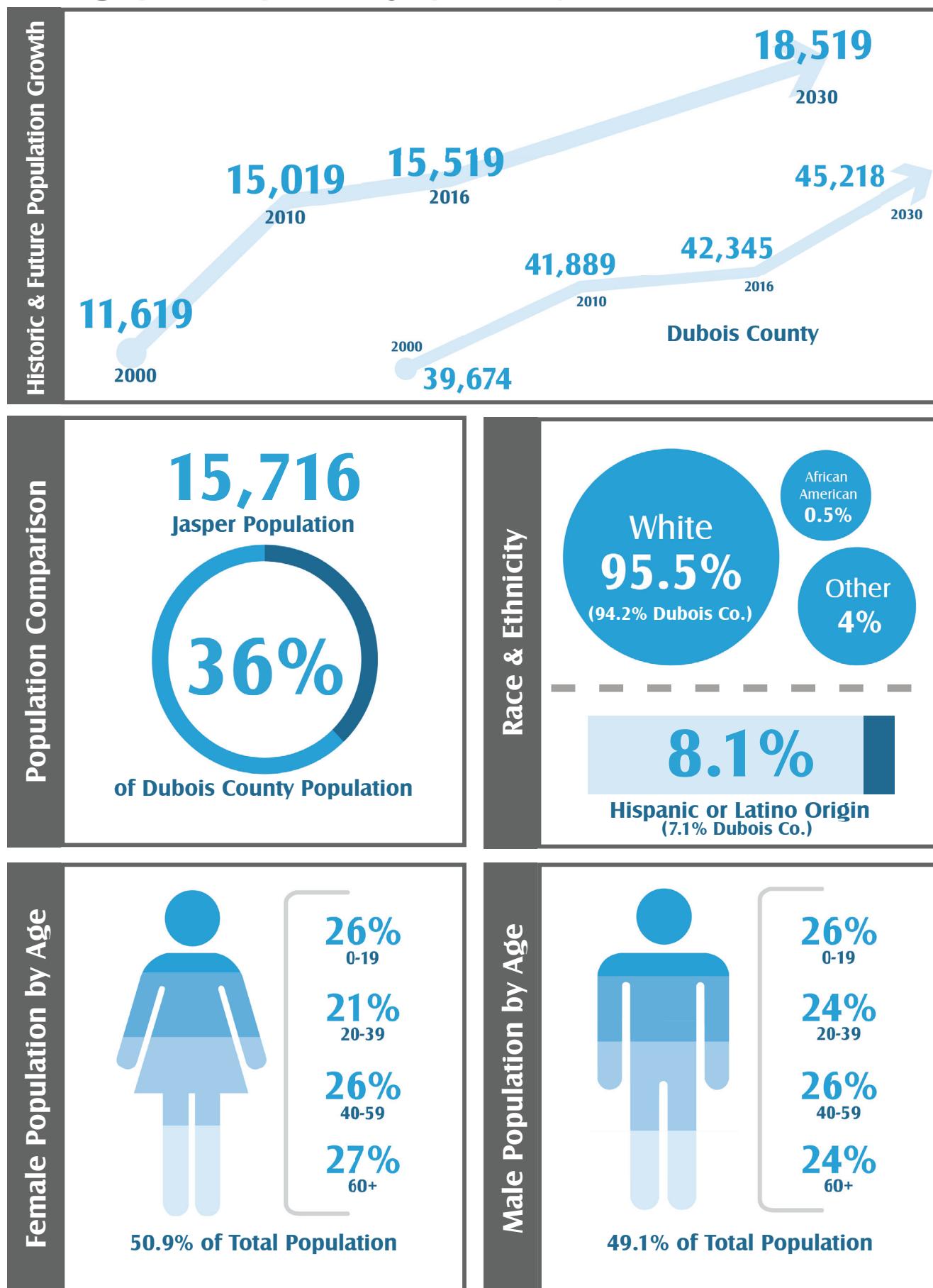
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Elementary Students Who Participated

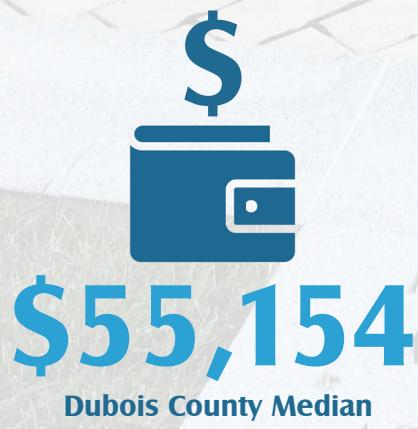




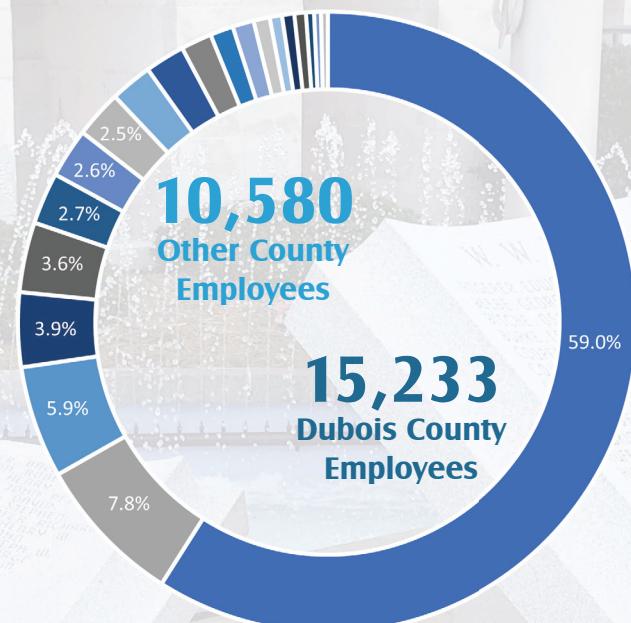
## Demographic Snapshot of Jasper Today:



Methodology and approach can be found in the in-depth Existing Conditions & Public Input Report found in Appendix A. A demographic analysis included direct comparison of Jasper to comparable communities, the County, Indiana, and the United States.

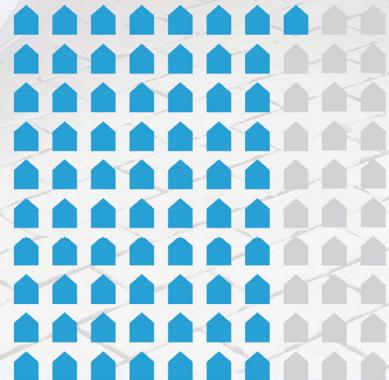


### Commuting Workforce into Dubois County



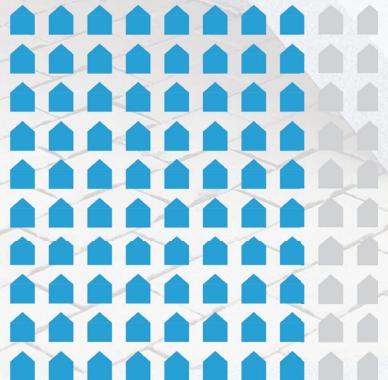
- Dubois, IN
- Other County
- Spencer, IN
- Perry, IN
- Pike, IN
- Orange, IN
- Daviess, IN
- Martin, IN
- Crawford, IN
- Vanderburgh, IN
- Warrick, IN
- Gibson, IN
- Knox, IN
- Lawrence, IN
- Washington, IN
- Floyd, IN
- Marion, IN
- Posey, IN
- Clark, IN
- Harrison, IN

**71%**



Owner Occupied Housing Units

**80%**



Homes Above \$100k



\*Statistics for Jasper and the Regional communities were taken from the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS), 2010 Census, and the 2017 Population Estimates. Demographics for the state as well as Dubois County were also analyzed from StatsIndiana.

# How is the Plan Organized?

Like the planning process, the plan is organized into three parts. The second part of this plan represents the major ideas, goals, and strategies that were developed. A vision was created to guide the overall plan and four major themes emerged during this process, which organizes the goals and strategies brought forth during this planning effort and make-up the direction for Jasper's future.

## Jasper's Vision

Jasper is a dynamic and innovative community with a focus on families, healthy neighborhoods, connecting people, and employment growth. Jasper will be the ideal choice for residents, businesses, and investors.

### What is Vision Statement?

A vision statement is an overarching and forward-looking perspective that sets the stage for the goals and strategies also identified in this plan. It is intended for this statement to capture the image of the future and reflects the values of Jasper.

## Four Overarching Themes Emerged:



Population Growth & Retention	Downtown & Riverfront	Identity	Neighborhoods & Housing
Growing Industry	Transportation	Environmental Assets	Parks & Recreation
Education	Regional Collaboration	Health & Wellness	Community Services
Utilities			
Land Use			





## Plan Goals

### Population Growth & Retention

**Goal:**

Attract residents, retain talent, and celebrate diversity within the region.

### Growing Industry

**Goal:**

Support employers and entrepreneurs in their efforts to expand and locate in Jasper.

### Education

**Goal:**

Ensure a talented workforce that serves the needs of employers.

### Utilities

**Goal:**

Plan for growth, service level and capacity improvements to Jasper's utility infrastructure.

### Land Use

**Goal:**

Promote sound development through everyday planning decisions and redevelopment.

### Downtown & Riverfront

**Goal:**

Strengthen the viability and connectivity between the Courthouse Square and the Riverfront.

### Transportation

**Goal:**

Improve transportation infrastructure and expand connectivity.

### Regional Collaboration

**Goal:**

Partner with regional municipalities and organizations to foster collaboration.



## Identity

**Goal:**

Celebrate Jasper's historic character and arts culture while also showcasing the community's unique identity.

## Environmental Assets

**Goal:**

Protect and expand environmental assets in and around Jasper.

## Health & Wellness

**Goal:**

Promote well-being for all community members and promote healthy living.

## Neighborhoods & Housing

**Goal:**

Establish a balanced housing stock for residents of all ages, incomes and stages of life.

## Parks & Recreation

**Goal:**

Expand high-quality recreational amenities.

## Community Services

**Goal:**

Continue to provide high-caliber community services.

# How Will We Measure Success?

The ability to measure success, or to determine if Jasper is making a positive IMPACT on the community is important to the planning process. The third part of this plan is the guidebook that will take the vision from concept to reality. This part identifies various tools, partners, potential funding, or other resources that can be used for implementation purposes. In addition, the City should track the following metrics to understand if current efforts are improving Jasper. These metrics can be tracked through U.S. Census data, American Community Survey Data, local permitting data, and the survey of local businesses and residents.

## We are successful if we have:

- An ongoing growth of our population
- Perpetual growth in employment
- Constant increase of our per capita income
- Steady increase of our property tax net assessed value
- Balanced and increased stock of quality housing options



# What are the Priorities?

Impact Jasper identifies over 100 strategies that cover several different topics. All strategies are important for the community, however not all strategies can be completed at once. The following priorities were selected by the Steering Committee and community members based on immediate need, and are organized by the four plan themes. A complete list of strategies can be found in the Comprehensive Plan.

## Population Growth & Retention

- Work with Dubois Strong to expand their marketing campaign geographically to attract population and talent (live, work & play).
- Develop an Incentive Program to attract young professionals and skilled workforce.

## Growing Industry

- Convene employers, educators, and other organizations to identify needs and gaps (land, transportation, incentives, education, talent, etc.).
- Promote Jasper as a Giga City.
- Promote incentives and amenities to attract new and diverse businesses and industries to Jasper to expand the existing business and industry base.

## Education

- Increase full-time enrollment for post-secondary degree and certificate options.
- Work with employers and educators to develop career pathways, life skills, and increase educational attainment.

## Land Use

- Improve commerce opportunities along 3rd Avenue (including Jasper Manor Shopping Center).
- Redevelop the "Y" intersection as an attractive gateway.
- Update inventory of vacant buildings, vacant structures, and undeveloped lots to address and encourage infill development.

## Utilities

- Develop a Utility Asset Management Plan to increase managerial, technical, and financial capacity of all owned utilities.

## Downtown & Riverfront

- Create a cultural and entertainment district, unifying the riverfront and downtown area.
- Implement the Downtown + Riverfront Master Plan. (façade improvement, walkability, bike-ability, public spaces, etc.).
- Hire a part-time main street director.

## Transportation

- Initiate a comprehensive, detailed transportation plan to prioritize construction projects, Midstates Corridor connectors, ID costs, and public safety benefits.
- Actively participate in the planning process and route alignment of the Midstates Corridor.
- Create better pedestrian connectivity in Jasper by connecting trail systems, destinations, and neighborhoods.

## Regional Collaboration

- Collaborate with Dubois County and other county partners to develop a regional approach to workforce, business attraction, growth, and development.

## Identity

- Implement, encourage, and promote public art.
- Complete and launch a "re-branding" exercise for Jasper that identifies a new direction and focus for the community.

## Environmental Assets

- Plant more trees along streets where feasible.

## Health & Wellness

- Allow, encourage, and support substance abuse treatment program(s) and facility(ies).

## Neighborhoods & Housing

- Attract new diverse housing development including single-family, multi-family, rental, and age-in-place housing.

## Parks & Recreation

- Develop an indoor sports/recreational facility and aquatic center.

## Community Services

- Work with broadband providers to expand high-speed and high-capacity internet to areas beyond the corporate boundaries of Jasper.

