



## Community-Led Downtown Revitalization

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Q: What Is the Wayne County Land Trust?**

A. The Wayne County Land Trust is a community-driven, nonprofit investment entity created by the Wayne County Foundation and other local partners and stakeholders to accelerate the revitalization of our county's core communities. In short, its mission is to restore our downtown, preserving historic buildings and creating new opportunities for housing and small business, creating a better place for those who live here today, and for those who call Wayne County home in the future. The Trust is designed to be a long-term owner of the properties it restores so that the profits are reinvested back into the community in perpetuity.

Our mission is to transform underutilized downtown areas into vibrant, thriving centers that reflect the unique character and aspirations of each town in Wayne County. The Trust will acquire properties to gain local control for redevelopment projects.

We are focused on three countywide priorities:

- Increasing housing supply to attract new residents and support current families.
- Leveraging natural and cultural assets to enhance quality of life for everyone.
- Developing thriving center city corridors in Centerville, Hagerstown, Fountain City, Richmond, and Cambridge City.

Our goal is to maximize every dollar by investing in projects that deliver long-term benefits for the entire county. By empowering neighborhood stakeholders, we ensure that revitalization efforts are inclusive and sustainable.

The Wayne County Land Trust is more than an investment in buildings-it's an investment in people, community, and the future of Wayne County. By coordinating with municipalities, private developers, local contractors, and community organizations, the Trust helps transform underutilized spaces into thriving, accessible downtown centers that reflect the diverse character of Wayne County. Let's revitalize our downtowns together.

#### **Q: Who makes the decisions?**

A. The Wayne County Foundation Board, with community and stakeholder input, appoints the Trust Board. The Trust Board consists of five local private sector leaders experienced in real estate, law, finance, and economic investment. A local advisory committee also supports their work. All serve on a volunteer basis.

**Q: How Does It Work?**

A. The Trust is focused on restoring and revitalizing our downtowns at scale (multiple buildings) rather than one-off projects, deploying capital into initiatives with measurable community benefit—particularly in areas that have been underserved or overlooked. As a not-for-profit organization, it is subject to the same public reporting and accountability as any other not-for-profit.

**Q: Who owns the buildings?**

A. The Wayne County Land Trust will purchase the buildings and will engage real estate development experts to facilitate the revitalization and construction. Once completed, the Trust will continue to own the properties and will engage property management professionals to operate them on behalf of the Trust.

**Q: Will this raise my taxes?**

A. No. The Trust is funded through philanthropic and investment capital. Although the trust is a 501c3, the properties will remain on the tax rolls and continue to contribute to local tax revenues. The Wayne County Land Trust is more than an investment in buildings-it’s an investment in people, community, and the future of Wayne County.

**Q: What will success look like?**

A. Success means more housing options, bustling downtowns, new business opportunities, and a stronger sense of belonging for everyone in Wayne County. We envision downtowns that are welcoming, accessible, and reflective of our county’s diversity.

**Q. Why Now?**

A. To continue momentum and invest in our county.

**In short: Investing in Ourselves: Local Insight, Local Ownership, Local Accountability**

The Wayne County Foundation is making a long-term investment in our community through the Wayne County Land Trust—a community-powered vehicle for restoring vitality, preserving historic character, and building local economic opportunity. Our vision is to realize stronger town centers and thriving neighborhoods across the county. The Trust builds on more than a decade of preparation and aligns with successful local & regional initiatives to amplify impact; all while being led by local decision-makers who understand our unique communities and challenges. With aligned objectives and strong community momentum (e.g. Forward Wayne County, HELP, etc.), we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity for transformative, lasting change. Let’s revitalize our downtowns together.

Learn more on our website: <https://forwardwaynecounty.org/wayne-county-land-trust/>



**Contacts:**

Acacia St. John  
Director, Forward Wayne County  
765-259-3327

Rebecca Gilliam  
Executive Director, Wayne County Foundation  
765-962-1638