State: Indiana
Community Name: City of Elwood, Indiana
Population Size: 8394
Percentage of Residents Above Age 60: 17
Community Structure: City
Other:
Community Type: Small Town
Elected Official Signing the Letter of Commitment
Name: Todd Jones
Title: Mayor
Office Mailing Address: 1505 South B Street, Elwood, Indiana 46036
Community Contact Name: Marcy Fry
Email:
Position: Economic and Community Development Director
Telephone:
Role: The Economic and Community Development Director is responsible for the initial business and industrial inquiries for the City of Elwood. The ECD Director is also responsible for facilitating, promoting, and ensuring community development in order to secure economic/business development opportunities and secure local employment. The ECD Director identifies and fosters economic development opportunities and secures funding in the way of grants for economic development activities and programs and is also the key advocate in assisting local organizations on the promotion of their businesses and our community in order to expand economic development opportunities. Key responsibilities of the ECD Director is identifying and communicating joint ventures. The ECD Director conducts site visits and monitors business results, as well as assists with marketing plans. The ECD Director will also provides assistance on available properties in Elwood by maintaining a business and building inventory and by establishing relationships with realtors. The ECD Director promotes the community in order to expand on economic opportunities, develops community and regional networks, and represents the community at regional, territorial meetings and conferences pertaining to economic and community development. The ECD Director also develops a communications strategy to citizens and businesses with the help of the mayor?s office, is a liaison to the schools, industry, city officials, and retail business to promote our city and their organizations.
Older Adult Involvement:

During the roughly 40 year period from the 1950's through 1980's, Elwood was primarily a bedroom community for individuals who worked at one of several automotive related facilities within a 30 to 40 mile radius. During the period, the population numbers were relatively stable, but with little or no increase. With the downsizing of the automotive industry (primarily General Motors), like most such communities, Elwood experienced some loss of population, which resulted in a loss of tax base - and the revenue for governmental services. During this period, the many former ?Motors employees? reached retirement age, increasing the need for government services from the reduced tax base. During the past 6 years, the City has developed a community wide program to attract new citizens, by attracting new industrial jobs and new residential facilities. These programs (e.g., ?Elwood is Open for Business?) have resulted in reversing the population decline, and providing increased tax revenues for government services. The new revenues are, of course, being spent on numerous services (e.g., police vehicles, fire trucks to increase public safety) upgrades in the public parks, in addition to upgrading the central business district (re-designated ?UPtown?) as a go-to designation for all ages fo citizens, including seniors. Newly renovated apartments in the UPTown district are handicap accessible, new sidewalks are making visiting the area more readily available to seniors and handicapped individual, and a new park honoring Veterans will be open soon. Three new apartment buildings will be located in the park, which will be completely wheel chair accessible also. Although the community is aware of the continuing need to attract young individuals, Elwood has benefitted by providing new facilities for seniors. Two new over 55 complexes opened in 2019-2020. These facilities have been an attraction for young families moving ?back home? to be near parents and grandparents.

Increasing Collaboration and Coordination:

One of the key projects in efforts to make the UPTown commercial district more user friendly is the development of a public park honoring Veterans in the area. The park is being built on approximately five acres of vacant property, which is conveniently located within 2 to 3 blocks from any point in the UPTown district. One aspect of the park is a proposed outdoor amphitheater. The amphitheater would, of course, be wheelchair accessible to accommodate seniors and disabled individuals. Having a readily accessible outdoor facility will provide an ideal area for family gatherings (i.e., a day in the park). The amphitheater would be available for amateur local entertainment groups (e.g., high school bands and choirs) and professional musicians. The provision of an opportunity to attend such entertainment events with family members is a key reason for the park (such as grandparents with grandchildren). The park facility generally and the amphitheater specifically will provide a facility for local church groups to sponsor outings, for the Chamber of Commerce to coordinate various community activities (e.g., summer outdoor movie nights), and numerous local charitable groups to hold fund raising events (e.g., the summer food festival). Each of these activities require substantial coordination between the city administration, police
agencies, fire departments, and the specific organization sponsoring the event - such as the Chamber of Commerce. Seniors residing in the new apartment complex, as well as those residing outside the Uptown district can enjoy this accessible venue. Of course, since many seniors are also Veterans, the opportunity to be honored by friends and family (or merely to quietly recall former comrades in private thoughts) can hardly be overlooked. Perhaps the simplest and most direct coordination of departments will be the increased safety patrols by police, and the mowing of the lawn by parks department personnel.

**AARP Team**

**Member Contact Info:** N/A

**Most Instructive Area of Work:**

Every county, city and town is required to provide an increasing array of governmental services. Where the entity has previously experienced stagnant or a decreased population base, the ability to provide such services becomes increasingly more difficult. By adopting an “Open for Business?” attitude towards new industries and commercial enterprises, and making the “Uptown” commercial district more attractive and more accommodating to seniors, Elwood has reversed population decline, added numerous new jobs, and expanded the tax base to pay for the governmental services necessary to make this a more family friendly community. None of these concepts are original or complicated. With adjustments to accommodate for the differences in individual communities, they are readily available. Simply recognizing that seniors are an asset is the first step. Not only do they volunteer for countless organizations, they are a magnet for drawing young families back to the community.

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**Logo or Image:** Error in form input for this field only.

**Website:** [https://elwood-in.com](https://elwood-in.com)

**Twitter 2:**

**Facebook 1:** City of Elwood Indiana

**Facebook 2:**

**Additional Social Media:**