

# CITY OF CONNERSVILLE

## Opportunity Zone Investment Prospectus

*City of Possibilities*



March 2022



**CITY OF CONNERSVILLE**  
**LETTER FROM THE MAYOR**

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**Chad A. Frank**  
*Mayor of Connersville*

The City of Connersville (population 13,000) is the only incorporated city in Fayette County. Our community is centrally located in East Central Indiana between three major metropolitan areas: Indianapolis, Indiana, and Dayton and Cincinnati, Ohio. Connersville is the largest city in a 30-mile radius. There are three major highways that intersect in Fayette County: State Roads 1, 44 and 121. There are also three railway lines that pass through our community: CSX, C&NC (a locally owned short-line railway) and Whitewater Valley Railroad (a non-profit, historic railway line). These rail services provide connectivity to Indianapolis, Indiana, and indirect access to other major Midwestern cities.

Connersville has collaborated with Region 6 partners in two areas to better understand our economic development needs and to instigate growth, not just for our City, but for the entire region. In partnership with the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce and Fayette County Foundation, the city is actively a part of the 21st Century Talent Region. This partnership, along with our participation in Indiana Eastern Works, has assisted us in implementing a formal strategy for building a vibrant community. We call this strategy the "Model for Positive Change." This model is designed to efficiently connect people and businesses with the opportunities that will help them thrive.

The time for change is now! We as a community are working on leading the way to sustainable opportunities where everyone can flourish. Invest and grow with us!

Sincerely,

Chad A. Frank





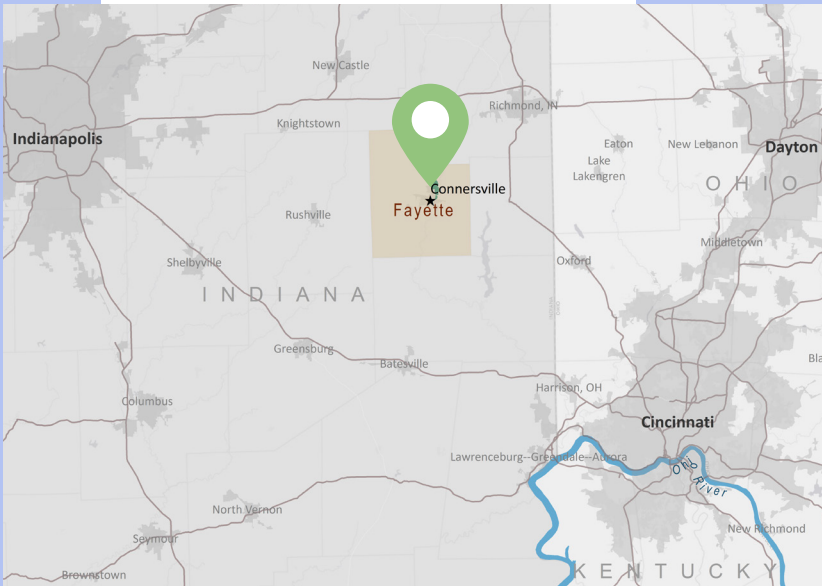
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# City of Connerville

Known as “Little Detroit,” the city earned its nickname because at one time, virtually every part needed in the manufacture of an automobile (except the tires) was made in Connerville. The City is rich in history, but Connerville’s real claim to fame is its residents.



*Connerville’s location at the intersection of a geographic triangle – including Indianapolis to the west, Dayton to the east and Cincinnati to the south – is a strategic advantage.*



Located in the center of a geographic triangle – including Indianapolis to the west, Dayton to the east and Cincinnati to the south – the City of Connerville is a designated opportunity zone. As Fayette County’s seat and only incorporated town, Connerville is a city with a small town feel. While enjoying the benefits of familiarity and safety within the confines of Connerville, residents are only a short drive away from pro football, basketball, baseball and soccer games, as well as Broadway shows, music concerts and shopping venues.

**EDUCATION**

Three schools rank among Indiana’s top public schools and nine public schools boast a student-teacher ratio of 17:1.

**CERTIFIED WORK-READY**

Investments in local adult education, such as Whitewater Technical Career Center and Ivy Tech, demonstrate Connersville’s strong commitment to linking youth & adult education to the high-skilled workforce needs of local businesses & industries.

**LOCAL BUSINESS**

Over 80% of local businesses employ less than 100 workers and represent 70% of all jobs in the county. Two sectors – manufacturing and healthcare/social services – serve as key contributors to the economy, representing two of every five jobs.

**HEALTH**

High-quality, on-site and telehealth services are available to area residents through Reid Health, along with access to an impressive array of medical professionals.

**ACTIVITIES**

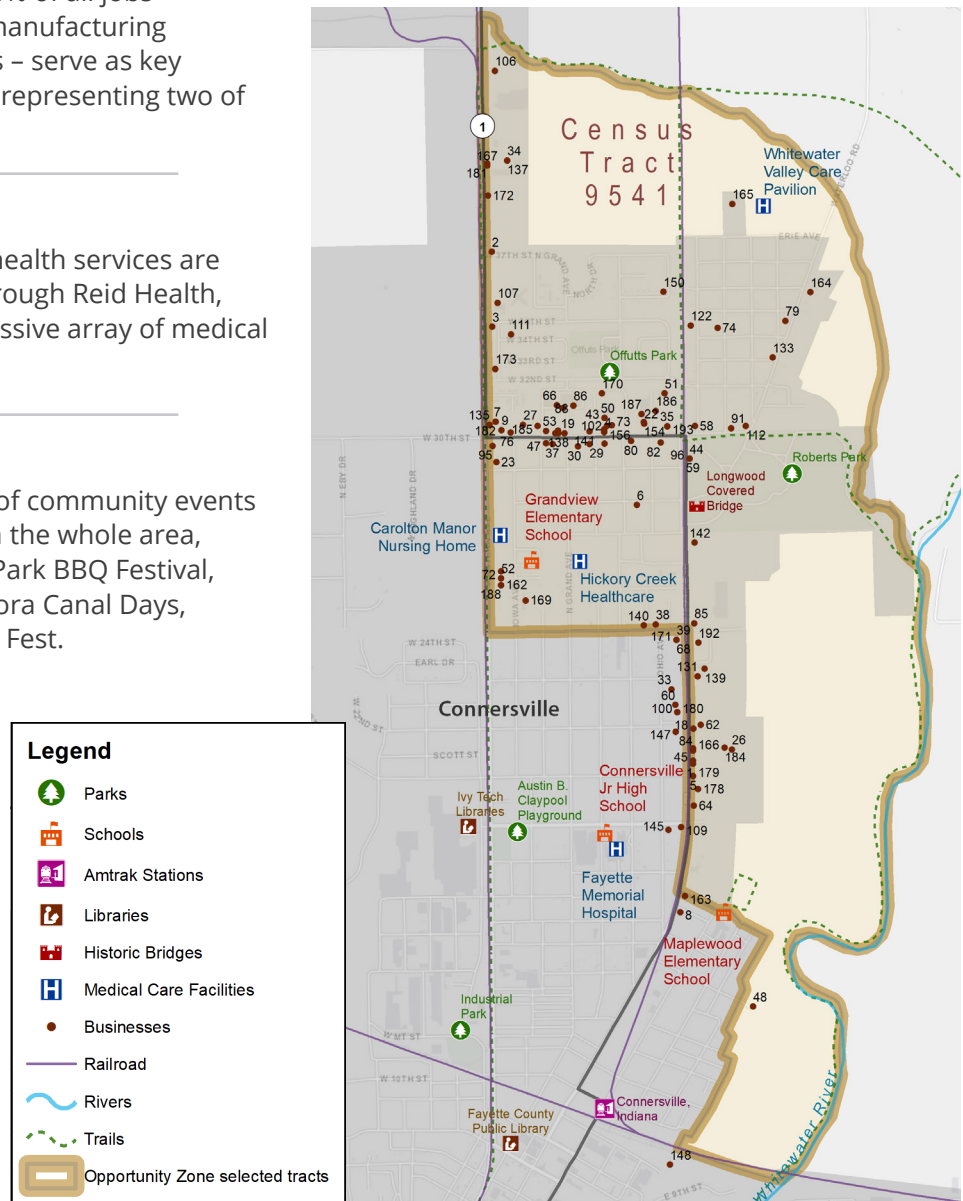
Connersville hosts a number of community events that attract participation from the whole area, including the Thunder in the Park BBQ Festival, Heritage Day Festival, Metamora Canal Days, Strawberry Days and German Fest.

**AMENITIES**

A variety of trails, parks, recreational facilities and sanctuaries is available in or close proximity to the county, including Nickel Plate Trail, Brookville Lake, Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary and Shrader-Weaver Nature Preserve. One amenity, Robert’s Park, has more than 95 acres of tennis, pickle ball and sand volleyball courts, basketball, Frisbee golf, horse stables/track, amphitheater and swimming pool (situated on Connersville’s large aquifer).

**NONPROFIT**

A pool of over 140 nonprofit organizations support investments in local youth, adults, families, organizations and communities.



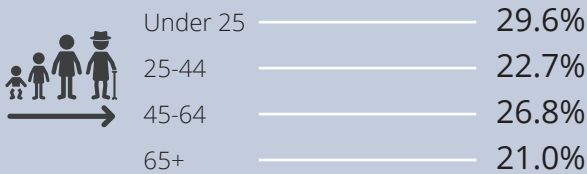
POPULATION



**County Population (2020)**  
Number of county residents



**Age Structure (2020)**  
Diversity of residents by age



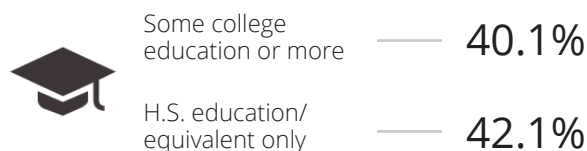
**Median Age (2020)**  
Median age of the population



**Households (2019)**  
Total number of households



**Education (2019)**  
Adults (25+) with:



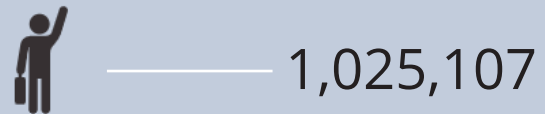
ECONOMICS



**Real Median Household Income (2019)**  
Adjusted for the effects of inflation



**Regional Labor Force (July 2021)**  
Labor force within a 50-mile radius of the county



**Manufacturing (2019)**  
Average annual earnings for employees



**Cost of Living Index (2019)**  
Cost of living relative to the national average of 100



**Home Ownership (2019)**  
Percent of homes owner-occupied





# Aeronautical Business



## Project Details

Connersville has several existing structures and shovel-ready sites available for investors who want to move their projects forward quickly. Two large parcels of land, currently owned by Connersville, are located close to the local airport.

The Connersville Mettle Field is one of Connersville's biggest accomplishments. Rated as one of the top small airports in the area, it offers two runways – one is a little over 6,500 feet long, with the second being 2,600 feet in length. The facilities include terminals, hangars and other amenities to serve the local population and businesses. Connersville currently has property that could be of interest to aeronautical-based businesses that need access to the mobility and options offered by its close proximity to the Connersville Mettle Field.

### ADDRESS

State Road 1 North & County Road 450 North

### OWNERSHIP

Owned by the City of Connersville

### AVAILABILITY

Available and considered shovel-ready

### SIZE

Approximately 66.7 acres

### ZONED

Industrial

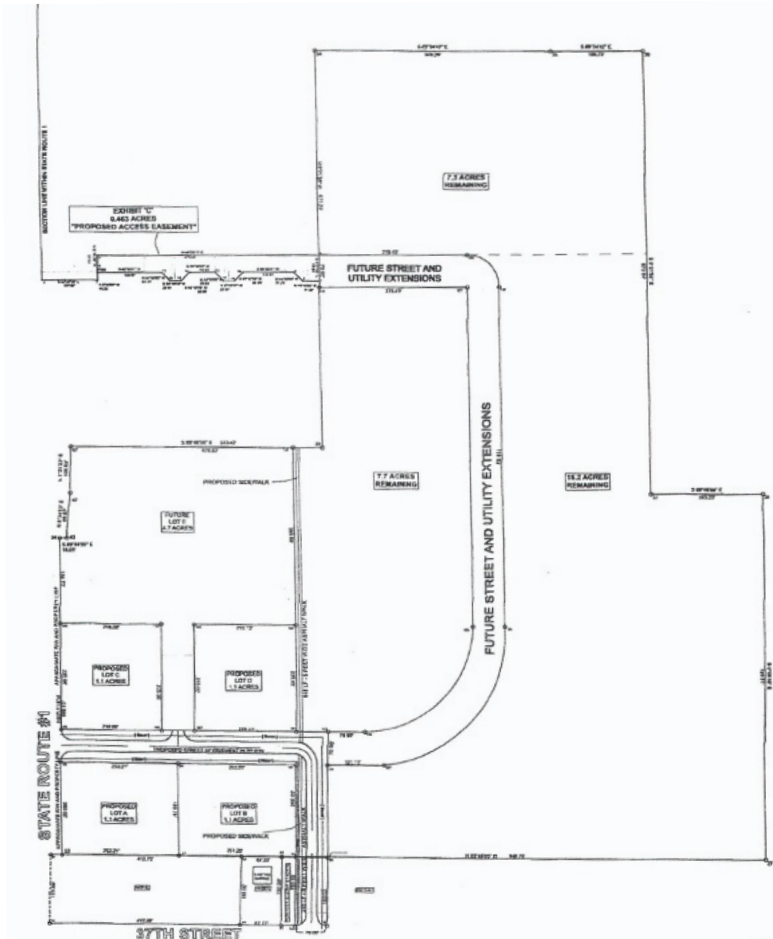
### AMENITIES

The property is located adjacent to the local airport, railroad tracks, State Road 1, and the local Industrial Park.

## Local Incentives

The available property is subject to airway regulations, etc., being located close to the airport. All incentives such as TIF, Tax Abatement, land grants, and cash incentives would be offered based on the amount of jobs to be created, capital investment and other factors.

# Workforce Condominiums



## Project Details

The City of Connersville is interested in supporting the development of workforce condominiums located on the north side of Connersville on State Road 1. The property is ideally located for quick access to shopping centers, within 15 minutes of I-70, and close to the local airport. The property is owned by an investor who is working with Connersville to establish this housing option in Connersville. With so many of Connersville residents commuting to Indianapolis, Richmond, Dayton, and other surrounding cities, the location would offer the convenience of rural living yet quick access for commuting to work.

### ADDRESS

North State Road 1

### OWNERSHIP

Privately owned, listed for sale

### AVAILABILITY

Available and considered shovel-ready

### SIZE

Approximately 44 acres

### ZONED

General Business

### AMENITIES

Property is located next to Wal-Mart, right off State Road 1.

## Local Incentives

All incentives such as TIF, Tax Abatement, and cash incentives would be offered based on the amount of jobs to be created, capital investment, etc.





## 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Park

Revitalization of Jaycee's Park took off in 2017 when Purdue University piloted a program called Enhancing the Value of Public Spaces, choosing Connersville as a focus and the park was re-christened as the J. Long Memorial Second Street Park.

Several community organizations as well as the Connersville Parks and Recreation department have worked together to raise funding for the project, to make the vision become a reality. The goal set for the park was \$250,000 to design the park in the plan. Through the efforts of over 100 donors, the community has reached and exceeded

the goal. Parks superintendent Katherine Good said that as of now, the community has raised over \$265,000 with some gifts still outstanding. Instead of the income from the matching grant that was cancelled the park reached deals with contractors for in-kind services. Donations will still continue to be accepted going to the park; they will go towards beautifying the park now, such as placing benches and planting new trees as opposed to actually renovating it.

Discover Connersville Director Sharon McQueen said, "This is a big step in our revitalization of downtown Connersville." Fayette County Community Voices is extremely proud to be part of the J. Long Memorial Second Street Park project. Brayton Johns, Voices Board President said, "This effort is a wonderful example of our community moving in the right direction- an example of what collaboration really can do. Thank you to everyone who has believed in this dream." The park is named in honor of the Long family. They have been a part of the project since the earliest stages and stated that they are "happy to have had the opportunity to work with the citizens of Connersville to make this project become a reality." The park will be a wonderful addition to the south side of Connersville. Brad Wilson of Discover Connersville said that "Discover Connersville has simply been one of numerous organizations that has collaborated together to take a big step in the revitalization of downtown Connersville and our southernmost entry to the city.

Being able to serve the community is one of the primary goals of many involved in the project. Service to humanity is the best work of life," said Brad Wilson of Discover Connersville. "This project is inspiring the next generation to pick up the baton and say 'let's keep this core of our community going,'" said Good. "This park is a tangible example of that." Carrie Pfeiffer, park board vice president, said she is looking forward to seeing people at the park. "Just people enjoying it, kids, adults, seniors," Pfeiffer said. "The park was designed so that everybody could participate in some form or fashion there." Good added this park is the first step towards making all Connersville parks accessible to all ages and all abilities.

<i>Project</i>	<i>Private &amp; Public Total Investments</i>
RDI, Inc.	\$225,000
Indiana Economic Development Corp.	\$900,000 tax credits/incentives
EDG	\$100,000 cash forgivable loan
Urban Enterprise Association Grant	\$29,000

BRIEF HISTORY

The City of Connersville, Indiana, was founded in 1813 and named after trader and frontiersman, John Conner. Since its establishment, industry and manufacturing have played a large part in the success of Connersville, Indiana. Known as “Little Detroit,” the City earned its nickname because at one time, virtually every part needed in the manufacture of an automobile (except the tires) was made in Connersville. Automobiles produced in Connersville include Ansted, Auburn, Cord, Empire, GMC (army truck chassis), Howard, Lexington and McFarlan, as well as Jeep bodies and other makes/models. Additionally, Connersville produced the majority of dishwashers in the nation in the 1970s. During World War I, Fayette County was the first county in the United States to reach and surpass its goal in the “thrift stamp” drive – and had the highest number of servicemen per capita of any county in the nation. As a result, a ship was named Connersville in honor of those achievements. The effort put forth for Connersville is an example of how our community did – and still does – pull together for a common goal.



Other Connersville “Claims to Fame” include the following:

- Elmhurst mansion (on the National Register of Historic Homes), in Connersville, was home at one time to Honorable Caleb Blood Smith, notably a judge and congressman who served as Abraham Lincoln’s Secretary of the Interior from 1861 to 1863. Although Smith’s official burial location is listed as the Connersville City Cemetery, the actual location of his remains is a mystery.
- The first butterscotch pie was baked in Connersville (as a result of a cooking accident) in 1904 by Sarah Wheeler at the Wheeler Creamery Exchange.
- Prior to becoming a county music legend, Tom T. Hall lived and worked in Connersville for a period of time, after which he produced a song “Thank you, Connersville, Indiana” that can be accessed on YouTube and found on his “Songs of Fox Hollow” album.
- Connersville is the birthplace of Howard Garns, inventor of the popular game, Sudoku. Garns later formed his own architectural firm that engineered Connersville’s Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- Connersville was the home of the first industrial park in the United States.
- The first high school band was formed in Connersville.
- Robert Wise, Hollywood director of Academy Award winning movies such as The Sound of Music, attended high school in Connersville.





**Chad Frank**

Mayor,  
City of Connersville



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OUR PARTNERS



Center for Regional Development

The Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD) seeks to pioneer new ideas and strategies that contribute to local and regional collaboration, innovation and prosperity. The Center partners with public, private, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations to identify and enhance the key drivers of innovation in communities and regions across Indiana, the U.S. and beyond.



The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs is a valuable state agency that works with local, state and national partners to provide resources and technical assistance to aid Indiana communities in shaping and achieving their community and economic development vision and goals.



Committed to the future of rural communities.

USDA Rural Development focuses on improving the economy and quality of life in rural America. It does so through a variety of programs, including grants, loans, and loan guarantees designed to help create jobs, strengthen economic development, and support the availability of such key services as housing, health care, water, electric and communications/broadband infrastructure.



The Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority partners with developers, lenders, investors, and nonprofit organizations to provide housing opportunities and stability for Indiana families, which prospers and strengthens communities across the state.