

REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER INDIANA WOMEN'S PRISON SITE

Near Eastside, Indianapolis, Indiana



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ON THE COVER: An engraved stone in the site's prayer labyrinth north of the chapel.
(Ashley Gurvitz)



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The extraordinary impact that ULI makes on land use decision-making is based on its members sharing expertise on a variety of factors affecting the built environment, including urbanization, demographic and population changes, new economic drivers, technology advancements, and environmental concerns.

Peer-to-peer learning is achieved through the knowledge shared by members at thousands of convenings each year that reinforce ULI's position as a global authority on land use and real estate. Each year, thousands of events, both virtual and in person, are held in cities around the world.

Drawing on the work of its members, the Institute recognizes and shares best practices in urban design and development for the benefit of communities around the globe.

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About ULI Indiana

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policymakers dedicated to creating better places. The ULI Indiana district council brings together real estate professionals, civic leaders, and the community for educational programs, initiatives impacting the state, and networking events, all in the pursuit of advancing responsible and equitable land use throughout the State of Indiana. With 320 members, ULI Indiana provides a unique venue to convene and share best practices in the state. ULI Indiana believes everyone needs to be at the table when the state's future is at stake, so ULI serves the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines—from architects to developers, CEOs to analysts, builders, property owners, investors, public officials, and everyone in between. Using this interdisciplinary approach, ULI examines land use issues, impartially reports findings, and convenes forums to find solutions.

Learn more at indiana.uli.org.

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Urban Land Institute harnesses its members' technical expertise to help communities solve complex land use, development, and redevelopment challenges. Technical assistance panels (TAPs) provide expert, multidisciplinary, unbiased advice to local governments, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations facing complex land use and real estate issues in Indiana.

Drawing from its professional membership base, ULI Indiana offers objective and responsible guidance on various land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The sponsoring organization is responsible for gathering the background information necessary to understand the project and present it to the panel. TAP panelists spend two days interviewing stakeholders, evaluating the challenges, and ultimately arriving at a set of recommendations that the sponsoring organization can use to guide development going forward.

Panel Members

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The historic architecture and central green space in the former Indiana Women's Prison site offer valuable opportunities for neighborhood redevelopment.

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CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS, DEPARTMENT OF METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT

The former IWP site consists of approximately 15 acres, located in the Willard Park neighborhood on the Near Eastside of Indianapolis.

INTRODUCTION

The ULI Indiana technical assistance panel (TAP) convened in April 2025 to develop a set of recommendations for the redevelopment of the 15-acre site formerly home to the Indiana Women’s Prison (IWP), located in Indianapolis’s Near Eastside. Decommissioned and largely vacant since 2017, the site presents both significant challenges and transformative opportunities. With guidance from subject matter experts and through engagement with community stakeholders, the TAP offers a set of actionable recommendations for the City of Indianapolis to ensure equitable, place-based redevelopment that respects the site’s historical significance and meets the community’s evolving needs.

This report reflects a shared vision for redevelopment shaped by community values and technical expertise. It emphasizes adaptive reuse of historic structures, housing diversity with affordability at its core, vibrant public spaces, and implementation strategies designed to center equity and transparency. The recommendations address six key areas: vision and values, community engagement, planning and infrastructure, market potential, financing, and implementation.

VISION AND CORE VALUES

The redevelopment of the former Indiana Women’s Prison site stands at a critical intersection of memory, opportunity, and community investment. During the TAP process, two consistent and deeply interwoven themes emerged: history and housing. These themes reflect the lived experiences, values, and aspirations of the surrounding neighborhoods and serve as the foundation for the panel’s recommendations.

Honoring a Complex and Often Overlooked History

Community members repeatedly emphasized the need to honor the site’s historic and cultural significance. The IWP, originally established in the 19th century, is the oldest facility in the United States constructed specifically to incarcerate women. Its legacy is layered—reflecting stories of institutional control, resistance, gendered incarceration, and, more recently, community activism to prevent further demolition and erasure of its structures.

Stakeholders highlighted the importance of preserving and interpreting this history with sensitivity and care. They expressed a desire to see the legacy of the women held at the site acknowledged through both the reuse of historic buildings and the inclusion of commemorative elements in future redevelopment. Suggestions ranged from retaining the chapel and courtyard as cultural and reflective spaces to integrating interpretive signage, public art, or small museums focused on women’s justice and the broader history of the Near Eastside. Proposals were also made to use the site for workforce training or medical assistance.

At the same time, honoring history must extend beyond symbols—it should shape who participates in the redevelopment process and who benefits from it. There is a call for meaningful engagement of women- and minority-owned businesses, inclusion of diverse voices in decision-making, and development models that reflect restorative, community-centered values.

Housing as the Heart of Revitalization

Community members also expressed deep concern about rising housing costs, the displacement of long-time residents, and the lack of affordable and accessible options for households across the income spectrum. There was broad support for new housing, especially if it includes the following:

- Affordability at varying income levels, including deeply affordable units;
- Options for seniors and persons with disabilities;
- Opportunities for ownership and wealth-building;



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A stakeholder interview session during the ULI Indiana TAP, where community members and local leaders shared their vision for the future of the former IWP site.

- Design features and architectural choices that respect the neighborhood’s historic character;
- Housing types that promote social cohesion, such as courtyard apartments, townhomes, and duplexes.

As one community member stated: “New neighbors, not a new neighborhood,” expressing a desire for growth without displacement. This sentiment reflects a broader vision for inclusive revitalization—development that strengthens the social fabric, rather than disrupting it.

A Holistic Vision for Inclusive Development

Guided by these themes, the TAP envisions a redevelopment approach that balances respect for the past with strategies for equitable future growth. Specifically, the vision for the site includes the following:

- **Honoring the social and architectural history** through sensitive adaptive reuse, cultural programming, and community-led storytelling;
- **Catalyzing equitable economic development** by fostering local entrepreneurship and creating inclusive development opportunities;
- **Providing affordable and mixed-income housing** that includes both rental and ownership opportunities, accommodates diverse household types, and integrates supportive services;
- **Enhancing public space and connectivity** through pedestrian-oriented infrastructure, open space, and multimodal access;
- **Building trust through transparency and inclusive engagement** by establishing permanent advisory structures and ensuring continuous public feedback mechanisms.



A former cellblock stands vacant on the IWP site—one of several historic structures the panel recommended for adaptive reuse in the redevelopment plan.

WHAT THE PANEL HEARD

The panel gathered extensive input from residents, community leaders, nonprofit organizations, and other local stakeholders to guide the redevelopment of the IWP site. These insights provided a foundation for the TAP's recommendations and highlighted key themes of local importance.

Neighborhood Context and Community Expectations

Four neighborhoods—Willard Park, Woodruff Place, Holy Cross, and St. Clair—immediately surround the site and share a collective interest in its future. Residents emphasized a desire for dense, affordable housing options and a development approach that enhances the surrounding community rather than displaces it. Participants consistently voiced support for public green space, suggesting it be oriented for community use and reflect the site's history.

Trust and Transparency

There is a general lack of trust in government-led redevelopment processes due to past experiences. Residents and developer partners want simple, transparent, and accountable development processes, including a fair request for proposal (RFP) or request for qualifications (RFQ) process that honors their input.

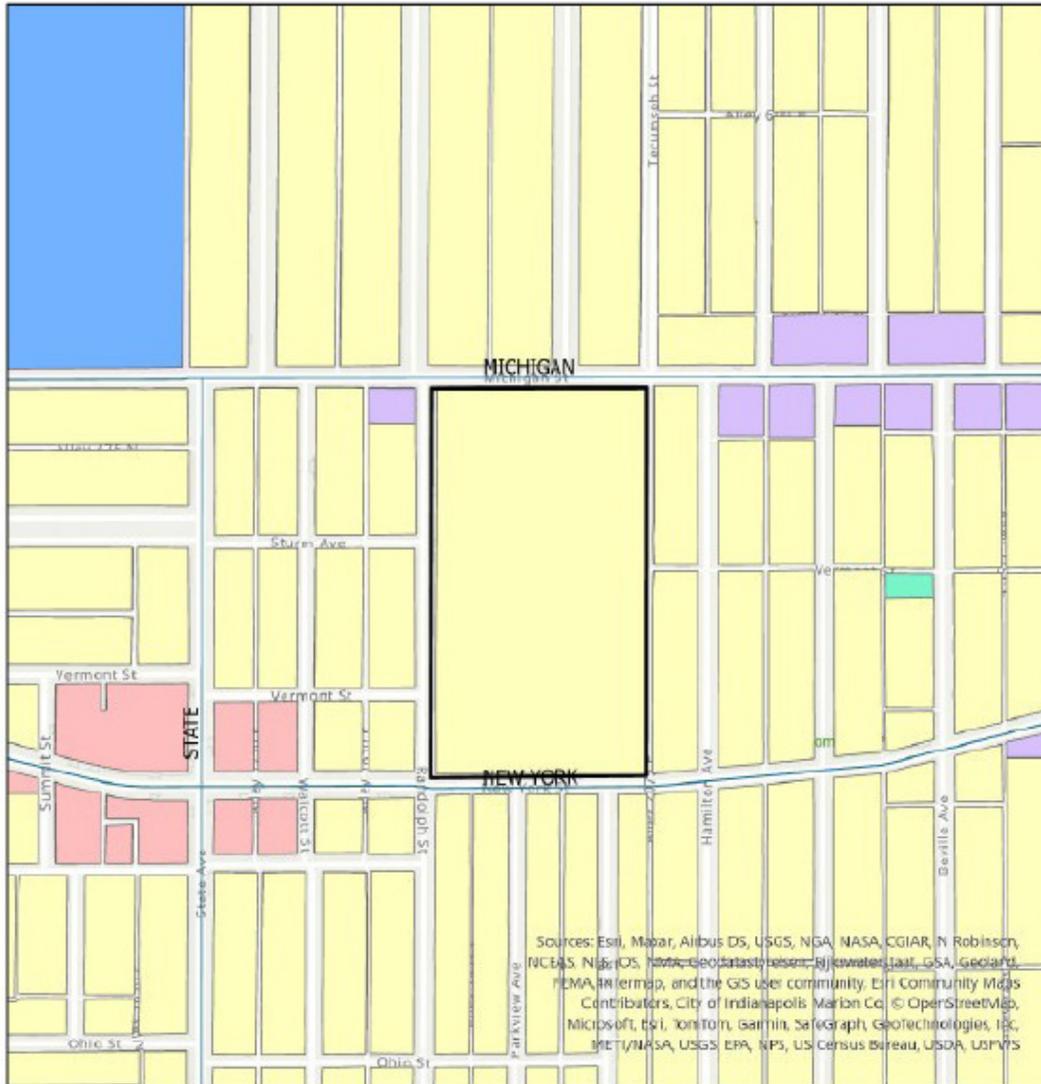
Cultural and Historic Significance

While many buildings on the site are not considered architecturally significant by themselves, the entire campus is considered significant. Resident groups particularly noted the chapel as worthy of preservation. Community members urged that the cultural significance of the site—particularly its history as a women's prison—be preserved and interpreted through commemorative uses and programming.

Inclusion and Participation

The community expressed a strong desire to be included not only in visioning and design, but also in implementation and ongoing stewardship. The TAP heard broad support for engaging women- and minority-owned businesses and ensuring inclusive development opportunities. There are also several active community groups with proven track records of delivering neighborhood services that could be allies in this process.

Land Use around IWP



Legend

- Indiana Womens Prison
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Village Mixed-Use
- Regional Special-Use
- Urban Mixed-Use
- Large-Scale Park
- Major Streets

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles



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The area surrounding the old IWP site is residential neighborhoods with some mixed uses at major intersections. The historic Arsenal Tech High School is three blocks northwest of the prison site.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meaningful community engagement must be the cornerstone of the site’s redevelopment. The neighborhoods surrounding the site—including Willard Park, Woodruff Place, Holy Cross, and St. Clair—have long histories of civic leadership and have already contributed significantly to shaping a shared vision for the site.

Despite years of advocacy and grassroots organizing, residents expressed frustration at the lack of formal feedback loops and concern about being sidelined in future redevelopment efforts. To address this, the panel recommends a multitiered approach to community engagement:

- 1. Acknowledge and Build on Past Efforts:** Recognize the longstanding leadership of local residents and organizations who have advocated for the site, hosted town halls, and generated ideas. These existing contributions should serve as the foundation for future planning.
- 2. Form a Community Advisory Committee:** Establish a permanent group composed of residents from adjacent neighborhoods, especially those from historically underrepresented communities. Include former residents of the prison, consult local stories and retain investments on property that are representative of the prison site. This committee should have meaningful influence over the development vision and ongoing decision-making.
- 3. Conduct Inclusive Visioning Meetings:** Host a series of accessible public meetings from early concept through final design. Use hybrid formats, offer multilingual resources, and leverage nontraditional tools (e.g., surveys, visual exercises) to increase participation.
- 4. Pilot Temporary Uses with Tactical Urbanism:** Activate the site with low-cost, temporary interventions like art installations, pop-up gardens, and local vendor markets. These pilots can help refine future uses, create early wins, and build community ownership.
- 5. Maintain Ongoing Feedback Loops:** Ensure regular updates using digital dashboards, visual reports, and public summaries of how community input informs design and policy choices. Transparency must be embedded throughout the process.
- 6. Prioritize Antidisplacement and Cultural Belonging:** Engage residents, youth, and small businesses in shaping public space and amenities. Ensure redevelopment includes programs and policies that promote affordability, prevent displacement, and celebrate the cultural history of the Near Eastside.

By implementing these engagement recommendations, the City can ensure a redevelopment process that is not only inclusive but also transformative—anchored in justice, belonging, and shared community stewardship.



ULLI INDIANA

Panelists tour the grounds of the former IWP, gathering insights to inform equitable, place-based redevelopment strategies.

PLANNING, LAND USE, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The IWP site presents a unique opportunity to develop a walkable, inclusive, and sustainable mixed-use neighborhood that reflects the character and needs of its surrounding communities. The panel recommends a planning and design approach rooted in neighborhood-scale development, equity, historic preservation, and long-term resilience. Redevelopment should enhance the existing fabric of the Near Eastside while addressing longstanding barriers to mobility, housing affordability, and connectivity.

Historic Preservation and Reuse

The site contains several historic buildings that contribute to its cultural and architectural legacy. While only some of these structures are protected under covenants from the Indiana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the panel strongly recommends retaining and adaptively reusing as many as feasible. The chapel, central courtyard, and former administrative buildings are particularly well suited for community use, cultural interpretation, or adaptive reuse for housing. The original cell block buildings also seem easily convertible to residential uses.

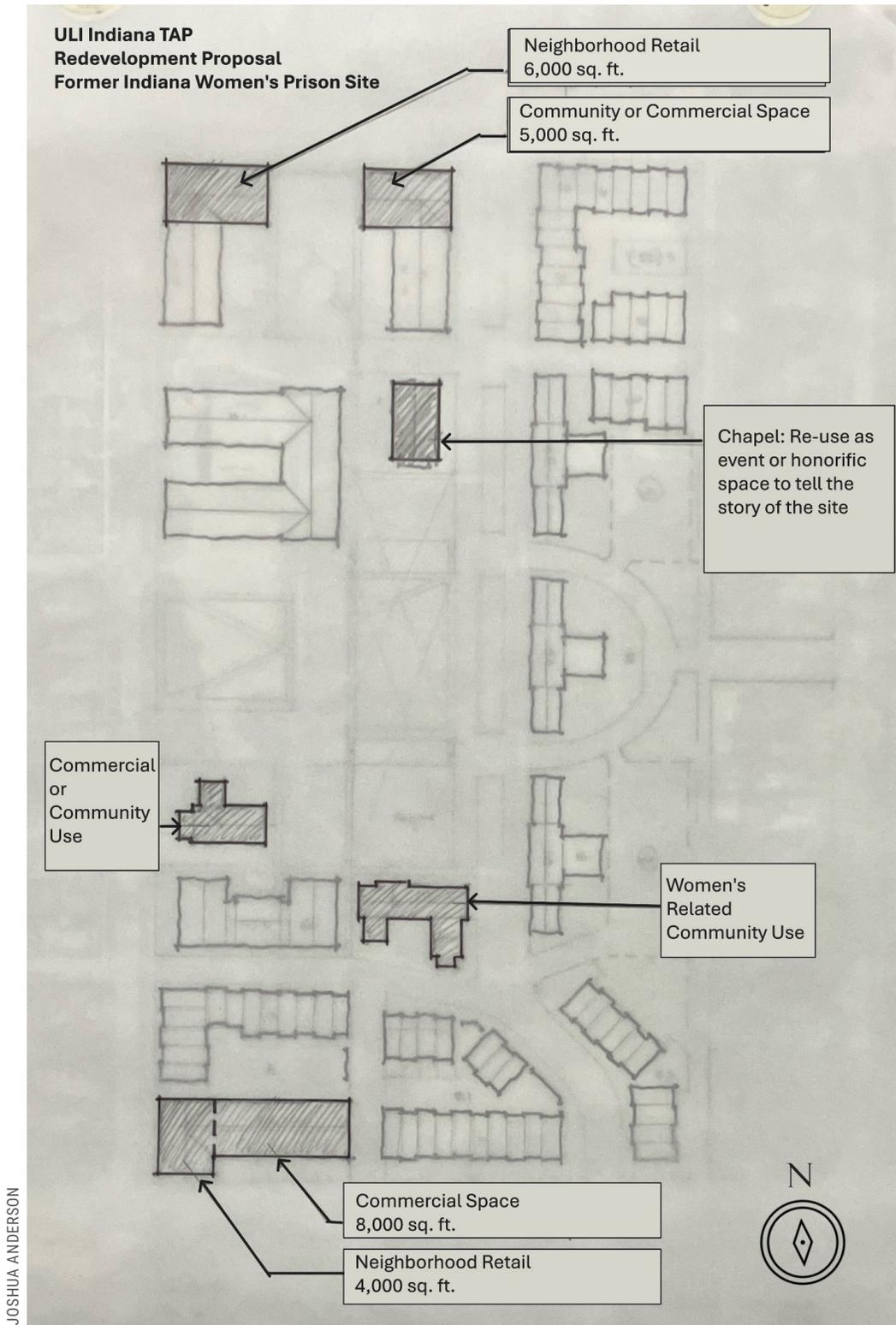
Key recommendations include the following:

- Engage SHPO early to identify preservation priorities and secure eligibility for state and federal historic tax credits;
- Integrate historic buildings into the overall site layout to maintain the spatial character of the former prison campus and unlock potentially crucial Historic Tax Credit funding;
- Convert suitable buildings into flexible uses such as housing, coworking, child care, or community arts and wellness centers; and
- Repurpose the central green space and courtyard as a publicly accessible commons to honor the site's layered history.

Housing Types and Site Layout

The panel encourages a housing strategy that embraces diversity in type, affordability, and design. The site should include the following:

- A mix of townhouses, walk-up apartments, duplexes, and courtyard-style housing, providing architectural variety and multiple price points;
- Both rental and for-sale housing to support residents at different stages of life and income levels;
- Universal design principles to support aging-in-place and accessibility for persons with disabilities;
- A layout that situates lower-scale housing at the edges to transition into adjacent neighborhoods, with slightly taller buildings located toward the site's interior;
- Carefully curated density to maintain a human scale while achieving housing production goals—20 to 30 units per acre is appropriate across most blocks; and
- The central quad serving as an organizing element of the site, preserved as green space and intentionally programmed for public gathering, play, and cultural activities.



The site contains several historic buildings that contribute to its cultural and architectural legacy. The panel strongly recommends retaining as many as feasible. The chapel, central courtyard, and former administrative buildings are particularly well suited for adaptive reuse.

Mixed-Use and Community Services

The panel supports integrating limited neighborhood-serving commercial uses to activate key intersections and meet local needs. Explore opportunities to support women- and minority-owned enterprises, social service providers, nonprofits, or mission-driven organizations. Commercial uses should

- Total no more than 5,000–10,000 square feet, to avoid overbuilding in a slow retail environment
- Be designed to promote neighborhood walkability
- Be strategically located at corners along New York and Michigan streets to encourage walk-in traffic and neighborhood integration
- Offer flexible ground-floor design to allow for conversion between retail, residential, or live/work configurations depending on market demand

Connectivity and Infrastructure

Redevelopment should prioritize walkability, safety, and multimodal access to ensure the site is well integrated into the surrounding community. The panel recommends the following, at a minimum:

- Creating a north–south “complete street” that extends through the site and aligns with existing street grids;
- Establishing an east–west pedestrian connection to increase midblock connectivity and integrate open space with adjacent uses;
- Upgrading the eastern alley and East Vermont Street with improved paving, lighting, and stormwater management;
- Building an internal trail network that links housing, parks, and amenities with safe, ADA-compliant pathways; and
- Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle access to IndyGo’s future Blue Line BRT station on Washington Street through sidewalk improvements and wayfinding signage.

In tandem, utilities must be assessed and potentially replaced, including sewer, water, electric, and broadband infrastructure. Where feasible, incorporate green infrastructure, permeable pavement, and tree canopy goals aligned with City climate and sustainability plans.

Zoning and Regulatory Tools

The current SU-8 (Special Use) zoning designation for correctional facilities is outdated and incompatible with future development. The panel recommends rezoning the site as a Development Plan (DP) district to achieve the following:

- Enable flexible site planning while maintaining predictability for neighbors;
- Reduce or eliminate parking minimums in favor of transit-oriented design;
- Allow a mix of residential, civic, and commercial uses; and
- Encourage building forms and block patterns that match traditional neighborhood development.

The rezoning process should include public input, design standards for preservation and new construction, and a clear phasing plan to ensure long-term cohesion across parcels. The site should be viewed as an integrated neighborhood rather than a segmented project.

MARKET POTENTIAL

The IWP site is strategically located within a transitioning area of the Near Eastside, offering strong potential for housing and small-scale retail development. The submarket exhibits positive indicators for both market-rate and affordable residential investments.

Housing Market Observations

The current vacancy rate in the surrounding submarket is 8.4 percent, suggesting moderate demand with room for new units. Average downtown Indianapolis rents are \$1.90 per square foot, while

the Near Eastside averages closer to \$1.30 per square foot. Developers targeting the IWP site could realistically achieve rents of \$1.60 per square foot for well-designed market-rate units, especially if paired with amenities and historic charm. Current market cap rate for multifamily is 6.4 percent; developers would look to achieve greater than this percentage for yield on cost to generate value on the project.



A. GURVITZ

The site's historic chapel, identified by stakeholders as a meaningful structure for preservation and potential cultural or community use in the redevelopment.

Development Capacity

The 15-acre site could yield approximately 300–320 housing units based on 20 units per acre, consisting of rental and for sale products. This could include

- Walk-up apartments (three to four stories)
- Townhomes and duplexes
- Courtyard and clustered missing middle typologies

A general rule of thumb for four-story walkups could achieve 40–50 units per acre; lower-scale missing middle development would average closer to 16 units per acre.

Affordable Housing Considerations

Housing affordable to households earning 50 percent of the area median income (AMI) would require rents closer to \$1.00 per square foot. At this level, traditional debt could only finance about 20 percent of the total development cost, requiring layered subsidy.

A typical capital stack for 50 percent AMI housing might include

- 40–70 percent equity from 9 percent low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC)
- 10–30 percent in local, state, or federal soft loans (HOME, CDBG, AHP)
- 10–30 percent in permanent senior debt
- 5–15 percent in deferred developer fees
- 0–10 percent in philanthropic capital or grants

The site is well-suited for both 9 percent and 4 percent LIHTC projects:

- Nine percent credits are more competitive but provide deeper subsidy (ideal for 30–50 units).
- Four percent credits work well for larger-scale (100–150 units) mixed-income developments with higher equity contributions.

Retail Feasibility

The local submarket has less than 3 percent retail vacancy. Over the past decade, the area has added only about 5,000 square feet of new retail space annually. The panel recommends limiting total retail square footage on the site to 5,000–10,000 square feet, focused at key intersections (e.g., Michigan and New York streets).

FINANCING STRATEGY

To support equitable development on the IWP site, a creative and layered financing approach will be essential. Public, private, and philanthropic sources should be combined to fund housing, infrastructure, historic preservation, and public amenities.

Tools and Funding Sources

Funding Tool	Description
Single-Site Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	A single-site TIF district could generate bond proceeds to cover up to 10–15 percent of the capital stack. This assumes a 90/10 split between bond proceeds and developer-generated increment.
Historic Tax Credits	Historic tax credits are available for buildings deemed eligible by the SHPO. These credits could support preservation and adaptive reuse of structures including the chapel, administration buildings, or dormitories.
New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC)	An NMTC is a federal tax incentive that attracts private investment into low-income communities. It is best suited for income-generating, community-serving components such as nonprofit hubs, cultural facilities, or commercial spaces. It can be layered with Historic Tax Credits, but requires careful structuring and compliance with both NMTC and historic preservation rules. The project must be located in a qualifying census tract and demonstrate clear community impact.
Blight Remediation and Redevelopment Initiative (IEDC)	The Indiana Economic Development Corporation has allocated \$185 million statewide for infrastructure and blight-related investments. The City should pursue funds for remediation, utilities, and site prep.
Redevelopment Tax Credits	Developers could apply with City support to close financing gaps on mixed-use or affordable housing projects.
Promise Zone Status	The Near Eastside’s federal Promise Zone designation may improve competitiveness for federal grant applications and project prioritization.

Implementation Considerations

Early phases should align with available subsidy sources to demonstrate feasibility and attract investor confidence. The City should act as a coordinator of layered funding, assisting developers in assembling multiple capital sources. Nonprofit and mission-driven developers may be better positioned to access public resources and advance inclusive goals. This multi-pronged financing strategy will be critical to ensuring that the IWP redevelopment can achieve its full potential as a vibrant, inclusive, and historically rooted neighborhood.

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

A deliberate, transparent, and phased implementation process will be critical to the project's success. While the eventual goal is full redevelopment of the site, the initial phase should start with placemaking and engaging the neighborhood to allow limited

access and use of the property. This measure will be essential to activate the site, start building a sense of community, and local buy-in while the full redevelopment plan unfolds.



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Looking east from the IWP site toward the surrounding residential neighborhood. Redevelopment plans aim to integrate new housing while respecting the existing community fabric.

The TAP recommends the following:

- 1. Issue an RFQ (not RFP):** Select a qualified development partner through a request for qualifications that emphasizes alignment with community goals. The RFQ should include clear parameters:
 - Required building preservation;
 - Public space design and street connectivity;
 - Minimum number of units or other development delivered in a target amount of time; and
 - Phasing expectations and affordability targets.
- 2. Target the Right Partners:** Seek developers experienced in “missing middle” housing*, adaptive reuse, and community-led projects.
- 3. Use Tactical Urbanism as a First Step:** Relocate fencing, activate the quad with art and temporary events, and define short-term community uses to generate interest and trust.
- 4. Set Clear Milestones:**
 - Q2 2025: Tactical Urbanism and RFQ issued
 - Q2 2026: Development deal signed
 - Q2 2028: Phase 1 (50 units) completed
 - 2030 and beyond: Subsequent phases and permanent infrastructure built
- 5. Ensure Accountability:** The redevelopment plan should include public timelines, clear roles for oversight, and shared metrics of success. Community representatives must remain at the table throughout implementation.

By focusing on values of equity, transparency, and neighborhood resilience, this redevelopment can become a national model for community-led transformation of a formerly institutional site.

* “Missing middle” housing types are house-scale options, such as duplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, and multiplexes. These residential buildings fit seamlessly into existing residential neighborhoods and support walkability, locally serving retail, and public transportation options.

Michigan City, Indiana: Transforming the Former Indiana State Prison Site

The redevelopment of the [Indiana State Prison \(ISP\) site](#) in Michigan City, Indiana, serves as a compelling model for transforming decommissioned correctional facilities into vibrant community assets. As the state plans to close the historic prison following the completion of the new \$1.2 billion Westville Correctional Facility, Michigan City is proactively engaging in a comprehensive reimagining of the 103-acre site. This initiative aims to foster economic growth, create jobs, and enhance community infrastructure, contributing to the city’s long-term prosperity.

Key Elements of the ISP Redevelopment Strategy:

- 1. Collaborative Planning:** A diverse team of architects, urban designers, transportation planners, and housing development professionals has been assembled to develop a master plan for the site.
- 2. Community Engagement:** Michigan City has prioritized public input through a series of interactive events, allowing residents to contribute ideas on land use, connectivity, economic development, and design. This inclusive approach ensures that the redevelopment reflects the community’s needs and aspirations.
- 3. Strategic Visioning:** The project leverages the site’s proximity to the Indiana Dunes National Park and downtown Michigan City, aiming to transform the area into a hub for commerce, recreation, and residential development.

CONCLUSION

The redevelopment of the former Indiana Women’s Prison site offers Indianapolis a rare and powerful opportunity to transform a place of confinement and disinvestment into a thriving, inclusive neighborhood rooted in justice, memory, and renewal.

Through its recommendations, the ULI Indiana technical assistance panel envisions a future that reflects the aspirations of local residents, honors the historical significance of the site, and delivers on the promise of equitable development.



ASHLEY GURVITZ

ULI Indiana TAP chair Joseph Jarzen (left) with TAP panelists (left to right) Ashley Gurvitz, Vincent Ash, Joshua Anderson, Mercedes Miley, and Karen Valiquett.

ABOUT THE PANEL

Joshua D. Anderson, RLA

**Principal & Co-Owner, Anderson + Bohlander
Indianapolis, Indiana**

Joshua D. Anderson is an urban designer and a licensed and registered landscape architect in the states of Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. He has over 15 years of professional experience and has served as the lead planner, designer, and project manager on numerous public and private projects throughout the state of Indiana. He is often involved in strategic planning for complicated redevelopment sites, providing conceptual direction for character, building massing, and urban form. He has experience in leading and managing both planning and landscape architecture efforts in all phases from concept, through schematic design, to construction documentation. His mission is to create unique and memorable places that are beloved by the public.

Ashley Gurvitz

**Founding Principal, Monarch Community Solutions
Indianapolis, Indiana**

Ashley Gurvitz is the founding principal of Monarch Community Solutions, a consulting firm dedicated to advancing equitable development, cross-sector collaboration, and community-centered innovation. Through Monarch, she works with public, private, and nonprofit partners to design and implement strategies that uplift historically underserved communities.

Previously, Gurvitz served as CEO of the United Northeast Community Development Corporation, where she led efforts to revitalize Indianapolis's Northeast side. Her leadership helped launch transformative projects in affordable housing, workforce development, and neighborhood health, including a 40,000-square-foot manufacturing facility built by minority-owned businesses and anchored in wraparound services.

Vincent Ash Jr.

**Vice President of Development, Lauth Group
Carmel, Indiana**

Vincent Ash Jr. serves as vice president of development at Lauth, where he leads strategic real estate development initiatives across a range of asset classes. He brings deep experience in public/private partnerships and economic development, having previously served as chief of staff at the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, where he helped drive statewide economic growth and business investment. Prior to that, Ash was director of Indianapolis Economic Development at the Indy Chamber.

Her background also includes roles as a senior legislative assistant for the Indiana House Democratic Caucus and as a community development manager for Eastern Star Church, where she managed over \$5 million in capital and community projects.

Named one of the *Indianapolis Business Journal's* "Forty under 40" in 2023, Gurvitz is deeply engaged in civic life, serving with organizations including Home Repairs for Good, Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, the Kennedy King Memorial Initiative, and the Police Merit Board.

She earned a degree in business administration from Ivy Tech Community College and pursued additional studies at Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs. Gurvitz remains driven by a mission to break down barriers and build thriving, connected communities.

Mercedes Miley
President, Farr Associates
Chicago, Illinois

Mercedes Miley is a licensed architect, incremental developer, and urban designer with nine years of experience in a variety of project types, scales, and methods. She leads Chicago-based Farr Associates, a full-service architecture and urban design firm at the forefront of decarbonization and high-performance buildings, with expertise in green technologies and healthy spaces.

Miley has facilitated architecture works from \$160K to \$95M with a focus on housing and civic works. In the planning and urban design realm, her work has mainly impacted underserved or underrepresented communities across seven states. With her diverse project portfolio, Miley can communicate effectively across clients, communities, and consultants, leading a strong team behind a cohesive mission. She believes everyone sits at the table. You can expect Miley to be a consensus builder and calm facilitator—no matter the stakes.

Karen Valiquett, PE
Indiana Market Lead, The Mannik Smith Group
Indianapolis, Indiana

Karen Valiquett is a licensed professional engineer with over 14 years of experience in civil engineering design, project management, and strategic planning. As Indiana market lead for The Mannik Smith Group, she oversees a diverse portfolio of planning, development, and environmental projects across the state. Valiquett is known for blending deep technical expertise with strong communication and stakeholder engagement skills to deliver complex infrastructure and development projects. Her leadership helps clients navigate regulatory, environmental, and design challenges to achieve long-term, sustainable solutions.



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