

A Plan for Redeveloping the Downtown of Columbus, Indiana

This Capstone project involves collaboration with three complementary client organizations in the City of Columbus, Indiana: the Office of the Mayor, the Heritage Fund of Bartholomew County, and the Office of Downtown Development. Columbus is a city of 51,000 and is best known for its exceptional midcentury architecture and for serving as headquarters to Cummins, Inc., one of the largest diesel and natural gas engine manufacturers in the world. The client organizations are seeking a plan to revitalize the once-vibrant Columbus downtown area, which has suffered a decline due to factors including (1) fewer office workers downtown following the transition to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic; (2) a lack of dense, affordable residential housing close to downtown; and (3) a lack of public, retail, and experiential (e.g., restaurant and nightlife) amenities and/or limited hours of operation for engagement to attract visitors and residents to the downtown area. This Capstone project will involve crafting a strategic plan to address these ongoing challenges and revitalize the downtown area. This Capstone will be of particular interest to students interested in municipal governance, economic development, urban planning, and community engagement, and also may involve opportunities for survey design, distribution, and analysis.