

America in Bloom 2018 Evaluation Report

Community: Dyer, Indiana

Evaluation Dates: July 23-24, 2018

Judges: Alex Pearl, Melanie Riggs



America in Bloom envisions communities across the country as welcoming and vibrant places to live, work, and play – benefitting from colorful plants and trees; enjoying clean environments; celebrating heritage and planting pride through volunteerism.

Seven Criteria (Codes)	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage
1. Flowers (FL)	60.00	27.00	45.00%
2. Landscaped Areas (LA)	72.00	32.00	44.44%
3. Urban Forestry (UF)	72.00	34.00	47.22%
4. Environmental Efforts (EE)	68.00	40.00	58.82%
5. Celebrating Heritage (CH)	56.00	25.00	44.64%
6. Community Vitality (CV)	48.00	25.00	52.08%
7. Overall Impression (OI)	88.00	40.00	45.45%
Other			
8. Evaluation Tour Preparation & Actions (ET)	13.00	13.00	100.00%
Scoring			
Total Points and Percentage	477.00	236.00	49.48%
Star Rating: 5			

Star ratings are based on overall percentage.

1 star = 0% - 9.99%	2 stars = 10% - 10.99%	3 stars = 20% - 20.99%	4 stars = 30% - 39.99%	5 stars = 40% - 49.99%
6 stars = 50% - 59.99%	7 stars = 60% - 69.99%	8 stars = 70% - 79.99%	9 stars = 80% - 89.99%	10 stars = 90% - 100%

Community representatives to receive the Evaluation Report (three minimum)		
Name	Title	Email
Mary Tanis	Dyer RDC President	mtanis@townofdye.com
Tom DeGiulio	Dyer Town Manager	tdegiulio@townofdye.com
Alyssa Retske	Admin. Analyst/Comm. Specialist	aretstke@townofdye.com

GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION:

Communities are required to provide the following prior to evaluation:

- Community profile organized to follow the criteria and metrics. For repeat communities, call out what is new and/or implemented due to judges' recommendations. Complete the Community Information pages - general information, metric implementation checklist, and contacts with emails of community members that will meet the judges.
- Evaluation Tour Itinerary with start and finish times for each day
- Community Map with boundaries and the tour route

The areas to be scored:

Judges will review Community Profiles, Community Maps, and Evaluation Tour Itineraries to confirm the appropriateness of the areas to be evaluated and contact communities prior to the tour so adjustments can be made.

- All areas (municipal, commercial and residential) to be scored must be within the boundaries of the entrant's community/municipality (except as noted below) and a representative portion of all areas must be included.
- Property to be scored, whether public or private, must be subject to the codes and regulations of the entrant's community/municipality.
- When a property does not meet these requirements, but the community's volunteers significantly impact the areas with labor and/or funding, then judges may include in their scoring the property not subject to the codes and regulations of the entrant community.
- A community may request recommendations for areas toured but not scored.

Metrics are noted with unique codes based on the criteria. Ratings include:

N/A (Not Applicable): Communities should strive to implement all metrics; however, judges will use N/A when a metric is not scorable in a community. An N/A metric is not included in the point totals and does not affect percentages.

Examples when N/A may apply in a metric: commercial/business areas do not exist; state or county statutes prevent implementation of a metric.

Not Meeting (0 pts.): Programs or procedures are not in place

Approaching (1 pt.): Programs or procedures are in place but not fully realized

Meeting (2 pts.): Programs or procedures are implemented but need improvement

Exceeding (3 pts.): Programs or procedures are implemented and succeeding but have not realized their full potential

Exceptional (4 pts.): Programs or procedures are exceptional.

Other:

- This Evaluation Report's scoring, general observations, and general and criteria recommendations are based upon the community's efforts in each of the criteria.
- Future projects and programs are not scored.
- The scoring for the seven evaluation criteria is adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the community's location.

General Observations and Recommendations (recommendations are indicated in italics):

2018 marks the third year the Town of Dyer has participated in the America in Bloom national awards program. This relationship is building on a strong base for a brighter future for Dyer. Each year judges provide many observations for consideration. *A review of these comments can assist city leaders as they develop their next comprehensive plan for the city.*

In 2016 the Town of Dyer used their first CN grant wisely to create a buffer between the railroad tracks and a residential community. *The development of Central Park adjacent to CN property would appear to qualify Dyer to apply for a second CN grant.*

Dyer's AIB committee is a fledgling start for cultivating community volunteers. *Branch out with specific requests to the community for short range (one and done projects) to long term commitments. Examples of long term commitments might include but not be limited to "friends of specific parks"; the museum; and public art. Short term examples are community clean ups; stream clean ups; and meet your neighbor.*

Many individuals volunteer their time for events in Dyer; and while records are kept regarding the number of volunteers and the hours contributed. Take this up a level by applying the IRS approved allowable dollar amount to demonstrate the dollar value of the contributed hours. Such a figure can be used in a variety of ways. Beside the PR value this figure is valued as "in-kind" services when applying for grants.

Volunteerism in Dyer is under-reported. Various organizations such as the Lake Central Schools, Franciscan Medical Center, and parks use volunteers to assist staff to provide quality services and programming. Recording of those efforts in hours, numbers of persons, tasks performed is important. Translate that into dollars and the numbers tell the story that without volunteerism programs don't get done, tasks aren't accomplished. These in-kind services are vital and the volunteers who perform them are appreciated.

The Town of Dyer appears to be on the cusp of growth. The last large parcels of land are in the planning stages to be developed. With the expected expansion of commuter railroad service to the community traffic will increase. These two growth factors *strongly suggests Dyer develop a comprehensive plan for allocation of resources and to provide direction for meeting the future. Review ordinances for relevancy and compliance.*

Add your America in Bloom involvement to the signs marking the gateway into your community just like you do on your website. Show your pride and accomplishments and share them with everyone. This will get everyone talking, asking questions and even looking for ways to participate. Expanding the number of AIB volunteers each year will help to make things easier for all and over time you will be amazed what can be accomplished. Work towards creating a grid work of volunteers a committee led for each criterion. The committee leads can then select and build their own committee with a focus on the aspects of each criterion.

Thank you for welcoming us into your wonderful community. America in Bloom is proud to count you as one of our 2018 communities and hope you will be a part of America in Bloom for many years to come. All of us at America in Bloom thank you for your participation and look forward to your return in 2019!

Our best to you,

Alex Pearl & Melanie Riggs
America in Bloom judges

Flowers Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
1. FLOWERS (FL): flowering annuals, perennials, bulbs, tropical plants, flowering topiaries, and colorful foliage and/or cut plant material for season-round interest in containers, hanging baskets, window boxes, raised planters, trellises, and in-ground beds	N/A	Not Meeting (0 pts)	Approaching (1 pt.)	Meeting (2 pts)	Exceeding (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
Leadership and Policy						
FL.01 - Management of flower display programs				X		
Plan of Action						
FL.02 - Action plan developed each season for procurement, scheduling, planting, and maintenance of flower displays				X		
Design						
FL.03 - Unity and Variety: plant combinations create visual interest and dramatic effect while appearing coordinated				X		
FL.04 - Suitability of Plant Selections: plants selected for environmental conditions and flourishing together				X		
FL.05 - Distribution and Location: displays found throughout the community and at key locations			X			
FL.06 - Seasonal Displays: seasonal displays with spring, summer, fall, and/or holiday displays				X		
Maintenance						
FL.07 - Watering program to maintain growth in place				X		
FL.08 - Fertilization: appropriate fertilization program using slow-release, liquid fertilizers, and/or soil amendments				X		
FL.09 - Grooming: regular pruning, dead-heading, removal and replacement of dead plants				X		
FL.10 - Plant health programs in place to monitor and manage pests and diseases (IPM/Integrated Pest Management)				X		
FL.11 - Health and Vigor: plants are robust and floriferous				X		
Community Involvement						
FL.12 - Flower displays are funded all or in part by volunteer contributions			X			
FL.13 - Volunteers participate in the design, planting, and/or care of flower displays				X		
FL.14 - Civic groups, garden clubs, Master Gardeners, school programs, etc., sponsor plant sales, plant swaps, or educational sessions that contribute to the quality and implementation of the community's flower displays			X			
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
FL.15 - Judges to enter text below				X		
Planters at City Hall						
Totals:	Possible Points		Actual Points		Percentage	
1. Flowers (FL)	60		27		45.00%	

Flowers (FL) Recommendations:



The town center is ablaze with eye-catching pink petunias massed in groups making a powerful visual display. The repetition of this colorful flower planting at key locations in various locations in Dyer including the Franciscan Hospital and the Bison art sculpture at the intersection of Hart Street and Rt. 30 ties the community together in a positive way. *Wherever possible repeat this successful visual display such as at the town's many parks' and around their entry signage.*

Investigate the logistics of adding a dramatic grouping of the pink flowered petunia display at the 4-corner intersection of Calumet and Rt. 30. This important intersection would also be a great place to plant annuals in the same pink petunia theme. The flowers are so visually strong that they could just be planted in the ground. Or elevate the planting with large planters arranging in 3 planters at each corner. Another option would be to have 3 large dramatic hanging baskets at each corner. Incorporate into the site plan an ability to irrigate and fertilizer this planting.

Summer is for blooming! Share the great success of the 'wow' flowers and how everyone loved them on your webpage and Facebook page. Encourage home owners and businesses alike to paint the town pink planting the same petunia variety that was so successfully planted in mass at the intersection of Hart and Joliet.

Invite Lakeshore Landscaping, the landscape contractor for the town, who plants the annuals for the city or a master gardener to offer a workshop to the public and call it by a catchy name, such as "dynamite flower displays for a powerful bloom". The focus of the workshop would be on the secret to growing great flowers touching on such topics as soil, fertilizer, planting, and watering for success. A coordinated color theme of the flowering plants throughout the town has the potential to tie the community together.

Encourage local businesses to become a part of your local America in Bloom program by adding colorful plants at key points of their business front and parking areas; and display signage along with the plantings in support of the Bloom program. Enlist business owners to become active members of Dyer's America in Bloom committee.



It has been proposed by the AIB judges, that (Girl & Boy) Scouts plant and maintain gardens around the little library sites established by the Scouts. *In addition to providing the instruction on what and how to plant and maintain the garden, as an added incentive identify specific merit badges the scouts will earn by taking on this type of project.*

Inquire with the Lake Central School system parent association their interest as a fund raising event selling seeds and or bulbs. Two sources are Flower Power <https://www.flowerpowerfundraising.com/request-information?q=request-information> and Terroir Seed <https://underwoodgardens.com/seed-fundraising/>

Landscaped Areas Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
2. LANDSCAPED AREAS (LA): plants and related programs for the leadership, design, installation, and maintenance of landscape (shrubs, ornamental grasses, vines, evergreen topiaries), turf, and groundcovers	N/A	Not Meeting (0 pts)	Approaching (1 pt.)	Meeting (2 pts)	Exceeding (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
Leadership and Policy						
LA.01 - Management of planting of public landscaped areas				X		
LA.02 - Municipal landscape ordinance requires landscaping and maintenance for new and/or improved commercial development				X		
Plan of Action						
LA.03 - Planning for restoration of natural areas					X	
LA.04 - Program for management of invasive plants				X		
LA.05 - Promotion and installation of demonstration/display gardens with interpretive signage; i.e. pollinator, wildlife, native, low-water use			X			
LA.06 - Recognition program for attractive landscapes in place			X			
Design						
LA.07 - Unity and Variety: plant combinations create visual interest while appearing coordinated				X		
LA.08 - Suitability of Plant Selections: plants selected for environmental conditions and are flourishing together				X		
LA.09 - Distribution/Locations: landscaping found throughout the community and at key locations				X		
Maintenance						
LA.10 - Grooming: pruning of plants, removal and/or replacement of dead plants				X		
LA.11 - Plant Health: programs such as IPM (Integrated Pest Management) in place to monitor and manage diseases and pests				X		
LA.12 - Weed Management: programs in place to manage weeds (removal, mulching, etc.)			X			
LA.13 - Health and Vigor: Plants are robust				X		
LA.14 - Turf Care: regular mowing, edging, and removal/replacement of dead turf				X		
LA.15 - Turf Health: programs such as IPM (Integrated Pest Management) in place to monitor and manage diseases, pests, and weeds				X		
Community Involvement						
LA.16 - Volunteer donations contribute to funding landscaped areas in public areas			X			

LA.17 - Volunteers assist in design, installation, and care of landscaped areas and turf in public areas			X			
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
LA.18 - Judges to enter text below				X		
Hiring professional landscape services						
Totals:	Possible Points		Actual Points		Percentage	
2. Landscaped Areas (LA)	72		32		44.44%	

Landscaped Areas (LA) Recommendations:

Professionally designed and planted gardens that surround the town center have the elements of a good landscape including balance, line, mass, proportion, color and size. The gardens are maintained by Lakeshore Landscaping. *Invite the consulting landscape designer to give a walking tour of the landscape planting at town hall to interested gardeners. Get the word out about this talk on Facebook, the town website and your signs. Focus attention on annuals, perennials and shrubs for the home garden.*

It was nice to see the stunning pink flowering hydrangea 'Invincible Spirit' planted in the landscape at the Franciscan Hospital. The Invincible Spirit Campaign raises \$1.00 per plant that goes towards The Breast Cancer Research Foundation. To date it has raised over \$1 million dollars. Not only has the Franciscan Hospital created a beautiful landscape, but also this landscape has additional benefits.

Involve Lake Central schools science classes and youth organizations to enhance the existing natural areas particularly the retention basin areas. A fun project would be for kids to 'seed bomb' native wildflowers into these sites to enhance the diversity of native plant species. Seed bombs are balls made with seeds and something to hold the seeds together; they are dried, and then planted by throwing them into the wildflower area to be planted. Investigate with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources <https://www.in.gov/dnr/> for lists of suitable species for each different habitat; the slightest change in soil type, pH, and moisture conditions will require different species. Always choose wildflower species carefully appropriate for your region. Another resource is the Nature Conservancy for Indiana www.nature.org/indiana. Recipes for seed bombs are available on the web; one such resource is <https://www.naturalbeachliving.com/how-to-make-seed-bombs/>



Add interpretive signage to water retention areas, such as parks and the parking lot adjacent to the CVS store. to explain what these low areas near are doing for our communities. The CVS retention area is well suited to be transformed into a butterfly garden. Community minded businesses such as Meijer stores have signage at their retention parking lot area.

The prevalent idea is that landscapes are important to health. An example is Children & Nature Network (www.childrenandnature.org). Well maintained "green" landscapes make you feel better. Let's get the Dyer businesses onboard to make the place these businesses call home become welcoming and pleasant places to enter and to drive by.

Currently many business sites are light on plants and heavy on litter. Encourage businesses to green-up the street side of their property, their parking lots and entryway's by planting low maintenance shrubs that are long lived. Offer a workshop by having one of the larger Dyer businesses or a local landscape nursery supplier sponsor a talk about high impact/minimal landscaping for their business. Review ordinances requiring commercial site to have minimum landscape requirements and to maintain standards of design. Encourage mandates that landscapes are to be maintained weed free, neat, clean, and free of dead plants. Establish an award of excellence and give to all commercial sites that keep up their landscapes, just like

restaurants get awards of excellence for their food. Residential landscapes are well maintained throughout Dyer. Support the efforts of commercial businesses to do the same.

Wildflowers are incorporated into the artful Bison public art statue. Look closely and you will notice the landscape surrounding the Bison is comprised of native species. Planting and encouraging native species and sustaining landscapes for public spaces are commendable as it sets the example of enhancing our awareness of the importance of plants and the environment. *Check out the informative Indiana Native Plant & Wildflower Society website at www.inpaws.org. The organization publishes a list of the native species of trees, shrubs and perennials planted at this site and note that some non-native plants were also used by Lakeshore Landscaping to enhance the site.* For landscape plantings, it is acceptable to use native plant cultivars, often referred to as 'nativars'. Refer to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center for more information regarding these plant developments www.wilflower.org.

Survey the residents of Dyer for their interest in having a community vegetable garden. Central Park has ample land should a site be needed, where residents can rent a plot of garden space for vegetable gardening. Community gardens are also wonderful meeting places where people can share garden ideas and network about gardening.

Urban Forestry Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
3. URBAN FORESTRY (UF): trees and related programs for the leadership, management, design, installation, and maintenance on public and private lands	N/A	Not Meeting (0 pts)	Approaching (1 pt.)	Meeting (2 pts)	Exceeding (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
Leadership and Policy						
UF.01 - Qualified personnel on staff or access to trained individuals				X		
UF.02 - Tree board/commission is active				X		
UF.03 - Municipal ordinance(s) enacted/enforced for tree preservation on public and private property				X		
UF.04 - Municipal ordinance(s) enacted/enforced for protection of trees during construction				X		
UF.05 - Currently a Tree City USA community and/or has the Growth Award designation				X		
Plan of Action						
UF.06 - Tree inventory for public areas is complete and current				X		
UF.07 - Annual tree planting program for public areas				X		
UF.08 - Management program for dead, imperiled, and/or invasive trees				X		
UF.09 - Recognition and protection of heritage trees	X					
UF.10 - Effective communication to residents of recommended trees, proper planting, "Right Tree in the Right Place," and/or maintenance			X			
Design						
UF.11 - Variety: appropriate selection of tree species planted				X		
UF.12 - Placement: appropriate spacing and planting area for optimal root and canopy growth				X		
UF.13 - Planting: correct planting depth (root flare at/above grade)				X		
UF.14 - Arboretum in place with labels and descriptive signage	X					
Maintenance						
UF.15 - Tree Health: program in place to monitor and manage diseases and pests				X		
UF.16 - Watering, Mulching, and Pruning: program for watering new trees; proper mulching (i.e., no volcano mulching); appropriate pruning, removal of dead limbs, and canopies raised adequately above vehicle and pedestrian areas				X		
Community Involvement						
UF.17 - Volunteer donations contribute to funding tree planting in public areas			X			
UF.18 - Residents participate in Arbor Day activities				X		

UF.19 - Volunteers assist in tree planting and care				X		
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
UF.20 - Judges to enter text below				X		
Kindergarten tree planting project						
Totals:	Possible Points		Actual Points		Percentage	
3. Urban Forestry (UF)	72		34		47.22%	

Urban Forestry (UF) Recommendations:

Dyer has been a dedicated member of Tree City USA <https://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/index.cfm> for 11 years offering tree giveaways, celebrations of trees, and plant a tree projects. *Apply for the Arbor Day Program's Growth Award.* The Growth Award highlights innovative programs and projects as well as increased commitment of resources for urban forestry.

The town of Dyer tree nurseries located at the Sandy Ridge Water Tower and the water tower near Portman Elementary School are ambitious projects to grow trees from young seedling size to a size that will live in a landscape setting. Five hundred sapling trees including four different species were planted by volunteers in 2018 and one hundred trees were given away this year from previous year's plantings. *Bring attention to these nurseries with signage explaining the purpose of the nursery as well as the types of trees that are being grown. Formulate nursery practices for the nurseries in regard to spacing, staking, and cultivation. The state of Indiana has a resource for tree standards https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/files/fo-ANSI_Z60_1_04.pdf.*

The forward-thinking plan to add a forest to the Central Park is a project that will be appreciated by generations both now and in the future. From farmland fields of the past to suburban needs of the present, managing and developing land is not an easy task. It is a great responsibility and Dyer is currently heading in the right direction in regard to building its forest. *In an effort to "reforest" Dyer enlist the support of veterans groups to create a "grove for Hero's". An additional concept would create an emerald ribbon of native forest trees on town property connecting each neighborhood, park and school to the next. A good location to begin an ambitious tree planting is at the Kahler Middle School weaving its way into Pheasant Hill Park. Focus the attention of your Arbor Day plantings on a large project like this over several years developing a planting program.*

We were informed of Lake Central School Superintendent Veracco's idea to plant a tree as a class tree every year for the entering kindergarten class. *This idea has merit worth following through on. Such monuments become a central gathering place for that class in years to come as alumni.*

The residential areas of Dyer have a maturing tree canopy. *Put a link to the tree ordinances on the front page of the town of Dyer's website to make it easy to find the ordinances. Work to inform residents of the importance and proper tree information. Use information from the Tree City USA media kit to inform residents of such topics as: proper tree selection, planting, mulching and care.* The eight newly planted trees at the Bison Art installation do not set a good example for residents to follow. *These trees might need to be replanted as they appear to be volcano mulched and planted too high. Contact the Indiana Department of Natural Resources <https://www.in.gov/dnr/> or Perdue University Extension at Lake County <https://extension.purdue.edu/Lake/Pages/default.aspx> for proper tree planting parameters.*

In the heart of town, on the entryway to the middle school is the St. Joseph cemetery with its beautiful stone monuments and beautiful pillars; but it is barren of any greenery and surrounded by an industrial chain fence. Cemeteries in the past were used as parks full of greenery and trees. They are places of peace and serenity. *Consider upgrading this scared place by plantings of selected trees.*

Environmental Efforts Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
4. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS (EE): environmental leadership, policies, plans and programs for resource conservation; pollution control; trash, recycling, and reuse; and alternative transportation	N/A	Not Meeting (0 pts)	Approaching (1 pt.)	Meeting (2 pts)	Exceeding (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
Leadership and Policy						
EE.01 - Environmental Advisory Board or Green Team in place				X		
EE.02 - Pet waste policies developed and enforced				X		
EE.03 - Electric/alternative fuel vehicle(s) used by municipality				X		
EE.04 - Electric vehicle charging station(s) provided				X		
EE.05 - Storm water management program in place						X
Plan of Action						
EE.06 - Litter and/or environmental clean-up programs in use				X		
EE.07 - Brownfield clean-up programs in place				X		
Resource Conservation						
EE.08 - Buildings are LEED certified and/or follow the standards				X		
EE.09 - Rain gardens and/or bio-swales in place				X		
EE.10 - Home energy audit program available			NS	X	NS	NS
EE.11 - Rain barrel program offered		X	NS		NS	NS
EE.12 - Low-flow water device incentives available			NS	X	NS	NS
Trash, Recycling, and Reuse Management						
EE.13 - Curbside recycling collection available			NS	X	NS	NS
EE.14 - Yard waste composting available or offered			NS	X	NS	NS
EE.15 - Prescription drug drop-off offered			NS	X	NS	NS
EE.16 - Hazardous waste and/or electronics waste collection or drop-off offered				X		
EE.17 - Plastic bag and/or foam container collection available				X		
Community Involvement						
EE.18 - Participation in Earth Day celebrations, Bike to Work Days, Walk to School Days, and similar opportunities that enhance public awareness of environmental issues				X		
EE.19 - Garden clubs, Master Gardeners, school curricula, and/or Soil and Water Conservation District, etc. provide educational opportunities for rain barrel usage, backyard habitats, and other environmental initiatives			X			
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
EE.20 - Judges to enter text below					X	
Floating islands at Pheasant Hill Park pond						
Totals:	Possible Points		Actual Points		Percentage	
4. Environmental Efforts (EE)	68		40		58.82%	

Environmental Efforts (EE) Recommendations:

Dyer has been built on a major flood plain. To deal with this issue the Town of Dyer cooperates with the Lake County Storm Water Management Commission (SMC). The commission's mission is to coordinate storm water activities of over 80 local jurisdictions covering 28 square miles, the Town of Dyer being one of them, to improve water quality, reduce flood damages, and restore and enhance the natural drainage system. Working with the town, businesses, and homeowners, the SMC effectively manages floodplains and water sheds, works towards reducing flood damages and protecting and restoring the natural resources of the area's natural drainage system. The Town of Dyer working with the Storm Water Commission, has thoughtfully implemented a long term plan that will build retention ponds in residential developments, improve storm water drains, repave streets, and remediate stream bank erosion with the end goal of managing storm water and reducing property losses.



It is yet to be determined whether the floating islands at Pheasant Hills Park pond have had an effect on water quality. *As part of a community education program signage would be helpful for resident understanding of what the purpose of the floating islands are in improving water quality at the site.*

Interpretative signage relating to the storm water control efforts of the Town of Dyer and the Storm Water Commission at specific sites, such as CVS by the pool, pheasant hill park (pond) walking trails around pond, Portman School, Chateau

Woods Pond, Plum Creek Bridge would benefit resident understanding of what these contribute to storm water control and habitat management.

Street improvement projects are ongoing in relationship to improving the ability of storm water control methods. The improvements will result in increasing storm drain capacities at the same time as paving road surfaces that have deteriorated over time.

Geese at Pheasant Hill Park are an issue to be dealt with. The city has investigated a "patrol dog" but has not implemented a solution as of this writing. The State of Indiana Department of Natural Resources <https://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/2996.htm> provides information and guidance on controlling problem geese.

In conjunction with a community clean-up day campaign, survey the interest of citizens in promoting a community wide yard sale. "One person's trash is another's treasure".

The Lake County Solid Waste District <https://www.lcswmd.com/> has been working with Dyer's Park & Recreation department and the Lake Central School System in providing a recycling education program. For all accounts the efforts appears to be succeeding. The Town of Dyer has seen marked reduction in tonnage being sent to the county landfill.

One area the Lake County Solid Waste District does not focus on in an aggressive way is in education of the business arena. *This opens up the opportunity for the Town of Dyer to investigate creating more of an environmental awareness relating to the needs of the business community. Each industry has special needs. Working with specific industry associations (restaurants, supermarkets, auto service industry are examples) business award for clean energy, reduction of waste, in effect best practices.*

Another opportunity presents itself to improve the environmental information base of the community. Mimic the website www.drq3.org. This addition to the town website would gather a host of green resources that the business community and residents can take advantage of in the pursuit of a "green community".

The Rain garden located in Miller Park near the Plum Creek Bridge could use signage identifying the gardens purpose.

The grounds of Portman School would appear to be prime space to become a “green environment” that teachers can use as a resource to incorporate into a wide range of curriculum subjects. Such initiatives can lead to a green school environment.

Study the National Wildlife Federation Green School program <https://www.nwf.org/Eco-Schools-USA> for incorporating the environmental and STEM issues. Look towards such companies as Terracycle <https://www.terracycle.com/en-US/> for age appropriate fund raising goals that also teach students about the world they live in.

Celebrating Heritage Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
5. CELEBRATING HERITAGE (CH): recognition, designation, protection, commemoration, and celebration of historical, cultural, natural, agricultural, and industrial resources	N/A	Not Meeting (0 pts)	Approaching (1 pt.)	Meeting (2 pts)	Exceeding (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
Leadership and Policy						
CH.01 - Historic preservation ordinance provides designation and/or protection from demolition		X				
CH.02 - Incentives offered to promote preservation: tax credits, waived permit fees, eased setbacks, available rebates, etc.	X					
CH.03 - Effective communication about ordinances, policies, and restoration methods		X				
CH.04 - Land trusts and/or conservation easements are available			NS	X	NS	NS
CH.05 - Historic Preservation and/or Architectural Review Board in place	X		NS		NS	NS
CH.06 - Historical Society is active			NS	X	NS	NS
Plan of Action						
CH.07 - National Register of Historic Places district and/or individual designations in place				X		
CH.08 - Natural and/or agricultural areas are protected				X		
CH.09 - Archives, artifacts, cemetery records, and oral histories in place and properly stored				X		
CH.10 - Historical publications/websites, interpretive signage, and programs in place				X		
Commemoration						
CH.11 - Signage in place for historic neighborhoods and/or structures	X					
CH.12 - Historical museum(s) and/or interpretive displays maintained				X		
CH.13 - Cemeteries, monuments, and/or plaques in place and well maintained				X		
CH.14 - Community heritage promoted through tours (guided or self), brochures, Smartphone apps, etc.		X				
CH.15 - Parades, festivals, and other events commemorating a community's heritage are held					X	
Community Involvement						
CH.16 - Volunteers participate in planning and implementing recognition of a community's heritage through historical tours, parades, festivals, etc.				X		
CH.17 - Volunteers participate in maintaining historical sites and structures			X			
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
CH.18 - Judges to enter text below					X	
4th grade history education program at town museum						
Totals:	Possible Points		Actual Points		Percentage	
5. Celebrating Heritage (CH)	56		25		44.64%	

Celebrating Heritage (CH) Recommendations:

Dyer has a rich history dating back to the 1830's when Aaron Norton Hart arrived to survey the area. Over the years Dyer has transformed itself as a waystation along a cross country route. As motor travel became affordable and popular it was one of the many paved routes for travelers going across country. The Lincoln Highway (Rt. 30) is a monument to that early movement. The roadside signage located in front of Meyers Castle tells that story very well.

In the past, Dyer had an airfield. This neighborhood is known as "airport subdivision". *Green Meadow Park, a neighborhood park, would be an ideal site to place a historic marker identifying the history of the neighborhood and how it got its name.*

Dyer's museum is a hidden gem. *In an attempt to reach more individuals with its message, we recommend incorporating technology to reach a larger audience, create pod casts of museum programs. To accomplish such an endeavor several potential partners could include but not be limited to: high school or colleges, within commuting distance (Prairie State, Indiana State Gary, Hyles Anderson) or local public communications stations.*

The Dyer Museum is strongly a one person show. Katy Powers, a dynamo of a person, performs a remarkable job of displaying collection and providing educational programming to a range of audiences. In order to strengthen this mission through museum collections and its programs, we recommend *reaching out to potential volunteers by promoting volunteer opportunities through requests for specific tasks or areas of interests. Collections management (archival and display), school programs, tours, writing, public programs, and fund raising are but a few of the areas where help is needed to lighten the burden on one person and ensure the museum thrives into the future.*

The America in Bloom judges propose the Dyer Museum investigate becoming a member of the Association of Indiana Museums (AIM), which is the statewide advocate and information resource for Hoosier museums. AIM serves Indiana's museum community by providing leadership, developing cooperative initiatives, and promoting the use of professional standards. <http://www.museumsusa.org/assocs/info/1563> Membership can open up opportunities for the Dyer museum from being a collection of interesting things to one of professional standards.

Thank you to the "Wild Ones" for assisting in maintaining the interpretative signage at the Lincoln Memorial sign on Rt. 30. And in doing so keeps this legend alive. Good job!

Dyer's town website <http://www.townofdye.net/edc/Home/History.aspx> provides an insight into the past and how far Dyer has grown since its early days. An addition to this bit of "gossip" and history might be to include on a regular basis biographical information on pioneers of the past and their contribution to Dyer's development.

In cooperation with the museum at special town events, have individuals dress up in character and recreate the lives of early Dyer settlers. This could take place in conjunction with a walking tour of St. Joseph Cemetery.

Community Vitality (CV) Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
6. COMMUNITY VITALITY (CV): policies, programs, and outdoor activities and facilities that lead to a vibrant community and a sense of well-being. Includes parks, playgrounds, dog parks, sports fields, water activities, trails, and other outdoor recreational opportunities	N/A	Not Meeting (0 pts)	Approaching (1 pt.)	Meeting (2 pts)	Exceeding (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
Leadership and Policy						
CV.01 - Clean Air (such as No Smoking) policies implemented				X		
CV.02 - Master plan in place for public green space and parks					X	
CV.03 - ADA accessibility in public outdoor areas including playgrounds				X		
Outdoor Facilities and Events						
CV.04 - Outdoor recreation facilities meet community needs				X		
CV.05 - Walking, biking, and exercise trails exist				X		
CV.06 - Outdoor performances/events for art, dance, theatre, music, and/or cinema				X		
CV.07 - Run/walk/bike races and marathons held				X		
CV.08 - Benches and seating available near walking, exercise, and playground areas				X		
CV.09 - Trees or shade sails are in proper areas to provide shade for spectators and/or participants			X			
CV.10 - Playground equipment exists, and age-appropriate ranges are offered				X		
CV.11 - Farmers' Markets are available	X					
Community Involvement						
CV.12 - Community gardening sites are in use	X					
CV.13 - Volunteer involvement in planning, funding, and/or implementing civic events such as organized runs, walks, etc.				X		
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
CV.14 - Judges to enter text below					X	
Upgrading of playground equipment in parks						
Totals:	Possible Points		Actual Points		Percentage	
6. Community Vitality (CV)	48		25		52.08%	

Community Vitality (CV) Recommendations:

Dyer has not yet explored the interest in having a community garden in the community. Should an interest surface, Central Park currently would have the space to accommodate the undertaking. In the meantime the town may want to investigate promoting “Plant a Row for the Hungry” <http://gardenwriters.org/Par/>. Such a program would not require additional resources from the town other than to direct participants to local food banks and soup kitchens in nearby communities that accept such donations. A program of this nature might be more effective in meeting residents’ needs. Plant a Row for the Hungry is a public service program of GWA (Garden Writers of Association) and the GWA Foundation. The public is asked to plant an extra row of produce each year and donate their surplus to local food banks, soup kitchens and service organizations to help feed America’s hungry. There are over 84 million households with a yard or garden in the U.S. If every gardener plants one extra row of vegetables and donates their surplus to local food agencies and soup kitchens, a significant impact can be made on reducing hunger.

Dyer’s Park Board oversees a Park and Recreation department that has 22 parks of which 15 have playgrounds. Central Park with 77 acres is the youngest park and the largest in the community. It will take years of careful development to reach its full potential. Under the supervision of Director Michael O’Shea, Central Park is thoughtfully growing to meet the diverse needs of the community.



The dog park located in Central Park is well used. *We recommend that programs be developed for dog owners. Having dog programs featuring such topics as choosing your vet, pet foods, grooming tips, dog health might be well accepted by dog park users.*

Dyer and the surrounding communities are growing in leaps and bounds. It is projected that with the addition of a railroad stop in Dyer in 2020 that will take commuters into Chicago in less than an hour, Dyer will become an attractive place to live. *Investigate linking bike/walk trails with neighboring communities.*

Along Calumet Avenue near Central Park is a section of land that has the potential make a good Bird Sanctuary. The property borders Central Park and would allow for a variety of habitats for different species of bird life. *Further investigate with the Indiana Audubon Society <https://indianaaudubon.org/> and the Indian Department of Natural Resources <https://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/2352.htm> to see if this idea can become a reality.*

Use the town media outlets to raise awareness of the community by asking them to respond to such statements as “I love Dyer because” or “Dyer could be better if they did” or “I can make my neighborhood better by”. The responses may surprise you.

Overall Impression (OI) Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
	N/A	Not Meeting (0 pts)	Approaching (1 pt.)	Meeting (2 pts)	Exceeding (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
7. OVERALL IMPRESSION (OI): adequate and effective amenities are provided in good condition, and the community is welcoming and beautiful						
Leadership and Policy						
OI.01 - Signage ordinances enacted and enforced				X		
OI.02 - Ordinances in place to address overgrown lots, abandoned vehicles, unscreened dumpsters, public nuisances, etc.				X		
OI.03 - Code enforcement or compliance officer on municipal staff and making a difference					X	
Amenities						
OI.04 - Site furnishings in place: water features, lamp posts, benches, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, containers, planters, and cigarette receptacles				X		
OI.05 - Crosswalks well marked			X			
OI.06 - Public restrooms available				X		
OI.07 - Effective community gateway entry features					X	
OI.08 - Effective use of banners, murals, and/or public art			X			
OI.09 - Effective wayfinding signage			X			
OI.10 - Effective use of non-plant seasonal decorations (i.e., lights, ornaments)			X			
Condition and Maintenance						
OI.11 - Condition of structures, buildings, decks, patios related to lack of vandalism, graffiti, peeling or faded paint and rust				X		
OI.12 - Condition of infrastructure: roadways, road shoulders, curbs, medians, sidewalks, crosswalks/pavement markings, transformers, and utility poles related to lack of weeds, vandalism, litter, graffiti, peeling or faded paint, and rust				X		
OI.13 - Condition of signs and site furnishings: water features, lamp posts, benches, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, containers, planters, and cigarette receptacles				X		
OI.14 - Condition of vacant lots, storm water retention ponds, and swales					X	
OI.15 - Lack of snipe/stake signs, billboards, and posted flyers				X		
OI.16 - Regularly scheduled street sweeping				X		
Community Involvement						

Ol.17 - Volunteer funding and participation in community revitalization and improvement programs, such as river sweep, home repair programs (CHIP), disaster relief, clean-up days, etc.			X			
Ol.18 - Programs are available for residents to fund public amenities such as memorial benches, brick pathways, etc.				X		
Ol.19 - Volunteer involvement in Adopt-A-Spot Programs, Habitat for Humanity Projects, River Sweep, etc.			X			
Ol.20 - Recognition programs for volunteers			X			
Ol.21 - Volunteer hours recorded			X			
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
Ol.22 - Judges to enter text below					X	
committed government to community improvement						
Totals:	Possible Points		Actual Points		Percentage	
7. Overall Impression (OI)	88		40		45.45%	

Overall Impression (OI) Recommendations:

The chain link fence surrounding St. Joseph Catholic cemetery on Joliet Avenue is worn out and an eyesore along such a major route through Dyer. We recommend *the town of Dyer work with St. Joseph Parish in finding resources they can use to replace it with a more architectural pleasing fence incorporating the current brick pillars. One possibility is to investigate if this project would qualify for a façade grant from the Town of Dyer.*

Wayfinding signs do not appear to exist in Dyer other than at the Franciscan Medical Center. *Specific sites such as the intersection of Calumet and Joliet Avenues might be a location where signage directing drivers to town such places as town hall, hospital, parks, schools, etc. might be appropriate.*

Permanent restroom facilities are present at a variety of parks where picnic shelters exist. Pheasant Hill Park is not one of them. *Considering the amount of activities that gather large crowds in this park, the America in Bloom judges suggest Pheasant Hill Park be studied for this amenity addition.*

New banners displayed on light poles along Hart Street, while attractive, are too small. They are difficult to read when traveling at the speed limit. Our advice is that the next *banner designed be larger and bolder. Wording has to be able to be legible when driving at speed limits.*

After spending time with City Manager Tom Degiulo and Council member Mary Tanis Dyer, it is evident that Dyer is represented by committed government to improving resident's quality of life.

Sheffield Avenue is one among a number of streets that is getting attention to improve the traveling experience. Encourage retail businesses (real estate owners) along Sheffield Avenue to take advantage of available façade grants from the town to freshen up the fronts of their businesses to make more appealing.

Judges toured neighborhoods in both the south and north areas of the town limits. Residential properties were in general well maintained. Grass mowed, minimal litter on the ground, and buildings were in good repair.

Commercial retail locations along Calumet Avenue previously visited in 2016 by AIB judge Alex Pearl, were weedy, now have less weeds. However, cigarette butts remain an eyesore. One solution is presented through Terracycle <https://www.terracycle.com/en-US/brigades/cigarette-waste-recycling> . This company collects and recycles cigarette butts. They provide the opportunity for the town and property managers to clean up their sites.

The Bison at the corner of Hart and Joliet Avenues is the beginning of a push to place more public art throughout the community. Over time and with imagination art in many forms will be seen. The corner of Hart and Joliet Avenues has a traffic utility box that could accommodate an attractive wrap. Gateway signs along Rt. 30 are attractive announcements one is entering Dyer. Dyer Art Visionaries (DAVe) - <http://www.dyerartsvisionaries.org/> and the Dyer Community Foundation <http://www.dyercommunityfoundation.com/> have lead the way in providing support for public art. The America in Bloom judges *advice that a youth member be added to the board.*

At the corner of Hart & Rt. 30 across the street from the Bison and in front of the restaurant is a utility box. *The thought is there to wrap the box in a design that can complement the Bison on the opposite corner.*

A topic that would appear to open up opportunities is that of volunteer appreciation. At present, the city does not have a means of recognizing the hard work put forth by volunteers. We recommend that the city sponsor an annual volunteer appreciation awards dinner, honoring each organization that contributes to the well-being and quality of life in Dyer. We also recommend that the town manager and town council participate in the ceremonies. Perhaps a capstone to the evening event could be a "Volunteer of the Year" award.

The Francians Medical Center has an inviting front entry along Rt. 30. The hospital's colorful Landscape compliment the Dyer gateway sign seen as a driver enters the town from Illinois. The appealing landscape provides a bright impression for community visitors. One can only imagine the impact on the healing community!

A path to open up the door to get business involvement in Dyer's AIB efforts would be to request retailers (garden centers, hardware stores, paint stores are examples) to include a tag line in their weekly advertisements. Once the dates are known when the AIB judges will be visiting, over the course of a number of weeks the advertisement tag line would say something like "the America in Bloom judges are coming to Dyer on this date. Let's clean up Dyer. Trash bags on sale this week." Each subsequent week a different product or service would be highlighted.

Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions (ET) Definition	Metrics Ratings		
8. EVALUATION TOUR PREPARATION AND ACTIONS (ET): community's readiness prior to and the action during the Evaluation Tour	N/A	Unmet (0 pts)	Met (1 pt.)
Prior to the Evaluation Tour			
ET.01 - Community Profile provided to judges at least two weeks prior to their arrival			X
ET.02 - Community Profile includes contacts with emails			X
ET.03 - Community Profile from a returning community makes it clear what is new and/or implemented from judges' recommendations (scored as N/A for a new community)			X
ET.04 - Evaluation Tour itinerary and Community map with boundaries provided to judges at least two weeks prior to their arrival			X
During the Evaluation Tour			
ET.05 - Evaluation Tour provided a representative cross-section of the community			X
ET.06 - Judges met with municipal leaders			X
ET.07 - Judges met with the business and/or non-profit community			X
ET.08 - Judges met with the media			X
ET.09 - Judges met with volunteers			X
ET.10 - Judges were asked to give a presentation(s)			X
Final Wrap-Up			
ET.11 - Enough time was allotted for judges to work on the Evaluation Tour Report in a quiet place with adequate Wi-Fi availability			X
ET.12 - Community participated in a wrap-up session at the end of the Evaluation Tour			X
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note			
ET.13 - Judges to enter text below			X
Time management of our hosts			
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage
8. Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions (ET)	13.00	13.00	100.00%

Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions (ET) Recommendations:

Thank you for the opportunity to meet members of the press and surrounding communities. It gives Dyer an opportunity to shine and brag to its neighbors.

The following are some recommendations for enhancing the AIB judges visit:

- List of names and contact information of people judge will meet
- Meet real estate or commercial property owners, business leaders
- Meet more members of town council, public works and the Lake Central Schools during the tour to discuss their perspective on issues and priorities in Dyer.

DISCLAIMER:

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2018 Community Recognitions

Community: Dyer, Indiana

Recognized Criterion: Environmental Awareness

The Town of Dyer has been developed in a major flood plain. To deal with this issue the city of Dyer cooperates with the Lake County Storm Water Management Commission (SMC). The commission's mission is to coordinate storm water activities of over 80 local jurisdictions, covering 28 square miles, the Town of Dyer being one of them, to improve water quality, reduce flood damages, and restore and enhance the natural drainage system. Working with the city, businesses, and homeowners the SMC effectively manages floodplains and water sheds, works towards reducing flood damages and protecting and restoring the natural resources of the area's natural drainage system. The Town of Dyer working with the Storm Water Commission, has thoughtfully developed a long term plan that will build retention ponds in residential developments, improve storm water drains, repave streets, and remediate stream bank erosion with the end goal of managing storm water and reducing property losses.

Noteworthy Project or Initiative: Public Art Bison Project

The Dyer Beautification Committee installed its first piece of public art at the corner of Hart Street and Rt. 30. The first piece of art is a beautifully hand-painted fiberglass life size bison. The fiberglass Bison was painted by two very talented Lake Central High School students. Symbols of both Dyer and Indiana are depicted on the Bison including the tree symbol, Dyer's logo, and the bicentennial date. The bison is surrounded by a floriferous garden of wildflowers, annuals and trees.

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