



# Indiana Main Street Transformation Strategy

## *Heart of Jasper*

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## Executive Summary

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Downtown Jasper, Indiana, is a community with a strong local identity, a loyal base of residents and visitors, and a foundation of civic pride that can be harnessed for long-term revitalization. Through community survey responses, local focus groups, and a review of market data (including ESRI Tapestry segmentation and Placer.ai visitation patterns), it became clear that Jasper's next chapter must focus on growing its evening economy to enhance vibrancy, support businesses, and create a more complete downtown experience.

Participants consistently expressed affection for Jasper's clean, charming downtown but highlighted a lack of energy, activity, and retail options after 5 p.m. While the built environment is strong and the daytime draw remains steady, data confirms a steep drop in business engagement and visitor experiences in the evenings. However, market analysis showed that foot traffic remains relatively strong after hours—suggesting an opportunity gap rather than a demand gap.

After evaluating several potential strategies, the most feasible and high-impact opportunity identified was **"Alive After Five"**—a transformation strategy centered on extending downtown life beyond traditional business hours. The strategy is not about large capital investments, but rather small, strategic changes that collectively transform the feel and function of downtown in the evenings. Examples include piloting consistent late-night hours, introducing small-scale activations, lighting and safety improvements, and branding/marketing efforts.

The community and stakeholder response to this direction has been positive and enthusiastic, and the strategy presents a practical entry point for incremental progress. Complementary initiatives, such as improving walkability and parking wayfinding, can follow as support structures to reinforce the broader vision.

The report concludes with detailed recommendations and an implementation roadmap, including next steps for board approval, public communication, and the formation of an implementation committee. With focused execution, Jasper is well positioned to build a livelier, more inclusive downtown that meets the evolving needs of its residents, workers, and visitors.

## About Main Street America

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Main Street America has been helping revitalize older and historic commercial districts for more than 35 years. Today it is a network of more than 2,000 neighborhoods and communities, rural, suburban and big cities, who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Main Street America is a program of the nonprofit National Main Street Center, Inc., a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Since 1980, over 2,000 programs have used the Main Street Approach, our time-tested framework for community-driven, comprehensive revitalization. Main Street America conducts research to document our impact by annually collecting statistical information on the preservation, revitalization, and economic activities in local Main Street programs throughout the country.

## About the Main Street Approach

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The Main Street Approach™ is Main Street America’s framework for community revitalization. Centered around Four Points (see below), the Approach offers community-based revitalization initiatives with a strategic, adaptable framework for downtown transformation that is easily tailored to local conditions. The Main Street Approach underwent a refresh in 2015 to become more responsive to economic context, strategy-driven, and outcome-oriented.



Every community has a unique set of place-based assets, anchors, and consumer markets that contribute to a healthy business district. Leveraging those assets through a targeted economic development strategy requires a thorough understanding of the marketplace. One of the best ways to help retain existing businesses and recruit new ones is to prepare information about your existing customer base and better understand potential new customer segments that could be served by your business district. Your local commercial revitalization program provides an important benefit by

developing a comprehensive analysis of the Heart of Jasper market that aligns community vision and consumer data with strategies that drive the organization’s revitalization programming. Through the Main Street Approach, we work together with organization leaders to understand market data and develop comprehensive strategies to deliver comprehensive Main Street transformation. This approach accomplishes several goals:

- Builds local knowledge and understanding of your district’s economy to create a foundation for successful revitalization;
- Identifies current strengths of the business mix and existing business clusters;
- Supplies relevant consumer data to the revitalization program so it can help existing businesses become stronger;
- Identifies opportunities for future business attraction and business cluster expansion; and
- Builds a strategic framework for niche development, including real e development, business development, promotions, marketing, branding, etc.

This philosophy is encompassed by the Main Street Approach Refresh. At the core of the new Main Street Approach are economically grounded “Transformation Strategies.” These Strategies articulate a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing a downtown or commercial district’s economy. They are informed by a solid understanding of local and regional market data and sustained and inclusive community engagement. Most activities within an organization’s annual workplan as part of the Main Street Approach should then be guided by Transformation Strategies and aligned with a direction and outcome. As part of our technical assistance, and to help make the new format easier to adopt, the National Main Street Center developed nearly 20 “off-the-shelf” strategies, known as Catalyst Strategies, that can be employed in a range of conditions across a variety of communities. These are, essentially, ready-made Transformation Strategies.



## About Indiana Main Street Program

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Since 1985, the Indiana Main Street Program (IMS) has been helping communities revitalize the economy, appearance, and image of their downtown commercial districts using the National Main Street Four Point Approach, which encourages revitalization built around a community's unique heritage and attributes. Using local resources and initiative, the state program helps communities develop and provides support for the implementation of their own strategies to stimulate long-term economic growth and pride in the heart of the communities' downtown or commercial core.

In 2005, the IMS Program transitioned to the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, where it is currently managed. IMS provides access to information, help getting focused, and community support and guidance to individuals and organizations interested in downtown revitalization. It also serves as a general clearinghouse for the latest tools and techniques in downtown development. General information, project development assistance information, and other resource materials are also available. The state program is a partner, but true revitalization success is built squarely on local commitment, initiative, and follow-through.

The Indiana Main Street program support of its designated local IMS programs has resulted in significant investment and economic growth from the bottom-up in Main Street districts. Since 1985, Indiana Main Street communities have achieved:

**5,723 NET new & expanded businesses**  
**33,602 NET full and part-time jobs**  
**\$3.9 billion in private reinvestment**  
**\$2.4 billion in public reinvestment**  
**10,823 building improvements**  
**9,226 New construction**  
**3,734 Public Improvement projects**

## Purpose of Transformation Strategy Visit

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A Transformation Strategy service is provided by the Indiana Main Street Program in partnership with Main Street America. The purpose is to give the local Executive Director, Board Members, committees, and city leaders, an opportunity to:

- (a) Digest community wide survey results
- (b) Understand current market data and trends through analysis
- (c) Gather feedback through focus groups of organization leaders, partners, and stakeholders
- (d) Utilize all information collected to develop a strategy or strategies to guide program work

## Visit Overview

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Indiana Main Street Program in partnership with Main Street America met with Heart of Jasper staff, board, partners, and stakeholders as a part of their overall Downtown strategic planning. The Downtown distributed a community-wide survey ahead of the visit, which was reviewed with staff and

board members. Onsite interviews were conducted with staff, board, committee members, city leadership and elected officials, as well as property and business owners. The purpose of the onsite interviews is to gather input to understand current perceptions of, as well as future vision for the Heart of Jasper.

Day One of the visit consisted of staff and board member review of survey and market data, community tour and focus group meetings. Day Two consisted of a final debrief of all direct input received along with a recommendation for Transformation Strategies, which were determined by market-based research, business/asset inventory and community input. Further discussion of implementation through existing and new workplans took place.

From the visit, Indiana Main Street and Main Street America may also find more ways to work with district leadership to work towards a community-driven, implementable plan.

## Key Observations

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- Downtown Jasper is deeply valued by the community as a central gathering place with strong visual character and a sense of identity.
- There is a strong foundation of collaboration and pride among residents, business owners, and partners who are committed to the district’s success.
- Stakeholders are eager to see downtown become more vibrant beyond daytime hours, with expanded options for dining, entertainment, and cultural experiences.
- The community recognizes the importance of supporting local entrepreneurs, especially as small businesses play a central role in Jasper’s economic future.
- There is shared concern about access and usability, including parking, connectivity between key areas, and the availability of visitor amenities.
- Physical and psychological connections between downtown zones need strengthening, especially between the square and riverfront developments.
- Affordability and sustainability for small businesses and property owners are growing concerns, particularly around costs, tenant recruitment, and long-term viability.
- There is enthusiasm for more visible, welcoming, and experiential elements downtown, to enhance the visitor experience and community pride.
- Stakeholders are aligned around the value of coordinated leadership, with strong partnerships already in place and a desire to deepen alignment across efforts.
- This is a pivotal moment for Jasper, with energy, opportunity, and city planning processes aligning to shape the next chapter of downtown development.

## How to Use This Report

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Main Street America's Transformation Strategy Report aims to guide the reader through our Four-Point Approach. It is more responsive to the economic context, community input, and how outcomes are directly measurable to revitalizing the Heart of Jasper. One of the best ways to understand how your district is performing, help retain existing businesses, and recruit new businesses is by preparing information about the specific customer base that is currently being served and who could be served by the Downtown main street district. This report looks at the following factors that help the main street program develop a comprehensive analysis of the Downtown that aligns vision and consumer data with catalyst strategies that drive revitalization programming.

- Create a foundation for successful revitalization by tapping into local knowledge to understand the Heart of Jasper's economy;
- Identify current strengths of the business mix with existing business clusters;
- Supply relevant and up-to-date consumer data to the local revitalization organization so it can help existing businesses become stronger;
- Identify opportunities for business attraction, district programming, and business expansion;
- Build a strategic framework for market niche development, including real e development, business development, promotions, marketing, and branding, etc.

The transformation strategy can serve as the foundation of the revitalization program's work. Most activities in the local revitalization program should be guided by the recommended transformation strategy and aligned around an agreed direction and outcome.

Please remember the following:

- **Understand the market** —As the local revitalization program pursues new businesses and customer segments, refer to the market data.
- **Vet new project ideas** —Do they fit/reinforce identified transformation strategy?
- **Inspire** —Use this report and previous reports, case studies, and best practices to inspire when you get stuck.

## Community Survey Results

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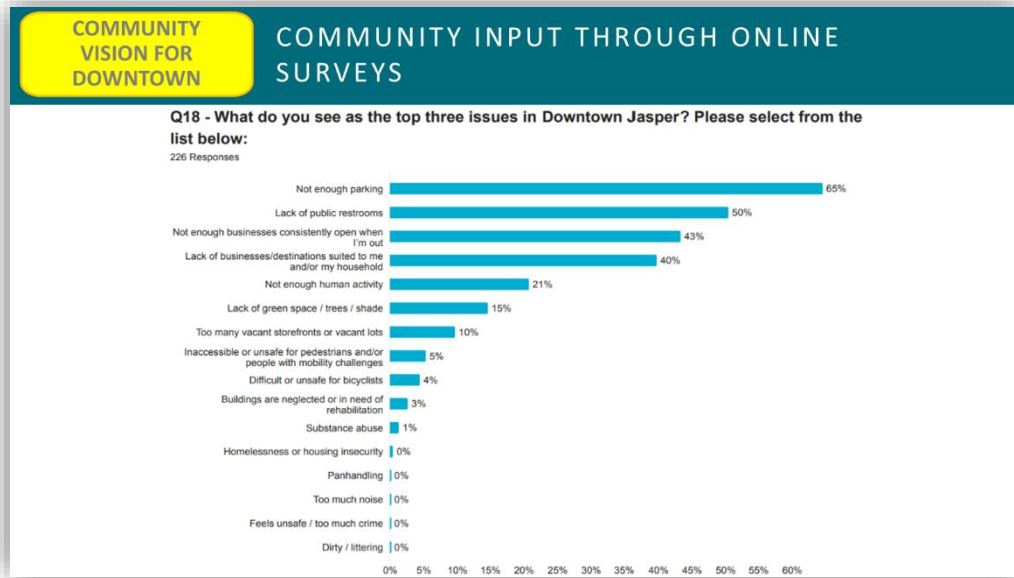
For downtown, a survey was conducted to gather input from residents, businesses, and key stakeholders from the community. The Heart of Jasper, with the help of various partners, received 1,509 responses.

Questions were geared toward surfacing attitudes about downtown, challenges, and opportunities the downtown is facing, desired business types and attitudes and perceptions about downtown. The following represents an analysis of those responses. A spreadsheet with each survey response is provided in the delivery of this report.

**Community Survey** | Open to anyone who might live, work, or visit Downtown. The purpose of the survey is to obtain information, seek knowledge people possess about the Heart of Jasper, understand



Which of the following are issues in Downtown Jasper?



**Analysis** | The most pressing issues identified in Downtown Jasper suggest a tension between its strong physical and emotional foundation and the functional gaps limiting its full potential. While residents and stakeholders value the charm and community character of the district, their concerns point to a disconnect between that identity and how the space operates on a daily basis.

Parking challenges and limited walkability signal that access to the district feels cumbersome, which undermines both casual visits and long-term investment. The lack of evening activity and limited business diversity further reflect a desire for more dynamic, everyday use—people want downtown to be not just attractive, but alive. Words like “empty” and “boring” hint at emotional disinvestment that can quietly erode the pride people feel unless matched with new energy and offerings.

Financial and structural concerns, particularly around commercial tenant recruitment and public-private competition, reveal anxiety about long-term sustainability. Stakeholders are navigating rising costs and limited tools to support the kinds of small businesses that are critical to Jasper’s future. Simultaneously, some residents feel that downtown lacks relevance in their daily routines, suggesting that activation strategies must not only draw visitors, but re-integrate locals.

In short, the identified issues reflect a community that deeply values its downtown but is calling for renewed purpose, better access, and more consistent vibrancy to match its potential.

What are the top three reasons you visit Downtown Jasper?

**Analysis** | Community survey responses reveal that people visit Downtown Jasper primarily to shop for fun (56%), access public services such as the library or post office (42%), and attend events or festivals

(40%). These top responses illustrate that downtown serves multiple roles in residents' lives—as a place of leisure, utility, and community connection. The high interest in shopping for fun reflects the value of unique, experience-driven retail that encourages exploration and casual browsing. Public services ground downtown in everyday routines, helping maintain steady foot traffic even outside of major events. Meanwhile, events and festivals contribute to emotional connection, drawing people together through shared experiences. However, the purpose-driven nature of most visits signals an opportunity: to evolve Downtown Jasper into a place where people come not just for one reason, but stay for many. By fostering overlap between these categories—pairing errands with entertainment, or events with shopping—the district can encourage deeper engagement and increase the likelihood of spontaneous, repeat visits.

What three business types would you like to see more of in Downtown Jasper?

**Analysis** | Survey respondents identified three top business types they would like to see more of in Downtown Jasper: breweries, wineries, or distilleries (39%), casual or family-friendly restaurants (32%), and family entertainment venues such as arcades or escape rooms (30%). These preferences point to a strong community interest in making downtown a more social, experience-driven destination. The leading response—alcohol-forward venues like breweries and wineries—suggests a desire for locally rooted spaces that offer both atmosphere and connection, where people can gather informally and enjoy a sense of place unique to Jasper.

The call for more casual or family restaurants, nearly a third of all responses, reinforces the need for approachable, everyday dining options that cater to a wide range of residents and age groups. This aligns with broader feedback throughout the engagement process about the importance of making downtown more welcoming and usable for families.

The popularity of family entertainment options further underscores a major opportunity: residents want downtown to support intergenerational activity and offer reasons to visit beyond shopping and dining. The combination of these three categories reveals a shared vision for downtown Jasper as not just a beautiful or functional place, but as a hub of social life—active in the evenings, accommodating to families, and full of local flavor.

### **The following questions are regarding shopping.**

If business hours weren't a barrier, what day of the week and time of day would you prefer to visit Downtown?

**Analysis** | Survey responses and visitor data reveal a strong alignment between when people want to visit Downtown Jasper and when they actually do—but also highlight a persistent mismatch with when businesses are typically open. This gap represents one of the clearest and most actionable opportunities to boost vibrancy and economic activity downtown.

From the survey, 51% of respondents selected Saturday as their preferred day to visit, followed by Friday (19%) and Sunday (16%). In terms of timing, 54% said they would prefer to visit after 5 PM, suggesting clear interest in evening hours and weekend experiences. However, 42% of respondents said the businesses they're interested in are not generally open when they want to visit, pointing to a disconnect between business operations and consumer demand.

Visitor behavior data from Placer.ai reinforces these preferences. Saturday sees the highest share of visits, followed closely by Friday, aligning perfectly with survey sentiments. Visitation peaks between midday and early evening (12–6 PM), with notable activity continuing into the evening—evidence that people want to linger when the experience supports it. Additionally, with an average visit length of 105 minutes and a median stay of 58 minutes, many visitors are staying long enough to engage across multiple businesses, particularly on weekends.

Taken together, these findings show that Downtown Jasper doesn't have to generate new interest—it simply needs to meet the demand that already exists. Coordinating extended hours on Fridays and Saturdays, especially among restaurants, breweries, and entertainment venues, could unlock immediate gains. Doing so would not only better serve current visitors but also deepen emotional connection to downtown by making it feel like a consistent, accessible place to spend meaningful time.

This is not just about convenience—it's about strategically aligning downtown operations with the rhythms of community life, converting weekend energy and evening interest into lasting economic and social value.

## The following questions are regarding housing.

**Analysis |** Combining survey results, demographic data, and psychographic profiles reveals a layered picture of what could make living in Downtown Jasper more desirable—and where current conditions both support and hinder that vision. According to the community survey, the top factors that would improve downtown livability are more things to do and places to shop or eat (56%), more parking (52%), and businesses being open more often—especially on weekends and evenings (39%). These priorities are consistent with broader feedback showing a demand for increased vibrancy and access, not just for visitors, but for those who might consider calling downtown home. Additionally, 38% of respondents emphasized the need for livelier activity overall, while 27% called for basic amenities like grocery stores or pharmacies—essentials that make living downtown more convenient and sustainable.

Yet, when asked directly about housing, respondents were split: only 28% said they would like to see more housing downtown, while 32% said no, and 40% were unsure. This hesitation reflects deeper tensions—perhaps tied to cost, perceived lack of supporting services, or uncertainty around downtown's identity as a place to live versus visit.

The demographic and market data provide helpful context. Within a 5- to 20-minute drive, Downtown Jasper is surrounded by a relatively stable, aging, and middle-income population, with a median age around 40 and incomes rising with distance—from \$61,829 (5-minute drive) to \$69,953

(20-minute drive). These households are small (average size 2.4) and reflect many of the ESRI tapestry segments common to rural and small-town America: faith-oriented, community-rooted, home-owning families who value routine and stability. Many are long-time residents with strong ties to place—people who may not instinctively seek downtown living unless it’s reimagined to meet their lifestyle needs.

In short, Jasper’s surrounding population has both the economic means and community orientation to support downtown housing, but their emotional readiness and functional confidence in the area as a livable neighborhood is still developing. Increasing housing alone won’t be enough. To shift perceptions and attract new residents, downtown must first be framed as a complete neighborhood: walkable, active, service-equipped, and rich in amenities that serve daily life—not just entertainment.

This points to a key insight for transformation strategy: efforts to grow downtown’s residential base must go hand in hand with investments in business hours, public space activation, and essential services. Downtown Jasper must not only be a place people visit on weekends—but a place people can live in comfortably and proudly every day.

## **The following questions are regarding occupation or employment, residence, age, ethnicity, and gender of participants.**

**Relationship Analysis |** Survey results and mobility data show that Downtown Jasper plays an important role in the daily and weekly rhythms of local life. While only 4% of survey respondents reported owning property downtown and 0% identified as tourists or first-time visitors (Survey Q2), the district still draws regular engagement from the broader community.

In fact, 74% of respondents say they visit Downtown Jasper regularly, with 28% visiting daily and 45% visiting weekly (Survey Q2 & Q4). Most visitors arrive by car—78% drive alone and 18% drive with others—and 90% live within a 15-minute drive of downtown (Survey Q5 & Q6). This accessibility reinforces the district’s role as a convenient and familiar destination for residents.

The district’s importance is further reflected in mobility data. Foot traffic is highly concentrated in and around Jasper’s commercial core, especially near Newton Street, where key destinations like Walmart, Germantown Center, and North Ridge generate the highest volume of overlapping visitors (Placer.ai Market Landscape & Favorite Places slides). These patterns suggest strong alignment between local shopping behavior and the downtown district’s location and offerings.

Despite relatively low rates of property or business ownership among survey participants, Downtown Jasper remains a high-use, high-value destination for residents—a signal of both its embeddedness in community life and its potential for deeper investment.

**Emotional Connectivity Analysis |** Jasper residents show a strong emotional tie to their community. According to survey results (Q31), 73% of respondents said they either “somewhat agree” (31%) or “strongly agree” (42%) that they feel emotionally connected to Jasper. Only 15% indicated any level of disagreement, while 11% remained neutral.

This sense of connection appears to be closely tied to two recurring themes in open-ended responses: preserving Jasper’s authenticity and making downtown more welcoming. Residents emphasized the importance of development that reflects Jasper’s unique character—specifically calling for support of local businesses, inclusive design, and experiences that prioritize the community’s needs. They also expressed a desire for a more pedestrian-friendly, event-driven downtown that is accessible to all ages and abilities, reinforcing the idea that downtown should serve as a vibrant, everyday destination. Together, these insights suggest that emotional connection in Jasper is grounded not just in identity and tradition, but also in the belief that downtown can and should reflect the values and aspirations of the community itself.

**Age Analysis |** The age distribution of survey respondents reveals key demographic imbalances that help contextualize the community input. Most notably, adults aged 25–64 made up the overwhelming majority of respondents, with the 25–34 age group alone representing 26% of total responses. This is significantly higher than their proportion in the general population (12.4%), according to Esri data for a 10-minute radius around downtown Jasper. Similarly, the 35–44 (20%), 45–54 (17%), and 55–64 (19%) cohorts were also slightly overrepresented relative to their local population share.

Conversely, youth under 18 (0%) and adults over 75 (1%) were dramatically underrepresented, despite accounting for nearly 13% and 9% of the community, respectively. The 18–24 age group also had limited participation, making up only 3% of survey respondents versus 5.7% of the local population. These gaps suggest that older teens and seniors—who may have different needs or usage patterns in downtown—are not fully represented in the results.

Given this skew, findings may reflect the priorities of working-age adults more than those of younger or older residents. Future outreach efforts should consider targeted strategies to engage underrepresented age groups to ensure a more comprehensive understanding of community needs.

**Race & Ethnicity Analysis |** The racial and ethnic composition of survey respondents does not fully reflect the diversity of the community. While the Esri 2024 data for the 10-minute radius around downtown Jasper shows that 11.4% of the population identifies as Hispanic/Latino, only 1% of survey respondents did. Similarly, individuals who identify as Two or More Races account for 4.8% of the local population but just 1% of respondents. No respondents identified as Black or African American or American Indian/Alaska Native, despite those groups representing 0.7% and 0.4% of the population, respectively.

Meanwhile, individuals identifying as White Alone made up 93% of survey participants—well above their 86.6% share of the local population. Other racial groups, such as Asian American (1%) and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (1%), were proportionally represented but in very small numbers overall. These imbalances indicate that the survey data may disproportionately reflect the experiences and priorities of White residents, while the voices of Hispanic/Latino and multiracial community members—two of the largest non-White groups locally—are underrepresented. Additional outreach and targeted engagement strategies will be necessary to ensure that future planning processes are more inclusive and reflective of Jasper’s full demographic makeup.

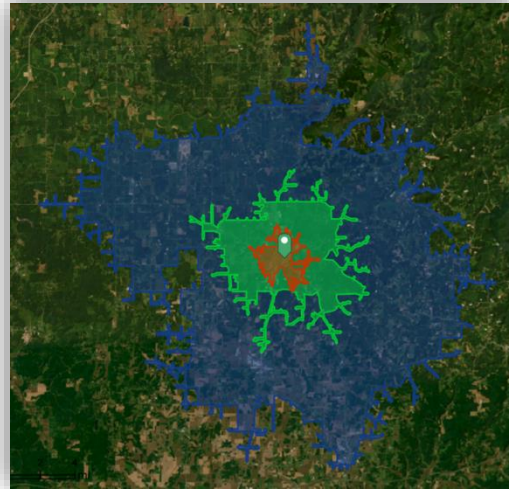
## Market Overview

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The market overview section evaluates the market based on trying to ascertain the inherent competitive advantages of Downtown Jasper.

Together with community input, as well as current place-based assets and anchors we can develop Transformation Strategies. The following represents summary charts of collected market data based on a series of 3 drive times (5 min., 10 min., and 20 min).

All comprehensive data is provided to the local program. Map is where data was extracted.



**Analysis** | ESRI reports and census data present several key findings when comparing market data across different driving radii. The Esri analysis provides valuable insights into the demographic and economic landscape of Jasper, IN, across three distinct driving radiuses. The demographic data for Jasper reveals important trends that can inform strategic planning and economic development for the downtown area.

ESRI market data reveals a layered picture of the downtown trade area, highlighting both its current reach and future potential. Within a 20-minute drive, the area captures nearly 38,000 residents, with a concentrated core of 6,716 people living just five minutes from downtown. Household size remains consistent across all zones at 2.4, suggesting stable, moderately sized households. Median age increases slightly with distance—from 38.4 in the core to 40.9 in the broader area—indicating a mature, aging population base. Income levels rise notably as the radius expands. Median household income climbs from \$61,829 in the 5-minute zone to nearly \$70,000 at 20 minutes, while per capita income and net worth show similar upward trends. Within five minutes of downtown, the most common household income range is \$50,000–\$74,999, but more than one-third of households earn over \$100,000, pointing to strong consumer capacity even in the immediate downtown area. Business density is also significant: 564 businesses and nearly 20,000 employees are located within five minutes, growing to 1,725 businesses and over 43,000 employees within 20 minutes—reinforcing downtown’s role as a major employment center. Looking ahead, the five-minute area is projected to experience steady growth between 2024 and 2029. While population and household gains are modest, median household income is expected to rise by nearly 3% annually, suggesting increasing affluence even amid relatively flat demographic growth. Overall, the ESRI data paints a picture of a stable and economically active trade area with an aging but well-resourced population, particularly within easy access to downtown.

## Tapestry Segmentation

Psychographics is the study of personality, values, opinions, attitudes, interests, and lifestyles. Psychographic studies of individuals or communities can be valuable in the fields of marketing, demographics, opinion research, prediction, and social research in general.

ESRI Tapestry Segment	5 Min		10 Min		20 Min	
Traditional Living (12B)	40%	2,686	16%	3,089	13%	4,925
Green Acres (6A)	20%	1,343	20%	3,861	17%	6,441
Rustbelt Traditions (5D)	18%	1,209	13%	2,510	7%	2,652
Prairie Living (6D)	14%	940	6%	1,158		
Front Porches (8E)	4%	269	20%	3,861	10%	3,789
Midlife Constants (5E)			9%	1,738		
Salt of the Earth (6B)					17%	6,441
<b>Total</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>6,447</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>16,217</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>24,248</b>

Tapestry psychographic data helps communities and businesses understand consumer lifestyle choices, what they buy, and how they spend their free time. Tapestry classifies US residential neighborhoods into 67 unique segments based on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. The top psychographic profiles for The Downtown are used to gauge possible shopping characteristics of Jasper’s largest potential shopping demographic.

### Tapestry Summary and Analysis

The ESRI Tapestry Segmentation provides a revealing portrait of the downtown trade area’s character and lifestyle preferences, underscoring its deeply rural, working-class, and family-oriented identity. Within a 5-minute drive of downtown, the population is heavily concentrated in “Traditional Living” (40%), “Green Acres” (20%), and “Rustbelt Traditions” (18%) segments. These groups represent young, lower-income families; affluent rural households with farming ties; and working-class residents rooted in industrial heritage, respectively. Together, they capture a blend of striving, stability, and tradition.

As the radius expands, the composition diversifies slightly. The “Front Porches” segment—older, close-knit households in small-town neighborhoods—emerges prominently at the 10- and 20-minute marks, accounting for 20% and 10% of those respective populations. Similarly, “Salt of the Earth”—a category defined by its rural, family-focused values—appears only in the 20-minute drive time but accounts for a striking 17% of residents, highlighting a strong outer-ring presence of hardworking, multigenerational households. The gradual appearance of “Midlife Constants”—aging, routine-driven individuals—at the 10-minute mark also points to an aging population increasingly anchored in predictable patterns and long-term residence.

Taken together, these segments suggest a market that is stable, loyal, and highly values tradition, independence, and community ties. Economic aspirations are present, but they are often grounded in rural or blue-collar contexts rather than high-density urban opportunity. Understanding these dominant psychographic profiles helps inform what types of messaging, businesses, and amenities will resonate. This is a population that likely values authenticity over flash, predictability over novelty, and practicality over trend—key insights for shaping downtown development and marketing strategies.

## Placer.ai Data

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Placer.ai tracks movement through communities over time via cellular data, illuminating behavioral patterns and consumer preferences. Placer.ai visitation data for the Heart of Jasper/Main Street corridor highlights consistent, locally driven engagement. Despite only 4% of survey respondents reporting property ownership in the district and no respondents identifying as tourists, Newton Street experiences strong, routine foot traffic, demonstrating its significance as a local hub. The majority of visitors originate within a short radius of downtown, reinforcing its function as a daily destination for errands, essentials, and gathering—not as a tourist-driven district, but a community-serving one.

Visitor loyalty and repeat visitation patterns further underscore this point. According to Placer.ai, local residents who frequent other major commercial destinations—such as North Ridge, Germantown Center, Walmart, and Rural King—are also routinely visiting downtown. Notably, over 55% of North Ridge and Germantown Center patrons are also recorded visiting the downtown district, suggesting that downtown remains competitive and complementary within the local commercial ecosystem. Even when compared to larger regional destinations like Eastland Mall or The Promenade in Evansville—each 40+ miles away—Jasper’s Main Street still retains a loyal, nearby customer base with significantly shorter travel distances and high crossover visitation rates.

The mix of most-frequented locations reflects the values and needs of the local population: practical destinations like Walmart and Rural King; community anchors like Memorial Hospital; and everyday dining staples like McDonald’s and Culver’s. These reinforce the notion that Jasper’s downtown is not a novelty—it’s integrated into the rhythm of daily life.

To maintain and grow that relevance, downtown investment strategies should continue to focus on serving these local audiences through improved infrastructure, placemaking, and business mix alignment. While Jasper may not currently draw a high volume of tourists, the stability and frequency of local traffic present an important foundation for sustainable economic development.

## Suggested Transformation Strategies

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### “Alive After Five”

The emerging preference for an **“Alive After Five”** transformation strategy reflects a strong convergence between data, community insights, and practical feasibility. Across the ESRI market profile, Placer.ai foot traffic data, and survey responses, one clear gap stood out: downtown Jasper currently sees notable early evening activity—particularly between 5 and 8 p.m.—but lacks sufficient businesses, events, and amenities operating during that time to convert foot traffic into longer visits and increased spending. Young professionals, local families, and visiting day-trippers are showing up, but they often leave quickly due to a lack of open storefronts, dining options, or engaging experiences.

This strategy resonated with the group because it felt **doable, measurable, and responsive to the people who are already here**. It doesn’t require starting from scratch. Many of the raw ingredients for success—like a family-friendly downtown environment, established community traditions, and local pride in Jasper’s quality of life—are already in place. The focus simply needs to shift toward **extending the district’s energy into the evening**. This might include coordinated late-night hours, live music programming, rotating pop-ups, outdoor dining expansions, or marquee lighting that encourages lingering past dusk. All of these are achievable through partnership, creativity, and alignment across stakeholders—rather than major infrastructure investments.

The group’s lean toward “Alive After Five” was not just about impact; it was also about timing and control. Compared to other transformation strategies, like **Connected, Walkable, and Park-Smart Core**, the evening strategy could be activated relatively quickly and largely at the local level. Improving walkability and traffic flow, while deeply important, often requires municipal processes, transportation studies, phased capital investments, and years-long timelines. This doesn’t mean walkability should be abandoned. In fact, the group recognized that **these two strategies can—and should—be connected**.

A thriving evening economy depends on the **perception and reality of downtown as safe, accessible, and inviting after dark**. Lighting matters. Sidewalk conditions matter. Clear signage and entryway visibility matter—especially for people unfamiliar with downtown or coming from out of town. The “staff-to-edge-lots” parking visibility idea, raised during community focus groups, is a perfect example of where the two strategies align: small interventions like signage, artful crosswalks, or pathway lighting can support both daytime and nighttime success. Likewise, a safe and connected core will expand the walkable radius of what visitors consider “downtown,” making it easier to cluster businesses, events, and dining in a way that feeds a cohesive evening experience.

In short, the group came to the **“Alive After Five”** strategy because it allows for **early wins, builds on existing energy**, and can be **led locally without waiting for big-ticket changes**. At the same time, a **secondary focus on connectivity and accessibility** will provide the infrastructure backbone that sustains evening vibrancy long-term. By nesting these two strategies together, Jasper can pursue both immediacy and endurance—lighting up its nights while paving the way for a more walkable, welcoming future.

Recommendations for action based on community survey input, focus groups, and market analysis.

### Next step actions to consider

Drawing on rich input from the community survey, partner focus groups, and market data analysis—including Placer.ai’s insights on device traffic patterns—the following recommendations are designed to advance Jasper’s **“Alive After Five”** transformation strategy. This approach is both grounded in local needs and aligned with achievable, high-impact interventions.

- **Pilot “Alive After Five” with Consistent Evening Hours**
  - + Establish a coordinated evening-hours pilot one night per week (e.g. Thursdays or Fridays) for 6–12 months. Encourage downtown businesses to commit to staying open and organize light programming to draw foot traffic—music, artists, kid-friendly play zones, food tastings, etc.
  - + *Why:* Placer.ai confirms strong post-5 p.m. device activity, yet few storefronts are open. Survey respondents want more to do downtown after work or school.
  
- **Launch a Mini-Grant Program for Activations**
  - + Create a flexible fund offering \$500–\$1,500 to entrepreneurs, artists, and business owners for temporary activations—e.g., street performances, sidewalk games, patio extensions, “night market” pop-ups.
  - + *Why:* Focus group participants voiced a desire for more vibrancy, especially small-scale activities that make downtown feel welcoming and alive.
  
- **Enhance Evening Environment with Low-Cost Public Realm Improvements**
  - + Prioritize upgrades that directly support safety, ambiance, and navigation after dark—such as lighting near parking areas and walkways, branded signage to and from gathering areas, and sidewalk or façade lighting.
  - + *Why:* Families, older residents, and women in particular shared concerns around safety and visibility downtown at night.
  
- **Develop and Promote a Clear “Alive After Five” Brand Identity**
  - + Brand the strategy with a name, logo, and marketing toolkit. Build awareness through unified messaging, event calendars, and cross-promotion across social media, City/County channels, and hospitality partners.
  - + *Why:* Survey and market data confirm people are willing to come downtown—but they need to know when, where, and why.
  
- **Foster a Downtown Business Alliance Focused on After-Hours Coordination**
  - + Create a structured but low-barrier way for businesses to collaborate on open hours, promotions, and shared problem-solving. Assign or incentivize leadership to maintain momentum.
  - + *Why:* Business fragmentation is a barrier. Peer-to-peer accountability can drive more consistent customer experiences.

- **Reclaim Underused Spaces for Evening Programming**
  - + Identify alleys, vacant storefronts, and wide sidewalks that can be converted into cozy, engaging spaces for the evening economy—through movable furniture, murals, lighting, or “parklets.”
  - + *Why:* These placemaking upgrades support family dwell time and improve perception of safety and energy.
  
- **Anchor Programming Around Signature Events**
  - + Plan 2–4 large-scale, recurring evening events to anchor the Alive After Five effort—e.g., a summer night market series, fall glow walk, or winter evening stroll. Align with the tourism calendar and leverage local themes (e.g., woodcraft, Spirit of Jasper).
  - + *Why:* Regular anchor events help shift habits and create buzz, without overextending staff or volunteers.
  
- **Track Progress and Celebrate Success**
  - + Establish a shared measurement dashboard with participation rates, foot traffic changes, and feedback loops from business owners and event-goers. Share results regularly with the board, City Council, and public.
  - + *Why:* Measurement fosters accountability—and celebrating even small wins builds long-term buy-in.

## Next Steps

To move from momentum to implementation, the following next steps are recommended:

- **Board Approval of Strategy**
  - + Present the recommended “Alive After Five” strategy to the Heart of Jasper board for formal approval. This should include a brief summary of how the strategy emerged, its alignment with community feedback, and the action plan outlined above. Consider passing a motion to adopt the strategy as the district’s transformation focus for the next 3–5 years.
  
- **Share the Strategy with Stakeholders & the Public**
  - + Prepare a public-facing summary of the strategy—ideally with visuals—to share through:
    - Heart of Jasper’s website and social channels
    - Local media outlets
    - Chamber, City, and CVB partners
    - An open community meeting or coffee chat series

This transparency will signal forward motion, reinforce alignment with public input, and invite collaboration.

- **Establish an Implementation Committee(s) or Subcommittee(s)**
  - + Create a small working group or committee tasked with coordinating pilot efforts, tracking progress, and reporting back to the board. This could include board members, city staff, business owners, and volunteers.
  
- **Set a 6–12 Month Pilot Timeline**
  - + Begin with a seasonal roll-out of “Alive After Five,” targeting high-traffic months. Use this period to test ideas, assess feasibility, and refine future programming.
  
- **Secure Early Funding Commitments**
  - + Identify potential sources for mini-grants, lighting improvements, and branding—whether through reallocation of Main Street funds, City support, or small-scale sponsorships from local businesses.

The “Alive After Five” strategy emerged organically from stakeholder feedback and market conditions as a practical, energizing, and achievable way to increase downtown foot traffic and spending. By starting small and strategically, Jasper can grow into a more vibrant, welcoming, and prosperous district for residents and visitors alike—without losing its distinctive charm.

These recommendations provide a framework for unified action, helping downtown stakeholders focus on cohesive strategies that can lead to long-term revitalization success.

## Summary

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Thank you to the staff, board, and community stakeholders for hosting Main Street America and Indiana Main Street on this Transformation Strategy visit and for all the great efforts you are making in Jasper. Downtown with all its assets and traffic generators is in a great position to leverage as part of its revitalization vision.

The next steps to the process are recommended as follows:

- + Review the summary report, adopt a strategy or strategies, and begin aligning workplans. Continue to use your strategy much like a business plan. As things change with new projects getting completed or a new catalytic development, go back and review and adapt as necessary but stay consistent with the market vision you have outlined and adopted.
- + Your program is off to an incredible and impressive start. Don’t forget while you are moving fast to stop and celebrate all that you have already accomplished. Congratulations on all your efforts!



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