



# Executive Summary for McCordsville: Mount Comfort Corridor Development Study

January 2017

## Acknowledgments

Thomas P. Miller and Associates (TPMA) owes distinct recognition to the following stakeholders for funding this study:

- Hancock County Community Foundation
- Hancock County Redevelopment Commission
- Town of Cumberland
- Town of McCordsville
- Hancock County
- NineStar Connect
- Hancock County Economic Development Council

## Introduction

The Town of McCordsville has a vested interest in the economic development of the Mt. Comfort Corridor that connects the community to other critical commercial, business, and residential centers of the greater Indianapolis region. For the purposes of this study, the boundaries of the Mt. Comfort Corridor are from U.S. 40 to CR 1000N. The communities expressed a need for additional data, analysis, and advocacy to aid marketing efforts focused on increased business investment along Mt. Comfort Road, specifically targeting such industries as advanced manufacturing, logistics, and life sciences, to bring high-paying jobs to the collective region. The “Celebrating Communities” collaborative grant opportunity offered by the Hancock County Community Foundation opened the door for such a study to be conducted, providing the communities with hypothetical development scenarios for industrial, residential, and commercial growth along Mt. Comfort Road. These development scenarios will allow further analysis regarding the sales and property tax effects of increased business investment. With this data, the Town of Cumberland will have a deeper understanding of the potential impact of the Corridor’s development.

The potential development initiatives described below are contingent upon the completion of appropriate road and utility infrastructure upgrades.

## Vision for the Mt. Comfort Corridor

The communities established a unified approach to the development of the Mt. Comfort Corridor, encompassing all perspectives and needs, based on the understanding that the corridor needs to grow and change over the next 5-10 years for increased prosperity of the region. The Mt. Comfort Corridor presents a tremendous, untapped opportunity for development in the region due to the existing broadband capacity assets. Its development potential is frequently compared to the Ronald Reagan Parkway in Hendricks County, thus the hypothetical development scenarios defined below are based on a similar vision. Because of existing and projected growth along the corridor, the county has pursued funding sources for infrastructure improvements based on increased commuter traffic. Additionally, the Towns of Cumberland and McCordsville envision a complementary policy for the development of the corridor that creates a unified identity and viable business and residential corridor. The unified identify should include a complete streetscape with accommodations for pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and vehicles that will increase quality of life characteristics, attracting residents, workers, and companies to the region. Simultaneously, improved infrastructure access will allow for increased capacity and mobility.

For the development of the corridor to be successful, public officials, stakeholders, and community members must continue the momentum built during this process and work toward the implementation of the recommendations.

## Hypothetical Development Scenarios

TPMA used feedback gathered during discussions with the communities to create three hypothetical Corridor development scenarios for each of the three partners (the Town of McCordsville, the Town of Cumberland, and Hancock County). Based on discussions, the scenarios include the following:

- **Commercial Development**
- **Industrial Development**
- **Residential Development**

TPMA conducted desktop research and field assessments in order to identify typical types of development for each scenario in comparable communities. Please note that the generic nature of the hypothetical development scenarios is to provide a baseline guide for the analysis, not to indicate any specific kind of development that may occur.

Data sources for the proposed hypothetical scenarios below include the RS Means and Whole Building Design Guide.

Four (4) Hypothetical Development Scenarios were identified for the Town of McCordsville and focused on the Vernon Township and Buck Creek Township taxing districts.

- **Downtown Boutique Shopping Area**
- **High-end Retail Park**
- **Medical Office**
- **Light Industrial Facility**

An impact analysis conducted for each of McCordsville's hypothetical scenarios provides the following key points:

McCordsville- Vernon(V) / Buck Creek(BC) Townships <i>Development Impact Comparison</i>					
Type of Impact	Scenario 1: Downtown Boutique Retail	Scenario 2: High-end Retail Park	Scenario 3: Medical Office	Scenario 4: Light Industrial	
Constructed Space	23,500 sq./ft.	78,400 s./ft.	14,500 sq./ft.	50,000 sq./ft.	
Construction Investment	\$3.9 M	\$11.0 M	\$2.6 M	\$5.6 M	
Construction Impact	Jobs	37	105	25	130
	Income	\$1.7 M	\$4.9 M	\$1.1 M	\$2.5 M
Job Creation	Jobs	102	210	65	31
	Avg. Salary	\$32 K	\$32 K	\$84 K	\$69 K
Increase in Tax Base	Property	\$3.5 M	\$10.0 M	\$2.3 M	\$5.0 M
	LOIT	\$4.5 M	\$8.6 M	\$4.7 M	\$2.1 M
Annual Tax Revenue Impact: McCordsville	Property	\$5 K (V) \$5 K (BC)	\$13 K (V) \$14 K (BC)	\$3 K (V) \$3 K (BC)	\$7 K (V) \$7 K (BC)
	LOIT	\$2 K	\$4 K	\$2 K	\$1 K
Annual Tax Revenue Impact: County	Property	\$36 K (V) \$38 K (BC)	\$101 K (V) \$109 K (BC)	\$24 K (V) \$26 K (BC)	\$51 K (V) \$55 K (BC)
	LOIT	\$18 K	\$34 K	\$19 K	\$8 K

### Conclusions:

- Scenario two (High-end Retail Park) offers the greatest construction impact.
- Scenario two (High-end Retail Park) has the largest increase in tax revenue.
- Scenario two (High-end Retail Park) creates the most jobs.
- Scenario three (Medical Office) produces the highest wage jobs.
- Scenario four (Light Industrial) has higher wage jobs than both retail centers, but relatively low employment.
- Scenario one (Downtown Boutique Retail) has a smaller footprint.

### Target Industry Identification

In September 2015, the Indianapolis Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was completed and included a target business review (i.e. target industry analysis) of industries in the greater Indianapolis region, including Hancock County. The target business review's focus determined the viability of existing industry targets, identified opportunity industries, as well as entrepreneurship and workforce assets.

Industry strengths are generally based on historical strengths and employment is typically concentrated by a few anchor employers in a region. The Hancock Economic Development Council identified the strongest industries for Hancock County, which align well with the 2015 Indianapolis Regional CEDS report. Existing sector strengths are sustained and grown by supporting numerous existing assets and initiatives by the public and private sectors. Additionally, a focus on technology-led economic development in the region has been and continues to be supported, and the Towns of Cumberland and McCordsville, and Hancock County have identified this as an aspirational target.

Based on this knowledge, TPMA has highlighted the following target industries with information on historical sector strength, national trends, and key site considerations for relocation.

TPMA Mt. Comfort Corridor Target Industries
Life Sciences
Manufacturing
Logistics
Information Technology

These identified target industries provide guidance to the communities as to which types of companies are best suited for location along the Mt. Comfort Corridor. Additional key site considerations, as well as a comprehensive description of the target industries are described in the full report.

## Recommendations

Based on the results of the fiscal impact analysis and the identified target industries, TPMA recommends the following:

- **Further Study** — TPMA recommends further study, to include estimating the costs of pre-development, return-on-investment analysis, market analysis, site due diligence, and community input for all of the development scenarios; however, we recommend that the following types of development should be given priority:
  - **High-tech Manufacturing** (*Scenario 3 for the Town of Cumberland or Scenario 3 for Hancock County*) – This hypothetical development yielded the largest investment and increase to the region's tax base and creates the best jobs. Given the choice between Cumberland and Hancock County, this development would generate the largest tax impacts for the region when located within the Cumberland-Sugar Creek taxing district.
  - **Custom Class Residential** (*Scenario 2 for Hancock County*) – This hypothetical development had the greatest impact in terms of investment and increase to the County's tax base of all the scenarios considered. While no jobs would be created in this scenario, this type of development would be complementary strategy for attracting high-wage, high-skill jobs and highly skilled workers to the region.
  - **High-end Retail Park** (*Scenario 1 for the Town of Cumberland and Scenario 2 for the Town of McCordsville*) – This hypothetical scenario attracts a large investment, contributes significantly to the regional tax base, and creates a large number of middle-wage jobs. In addition, this type of development may be important as a strategy for improving the quality-of-life and attracting highly skilled workers to the region.

- **Marketing/Branding** – As previously mentioned, fiber capacity along the Corridor is one of the best in the Indianapolis MSA region. This critical infrastructure asset is a well-kept secret that needs to be broadcasted and marketed to attract residents, talent, and businesses. Establishing a brand based on this asset can be a differentiator for the communities. Focused marketing efforts on the target industries and site selections factors identified are recommended.
- **Land Use Plans** – Based on discussions with the communities, a comprehensive land use plan along the corridor and throughout the rest of the county is recommended for a cohesive, forward-thinking strategy for impending development.
- **Pre-development** – Communities need to be ready for impending development, thus, identifying prime shovel-ready sites for such development scenarios is imperative. Pre-development site work is recommended as a means of increasing speed-to-market for developers, consultants, and businesses.