



REMINGTON, INDIANA

Downtown Revitalization Plan

June 2012



REMINGTON INDIANA **DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN**



Acknowledgements

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NOTE:

The graphics contained within this document, including illustrative plans, sketches, photographs, etc., are intended to portray design intent and not final architecture, site, or streetscape design. This plan is not intended to be used as a construction document.

Executive Summary

Committed citizens of Remington permitted the RATIO team to lead them through a process to solidify ideas for future development in downtown. The Remington Downtown Revitalization Plan is the result of the collective insight and effort of Main Street Remington, Town officials, staff, and residents. A plan that does not involve those it hopes to serve can not fully realize its potential or vision.

The Downtown Revitalization Plan builds on the vision and goals of the Remington-Wolcott Development Plan (2008). That plan exposed the principles of Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) from the Congress of New Urbanism as a way to create a vibrant livable town. This plan focuses on the original Remington, centered around the Railroad, and proposed to create a *heart* there.

Revitalization is a holistic process addressing two primary areas: physical design of the streetscape and economic development. The integration of these two elements results in the Implementation Strategies of Chapter 4 and supports the retention, encourages the establishment of additional businesses, and physically improves the downtown environment for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.

This Plan provided specific recommendations and is descriptive,

creative, and flexible. With leadership and perseverance, the plan will be a tool to guide public and private investment over the next 15 to 20 years and to secure additional grants and funding from various sources.

Vision

Community stakeholders envision the downtown as a unique place where cultural expression and pride is apparent in the social activity, architecture, and commerce.

Primary Goals

Strongly desired projects are highlighted in green.

- Encourage mixed-use, infill development downtown; encourage high quality niche retail
- Renovate / update / maintain building facades on Ohio Street and North and South Railroad Streets
- Utilize/renovate the historic railway depot; emphasize this as a showpiece for the community
- Utilize the railway corridor to link amenities, such as Carpenters Creek, local parks, and local / regional trail systems to each other and downtown, and as an opportunity for a public gathering spot and downtown green space

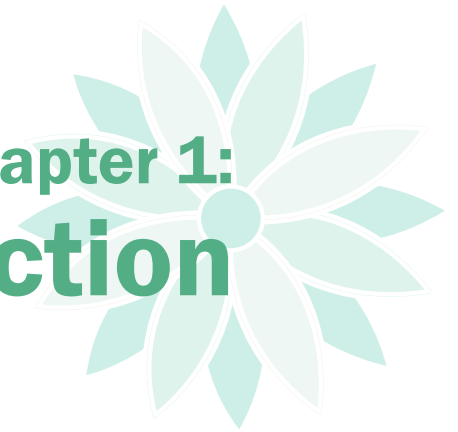


- Establish a primary downtown gateway at the SR 24 and Ohio Street intersection
- Create consistency of streetscape enhancements including street trees, seasonal planting, lighting, and site furnishings
- Improve the condition of sidewalks, curbs, gutters and street surfaces and widen sidewalks to ensure safety and proper drainage
- Establish appropriate pedestrian scale through building restrictions and streetscape enhancements
- Include art in downtown improvements

Recommendations

- Update land use ordinances to promote and maintain a compatible, well-proportioned urban form
- Apply for CFF and other grant funding
- Seek angel investors to fund redevelopment
- Partner with the Jasper County HPA to preserve and rehabilitate the Depot
- Form a downtown merchant's association to assist town staff with improvements
- Recruit businesses not located on Railroad or Ohio Streets that would also benefit from an enhanced image
- Implement wayfinding opportunities

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

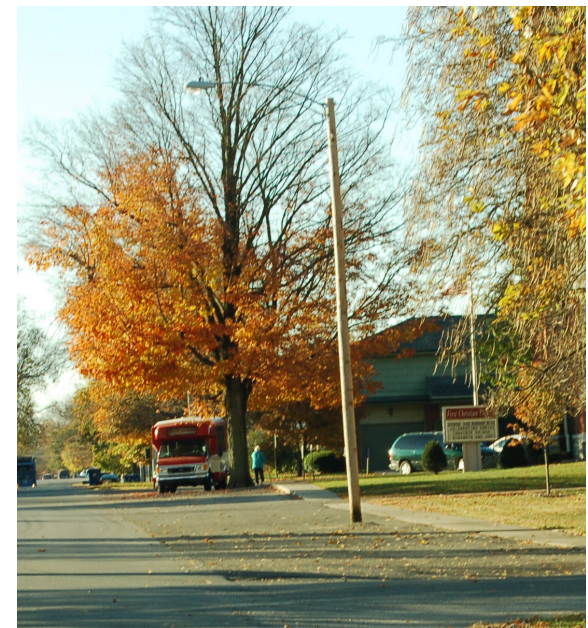


Planning Process

Purpose of the Plan

Remington is a self-declared “Indiana’s Great Small Town Oasis” with a forward-looking desire for long-term vitality. This Downtown Revitalization Plan is the culmination of this current and previous planning efforts, and is an essential component toward implementation of the Town’s vision for the future.

In addition, this plan satisfies a step in assisting eligible municipalities to obtain streetscape implementation, historic preservation, facade renovation and other economic development funding such as that offered by the Indiana Main Street Revitalization Program (MSRP) or Community Focus Funds (CFF) administered through OCRA.



Community Engagement

Previous Planning Efforts

Several planning efforts have been completed for the Town of Remington and surrounding area in recent years. This plan builds upon those studies and their recommendations, while furthering the specific focus on revitalizing downtown. Some of the plans referenced include:

- **Remington | Wolcott Development Plan (RWDP)** (August 2008 - Purdue University Landscape Architecture Program)
- **Remington | Wolcott 3-Year Strategic Action Plan** (May 2009 - DCI)
- **List of Ten Most Endangered Historic Sites and Structures In Jasper County** (May 2009 - Historic Preservation Association of Jasper County)
- **Remington Comprehensive Plan** (1994)
- **Remington Zoning & Subdivision Control Ordinances** (1994)

Community Engagement

There was an extensive effort to gather public input, including surveys and public workshops, during the preparation of the 2008 RWDP. This information can be found in Chapter 6.0, and in the resulting guidelines of Chapter 16.0, of that plan.

The Steering Committee for this downtown revitalization plan confirmed that the vision and goals identified in the RWDP were comprehensive and deemed to still be accurate. Those goals are reflected in the illustrations and recommendations in Chapter 3: Recommendations herein.

Steering Committee

A strong steering committee comprised of visionary community leaders and representatives guided the process to ensure an authentic vision for the future

of downtown Remington. The committee met five times throughout the process to provide feedback on concepts and ideas for the final plan and implementation strategy. These individuals and the groups they represent will be necessary partners as implementation moves forward.

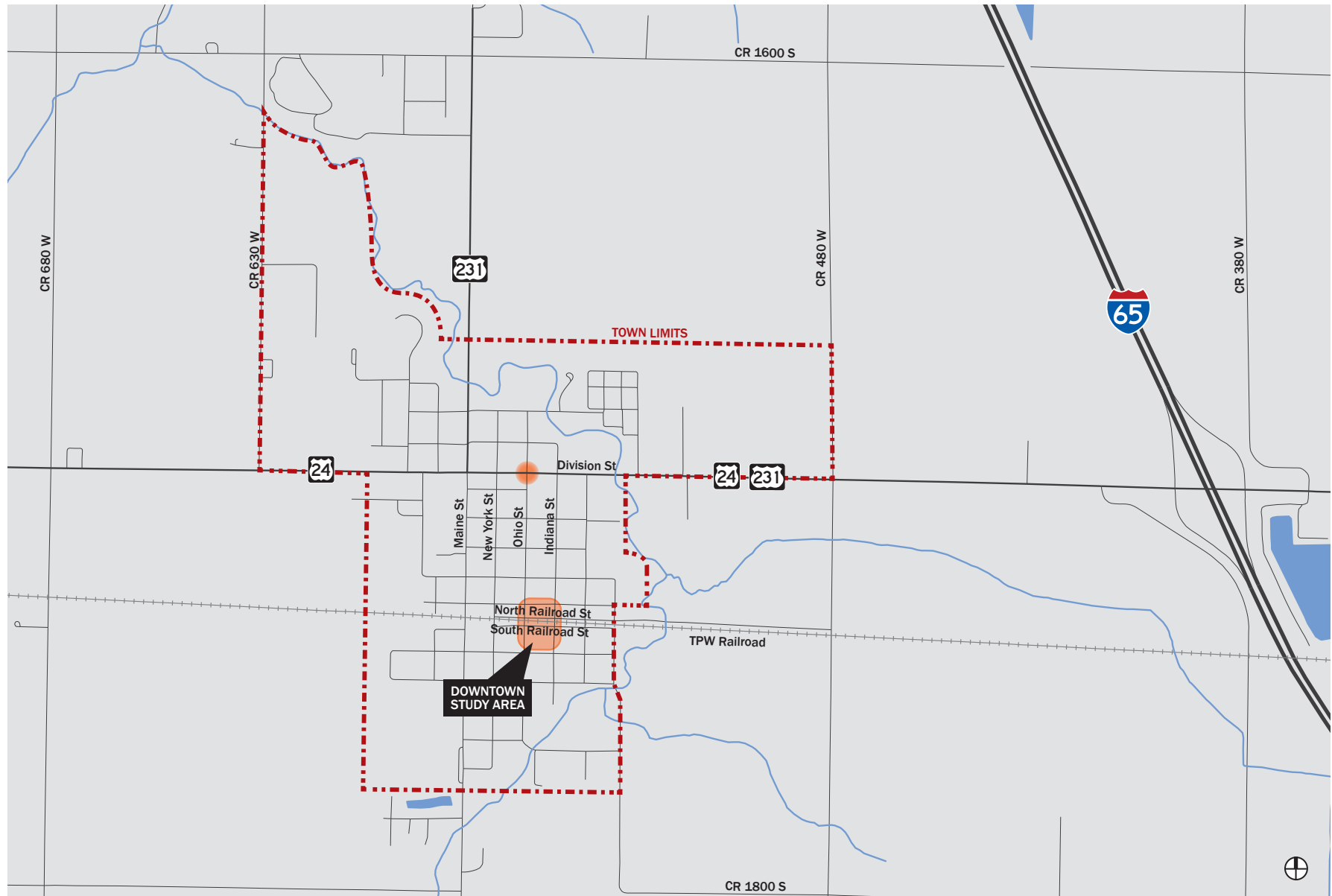
Public Hearing

In June 2012, there was a public hearing before the Remington Town Council to approve the Downtown Revitalization Plan.



Steering Committee Meeting

The Community



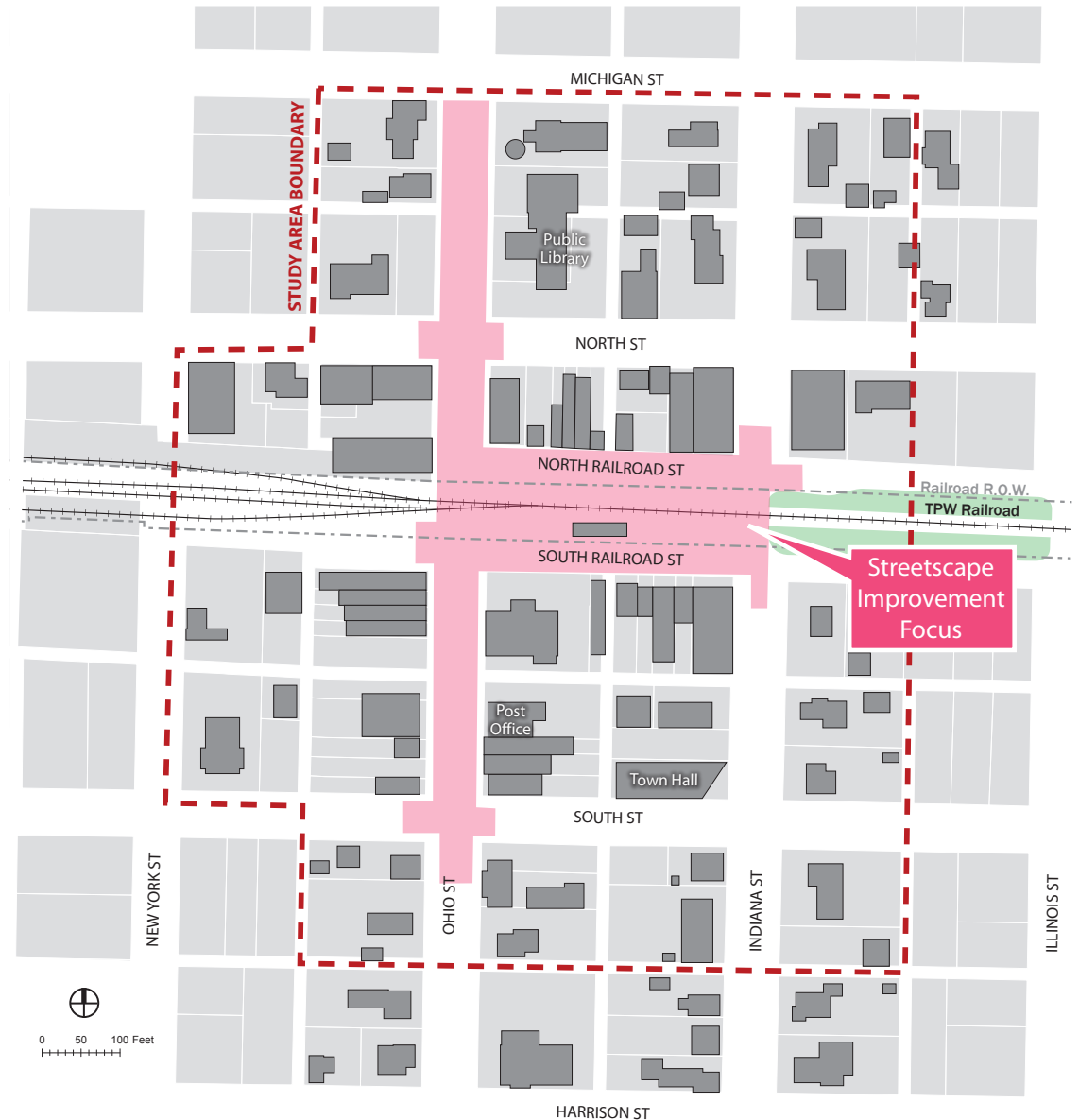
Study Area

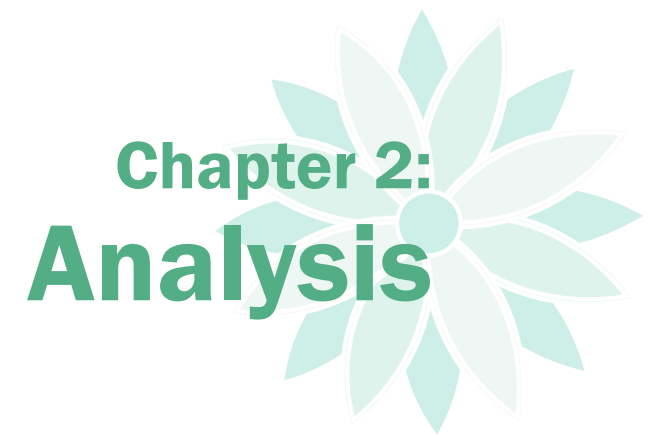
Remington is located in northwestern Indiana, 1.5 miles west of Interstate 65 and 90 miles in between Indianapolis and Chicago. The town is accessible by two highways; US 24/Division Street and US 231. Downtown lies five blocks south of SR 24. This plan focuses specific recommendations for revitalization on the area in the vicinity of Ohio and North and South Railroad Streets depicted in pink, though the study area is roughly bounded by Michigan and South Street and New York and Indiana Streets on the west and east respectively. One other area that could impact the success of downtown is the US 24/231/ Ohio intersection is addressed in this plan.

Local Organizations

Many service and volunteer organizations exist within Remington, including:

- American Legion post 280 (Dewey McGlynn),
- Remington Historical Society
- Lions Club
- Tri-Kappa Sorority
- Masonic Temple
- Churches: Apostolic Christian, Remington Baptist, Sacred Heart Catholic, Heritage Bible, First Baptist, and Remington United Methodist Churches





Chapter 2: **Analysis**

Site Analysis

The downtown Remington study area bears some signs, as many cities and towns do, of limited funds to maintain or upgrade downtown infrastructure. Some infrastructure, such as sidewalks, curbs, ramps, streets and drainage inlets, are visible and obvious to residents and visitors. The underground utilities that convey water, drainage, and waste are less visible, but knowledge of the condition and capacity affects the ability to revitalize and redevelop a community.

Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad

Constructed in the 1850's and 1860's, the Toledo, Peoria and Western (TPW) Railroad is a 247 mile rail corridor that runs from Mapleton, Illinois to Logansport, Indiana. The line was once an important passenger route as people migrated to the Midwest. The line still carries a high volume of goods along its route, and features important connections to all of the major rail carriers along its route. The TPW's historic significance to the Town of Remington is evidenced by its dominant presence in the central business district of Remington. The east-west corridor cuts through the center of the downtown area, and actually much of downtown Remington is oriented towards the railroad.

The TPW's current schedule includes an eastbound train on Monday, Wednesday,

and Friday and a westbound train on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday - these runs typically take place overnight. The track is also utilized for daily trips between the Hoosierlift intermodal facility on the east side of Remington to Lafayette. Although the scheduled utilization of the tracks does not create a significant disruption for the residents of Remington, the track's location through the center of town does create a significant impact on the feel of the downtown area. Rather than serving as the focal point that it most likely was in its heyday, the railroad now represents a physical and psychological barrier that divides the commercial area. Currently, many of the street crossings of the track are in very poor condition, and sidewalk connections, where present, are not conducive for anyone with any physical impairments. As a result, it appears that people drive to and park in front of their destination.

Downtown Streets and Traffic Patterns

Ohio Street is clearly the "main" street in terms of vehicular traffic and access to downtown from US 24. It is in relatively good condition. Many streets though, show signs of reflective cracking, edge raveling, and multiple asphalt overlays, and would benefit greatly from milling (grinding down the surface) and resurfacing. Traffic

capacity does not appear to be a problem, nor does parking.

North and South Railroad Streets between Ohio Street and Indiana Street are of particular interest from a traffic pattern standpoint. Currently, both are two-way, east/west roadways with 45-degree angled parking facing southeastward. The streets run roughly parallel to the TPW Railroad which bisects the downtown. The



North Railroad Street features angled parking facing southeast and parallel parking facing west



Commercial buildings along North and South Railroads Streets are orientated to the TP&W RR

predominantly commercial buildings on this block face inward toward each other, but seem awkwardly disconnected by the railroad and the lack of inviting pedestrian connections. It should be noted that vehicles appear to be parking within the railroad's right of way, especially on North Railroad Street.

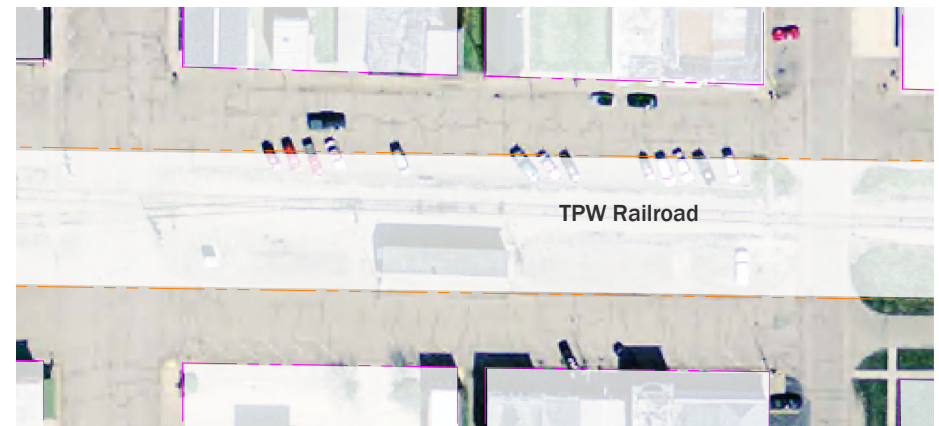
Pedestrian Network

The sidewalk network in downtown Remington does little to encourage pedestrian activity. The condition of the pedestrian network appears to encourage motorists to drive to each destination and park in front of the business, rather than to park and walk between destinations. Safe, directed connections across the railroad are also lacking. If the downtown area is to be revitalized, the pedestrian network must be

strengthened and sidewalk and trail links to other parts of town encouraged.

Accessibility is an issue in downtown Remington. While many of the sidewalks appear to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), it appears that sidewalk curb ramps either do not exist or are substandard. In addition, there are also several places where the sidewalk cross slope appears to exceed the ADAAG maximum of two (2) percent. The lack of adequate ramps

makes the downtown area a challenging place for anyone with disabilities or trying to push a stroller or anything on wheels. Although curb ramps and sidewalks were not identified as a priority by the Committee, any federal funding opportunities will mandate that the sidewalks are upgraded to meet the ADAAG.



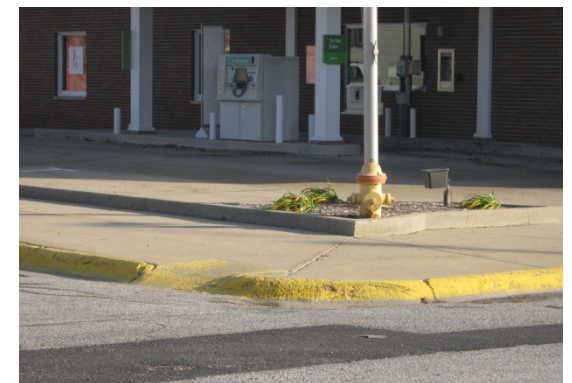
Actual right-of-way for North and South Railroad Streets



Remnant of sidewalk crossing of railroad at Indiana and South Railroad Streets



Sidewalk on the east side of Ohio Street; should be improved to encourage access to downtown




Many curb ramps are abrupt and largely unsuitable (width/slope) for their intended use

Parking Analysis

These two pages compare the availability of automobile parking within the blocks immediately surrounding the proposed streetscape improvements. Keep in mind that there is more to efficient parking than simple counts; ease of identification, clearly painted lines, accessibility, and perceived safety are all contributing factors.

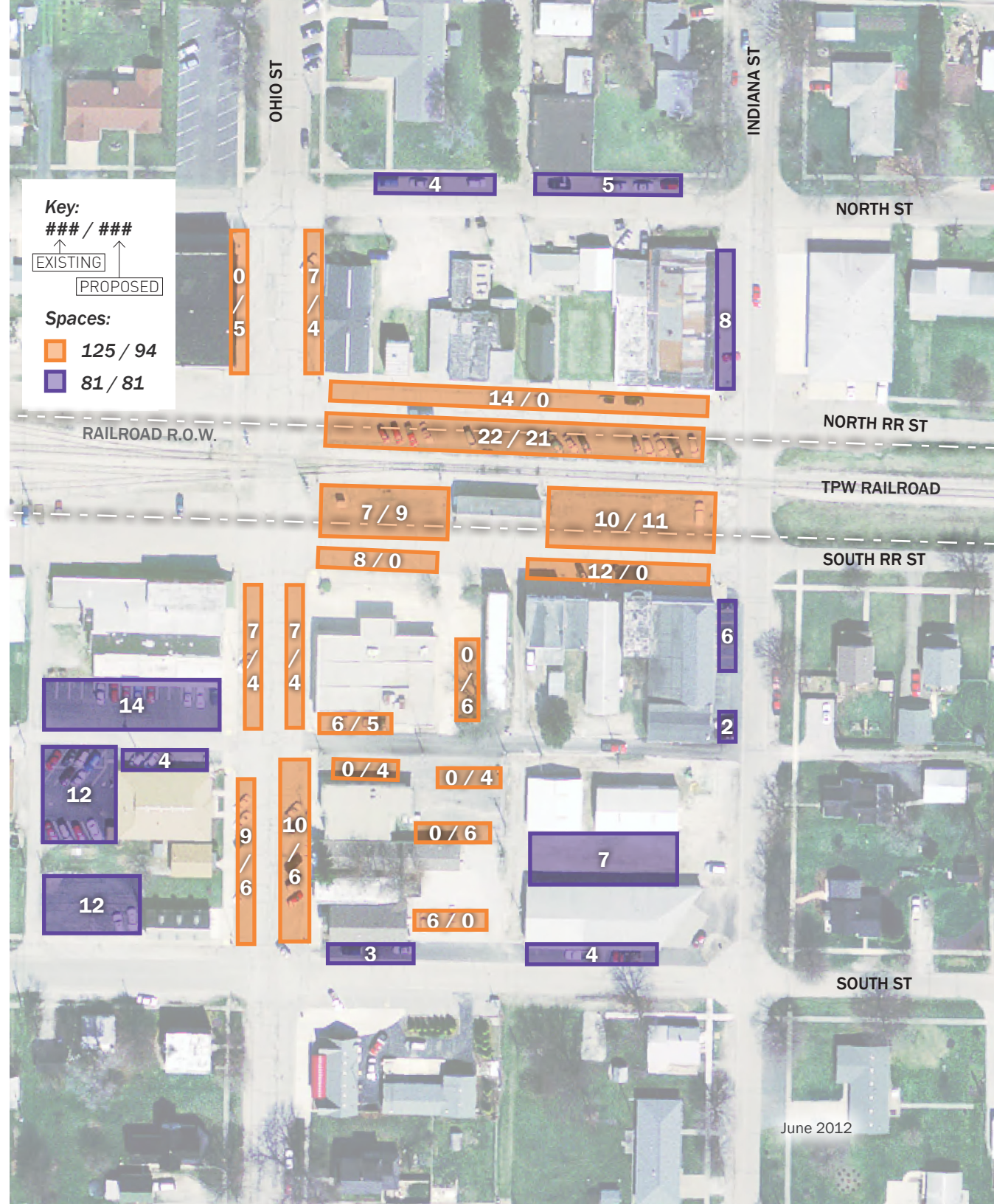
Orange boxes illustrate the counts that would change.

 Purple boxes are existing counts that will remain after improvements.

Conclusion

The current estimation of parking in downtown Remington is 206 spaces, many of which are not often painted, making the exact count variable depending on how patrons decide to park. The total estimation for the proposed streetscape is 175 spaces.

The overall anticipated loss, as shown, of 31 spaces should not be seen as an absolute. The proposed streetscape improves efficiency and clarifies a more exact count, but there are several additional factors to consider. This count does not consider most parallel parking on side streets, or potential additional projects the Town could choose to tackle, such as reorganizing and clearly marking parking at City Hall to improve the counts shown.



Infrastructure Analysis

Storm Drainage

There is a storm sewer system in the downtown area. The system was not analyzed for capacity, but based on initial observations it appears that the primary problem is ineffective surface runoff collection. Gutter lines are nearly nonexistent due to repeated street paving without milling the existing grade, and the surface drain inlet castings are flush with the ground or recessed. This makes it nearly impossible for water to be directed into the storm system. We noticed several areas where shallow ponding occurred on the edges of the streets. Over time, this contributes to the street surface deterioration, but does not appear to be of a significant health or safety issue.

Re-establishing gutter lines and milling and resurfacing the asphalt will help to channelize stormwater. It is recommended that the existing drain inlets located in paved radius aprons be moved to strategic locations along the new gutters. An alternative to the flat castings currently in place are new inlets with vaned grates and a curb face opening. The vaned grates significantly improve the hydraulic capacity of inlets on grade, while the curb openings provide for stormwater collection if the surface grate is clogged with leaves or grass clippings.



Evidence of standing water contributing to the deterioration of Indiana Street



Flat inlet grates in paved areas should be strategically relocated to gutter lines and include a curb face opening



Defined gutter line and curb inlet with vertical opening that can collect surface water even if flat grate is clogged with leaves or grass clippings

The Gateway Issue

The biggest issue from a traffic flow and economic development standpoint is the lack of visual clues linking downtown Remington to US 24, the main arterial through town. There is a lack of obvious signage on the highway to encourage a passing motorist to leave US 24 and venture into downtown Remington. This could be remedied by gateway treatments (signage and/or street improvements) at Ohio Street and US 24.

Building Occupancy

The most prevalent uses in downtown are service-oriented related to healthcare and finance. In addition, there are retail and food services as depicted on the Downtown Occupancy Analysis graphic on the facing page.



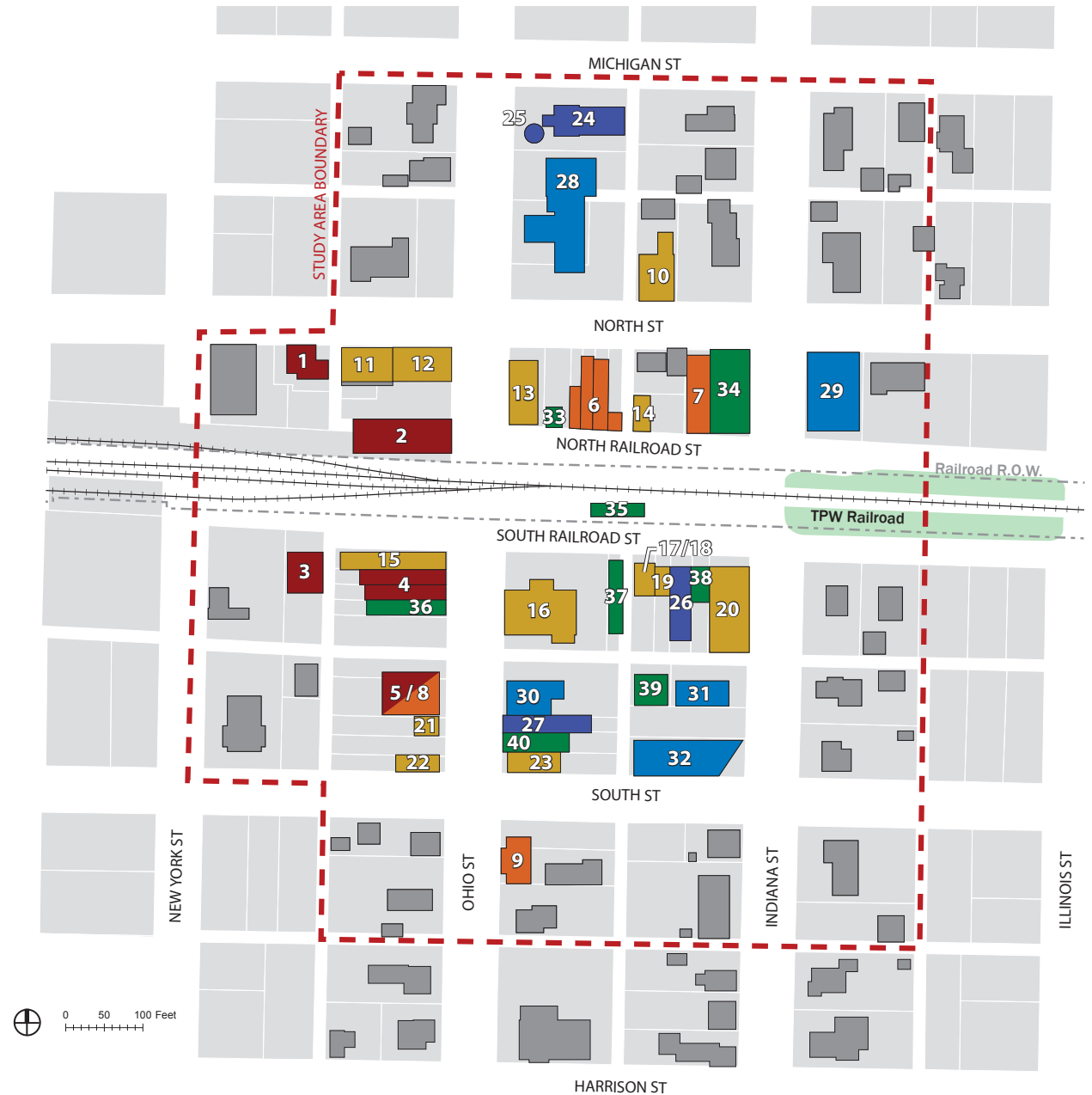
US 24 / US 231 / Division Road illustrating a main entry to town.

Downtown Occupancy Analysis

January 2012

Remington, IN - Downtown Occupancy

- RETAIL / COMMERCIAL
 1. Blossom Boutique
 2. Industrial Pallet, Inc.
 3. Select Window Company
 4. Mini Measures Antiques
 5. Homestead Buttery & Bakery
- FOOD / DRINK
 6. Shooter's Bar & Grill
 7. Milley's Bar & Grill
 8. Homestead Buttery & Bakery
 9. Pizza King
- SERVICES (PERSONAL, FINANCIAL, MEDICAL, ETC.)
 10. Clark's Cutting Edge (Landscaping)
 11. Stitz Funeral Home
 12. Stitz Funeral Home / Former Furniture Store
 13. Remington Family Dentistry
 14. Hair Station
 15. Regional Occupational Care Center (ROCC)
 16. Regions Bank
 17. Water Tower Place - Hair Salon
 18. Water Tower Place - Massage Therapy
 19. Coin Laundry
 20. Clarence's Auto Repair
 21. Advance Trading Inc.
 22. Farmer's Mutual Insurance Company
 23. Veterinarian
- NON-COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATIONS
 24. Remington Historical Society
 25. Historic Water Tower
 26. American Legion
 27. Purdue Extension Office
- COMMUNITY FACILITIES
 28. Library / Tobias Center
 29. Police Department / Ambulance Service
 30. Post Office
 31. Streets Department
 32. Town Hall
- VACACIES / RESIDENTIAL IN COMMERCIAL STRUCTURES
 33. Residence
 34. Former Bowling Alley / Residence
 35. Former Depot
 36. Former Cafe
 37. Vacant
 38. Residential
 39. Residential Ownership - Storage
 40. Blaney Casey & Walton (Legal Services)



Market Analysis

Downtown districts are largely business, shopping and entertainment districts that rely upon a consistent interaction of workers, residents and visitors to generate enough “activity” to be deemed successful. For smaller downtown / main street environments, “success” typically lies in the mix of shops, restaurants and services that come together to form an engaging district that is simultaneously a commercial center and social gathering place. Therefore an understanding of the market drivers that support these types of businesses is crucial to driving redevelopment and revitalization opportunities. These drivers rely upon various sources of customers – local residents, downtown employees, workers, and visitors from a regional trade area.

The Pallet Company is a major employer, though not the typical downtown business. Many of the properties are publicly-owned and operated by the town or Jasper County including the town hall, police station, and library.

Even with these businesses, many of the structures on North and South Railroad Streets, as well as Ohio Street, are vacant, in poor condition, or contain residential uses which do not support economic development.

From a market perspective, the wide-scale revitalization of downtown Remington proves to be a difficult proposition. At the beginning of the process, the project team conducted a SWOT analysis which yielded the following information.

SWOT Analysis for Market/Economic Conditions

Strengths

- Good regional access via I-65 and Route 24/231
- Proximity to preferred locations for future job expansion opportunities



via key economic sectors (i.e. Transportation and Warehousing)

- Reasonable mix of retail and service businesses, as well as civic destinations

Weaknesses

- Small, declining population in Town / small trade area
- Located in stagnant part of growing county
- Proximity to Rensselaer makes it difficult to attract retail and services that would typically gravitate to larger community
- Downtown's obsolete urban pattern
- Low quality of downtown buildings
- Limited scale of existing retail offerings to bring people downtown on a regular basis
- No arterial connected to downtown to direct traffic to retail/commercial opportunities

Opportunities

- Drawing visitors off of interstate as additional customer base
- Better connectivity to downtown from Division Street
- Economic development opportunities off of interstate
- Senior housing development in downtown



Threats

- Population growth tied to local job creation vs. regional access
- Lack of population growth continues to drive development to larger communities

Assessment

Downtown faces two major hurdles. The first is its size. A residential population of 1200 – which declined in the 2010 census – is considered too small to realistically support a business district, even of small scale. So to achieve a cluster of business related uses in downtown, it is crucial to draw a customer base from a much larger region or trade area. This will be a challenge since Remington's available trade area shrinks when one considers the proximity of larger communities and service/retail centers like Rensselaer.

The second hurdle is the physical orientation of downtown. Downtown Remington was built as a railroad focused commercial center. The major transportation route through town is now located to the north – along County Road 1700 / Route 24/231. This shift of the primary artery drastically reduces the investment appeal of downtown Remington for commercial purposes. It is not a coincidence that most commercial uses –

from the IGA to banks and the hardware, are located on this route.

There are limited activities available to Remington to address the first hurdle other than to encourage economic development opportunities in southern Jasper County that might drive more growth in that region. The county's key economic sector – Transportation and Warehousing (e.g. Advance Auto)– is ideally suited to land along I-65 and could drive job opportunities close to Remington that the town can take advantage of.

The second hurdle is not insurmountable, but can be difficult to address. What is clear is that a pro-active and long term

strategy and work plan is necessary to drive the market into downtown. A passive approach will only drive the limited retail growth opportunities in the county to Route 24/231 or outside of the community altogether. It must be stated, however, that a regulatory approach (i.e. zoning or other land use controls) is not sufficient to achieve targeted market improvements in downtown Remington.

The key method to drive a sustainable business climate in downtown Remington is to attract a wider customer base to the community. The core customer base should incorporate local residents, residents from nearby towns, and regional visitors. The first strategy to achieve this is to incorporate

as many destination establishments as possible. Destinations, which do not have to be businesses, bring people to downtown on a regular basis and vastly increase the likelihood that customers will either engage with an establishment while they are there, or will in the near future. However, the destinations that Remington is capable of will likely only serve to shore up the existing retail climate.

To achieve business growth of any scale, Remington will need to attract literally thousands of new people to downtown on a regular basis. This will require completely re-shaping downtown into a regional destination.

In the short term, it is crucial to improve the physical environment of downtown Remington, including its streets, circulation, sidewalks and building exteriors. Through various grant programs, including this OCRA funded initiative, this can be accomplished at limited expense to the Town and without a solid market base to support it. Then the Town must turn to strategies to drive people to its downtown area. It may be helpful to examine the strategies of other small towns that have similar geographic obstacles. Tourism is typically a major draw, but there are other opportunities such as drawing visitors in from the region, attracting new residents via economic development, or serving existing residents via different housing / lifestyle opportunities.



East Side of Ohio Street south of South Railroad Street.

Overall Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on data and analysis that can be viewed in full within the Appendix of this document.

Demographic / Housing Trends: The Town of Remington is a community with stagnant growth, located within a rural region that has also experienced limited growth. By itself, neither Remington nor its environs offer the population base or income levels to support residential construction of any scale, let alone anything in or near downtown Remington. The one exception is an aging population that could support a senior housing development which, if located in downtown, could potentially take advantage of proximity to several key community services. The community could also take advantage of its location 90 miles between Chicago and Indianapolis.

Economic / Employment Conditions: Jasper County has a relatively stable economic base and several areas of employment specialization that make it unique within its region. The proximity of Remington to Exit 201 and I-65 could result in future employment (and possible residential) growth given the county's concentration in Transportation and Warehousing, an employment sector that seeks out locations adjacent to major regional transportation routes. This potential is already being

borne out by the completion of a major warehousing facility just east of I-65 on Route 24/231.

That being said, Jasper County has also experienced the largest “boom/bust” cycle of employment in the past decade, growing by highest percentage (18%) of any adjacent or nearby county between 2001 and 2007, and then falling the fastest of any county other than Newton from 2007-2010. While the scale of rise and decline compared to nearby counties is somewhat related to the relatively small number of overall employees, it also makes it difficult to project employment patterns in the future.

While it is clear that population growth in Jasper County is driven primarily by proximity to employment centers in Northwest Indiana and Illinois, employment retention and growth within the county are crucial for the success of the southern half of the county – including both Remington and Rensselaer.

Commercial Office Market: Overall, there appear to be limited opportunities for Jasper County to attract amounts of professional office users of notable size (i.e. sizeable enough to generate tangible market reaction). These opportunities would be even more limited in Remington.



Retail Market: The economic geography of downtown Remington means that it cannot rely upon a trade area much larger than its own population, which is small. Opportunities to “layer in” markets to support downtown businesses, such as higher intensity housing and office uses, are limited. While some opportunities exist, the scale required to generate changes in the local marketplace is very high. Therefore, to elicit retail growth of any scale, downtown must draw in a customer base significantly larger than presently exists. For example, to generate enough sales to support 3 new small scale retailers (1,500 square feet each), those businesses must generate \$675,000 - \$900,000 in annual sales. Assuming that customers wouldn’t be included to spend all their disposable

income at these stores, this means that those 3 businesses would have to capture 10% of all spending from 700 - 1,200 households, or 1,800 to 2,300 residents, about twice the size of Remington’s current population.



Successful Commercial business.



Historic building contributes to downtown authenticity.

Facade Analysis

Many buildings in downtown Remington have been altered over the years. In several cases, historic components may be hidden just below later layers of materials.

Historically, the building facades downtown were built at the edge of public right-of-way, giving the pedestrian space a “street wall” (building facades that provide boundaries for an outdoor space). Many of the structure in the photo at right are no longer present.



Historic photo of Downtown Remington (Ohio Street) with building facades adjacent to the sidewalk, many structures have been replaced.



Unsympathetic alterations to this facade included metal siding that covered the original brick, an overbearing awning, and small windows that are unsuitable for the building size. (Not located in Remington)



This bank building is a later addition to Downtown Remington that is set far back from the street. It lacks the “street wall” (building facades that provide boundaries for an outdoor space) which reduces pedestrian comfort.