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Wayne County Land Trust Launches to Revitalize Downtowns and Strengthen Communities

Richmond, Indiana — The Wayne County Foundation has announced the creation of the Wayne County Land Trust, a community-driven, nonprofit investment entity dedicated to accelerating the revitalization of Wayne County’s core communities. Revitalization will be achieved through the restoration of historic buildings, expanding housing options, and reinvesting locally for long-term growth. The Trust builds on over a decade of preparation and aligns with successful local and regional initiatives to amplify its impact. Learn more about the Trust [here](#).

The Wayne County Foundation and Forward Wayne County, the community development initiative of the Foundation, recognized the need for a long-term approach to revitalization, as many business owners lack the capital or expertise to restore aging historic buildings.

“The creation of the Wayne County Land Trust represents a meaningful step forward in strengthening the heart of our communities,” said Rebecca Gilliam, Executive Director of the Wayne County Foundation. “For years, residents and partners have shared a vision of vibrant downtowns, thriving small businesses, and restored historic spaces, and now we have a dedicated vehicle to make that vision real. The Trust allows us to invest with purpose and preserve what makes our county special, ensuring the benefits of revitalization are felt by families for generations to come.”

The Trust has purchased 22 properties in downtown Richmond and the Depot District, putting the Trust over the threshold to begin work on a large-scale revitalization project with significant cost-saving advantages. The Trust will operate as a long-term owner of the restored properties, ensuring that profits are reinvested back into the community for years to come.

“Forward Wayne County is proud to help lead this collaborative effort to reimagine what’s possible in our local communities,” said Acacia St. John, Program Director of Forward Wayne County. “The Trust gives us the tools to bring new life to historic properties. This is more than a development initiative; it’s a long-term commitment to building a stronger, more connected Wayne County for everyone.”

Local decision-making is at the very core of the Trust, as it’s led by local leaders who understand the community’s challenges and opportunities. The Trust Board, appointed by the Wayne County Foundation Board, consists of local private sector leaders who have expertise in real estate, construction, law, finance, and economic development. A local advisory committee also supports their work. All members serve on a volunteer basis, ensuring the Trust remains rooted in community insight, accountability, and shared vision.

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