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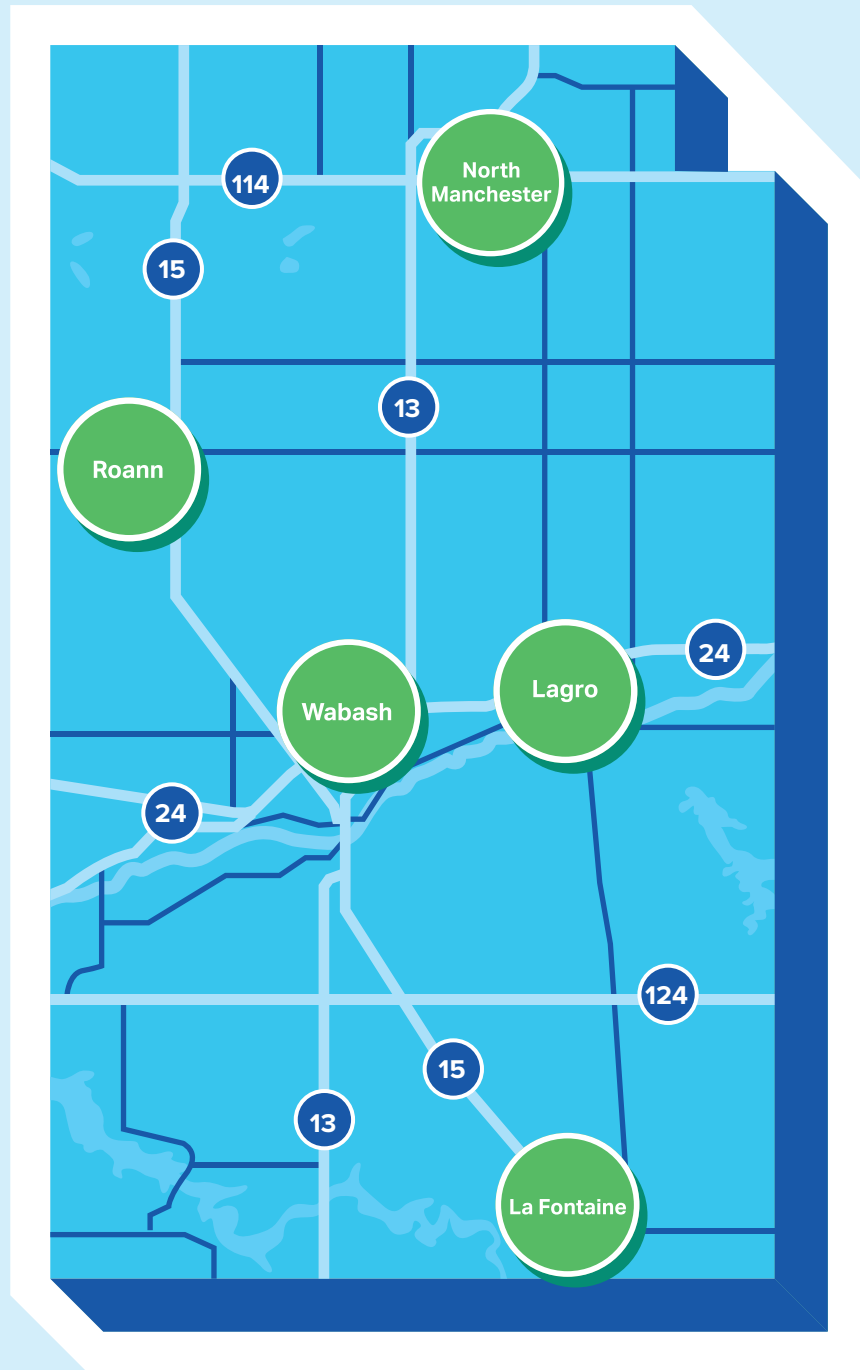LAGRO NORTH MANCHESTER ROANN WABASH LA F

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
WABASH COUNTY

A BOLD PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITIES OF WABASH COUNTY

PRESENTED JULY 2022

THE COMMUNITIES OF WABASH COUNTY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RESOLUTION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Imagine One 85 Steering Committee would like to thank the following individuals, stakeholders, and organizations for their commitment and dedication in assisting with Imagine One 85. Sharing your knowledge, thoughts and ideas rendered an invaluable service to the communities of Wabash County. Imagine One 85 is grateful for the many other community members who participated in the process or simply expressed their support and enthusiasm for the effort.

Town of North Manchester Plan Commission

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Community Stakeholders

Natural Resource Advocates
Young Professionals of Wabash County
Middle School Students
Commuters
Honeywell Foundation
Human Resource Professionals
Major Employers
Non-Profit Leaders and Social Service Providers
Kiwanis Wabash Club
Manchester University Leadership
Manchester University Town and Gown Committee
Wabash County Board of Zoning Appeals

A MESSAGE TO WABASH COUNTY

July 11, 2022

To the Communities of Wabash County:

After facing 40 years of declining population, Wabash County leaders banded together to organize the Imagine One 85 initiative to arrest population loss and grow Wabash County. Spanning nearly two years of work, in a pandemic, the planning process culminated in the creation of this document, a countywide comprehensive strategic plan, which represents the synthesis of citizen ideas and expert technical analysis for growth in Wabash County.

The process has been a stimulating exercise that allowed citizens of the county to examine the communities we all live in, the roles we play as residents of these communities, and ultimately what citizens imagine the future of Wabash County to be. The Imagine One 85 Plan examines the use of resources and land, provides a fiscal review, and recommends actions and implementation strategies that revolve around four different components: Great Places, Prosperity, Housing and Community, and Foundations.

With this plan our communities articulate the following vision for Wabash County's future:

We, the communities of Wabash County, are connected, resilient, and growing. We are open, welcoming, and prosperous. Our spirit, like our natural resources, is flourishing and vibrant.

Leadership shines bright in our county. We produce and attract energetic and capable young citizens. Wabash County is a great place to live, work, and learn. Residents and visitors thrive here.

Whose responsibility is it to grow Wabash County? Growth is everyone's responsibility!

While the plan is an official government document, it is far more than a "to do" list for elected officials, municipalities, chambers, or foundations. Organizations, stakeholders and individuals who are passionate about the communities we call home will join in the hard work of implementation. This plan calls upon each of us to ensure the success of the plan's 85 recommendations by considering how our behaviors, decisions, investments, and choices can contribute to growth.

For this plan to succeed, the communities of Wabash County will need to execute the objectives, take bold actions, commit to changes that may be difficult, and above all, work together with generosity and grace to reach this collective goal. We as citizens can find common ground in our passion for Wabash County and our commitment to creating a hopeful future of growth and prosperity. It is our firmest belief that Wabash County can, and will, make this happen.

Please read and share the Imagine One 85 plan. We anticipate you will learn things about Wabash County that may surprise you, and we hope you will find urgency in the recommendations made. Find your place and where you can best devote time, talent and treasure to make a bright future for Wabash County a certain reality.

We are extremely grateful to all of you and the work you do, and we are proud to call Wabash County home.

Patty Grant
Executive Director

Community Foundation
of Wabash County

Keith Gillenwater
President and CEO

Grow Wabash County

CONTENTS

"Everything Imagine One 85 is doing is GREAT! There are visionaries in the county producing results."

Online Participant

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Imagine One 85 is a community-driven effort to establish a strategic vision for the people of Wabash County and develop a road map for growth and investment for decades to come. This process is open, inclusive, and informed by the experiences of community members and stakeholders. Over a year, the Imagine One 85 Steering Committee helped lead each of the county's unique communities through this process. This plan represents their hard work and leadership. In this section, you'll read more about the driving purpose of Imagine One 85: to arrest and reverse population decline. You'll also learn about the planning process and the communities that compose Wabash County.

A FUTURE WITH FEWER?

THE POPULATION IN WABASH COUNTY IS DECREASING...

By 2050 Wabash County could have 5,000 fewer residents than it does today. This will represent a 14 percent decline. This slow but steady decline began in 1980 when the county reached its high point for in-migration and population. That year, close to 400 people moved in and the population tipped over 36,500 residents for the first time. Since then, between 50 and 100 households have left each year. Population isn't the only measure for community vitality, but the consistent loss has had an impact and will continue to compound.

The communities of Wabash County are strong and well-defined. Despite the challenges posed by population decline, the county has made significant progress and invested heavily in its future. Regionally, the population is growing and points toward an opportunity for the county. As Wabash decreased from 1980, the 11-county region centering on Fort Wayne grew by more than 150,000, or 25%. This growth outpaced the state (23% over the same period) and has continued through 2020 with bold plans to reach one million total residents in the area by 2030.

FORECASTS PLACE OUR COMMUNITIES AT A CROSSROADS...

Without intervention, the county will continue to lose people. By 2050, another 5,000 residents will move to other communities, taking with them their energy, talent, ambition, and all the big and small investments that come with living or raising a family in a community. The impact of this continued loss could change the county at a fundamental level.

Figure 1.1: Historic County Population
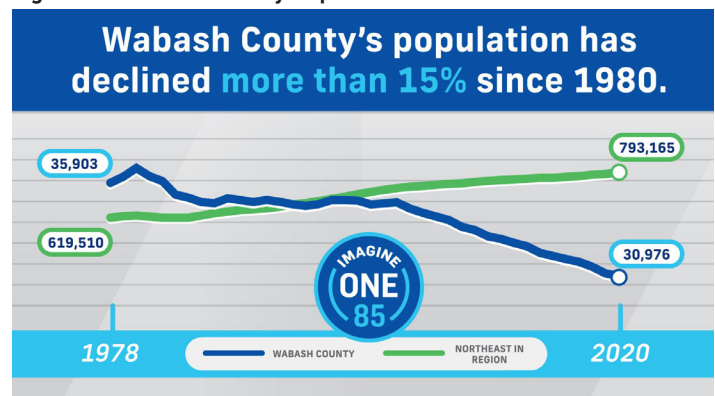
Source: *U.S. Census*

THE IMPACTS OF THE DECLINE GO WELL BEYOND PEOPLE...

Communities in decline around Indiana and the broader Midwest have experienced a wide range of effects as a result of this trend. Some of these are expected, direct impacts such as declining school enrollment, lower tax revenue, and increasing tax burden. Many are more subtle, like a softening retail and housing market, smaller workforce, and others. Now, four decades into the trend, Wabash County can document the changes.

A loss of 5,000 additional people would mean 1,800 fewer families and their children in the county's three school districts, 2,000 fewer needed housing units, and a greater challenge in funding necessary repairs and maintenance to our roads and communities.

TREND DOESN'T HAVE TO BE OUR DESTINY...

The communities of Wabash County hold significant potential. Recent projects and initiatives have demonstrated the impact collaboration can have on broad community goals. These efforts--especially when built around the community's unique assets--raise the collective voice of the county and unlock new opportunities previously unthought of. This plan is an example of this collaboration, and its vision and recommendations represent the interests of hundreds of contributing community members.
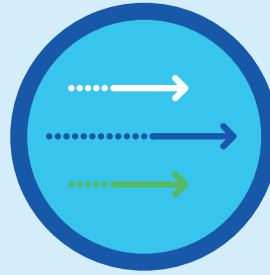
Vision → Goal → Actions

WELCOME TO IMAGINE ONE 85

WABASH COUNTY'S COLLECTIVE RESPONSE TO A LONGSTANDING CHALLENGE...

In June 2019, a coalition of leaders from all sectors joined in an unprecedented countywide collaboration called Imagine One 85. Together, with input from residents, the group aimed to develop a bold, strategic comprehensive plan for the growth and prosperity of the entire county, and the incorporated communities of La Fontaine, Lagro, North Manchester, Roann, and Wabash.

These leaders studied other communities from around the state and the country to determine that a bold, comprehensive plan for the future is the best possible way to arrest—and reverse—the county's population decline. All community members who care about the future of these communities were invited to contribute their time, talent, and ideas.

Together, residents and leaders sought to create a strategic plan that addresses the population challenge—and articulates a long-range vision for quality of life, growth, land use, education, environment, economic development, transportation, recreation and public health—in a sustainable, results-oriented and measurable way.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

What is a comprehensive plan?

A comprehensive plan is a broad, multi-topic policy statement that includes goals, strategies, and action recommendations to guide the long-term development of the county. Recommendations support the long-term, community-derived vision statement that imagines where the county--as a collection of communities--should be in 20 years.

In the state of Indiana, a comprehensive plan serves as a policy backstop for key land regulatory tools like the zoning code. It also serves as a guide for decision makers and a playbook for community investment decisions. In the state, plans should include

a statement of objectives for future development, a statement of policy for future land use, and a statement of policy for other public property, such as roads, facilities, lands, and so on. Imagine One 85 meets and exceeds these requirements for establishing a comprehensive plan.

A successful plan takes into account the interconnected nature of these topics and establishes a coherent strategy for future growth and investment. This can mean including non-government partner organizations into the discussion and the final implementation. The leadership coalition for Imagine One 85 was organized to reflect all of these diverse interests.

This plan is a tool to address community needs, prepare for change and protect what the communities treasure. It serves as both a business plan and guidebook for decision-makers. The Comprehensive Plan also serves as a marketing tool for the county to clearly convey the community's values and priorities.

To achieve the vision and goals, the plan includes specific actions (policies, projects and programs) and identifies timing and responsibilities for undertaking those actions. It also contains map-based recommendations that indicate the county's intent for where and how it will use land resources and design infrastructure improvements.

Broadening the coalition...

Plans like Imagine One 85 are typically undertaken by individual jurisdictions alone. It is less common for communities to work together and build a cohesive, countywide strategy. This approach has its advantages. As a network of unique communities, Wabash County has the opportunity to pool its assets and leadership. With a shared vision, each community can play its role in advancing the plan toward the larger goal. More than 1,000 people contributed their ideas and energy to this plan during the process. These ideas were gathered, organized, and considered by the process Steering Committee. This group was intentionally convened to represent the diverse interests of the people, communities, and institutions that are present in Wabash County.

What will the plan mean for the citizens of Wabash County?

The Imagine One 85 plan is a cohesive strategy to improve outcomes for the communities of the county and the community members integral to their growth and prosperity. The plan's recommendations can have a positive effect for residents, business owners, students, or anyone who cares about the future

of the county. This plan--if realized--can have a positive impact on the qualities of life, place, and opportunity for all residents.

Why do we need a plan?

This population decline over the span of decades is partly the result of the absence of a countywide comprehensive strategic vision for growth. Communities, like businesses, cannot reach their potential without a deliberate and thoughtful blueprint. Wabash County's potential has a much better chance to be realized if leaders use an intentional and thoughtful planning process. Imagine One 85 represents a rare process of bringing together all the communities of Wabash County to take charge of their future. This will require a commitment to implementation that leverages our assets and acknowledges into the very real challenges of population decline, economic development, poverty, housing, education, workforce development, and others.

While planning is good stewardship in general, it must also address a community's most urgent challenges. In the case of the communities of Wabash County, that challenge is population decline. The county is home to many great assets such as the Honeywell Foundation and Manchester University along with unique communities from both large and small. It's up to community leaders and residents to take the initiative to develop a plan—and implement it.

But it's not just about the population challenge. Wabash County has great potential. Over the previous decade, communities in the county have beautified the public realm, attracted new businesses, opened up new connections to the rivers, or simply invested in themselves. By joining together for an unprecedented effort, all the distinct communities can define a unified vision that strengthens Wabash County. These are the right, first steps and this plan seeks to build on this momentum.

Who built the plan? Who will implement the plan?

The plan was built by the community through an open process of discovery, analysis, and prioritization. This helped to reveal a series of recommendations or actions. These can be found in the Action Agenda. These recommendations are not limited to the purview of local government. In fact, to successfully implement the plan, the community will need to continue to build on the Imagine One 85 spirit of collaboration and forge new partnerships. These cross-sector relationships will help elevate the cause and drive the movement forward.

THE PLANNING AREA

A NETWORK OF PLACES AND COMMUNITIES...

Imagine One 85's focus is Wabash County and is inclusive of the City of Wabash and the Towns of North Manchester, Roann, Lagro, and La Fontaine, along with all unincorporated land. The county is approximately 412 square miles in size, making it the 32nd largest county in Indiana out of all 92 counties and the third largest land size in the Northeast Indiana region, behind Allen and Kosciusko Counties.

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL APPROACH TO PLANNING / COLLABORATION...

Countywide planning is quite rare and requires trust and close collaboration. The communities around the county have many shared interests and have the potential to achieve more substantial outcomes by working together. However, each of these communities is unique and has distinct opportunities and challenges. This effort is intended to engage and impact every community in Wabash County, whether part of an incorporated community or a rural main street. As implementation moves toward achieving growth, everyone who is passionate about the communities of Wabash County is encouraged to consider their role in helping our communities grow and thrive.

Map 1.2: Planning Area

The adjacent map illustrates the planning area for Imagine One 85 including the county, cities, and towns.

- Wabash County
- Townships
- Streets
- Railroad
- Trails
- Rivers, Streams, and Water Bodies
- Incorporated Communities
- Parks and Open Space
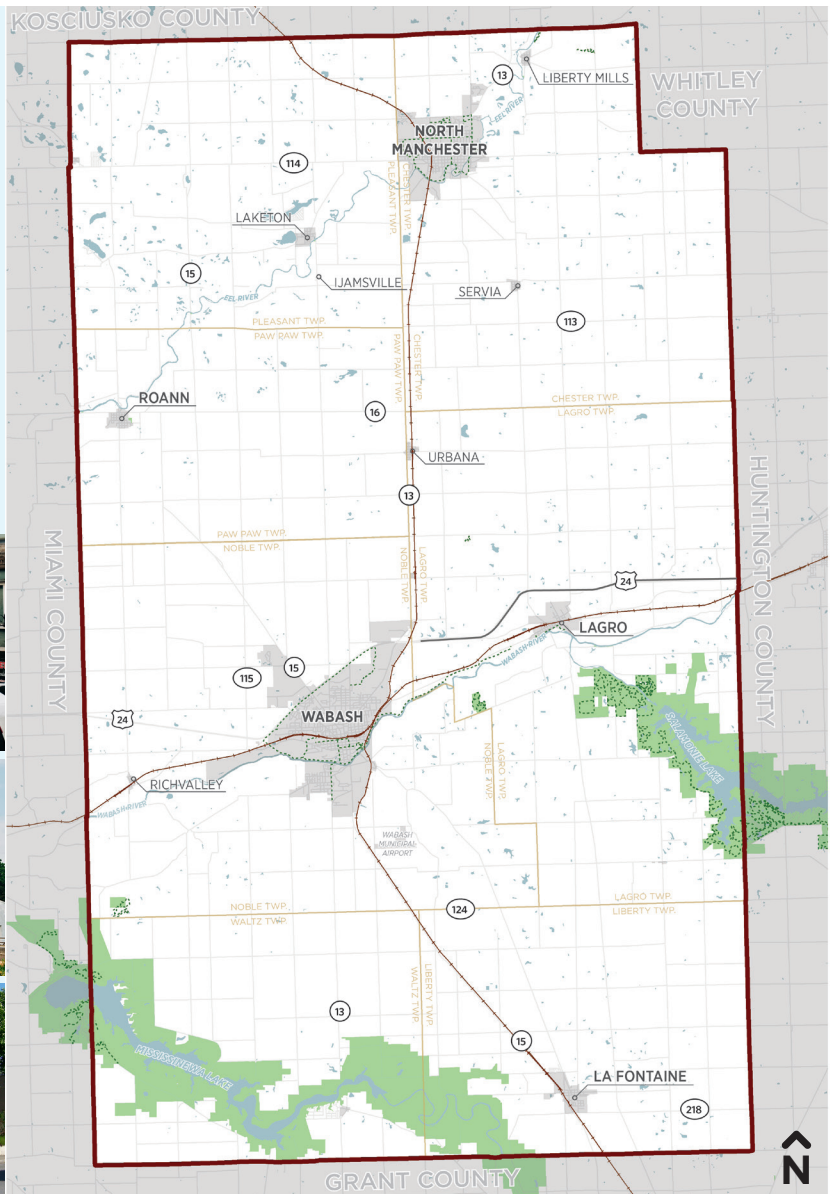
COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Imagine One 85 is an open, inclusive, and transparent process. Anyone who cares about the future of the communities of the county was invited to contribute ideas and is encouraged to take responsibility for growth. In the year-long process of outreach and engagement, hundreds of people participated in the conversation about how the County should grow. Straddling the COVID-19 pandemic and related health and economic shutdowns, the Steering Committee needed to be creative in its approach to engagement. The group had two guiding priorities: safety and openness.

ENGAGEMENT PHASE

PLANNING PHASE

Preparation & Planning

Kick-off the plan process

Develop a strategy for promoting the plan and motivating participation

Create a plan for community engagement

Technical Analysis

Research and understand key topics impacting Wabash County

Focus on the Future!

Begin the conversation through a series of community workshops and imagine a bold future

Plan Development

Develop recommendations and strategies for the plan

Growth Summit

Affirm vision & goals and begin building actions to achieve vision

Final Plan

Review and refine the draft plan

Develop implementation plan and structure

Finalize the plan and launch implementation

CONVENING A REPRESENTATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE...

The Imagine Steering Committee led the process, making significant decisions regarding substance, outreach, and the plan's general direction. The Committee also acted as spokespersons for the planning effort, officially represented citizens in the planning process, and provided direction and feedback to the planning team at crucial steps. The 19-member group consisted of elected officials representing the county, the city, and incorporated towns as well as Grow Wabash County and Community Foundation of Wabash County. This group was selected to represent the diverse interests of the county and its communities.

PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

Several important studies and processes pre-dated the Imagine effort. These helped to inform and focus the plan process with a strong foundation of community preferences and key data. The Wabash County Population Analysis and Recommendations, completed in 2019, laid the groundwork by establishing the focus of the plan: population decline. This work also included a series of recommendations, some of which are lifted up later in the plan.

In addition to previous technical research and analysis, community leaders hosted a series of discussions through the Lilly Endowment Gift VII and On the Table initiative in the years leading up to the Imagine process. More than 450 people contributed to these conversations and this input was integrated into the initial round of Imagine community engagement.

Existing Plans and Studies

▶ Wabash County Population Report (2020)

▶ Wabash County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2019)

▶ North Manchester Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2016-2020)

▶ North Manchester Housing Analysis (2017)

▶ Studies for Advancement Public Report (2017)

▶ City of Wabash Housing Potential Analysis (2017)

▶ Wabash County Tourism Economic Impact Report (2016)

▶ North Manchester Comprehensive Plan (2015)

▶ City of Wabash Strategic Investment Plan (2014-2018)

▶ City of Wabash Comprehensive Economic Development Plan (2013)

▶ Wabash County Comprehensive Plan (2012)

▶ City of Wabash Parks Department Master Plan (2010-2014)

STARTING THE CONVERSATION: FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

The Focus on the Future community conversations introduced the Imagine One 85 process to the community. These initial in-person and virtual workshops were hosted between November 2020 and March 2021. More than 250 people participated in a discussion and, together, generated thousands of comments and ideas. Taking on the challenges posed by population decline, participants structured their comments as a response or solution. These ideas were wide-ranging, but clustered around several topics, including housing, jobs, education, and amenities.

A series of stakeholder groups were also convened alongside the Focus on the Future workshops. These groups met by invitation to discuss specific, essential topics for Wabash County's future and resulted in a deeper understanding of the community assets and challenges. Topics covered during these events included:

- Manchester University
- Housing
- Diversity
- Natural Resources
- Education
- Employers

Community engagement was designed to generate open comments on paths to improving the county's qualities of place, life, and opportunities. Respondents were primed on key conditions and trends before each workshop. This included the principal focus of the Imagine One 85 planning effort, the county's decreasing population. The input served as a foundation for major elements of the plan including the community's vision, goals, and general direction. These elements were tested back with the public during the second round of engagement.

Each meeting during the Focus on the Future round centered around a consistent set of prompts and discussions. Whenever possible, participants were also provided a background presentation from a member of the planning team. This priming information was intended to help place the process, share key findings related to conditions and trends, and lay out additional steps to come in the planning process.

Participants learned about conditions and trends while sharing their thoughts for the future of the county and its communities.

Major Themes from the Focus on the Future Workshops:

▶ **Enrich our education system.** Many respondents noted that the strength of local schools is a major factor when young families are deciding where to live.

▶ **Create more and higher paying jobs.** Quality and well-paying jobs may encourage residents to stay in the County or entice non-residents to move in.

▶ **Increase housing options and affordability.** Housing availability and affordability are essential to attracting new residents to a community.

▶ **Expand and improve high-speed internet access.** Internet access is essential for families, workers, and students. This was made clear by the pandemic and the related economic shutdowns.

▶ **Create great places.** Wabash County is home to beautiful natural features and historic charm. Some residents, however, feel that their communities are lacking in the types of amenities that draw in outsiders and retain locals.

▶ **Embrace diversity.** For Wabash to grow in population, each resident or prospective resident should feel welcomed and included, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, or cultural background.

▶ **Strengthen our health and social support services.** People want to live where they have access to the best health and social service opportunities.

▶ **Broadcast our image.** "Wabash County already has a lot to offer!" Some residents suggest that people would move to the County if they only knew how great it already is.

▶ **Improve coordination and collaboration across our organizations and institutions.** Working together is a key to promoting growth in the county.

▶ **Protect our natural features and develop outstanding new amenities.** While Wabash County is already rich in natural amenities, it will be imperative to proactively preserve and improve upon the existing assets.

▶ **Attract and retain young, talented individuals.** Achieving sustained population growth will depend on bringing in new individuals from a younger demographic and retaining those who are already in the county.

▶ **Continue to grow a skilled workforce.** A limiting factor in scaling up a community is the availability and skillset of the workforce.

The Imagine One 85 Growth Summit
represented a major milestone in the process.

Participants shared their MIGHTY ideas for the future
of the county.

IDENTIFYING AND WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS…

The planning team hosted a series of stakeholder group and individual interviews throughout the engagement round. These interviews were not agenda driven like the community conversations but rather, facilitated by the planning team based on the organizing topic. A summary of these interviews is included in the appendix. Groups included social service providers, leadership from small and large businesses, elected or appointed officials, and others. See the full list of groups engaged to the right.

THE IMAGINE ONE 85 GROWTH SUMMIT

The Imagine One 85 Growth Summit was hosted on July 14, 2021 on the outdoor plaza at the Honeywell Center in downtown Wabash. This event was the punctuating community engagement activity for the process. Just over 200 people attended that evening with several dozen adding their comments later online.

During the program, speakers from around the community shared their experiences with living, working, and raising a family

in Wabash County. The planning team then presented key information gathered through the process on demographics, economics, and other topics. Attendees spent the balance of the time sharing their MIGHTY ideas for the future of the county in small groups. Each group first compiled a full list of ideas from each member and then discussed and selected those ideas with the greatest potential to increase population in the county over the 25-year planning horizon. These MIGHTY ideas were collected and posted for all attendees to read.

More than 400 ideas were shared during the Growth Summit with 42 identified as MIGHTY Ideas by group members. The ideas spanned a wide range of topics including: housing, economic development, growth and development, parks, amenities, education, and more. Many of the ideas shared during the summit are represented in this plan and several are indicated as priorities.

Stakeholder Groups engaged throughout the process included:

- ► Natural Resource Advocates
- ► Young Professionals of Wabash County
- ► Middle School Students
- ► Commuters
- ► Honeywell Foundation
- ► Human Resource Professionals
- ► Major Employers
- ► Non-Profit Leaders and Social Service Providers
- ► Manchester University Town and Gown Committee
- ► Wabash Kiwanis Club
- ► Wabash Rotary Club
- ► North Manchester Rotary Club
- ► Manchester University
- ► Plan Commission of the City of Wabash
- ► Plan Commission of North Manchester
- ► Wabash County Advisory Planning Commission
- ► Wabash County Board of Zoning Appeals

NOW IS THE BEST TIME TO PLAN OUR FUTURE

For more than four decades, the population in Wabash County has slowly decreased. Why is this the right time to act? What is it about this moment that's different or special? Simply put, there is a spirit of collaboration between the communities of Wabash County and there is resolve to act in unison. And while each community will have a unique role to play in the solution, this diversity is a strength. The task is big, but as this section points out, it is also manageable.

THE CHALLENGE WE FACE: LOSING 130 EACH YEAR...

From the high point in 1980, Wabash County has lost over 5,300 residents. That's around 130 people per year, or the average graduating class from any of the county's three school corporations. To regain the high water mark, and indeed grow well beyond it, the communities of the county will need to pull back or attract 5,300 residents. While this seems like a tall order, the goal is realistic.

It is important to think about community decline and growth in terms of households. Very few Americans, and even fewer residents of Indiana, live alone. Rather, people live in household or family units. When a decision is made to move, that decision is inherited by the full unit. Therefore, with growth as the goal, it's not just about attracting individuals, but rather families.

It's not feasible or desirable to expect those 5,300 people to return overnight or even in a single decade. Gradual, positive change is the goal. This incremental change allows the communities to recapture the energy that has slowly drained out and responsibly re-invest in projects that continue to enhance the county's qualities of life, place, and opportunity.

IMAGINE "PLUS" 85!

Adding 85 families each year would put Wabash County back on pace to reach and grow past its population high point in 1980 in 25 years. Doing so has the potential to add millions in tax revenue, boost school enrollment, and add to the richness, diversity, and sustainability of the communities.

The contents of this plan are squarely focused on the plus 85 challenge. There is no single action the communities can take to reverse the population trend. Rather, the Imagine One 85 process has challenged each of these communities to consider their role in the solution. Through a process of discovery and analysis, priorities have emerged. Issues like housing, education, and jobs are critical, but they're only parts of the solution. This plan presents a menu of potential actions that squarely address these priorities and builds off the hard-won momentum of other recent, community initiatives.

+85

+85 population turnaround

CHAPTER 2
KEY TAKEAWAYS TO KNOW...

Strong community planning starts with a holistic review of conditions and trends. To better understand the communities, the planning team gathered data, reviewed existing reports, and developed new sets of analyses. The Technical Analysis Memos (People, Prosperity, Place, and Foundation), available in Appendix C: Analysis, present these findings across the major plan topics. After combining this analysis with the priorities from the community and stakeholders, twelve takeaways emerged. These are presented below as principal challenges and opportunities for Wabash County.

1. Population is still declining...

If trends continue, by 2050 Wabash County could have 5,000 fewer residents than it does today. This slow but steady decline began in 1980 when the county reached its high point for in-migration and population. That year, close to 400 people moved in and the population peaked at 36,500 residents. **Since then, between 50 and 100 households have left each year.** Population isn't the only measure for community vitality, but the consistent loss has had an impact and will continue to compound.

The 2020 US Census confirmed this decline had indeed continued through the last decade. Over that period the county shrank by five percent, now just above 30,000 residents. Communities in decline around Indiana and the broader Midwest have experienced a wide range of effects

as a result of the trend. Some of these are expected, direct impacts like declining school enrollment, and lower tax revenue or increasing tax burden. Many are more subtle, like a softening retail and housing market, smaller workforce, and others. Now four decades into the trend, Wabash

County can document the changes. A loss of 5,000 additional people would mean 1,800 fewer families and their children in the county's three school districts, 2,000 fewer needed housing units, along with a greater reliance on community citizens to help cover the costs for needed repairs and community upkeep.

Figure 2.1: County Population Projection
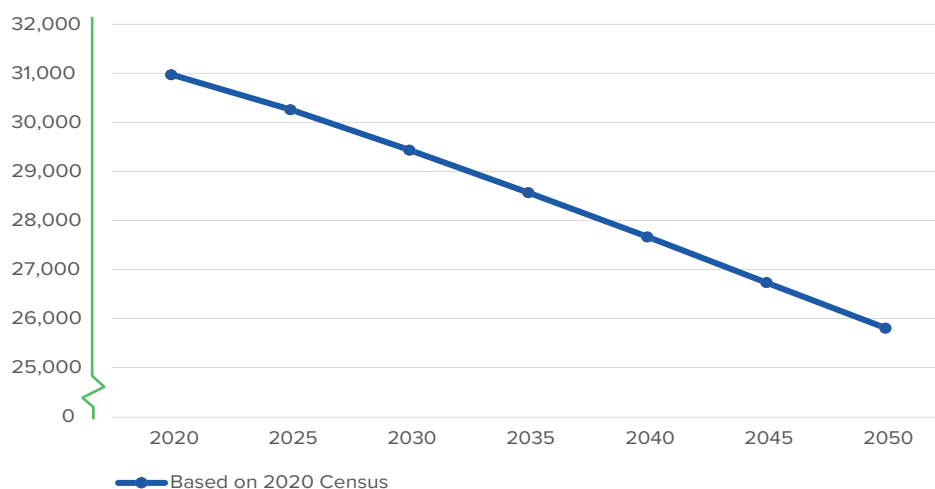
Source: *U.S. Census*

2. Demographics are changing quickly...

Just like the overall population, the demographic make-up of the communities of the county are also changing. Already an older community, the median age in the county (42) is now four years older than the state. This is reflected in the labor force. In 2020, 26% of the County's jobs were held by people over the age of 55. In critical industries such as manufacturing and agriculture, which account for over 3,000 jobs combined and more than a third of the county's employment, **more than 30 percent of workers are over the age of 55.** This pending wave of retirement has the potential to add to labor scarcity, especially in two of the county's most productive sectors.

Family and household sizes are decreasing as well. At 2.7, the average family size is less than the state (3.1) and only one in five households is home to a child under 18, compared to 23% state average.

With respect to race and ethnicity, the communities remain relatively homogeneous with very small growth in the county's black and Asian communities between 2000 and 2020. Residents identifying as Hispanic or Latinx, however, doubled over this period from a representation of 1.5 to 3 percent. Additionally, this growth may be under-counted as has been the case in similar communities around the Midwest.

First Friday events in Downtown Wabash offer opportunities for the community to gather together.

3. Workforce is shrinking faster than the population...

Employers in Wabash County are casting a wider net to fill their needs and are considering relocation in order to scale their operations. Regionally, there is a similar picture. The 11-county northeast Indiana labor force has decreased by 10,000 people or two percent and this trend has greatly increased the competition for workers, especially skilled labor, around Wabash.

There is a strong, demonstrated link between economic output and the vitality of the local labor force. Population decline further stresses the system, as young people--especially those with a college degree--migrate to other communities. Considering the majority of new jobs in the county (59%) come from business start-ups, this out-migration is troubling. Additionally, while the unemployment rate quickly recovered from a COVID-19 high of 16.5% back down to 4.5%, the labor force participation total (those actively employed

Attracting and retaining a skilled workforce is a critical need for the county and its local businesses.

or looking for work) has fallen at a faster rate than the population: from a high point of 18,400 in 2000 to just over 15,000 in 2020. **This nearly 20% decrease is six times the regional decline and twice the population decline.**

"We're on the cusp of scaling our operation right here in Wabash County, but the limitations or the risks we see have to do with people. We need skilled operators and we're looking farther and farther away and offering more and more to bring workers to Wabash County ."

- Local Business Owner

Figure 2.2: Age Distribution in the Workforce

Legend: 14-18 | 19-21 | 22-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+

Category	55-64	65+
Total	18%	7%
Manufacturing	25%	6%
Healthcare Social Svcs	17%	7%
Retail Trade	18%	11%
Accom / Food Services	9%	5%
Construction	15%	6%
Agriculture	17%	15%
Education Services	13%	5%
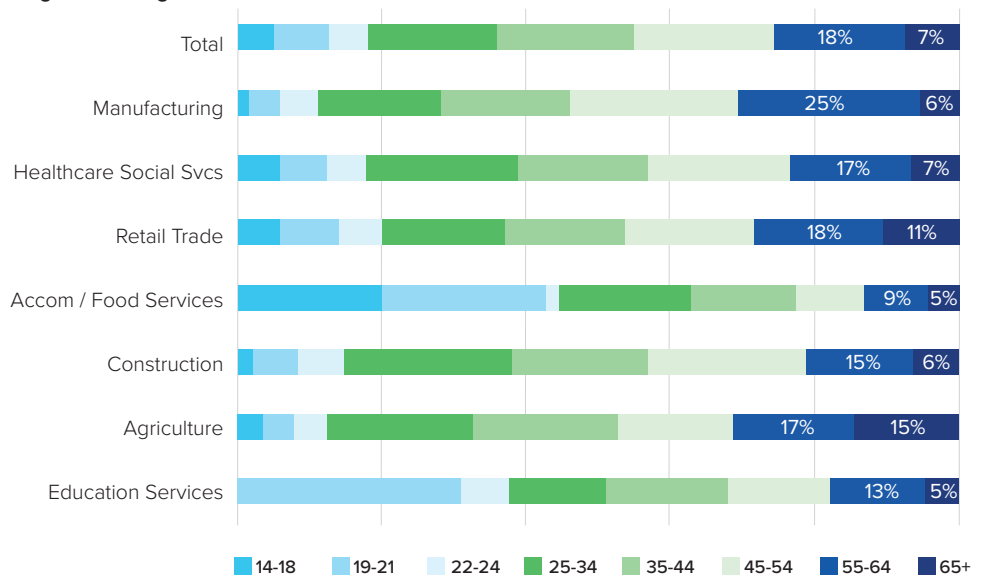
Source: *Ninigret Partner analysis of LEHD Data*

Figure 2.3: Housing Value vs. Number of Permits
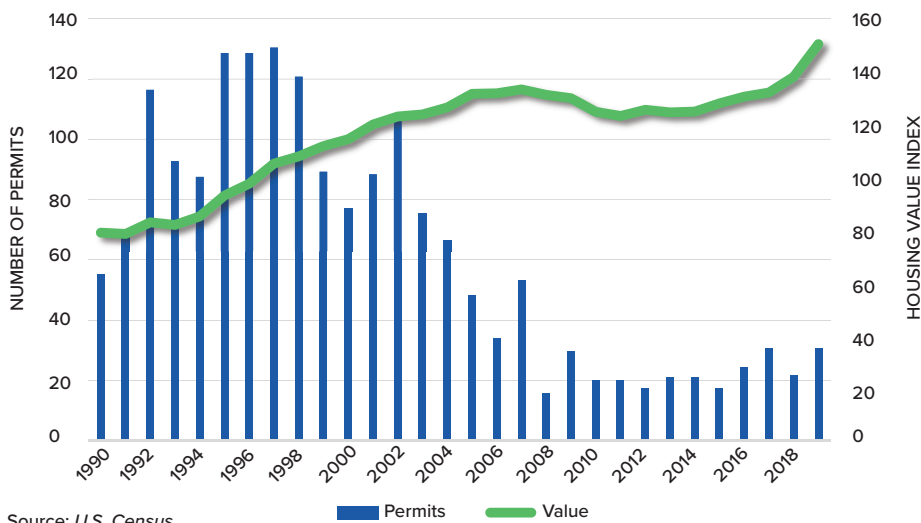
Source: *U.S. Census*

4. The housing market is stalled...

The sales price for a home in Wabash County is up 21% or $25,000 from 2020 to 2021. Competition among buyers is fierce, and with limited inventory and very little new builds, the time-on-market is among the lowest in the state. **Over the last ten years, the county has outpaced the state in median sales price growth (85% increase in the county compared to 70% in Indiana) while losing more than 1,000 residents.**

Homebuilding--outside of a handful of small projects--has not occurred in the county at scale in more than three decades. And last, the cost of remodel projects for older homes drastically increased through the pandemic with labor prices and materials prices at all time highs. These factors make for a highly competitive real estate market, even in a community with a declining population.

The number of building permits issued each year is down by over 100 permits since the peak in 1997, and more permits were issued that year than from 2015 to 2019 combined. In the last two decades, very few new housing subdivisions have been developed. There is significant pressure on the county's current supply.

The conditions in the rental market are similar. While the county is dominated by owner-occupied housing (74% of all households), the competition in the for-sale market has driven up rent demand to levels consistent with metropolitan counties like Allen to the east. At the time of this release there were 10 two-bedroom rental units available across the county; there were more than 50 available in Kosciusko County to the north.

"It's not as if people don't want to live in Wabash. I'm working with clients from across the state and as far away as the west coast, who are looking for a home in our county. The issue is with inventory. We simply don't have the options and we're not building them... at least we're not building them fast enough."

- Bob Lundquist, Lundquist Appraisals & Real Estate, Inc.

5. Many roads and bridges are in poor condition...

Asset Management data, collected by communities, from 2020 indicates many roads have poor pavement conditions and a substantial share of local bridges are structurally deficient and need or major repairs. These issues amount to a substantial maintenance backlog, particularly for Wabash County. Of the County's 716 miles of roads, approximately 500 miles or about 70 percent have poor pavement conditions. Further, 12 of the County's 58 bridges are "structurally deficient" and may need to be rehabilitated or reconstructed. **This amounts to an estimated maintenance backlog of at least $146 million for roadways and $34 million for bridges.**

Among the County's communities, La Fontaine's streets are also predominantly in poor condition, with a backlog estimated to be at least $1.2 million. Streets in Wabash and North Manchester are generally in much better condition. In both communities, at least 60 percent of streets, measured by centerline miles, are in fair condition but maintenance backlogs for each community are still substantial with an estimated $4.5 million for Wabash and $1.2 million for North Manchester.

Beyond the growing financial cost, poor pavement and bridge conditions can slow traffic and emergency response, contribute to vehicle damage, and difficulty moving freight and agricultural products to market and would send a negative message to residents and prospects about the state of Wabash County.

Roadways, like the one shown above, are common throughout the communities of Wabash County.

6. There has been very little physical growth and development...

Very little development has occurred in Wabash County over the past decades. This limited growth has largely been led by market conditions for the County. Between 2000 and 2019, fewer than 600 acres transitioned from agricultural or undeveloped to developed. **That's roughly 30 acres per year or the equivalent of eight blocks in downtown Wabash.** Compared to other counties in the region, this growth is small and represents just two-tenths of one percent of the total land mass of the county.

One of the primary assets in the county is the diverse collection of places from urban to rural to natural. But the rural spaces dominate. At just over 220,000 acres (345 square miles), agricultural land encompasses 82 percent of the county's 412 square miles. At the current growth trend, it would take until 2094 to develop just one percent of the county's total agricultural land. In a recent series of Imagine One 85 focus groups, local leadership stressed the importance of finding places for positive community growth.

"Farming and agriculture are essential parts of our identity as a community. We can maintain that legacy, and identify key areas for additive growth. It's not a zero sum game. It's about balance, planning, and a realistic understanding of the inhibitors to population growth."

- Local Leader

7. Room for growth without affecting the character of the communities...

Community zoning maps support modest development, especially related to housing and employment districts. Of the 23,000 acres zoned for residential, only 60 percent is currently built. If the remaining 9,500 acres were developed - even at the low density of one unit per acre - the communities could create more than 6,650 housing units or homes for 15,000 new residents. Industrial growth capacity is even greater with only 29 percent of the zoned footprint currently developed.

Almost every land use (commercial, residential, industrial, etc.) has at least 40% undeveloped land capacity available for future growth based on the current zoning. Specifically, industrial development capacity is substantial. An estimated 71% or just over 4,080 acres of industrial zoned land is available for future development.

Figure 2.4: Land Capacity by Zoning

60% Developed
40% Available Residential

29% Developed
71% Available Industrial

51% Developed
49% Available Commercial
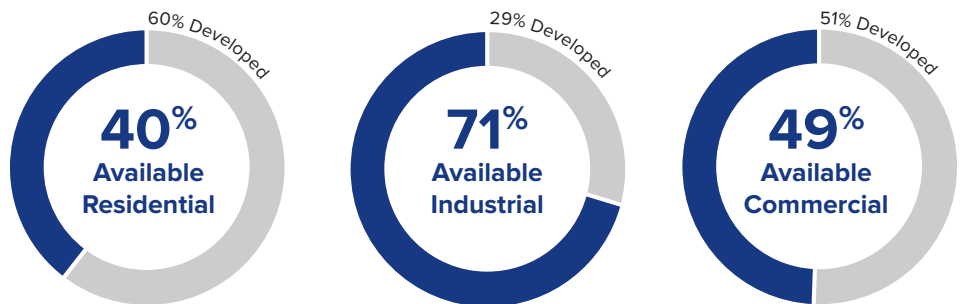
8. Strong community partners that provide unique county opportunities...

Many local organizations serve as partners for addressing population decline as well as important assets unique to a rural location like Wabash County. The Honeywell Foundation impacts hundreds of thousands of guests each year by inspiring all ages through the arts. Driven by their mission statement, they remain "dedicated to the enhancement of artistic, social, cultural, and recreational opportunities for all". These programs, events, and services connect the communities with rich opportunities focused on enhancing quality of life and attracts visitors from the region and State to experience the unique qualities of the County.

As a major institution, Manchester University and its 1,000 on campus students contribute significant impact on the county. Through community service programs, the university offers a variety of engagement opportunities including tutoring for elementary students and supporting Habitat for Humanity. The university further contributes through post-secondary education, enhancing the career readiness of students and professional connections to local industries. **These unique assets are determining factors for achieving many recommendations outlined in Imagine One 85.**

Assets like the Honeywell Foundation and Manchester University are points of pride for the county.

9. Demonstrated economic growth and private business investment…

Despite the decline in population, the county's economy has maintained consistent, if modest, growth. Between 2015 and 2020 the county's gross domestic product grew by three percent to $1.2 billion. Wages have also continued to grow over the last decade. **Total wages adjusted for inflation are up by approximately $46 million.** Total payroll wages in the county totaled $464 million in 2019.

Business establishments are used as a proxy for businesses. Establishments are locations that are recorded for purposes of unemployment insurance and payroll taxes. Establishment counts provides a method to track business formation and losses over time. Based on this data Wabash County has fewer establishments than after the Great Recession. The large gain in 2013 reflects a spike in retail and professional services businesses. For context, the peak number of establishments for Wabash County in the 21st century was 2003 with 771 establishments.

Figure 2.5: Largest Private Employment Sectors
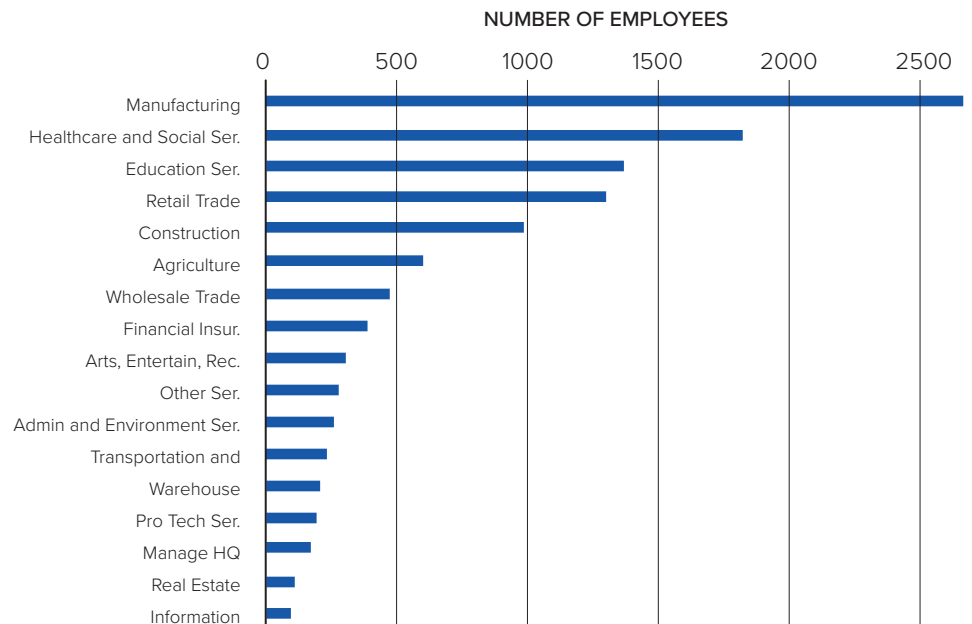
Source: *Bureau of Labor Statistics*

Figure 2.6: Total Establishments in Wabash County

Source: *St. Louis Fed FRED Statistics Series*

10. New revenue streams available for infrastructure improvements…

While income tax supports a substantial portion of the county's resources, there are several untapped revenue streams available to generate additional funding. The Food and Beverage Tax is applied to retail sales on food and beverages when something is purchased in the county. It has a maximum rate of one percent that is collected for use on countywide resources and improvements. More than 20 counties in the state, including Allen and LaGrange, have implemented a Food and Beverage Tax. **This tax could generate more than $450 thousand in annual revenue for Wabash County.** Total food and beverage production and export in Wabash County is an estimated $62 million. Exports are any sale of food and beverage products to a non-resident of Wabash County. Just over seven percent of total food and beverage sales in the County are exported to out-of-county residents.

Figure 2.7: Food and Beverage Production and Export
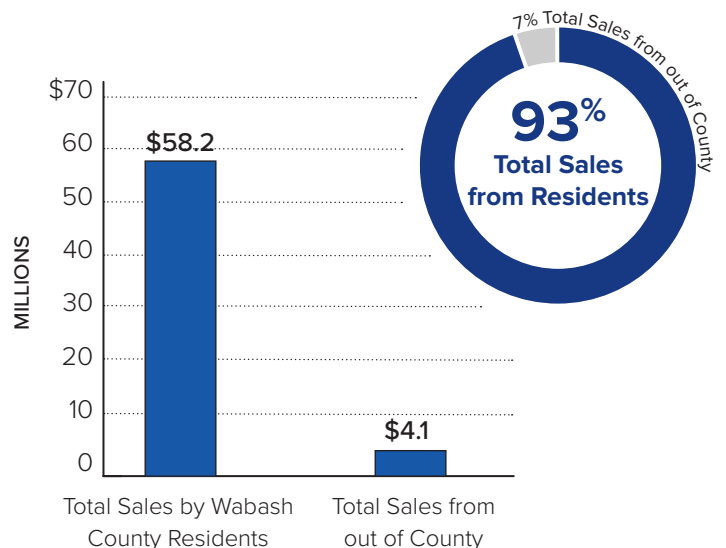
Source: *IMPLAN 2020 Data for model region including Wabash County*

Considering the percent of sales from exports, approximately $32 thousand in tax revenues would be contributed by out-of-county purchasers, leaving $418 thousand in food and beverage tax revenue drawn from sales to residents within Wabash County. With the large number of visitors coming into the County to enjoy Honeywell Foundation performances, this is a unique opportunity to benefit from expenditures made by visitors from outside the community. If implemented, this fund could support large scale projects that assist with community growth.

Wheel Tax is applied to motor vehicles including both standard cars and commercial trucks. It applies a flat surcharge to motor vehicles at a maximum rate of $25 for autos and $40 for trucks, which can be increased if a transportation management plan is established. This tax can be applied at both the county and municipal levels providing substantial revenue for use on capital improvements and infrastructure maintenance. In Indiana, 55 counties have this tax structure in effect providing supplemental resources to income and property taxes. **The county and municipal wheel tax could generate up to $2.7 million in annual revenue.**

11. Unique connection to natural places...

The rivers, reservoirs, forests, and fields help to shape the identity of the communities of Wabash County. These blueways and greenspaces are important assets and have been well-leveraged by recent projects like park and trail expansions. The Eel and Wabash Rivers are special, unique in the way they connect the communities, each cutting from east to west. Lake Mississinewa and Lake Salamonie are two additional assets that further connect Wabash County to the benefits of water access. Land around these reservoirs is designated as state forests ensuring the protection of wildlife and the operation of the lakes for stormwater management and flood prevention. Aside from recreational uses, these areas are not available for private development due to their importance to flood control and benefit as a regional amenity. **These areas include approximately 15,050 acres of land, or five percent of the county's total land area.**

The county's natural features provide peaceful amenities for both residents and visitors.

12. Not starting from scratch...

When comparing the county to similar communities, it's clear, Wabash County has made progress. **Despite its challenges, the communities have made strong investments in themselves and bet on forthcoming returns.** Each of these efforts has value and can be leveraged from the vibrant main streets in each community to local institutions such as Manchester University and the Honeywell Foundation. The county exhibits a strong sense of place from the natural resources of the Wabash and Eel Rivers to historical assets including museums and covered bridges. It is the culmination of these local community amenities, attractions, and assets that makes it unique within the region. Using the momentum of previous efforts will ensure that a strong, vibrant future is realized through Imagine One 85 and the robust partnership the process has developed for addressing population decline.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Imagine One 85 conducted detailed analysis on 12 key topics essential to the County's future. This information is available in the appendix, organized into four technical analysis memos:

Prosperity
- Economic Development
- Fiscal Capacity
- Fiscal Resiliency
- Housing

People
- Public Health
- Placemaking
- Education

Place
- Land Use
- Agriculture
- Natural Resources / Parks and Rec.
- Historic and Archaeological Resources

Foundation
- Transportation
- Hazard Mitigation
- Public Facilities and Services

CHAPTER 3
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

This chapter outlines a conceptual development framework that reinforces the plan's actions and land use recommendations across the county and its communities. It is presented through a conceptual opportunities map that defines principles for growth, development, and conservation throughout Wabash County.

The principle statements describe the intent around "how" (general character) and "where" (conceptual location) development should occur in the communities of Wabash County. The statements reflect themes identified through the technical analysis and community insight shared from public engagement to either encourage appropriate growth (inward or outward) or maintain unique areas. These themes include development intent (quality, appearance, pattern, character, and organization), environmental quality, community assets, infrastructure systems, and connectivity and mobility options. The principles are supported by a diagram portraying high level concepts for future development and their general boundaries across the county.

MAIN STREETS REMAIN VIBRANT AND AUTHENTIC TO THE COMMUNITY.

▶ The City of Wabash and Town of North Manchester acknowledge ongoing efforts to protect, preserve, and enhance their main street.

▶ The Towns of Lagro, Roann, and La Fontaine embrace their individuality in attracting community investment.

▶ Each community leverages both local and regional investments to connect and revitalize main streets.

▶ New development reinforces the unique architectural and historic identity.

▶ Main streets continue to serve as the "heart" of community providing a variety of land uses, activities, and experiences.

▶ Communities support investments to ensure main streets remain relevant, active, and central to the place's identity.

NEIGHBORHOODS SUPPORT A STRONG DIVERSITY OF HOUSING OPTIONS AND LIFESTYLES.

▶ Established neighborhoods and their residents are respected and connected within the community.

▶ A variety of housing types are encouraged to meet community needs.

▶ Neighborhood investments reflect the unique characteristics of the area and community.

▶ Residents are engaged and involved in neighborhood and community-level planning efforts.

▶ New housing development is respectful of community character and provides for diverse lifestyles.

▶ Investments are led and informed by the community to support ongoing improvements.

COMMERCE CENTERS SERVE AS DESTINATIONS FOR RECREATION, ENTERTAINMENT, AND SERVICES.

▶ Areas allow for a mix of uses to support the needs of local residents and regional visitors.

▶ Permitted uses are responsive to demand and remain flexible to help the community advance its quality of place.

▶ Existing activity centers, infrastructure, and transportation capacity focus new development growth.

▶ Projects strive to benefit the community character and fiscal health.

▶ Efficient and safe connections are provided between neighborhoods, employment areas, and activity centers.

EMPLOYMENT DISTRICTS PROVIDE MODERN AMENITIES FOR EMERGING INDUSTRIES.

▶ Industrial, commercial, and office employers are valued and supported.

▶ Communities collaborate with employers to anticipate challenges and identify opportunities.

▶ Investments provide modern amenities to support current business operations and allow for industry scaling in the community.

▶ New development is focused on diversifying and expanding existing employment districts.

COMMUNITY CENTERS ARE INVIGORATED WITH FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT.

▶ Development is encouraged within community centers for the Towns of Roann, Lagro, and La Fontaine to reinforce main streets and established neighborhoods.

▶ Growth areas concentrate development to leverage past investments in infrastructure.

▶ Mixed-use is encouraged to enhance communities and provide new services for residents, workers, and visitors.

▶ Redevelopment, especially near main streets, supports the local economy and acknowledges the existing character.

CORRIDORS CONNECT AND ENABLE COMMUNITIES.

▶ Transportation corridors are monitored and evaluated for proactive improvements.

▶ Gateways, both internal and external, are representative of the distinct community character within the county.

▶ Truck or shipping routes are considered in project evaluation to limit potential impact on the community core.

▶ Public right-of-way balances efficiency with community aesthetics to serve as welcoming gateways.

▶ Multi-modal connections (bicycle and pedestrian) are integrated into corridors to provide accessible connectivity across the county.

OUTWARD GROWTH IS RESPECTFUL OF THE COUNTY'S RURAL CHARACTER AND HERITAGE.

▶ Development along the edge of communities represents a transition to rural areas through density, development pattern, and character.

▶ Distinct open space, unique natural features, and prime farmland are preserved.

▶ Infrastructure investments are deliberate and protect economic stability.

▶ Strengthening community cores is a priority over outward expansion.

OPEN SPACES ARE INTEGRATED AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL COMMUNITY DISTRICTS.

▶ Communities strive to connect all districts to park amenities and open spaces.

▶ Investments enhance the quality of life for residents and workers across the county.

▶ Park coverage is improved to provide a range of activities, amenities, and programs for the community.

▶ Maintenance of existing facilities and assets is prioritized over new park or open space growth.

▶ New development integrates appropriate connections and park facilities into the design.

TRAILS AND BLUEWAYS DELIVER CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN NATURAL FEATURES AND COMMUNITIES.

▶ Stream and river corridors are a focus for multi-use trail corridors, blueway projects, and greenways.

▶ Main streets are destinations for local and regional trail networks.

▶ Legacy rights-of-way from abandoned railroads, utility infrastructure, or others are leveraged for countywide connections.

▶ Major corridors design for safe integration of trail networks, crossings, and amenities.

AGRICULTURAL CHARACTER REMAINS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF THE COUNTY'S IDENTITY.

▶ Farmland is reserved for ongoing agricultural production, allowing for appropriate compatible development opportunities.

▶ Communities work closely with agricultural industries to support operations, understand challenges, and embrace opportunities.

▶ Agricultural innovation is encouraged for existing operations and emerging practices.

▶ Investments maintain a balance between community growth and agricultural identity.

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
COUNTYWIDE VIEW

Map 3.1: Development Framework

The adjacent map illustrates the conceptual locations across the planning area where the principles would apply.

- ● Main Streets remain vibrant and authentic to the community.

- ▨ Neighborhoods support a strong diversity of housing options and lifestyles.

- ▨ Commerce centers serve as destinations for recreation, entertainment, and services.

- ▨ Employment Districts provide modern amenities for emerging industries.

- ▨ Community Centers are invigorated with focused development investment.

- ▬ Corridors connect and enable communities

- ▭ Outward growth is respectful of the county's rural character and heritage.

- ▭ Open spaces are integrated and accessible to all community districts.

- ▥ Trails and blueways deliver connectivity between natural features and communities.

- ▭ Agricultural character remains an essential component of the county's identity.

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
COMMUNITY VIEWS

Map 3.2: Community Development Framework

The adjacent map illustrates the conceptual locations across the planning area where the principles would apply.

- **Main Streets** remain vibrant and authentic to the community.

- **Neighborhoods** support a strong diversity of housing options and lifestyles.

- **Commerce centers** serve as destinations for recreation, entertainment, and services.

- **Employment Districts** provide modern amenities for emerging industries.

- **Community Centers** are invigorated with focused development investment.

- **Corridors** connect and enable communities.

- **Outward growth** is respectful of the county's rural character and heritage.

- **Open spaces** are integrated and accessible to all community districts.

- **Trails and blueways** deliver connectivity between natural features and communities.

- **Agricultural character** remains an essential component of the county's identity.

ROANN

LAGRO
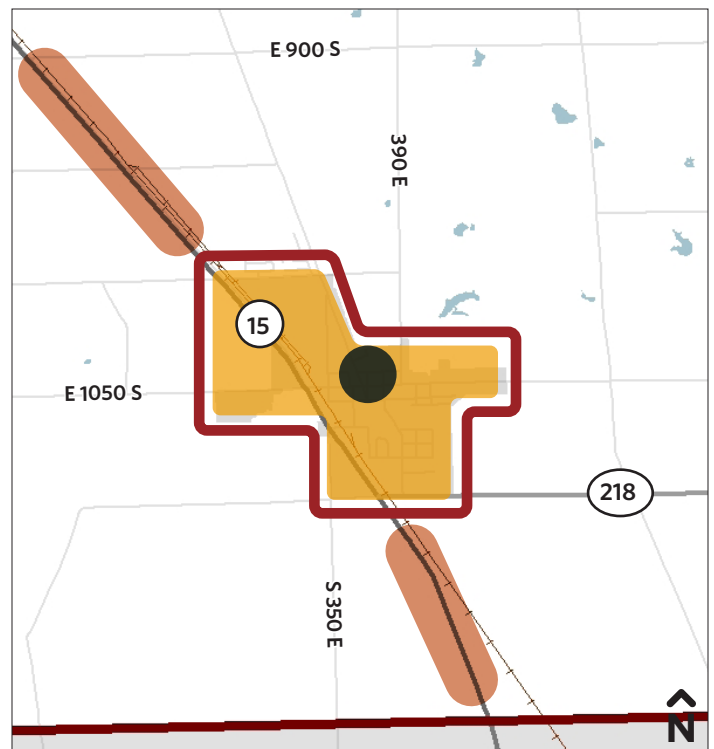
LA FONTAINE
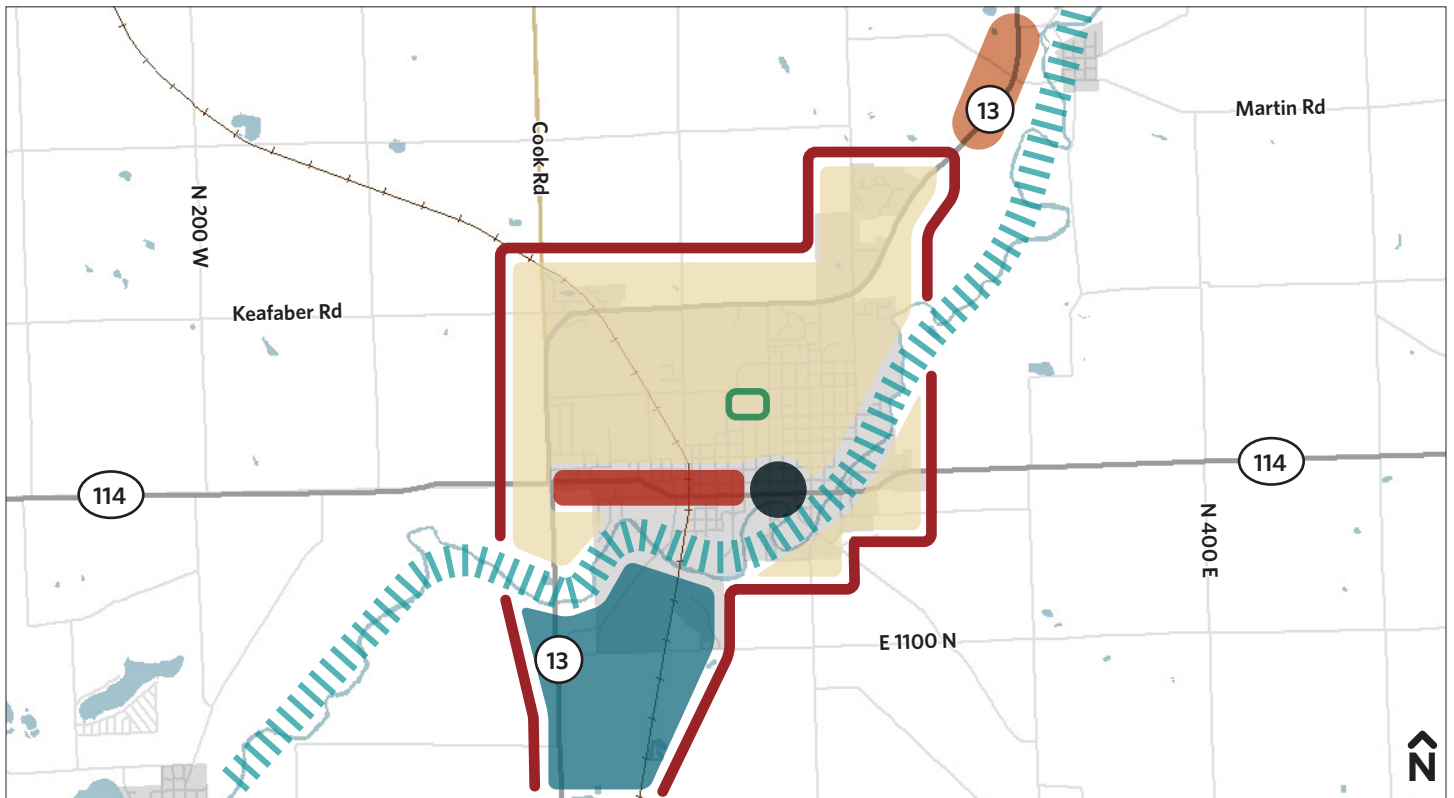
NORTH MANCHESTER

WABASH

"Our community has a beautiful focal point with the Roann Covered Bridge."

Focus on the Future Participant

FUTURE LAND USE AND CHARACTER

The Future Land Use and Character Map expresses the intent for how Wabash County should use its land resources in the future. This map considers the ideal character types, which are types of places that share attributes of urban and rural form and function, as well as the ideal land uses for an area. The future character types identified are based on an evaluation of existing types found throughout the county and its communities and are intended to define the characteristics of development that are desirable. These will be achieved through local policy decisions including infrastructure investment, zoning regulations, and neighborhood revitalization. The existing and future land use maps along with the character type descriptions are presented on the following pages.

BENEFITS OF A CHARACTER-BASED APPROACH

This plan takes a character-based approach to shaping growth across Wabash County. While the Future Land Use and Character types identify both primary and secondary uses, they also convey more detail about the built form that is desired or already exists in each area. There are a number of advantages to this enhanced approach, including:

- It strengthens previous planning work, building upon the recommendations for land use and development identified in previous comprehensive plans;
- It describes the overall intent for each area, which helps decision-makers to understand whether a particular development aligns with the purpose and focus of the area;
- It provides clearer expectations about the physical characteristics of development in an easy-to-understand format; and,

- It provides an indication of potential improvements (such as sidewalks, street lights, crosswalks, landscaping, etc.) that would be beneficial.

FUTURE LAND USE AND CHARACTER TYPES

Several character types guide the future development intent for the county. These define characteristics for a spectrum of land uses from agricultural to mixed use and include:

- ▶ Downtown Core
- ▶ Town Center
- ▶ Commercial Center
- ▶ Institutional Campus
- ▶ Industrial Center
- ▶ Traditional Neighborhood
- ▶ Mixed-Rural Residential
- ▶ Rural Living
- ▶ Open Space / Conservation

OUR DEFINITION FOR GROWTH IN THE COUNTY

Growth is often related to expanding or removing features for new development that may or may not align with the character of the community. For Imagine One 85, growth is about celebrating who we are as both a county and a collection of communities. It is the collective roadmap for growth and development over the next several decades and supports addressing population decline by investing in the people, businesses, and places that helped shape Wabash County. While new development is encouraged, it is dependent on supporting our unified vision and strengthening the character of each community. Imagine One 85 strives to ensure our natural assets, farmland, and neighborhoods are preserved, protected, and enhanced through appropriate development.

EXISTING LAND USE MAP
COUNTYWIDE VIEW

Map 4.1: Land Use Character Types

The adjacent map illustrates the existing land use character types across the county and its communities.

- Open Space / Conservation
- Rural Living
- Mixed Rural Residential
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Town Center
- Commercial Center
- Downtown Core
- Industrial Center
- Institutional Campus
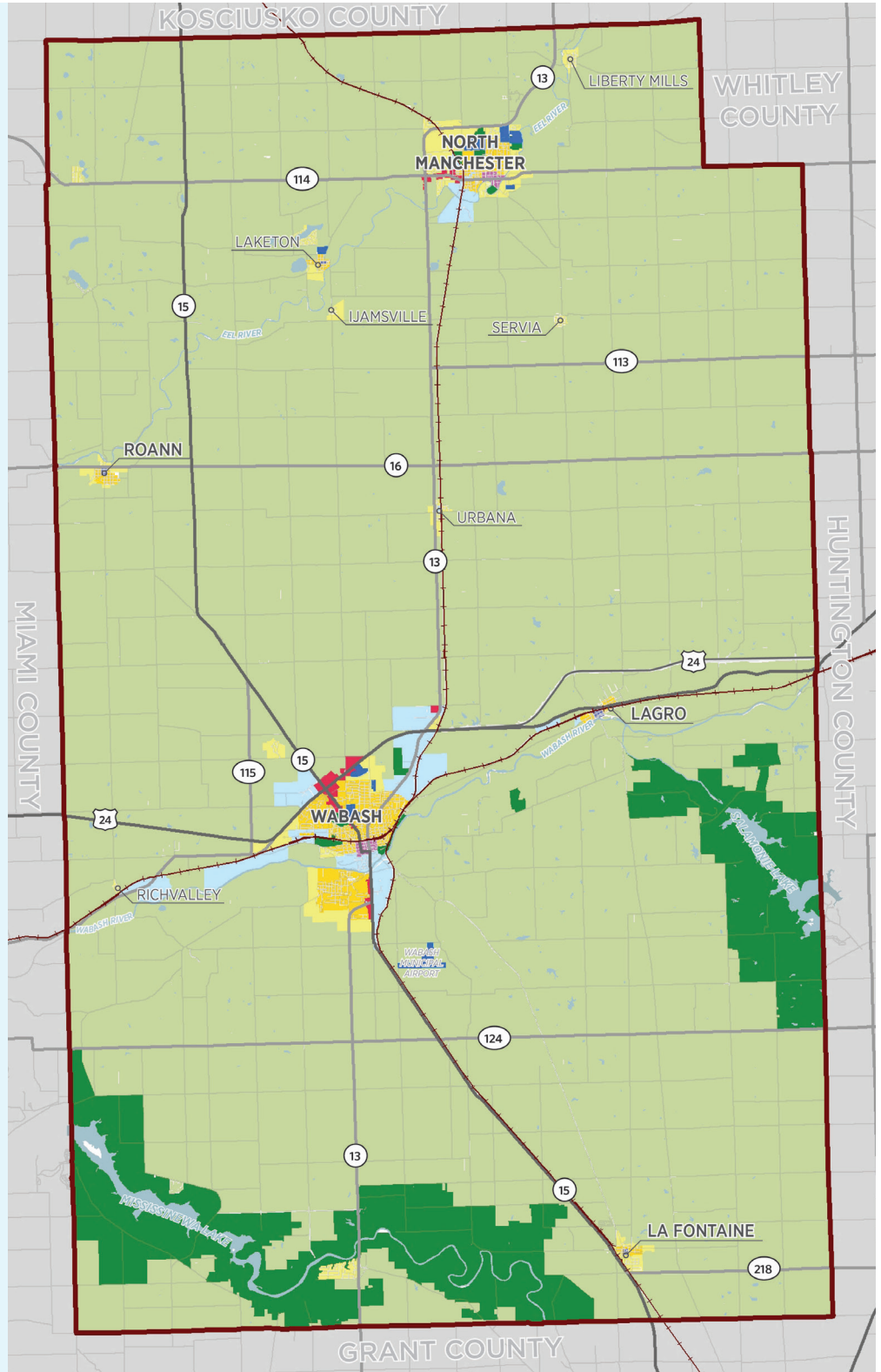
FUTURE LAND USE MAP
COUNTYWIDE VIEW

Map 4.2: Land Use Character Types

The adjacent map illustrates the future land use character types across the county and its communities.

- Open Space / Conservation
- Rural Living
- Mixed Rural Residential
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Town Center
- Commercial Center
- Downtown Core
- Industrial Center
- Institutional Campus

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

LIBERTY MILLS

WHITLEY COUNTY

NORTH MANCHESTER

LAKETON

IJAMSVILLE

SERVIA

ROANN

URBANA

MIAMI COUNTY

HUNTINGTON COUNTY

LAGRO

WABASH

RICHVALLEY

WABASH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

LA FONTAINE

MISSISSINEWA LAKE

GRANT COUNTY

N
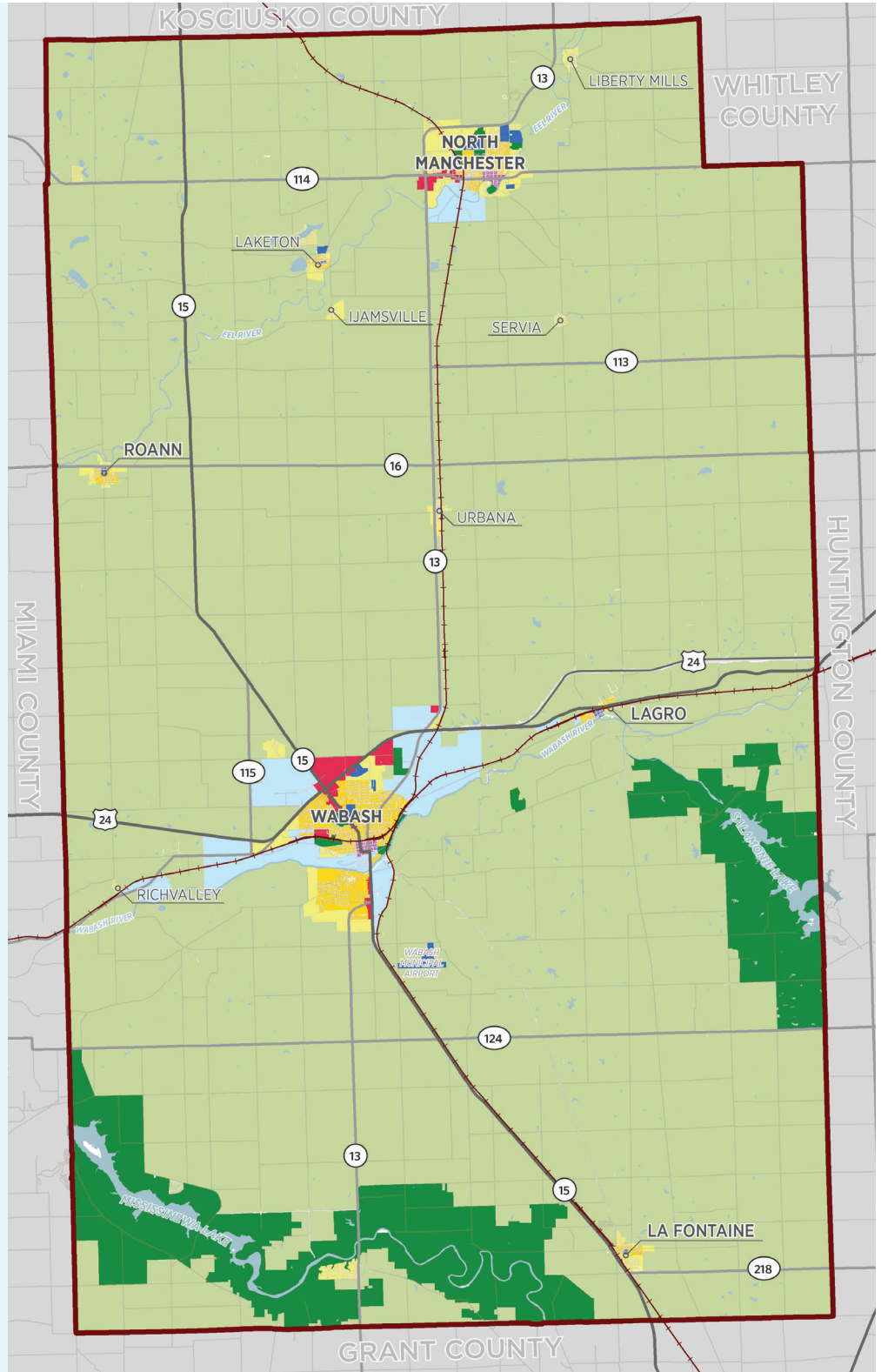
EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USE MAPS
COMMUNITY VIEWS

The Future Land Use and Character Map expresses how the communities of Wabash County should use its land resources in the future. This map considers several factors for identifying the appropriate future character type for a property including the existing land use, current zoning district, and strategic investment potential. Provided in this section are a series of maps comparing the existing and future land use character types for each community along with a brief description for the intended growth in the area.

CITY OF WABASH

- Commercial growth near major crossroads including US-24 and SR-15 to provide a diversity of shops and services for the community.
- Opportunities for industrial or employment oriented uses adjacent to existing employment centers east of SR-115, near SR-13, and along the southern corridor of US-24, specifically near the western and eastern edges of the City.
- Residential support near existing neighborhoods that allow for diverse housing types and encourage infill residential near Downtown and central neighborhoods.

TOWN OF NORTH MANCHESTER

- Commercial growth near the crossroads of SR-13 and SR-114 providing services to existing neighborhoods and employment centers in the Town's industrial park.
- Residential neighborhood extension along the Eel River, activating the corridor with integrated park spaces, trail connections, and water access.
- Continued industrial growth within and around the industrial park, adjacent to the railroad, encouraging industry attraction and expansion in the community.

TOWN OF LA FONTAINE

- Focused development near the Town Center and surrounding neighborhoods providing investment opportunities for offering commercial shops, businesses, and restaurants to the local community.
- Infill residential in existing neighborhoods, specifically new housing types that promote a range of lifestyle options while maintaining the existing character.

TOWN OF LAGRO

- Focused development near the Town Center and surrounding neighborhoods providing investment opportunities for supporting existing commercial shops and businesses while providing a mix of new services to the community.
- Maintaining existing neighborhoods by encouraging appropriate infill residential that diversifies the housing stock and offers new options to current and future residents.
- Integration of park spaces and water access within existing neighborhoods and adjacent to the Town Center, specifically south along the Wabash River.

TOWN OF ROANN

- Town Center investment that provides a wider range of uses to the surrounding neighborhoods including commercial, shops, restaurants, and new housing.
- Creation and integration of a community park space that is centrally located to both the Town Center and existing neighborhoods.
- Improved access to the Eel River, north of SR-16, that provides additional trail connections and natural areas for the community.

Land Use Character Type Legend

■ Open Space / Conservation		■ Traditional Neighborhood		■ Downtown Core	
■ Rural Living		■ Town Center		■ Industrial Center	
■ Mixed Rural Residential		■ Commercial Center		■ Institutional Campus	

Map 4.3: City of Wabash Existing Land Use
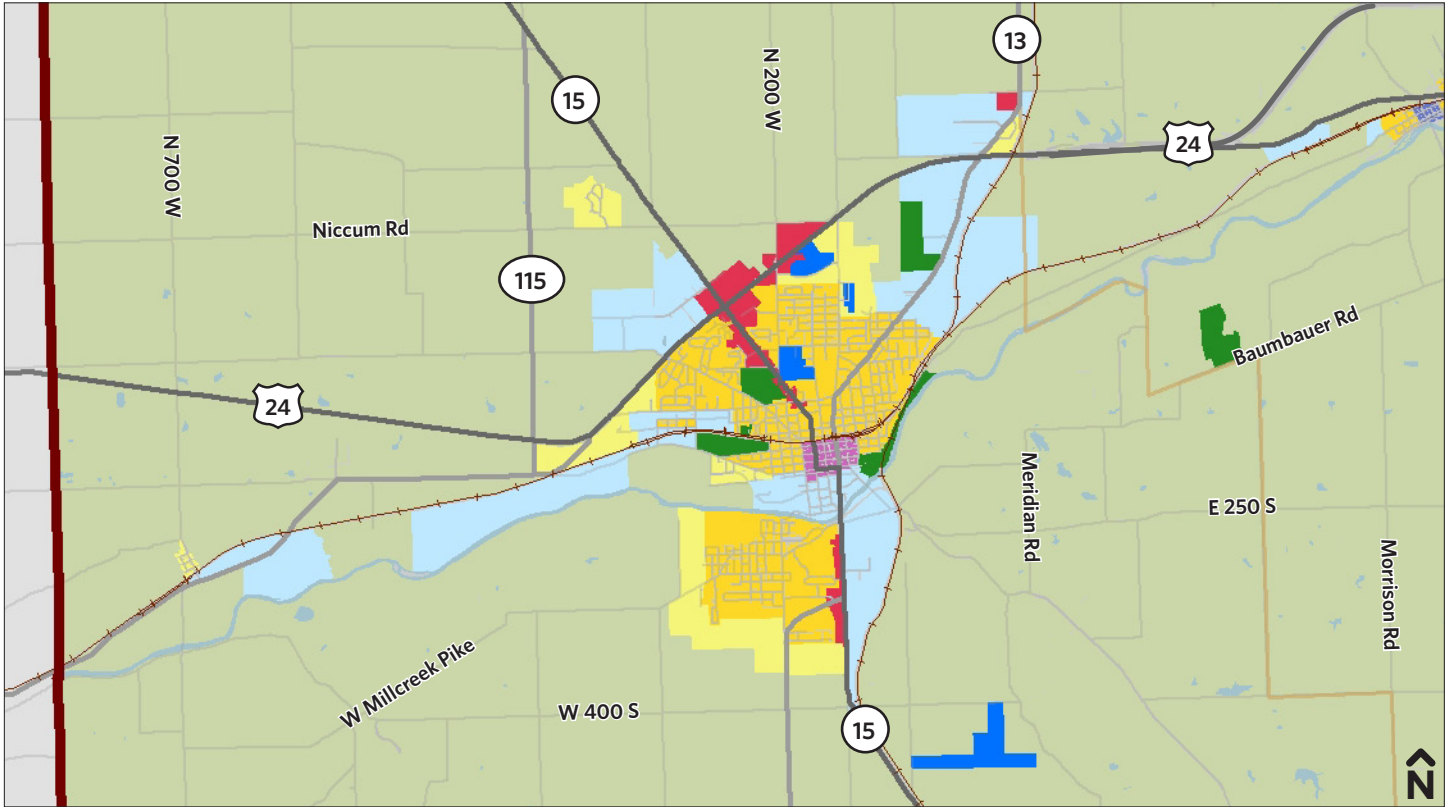
Map 4.4: City of Wabash Future Land Use
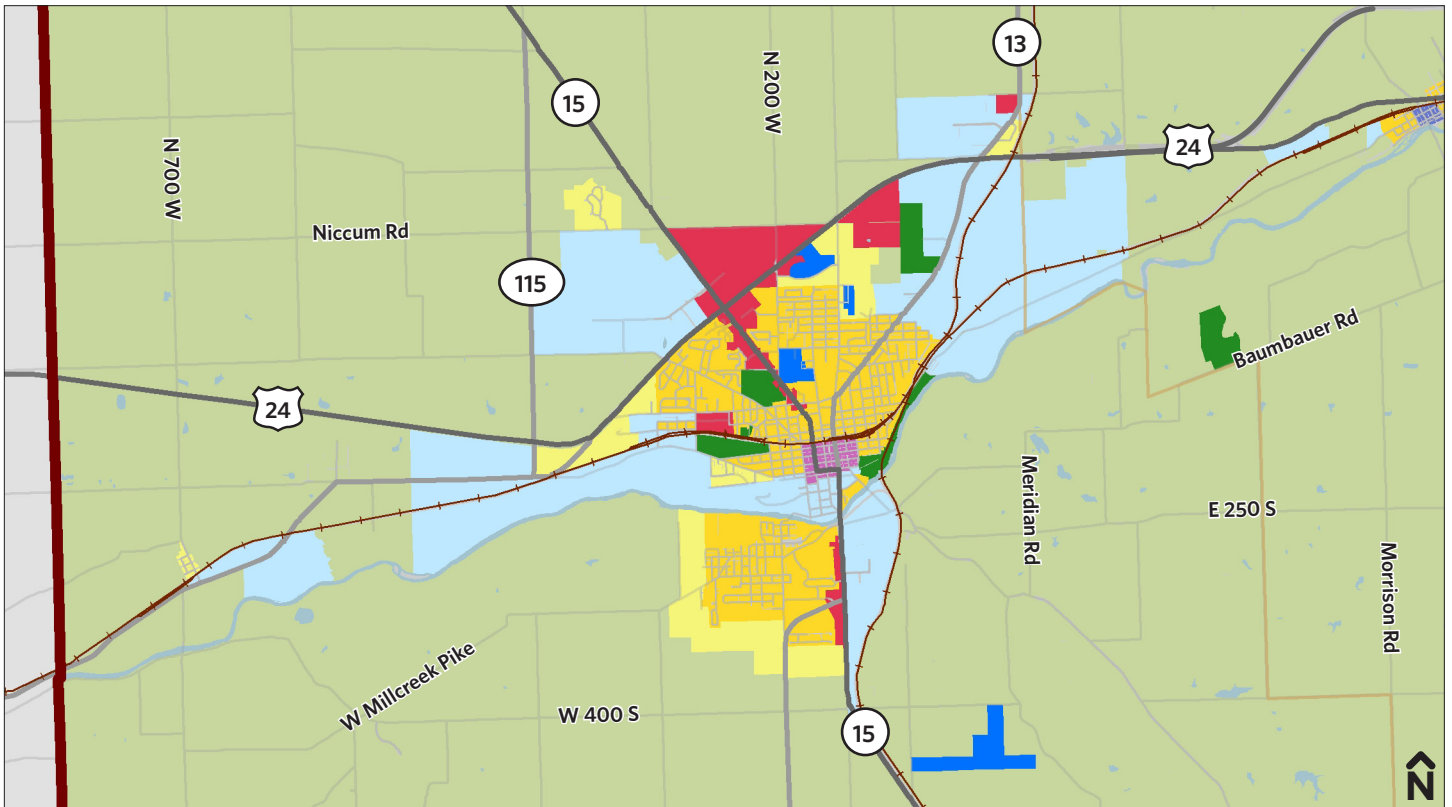
Map 4.5: Town of North Manchester Existing Land Use
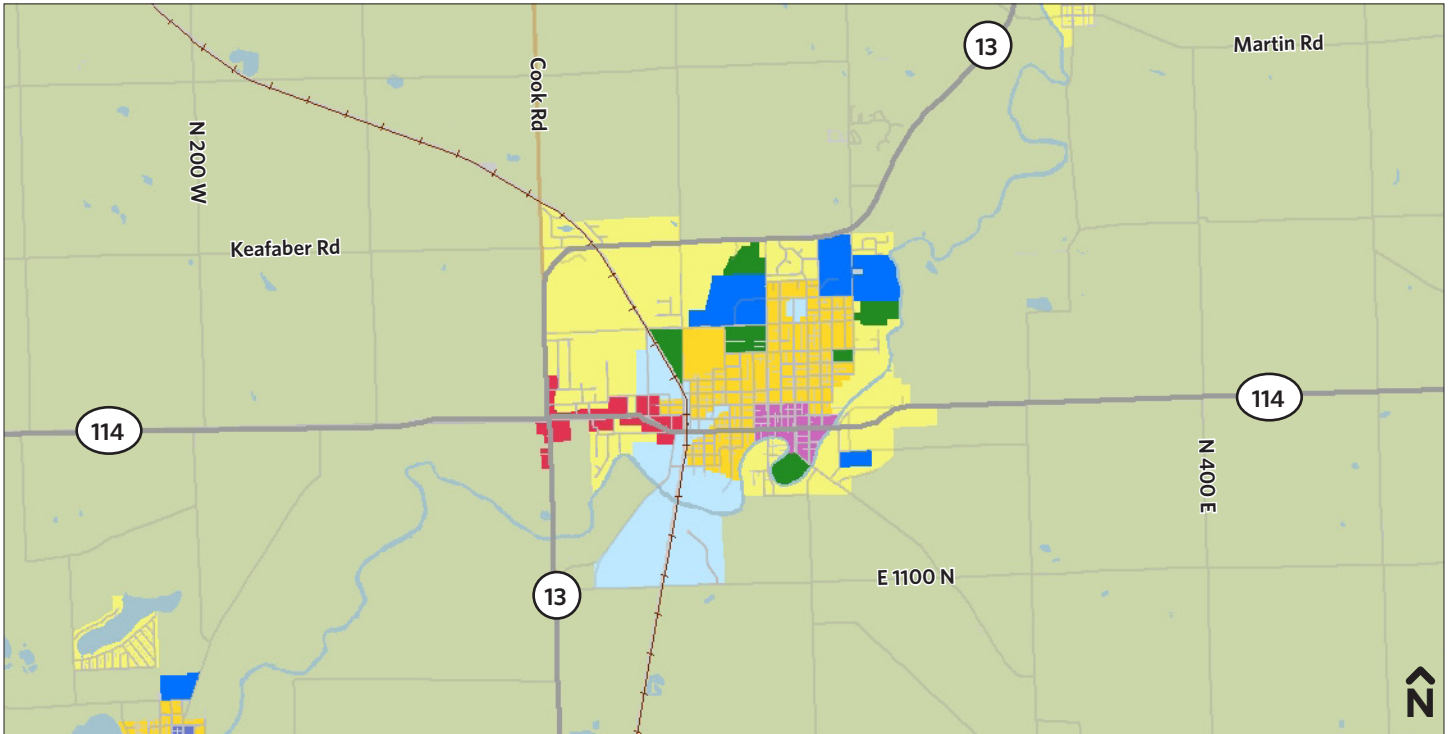
Map 4.6: Town of North Manchester Future Land Use

Land Use Character Type Legend

- Open Space / Conservation
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Downtown Core
- Rural Living
- Town Center
- Industrial Center
- Mixed Rural Residential
- Commercial Center
- Institutional Campus

Map 4.7: Town of La Fontaine Existing Land Use
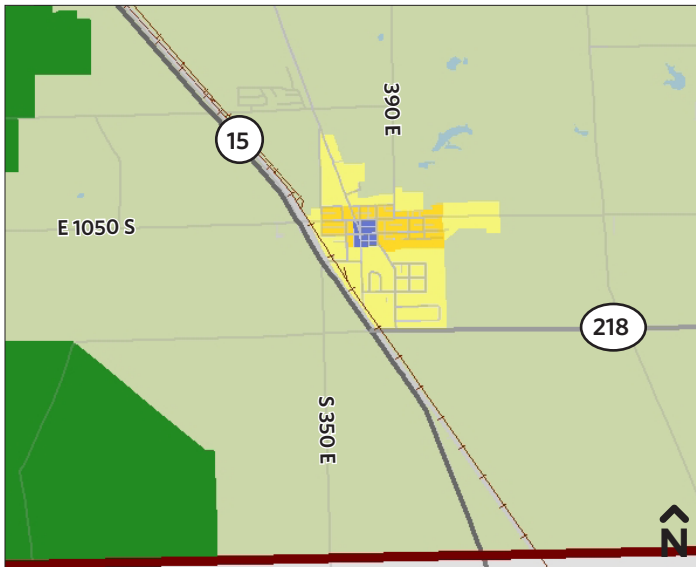
Map 4.8: Town of La Fontaine Future Land Use
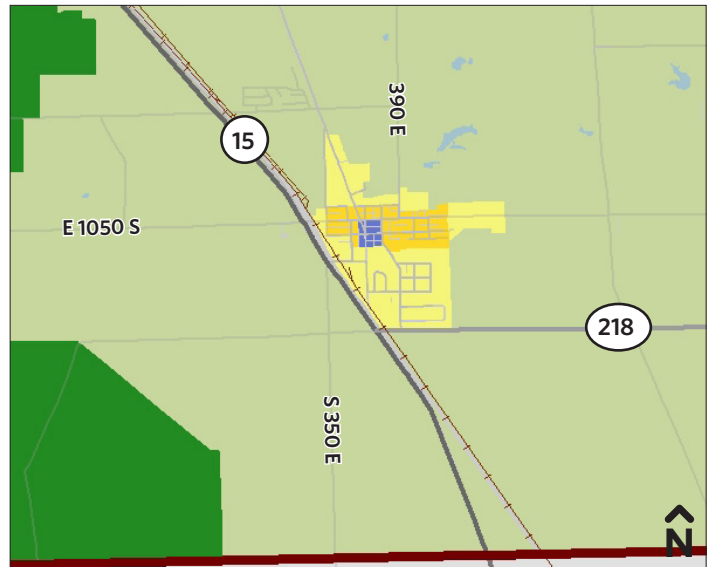
Map 4.9: Town of Lagro Existing Land Use
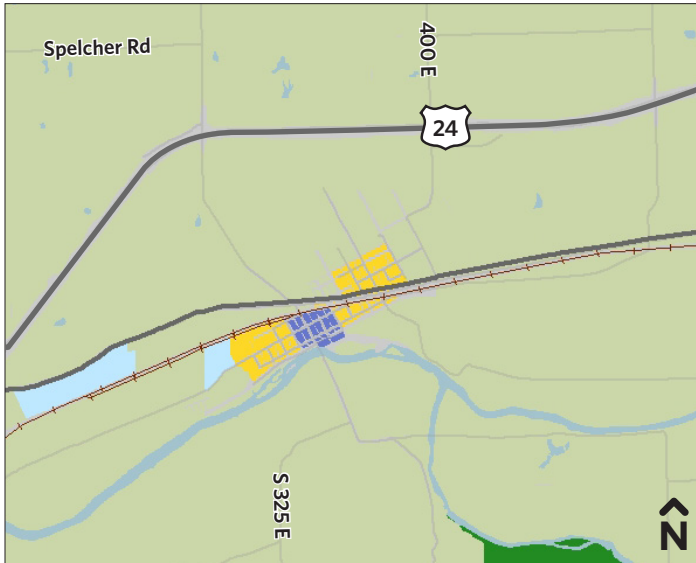
Map 4.10: Town of Lagro Future Land Use
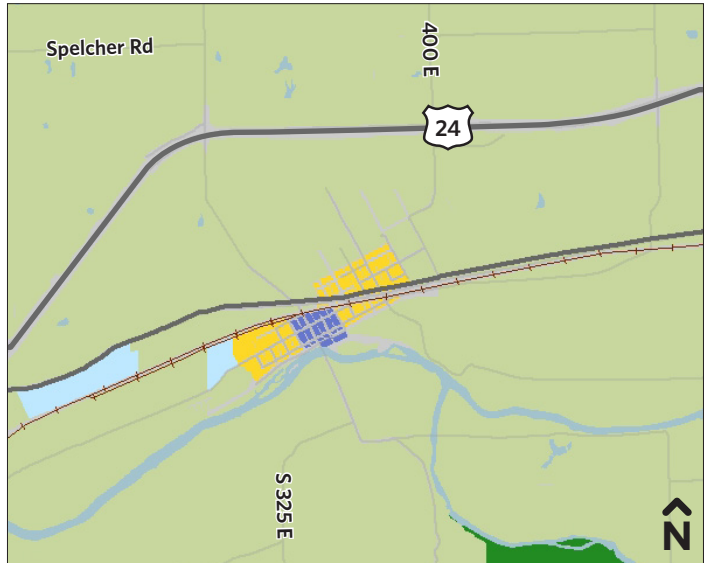
Map 4.11: Town of Roann Existing Land Use
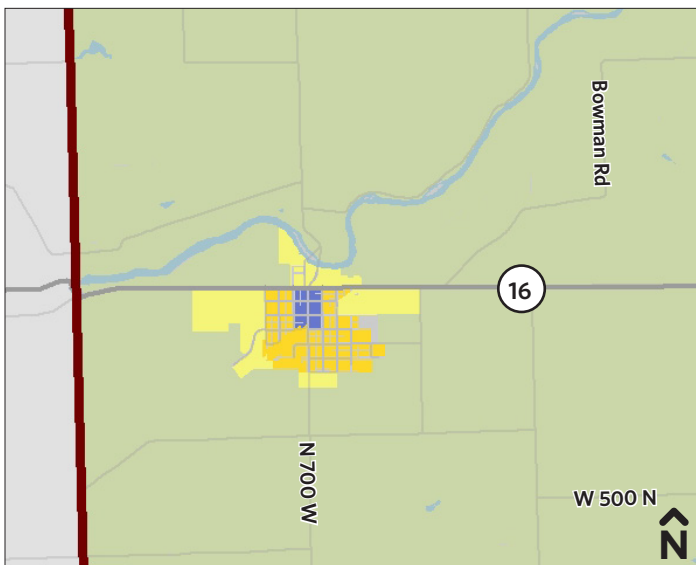
Map 4.12: Town of Roann Future Land Use
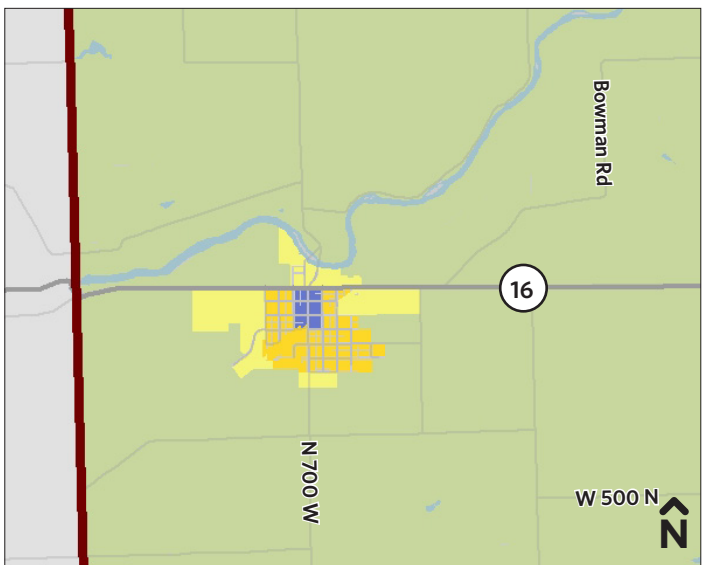
Note: There are no changes between the existing and future land use maps for the Towns of La Fontaine, Lagro, and Roann.

DOWNTOWN CORE

The historic, civic, and cultural centers of urbanized areas. These areas provide a variety of uses in a compact, walkable center such as commercial, office, and residential. Buildings are located very close to one another or are directly attached and are constructed close to the roadway. Streets are connected in a grid pattern with sidewalk and pedestrian connections throughout, encouraging walkability. Complementary uses such as park space or community facilities are closely integrated with other major destinations.

INTENT

- Support infill of vacant lots, especially within the center of communities

- Adapt and reuse existing historic buildings or currently vacant commercial and industrial sites

- Encourage vertical mixed-use development (residential or office above commercial) at an appropriate scale to the district

- Reduce / consolidate surface parking to allow for additional infill development or conversion to public gathering spaces

Primary Uses

- ▶ Vertical mixed-use (commercial first floor, office or residential above)
- ▶ Office
- ▶ Commercial / Retail
- ▶ Multi-family residential
- ▶ Civic / Cultural / Institutional

Secondary Uses

- ▶ Single-family residential
- ▶ Parks and Open Space

Example character pattern.

TOWN CENTER

Traditional activity centers with a mix of small-scale commercial, office, and residential uses. They may be in either incorporated communities or unincorporated areas but typically serve as the activity center for the community. These areas are generally walkable, being developed on small, grid-like blocks but may not have complete sidewalk connections. Buildings are constructed close to the roadway with small parking areas or some on-street parking adjacent to the main entrance.

INTENT

- Provide connectivity between commercial / retail and surrounding residential areas

- Locate new buildings near street on at least one side and accommodate parking to the side or rear of buildings, or provide on-street parking

- Improve / provide public realm features such as signs, sidewalks, landscaping and public art

- Encourage streetscape continuity with respect to scale and character Infill development on vacant lots

Primary Uses

▶ Vertical mixed-use (commercial first floor, office or residential above)

▶ Office

▶ Commercial / Retail

Secondary Uses

▶ Multi-family residential

▶ Single-family residential

▶ Civic / Institutional

▶ Parks and Open Space
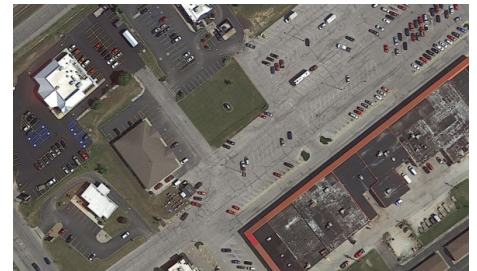
Example character pattern.

COMMERCIAL CENTER

These are predominantly commercial and retail areas characterized by large footprint buildings or shopping centers along major corridors. Buildings are set far back from the roadway with surface parking lots between the building and roadway. Sites have minimal landscaping integrated along the edge of parking areas with hardscaping elements such as patios, pavilions, etc. Areas may have some pedestrian / sidewalk connections but are typically accessible by vehicle only due to site layout and corridor use.

Example character pattern.

INTENT

- Provide connectivity to nearby uses (paths, streets)

- Locate new buildings near street on at least one side and accommodate parking to the side or rear of buildings

- Improve / provide public realm features such as signs, sidewalks and landscaping

- Reduce the number of access points into development for pedestrian and vehicular safety

- Reduce and consolidate surface parking

Primary Uses

- Mixed-use
- Commercial / Retail
- Office

Secondary Uses

- Civic / Institutional
- Multi-family Residential
- Parks and Open Space

INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUS

These areas include academic, government, hospital, religious centers, and church centers providing a range of building types to support their functional use. Some sites contain one primary structure while others require several buildings arranged in a campus to provide necessary operations. These areas are typically integrated into neighborhoods or commercial areas and are walkable to many community amenities. Private open space and sidewalk connections are common features that further integrate the site into the surrounding area.

INTENT

- Encourage better physical links between campus and other areas, including through multi modal transportation

- Promote development along the edges of campuses that are compatible with adjacent land uses and character

- Provide economic development opportunities through supporting commercial and retail

Primary Uses

▶ Civic / Institutional

Secondary Uses

▶ Office

▶ Commercial / Retail

▶ Parks and Open Space

Example character pattern.

INDUSTRIAL CENTER

These areas are characterized by large footprint manufacturing, assembly, warehousing, and other similar employment oriented uses. Street connections are typically limited to provide direct site service to major corridors and highways. In some instances, businesses have outdoor operations that require additional screening or buffering from adjacent development. Most sites have multiple access drives to separate general employee and customer traffic from heavy truck or machine movement.

INTENT

- Promote opportunities for larger employers to locate and conduct business, as well as for the clustering of businesses

- Ensure adequate utilities and transportation to support business activities and operations

- Encourage use of appropriate design covenants to integrate industrial parks into the surrounding community with appropriate separation or buffering from neighborhoods and parks

Primary Uses

▶ Industrial

▶ Light Industrial

▶ Office

▶ Commercial

Secondary Uses

▶ Retail

▶ Parks and Open Space

Example character pattern.

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD
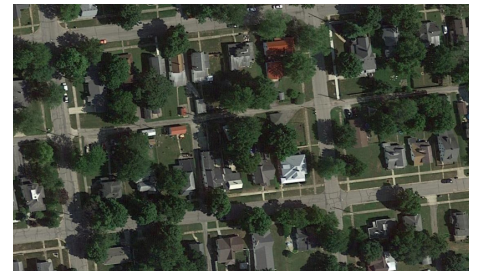
These consist of primarily residential areas featuring a mix of housing types such as detached single-family, duplex, manufactured home parks, and townhomes. These areas are typically near activity centers and developed in a traditional, grid-like street pattern. Housing is generally older and can include historic neighborhoods or properties near the center of the community. New infill residential can occur throughout the neighborhood taking a variety of forms from detached single-family to townhomes. These neighborhoods can include appropriately scaled retail or office uses and complementary uses like parks or community facilities.

INTENT

- Provide streetscape features such as sidewalks, street trees, and lighting

- Introduce neighborhood-scale commercial centers at key intersections

- Allow neighborhood-scale commercial or mixed-use centers at key intersections within neighborhoods

Primary Uses

▶ Multi-family Residential

▶ Single-family Residential (small lot)

Secondary Uses

▶ Commercial / Retail

▶ Parks and Open Space
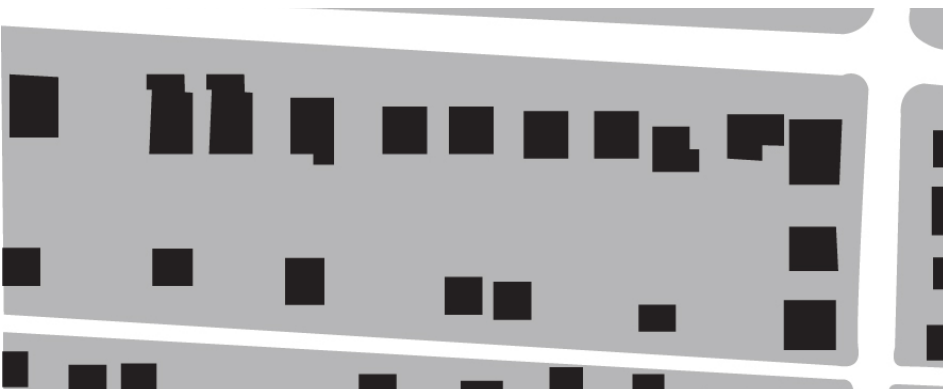
Example character pattern.

MIXED RURAL RESIDENTIAL
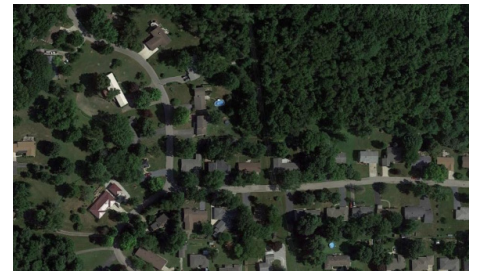
Areas characterized by larger lot residential or standalone subdivisions near the outskirts of a community or adjacent to a rural setting. These areas represent the transition from rural to urban areas providing a mix of small businesses and institutional uses near subdivisions. Homes range in age from older, mid-century stock to modern housing options constructed in new subdivisions. Lots are generally one acre in size near agricultural areas or smaller near activity centers and Traditional Neighborhoods.

INTENT

- Encourage preservation of natural features as open space amenities for the community and visitors to the region

- Promote trail connections for conservation areas and open spaces to create an established, connected greenway system

- Support low-intensity development in designated areas that integrate into the natural landscape

Primary Uses

▶ Single-family Residential (large-lot)

▶ Agricultural

Secondary Uses

▶ Commercial / Retail

▶ Institutional / Civic

▶ Parks and Open Space
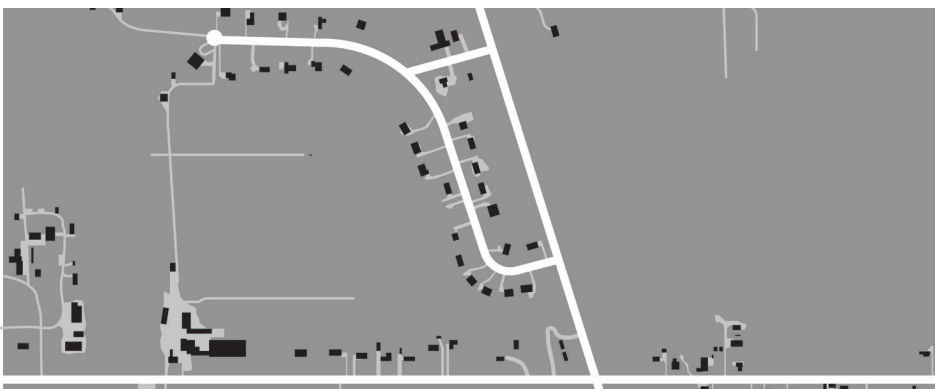
Example character pattern.

RURAL LIVING

These consist of primarily agricultural areas which include single-family residential, agricultural support buildings, small-scale commercial, and institutional uses in a mixed rural setting. Homes and other buildings are generally set back from the roadway but may be developed close enough to share common driveways. Properties are typically over one acre in size and may range up to several acres when adjacent to large farm tracts. These areas may have municipal water and sewer service if located near a more developed portion of the city but are typically served by private water wells and septic systems. These areas may also include light industrial plants, pole barns, utility buildings, or other similar farming facilities that are essential to production.

INTENT

- Support agricultural activities and minimize incompatible land uses
- Promote co-location of local businesses to encourage industry growth
- Limit most new major subdivision development to preserve and protect natural features
- Allow the division of land for minor / large-lot subdivisions, per Indiana law

Primary Uses

▶ Agricultural

▶ Single-family Residential (large-lot)

Secondary Uses

▶ Commercial / Retail

▶ Light Industrial

▶ Institutional / Civic

Example character pattern.

OPEN SPACE / CONSERVATION

These areas include parks, open spaces, or undeveloped natural areas that may serve recreational or conservation purposes and are protected from future development. These are represented at a variety of scales from neighborhood parks of less than an acre to large, regional conservation sites composed of hundreds of acres. In some instances, additional amenities are provided to enhance the area based on the community or region's desires.

INTENT

- Preserve existing conservation areas
- Improve recreational assets to match community needs
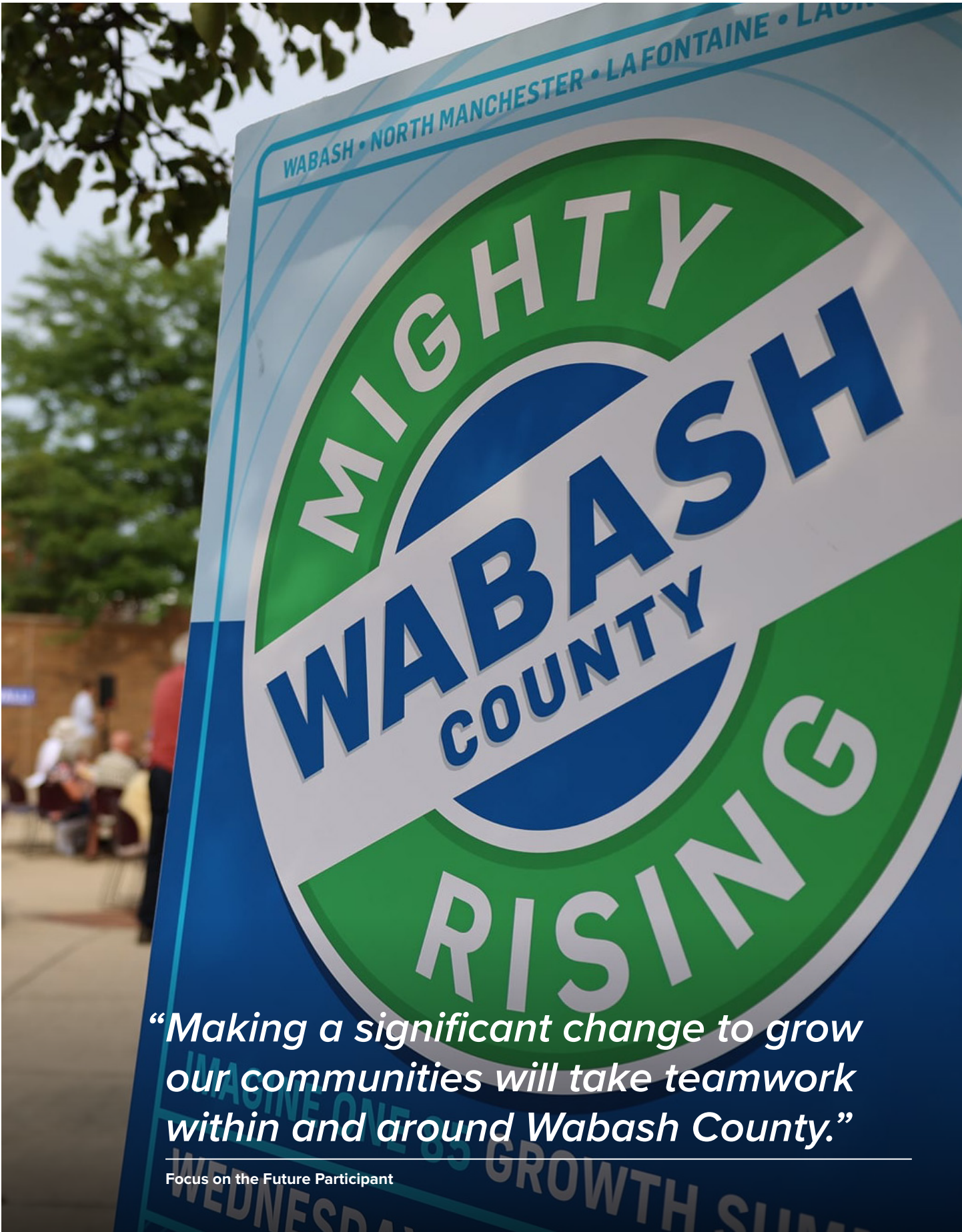
"Making a significant change to grow our communities will take teamwork within and around Wabash County."

Focus on the Future Participant

CHAPTER 5
THE VISION

Imagine we achieve our goals. Imagine we begin growing again. We build a community that has energy and attracts talent from around the country. The communities of Wabash County emerge as the American example of reinvention and self-determination.

We find ourselves at a critical moment. Without intervention we'll continue to lose population and suffer the related consequences. But together, we've worked hard to imagine an alternative and established a plan to move our communities forward. Population decline is the challenge, Imagine One 85 is our collective response.

WHO ARE WE? →

Participants share Mighty Ideas at the Imagine One 85 Growth Summit.

VISION

We are

MIGHTY WABASH COUNTY RISING...

We, the communities of Wabash County, are connected, resilient, and growing. We are open, welcoming, and prosperous. Our spirit, like our natural resources, is flourishing and vibrant.

Leadership shines bright in our county. We produce and attract energetic and capable young citizens. Wabash County is a great place to live, work, and learn. Residents and visitors thrive here.

IMAGINE ONE 85
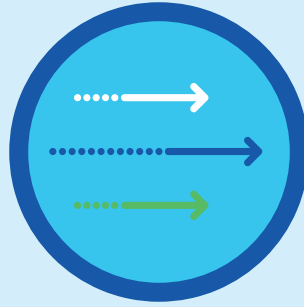
Vision → Goal → Actions

PLAN STRUCTURE

This plan is organized into five topic areas, which reflect themes from community input. Each topic area is supported by a goal and several objectives that serve to organize the 85 specific actions detailed in the plan.

Vision

Unified aspirations for the future quality of life and place across all the communities.

Goals

Intended outcomes expressed in simple terms for the plan's five topic areas.

Objectives

Sub themes within the goal that serve to organize actions.

Actions

A project, policy, or program.

GREAT PLACES (GP)

A range of diverse and beautiful environments – thriving town centers, productive agricultural lands, verdant natural spaces – that, collectively, define Wabash County.

PROSPERITY (PR)

A strong and growing network of communities built through their commitment to competitive and lifelong education, support for entrepreneurs and local businesses, and investment into bold projects and initiatives.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY (CO)

A healthy housing system with a wide range of options, safe and attractive neighborhoods, and choices for residents of all ages and lifestyles.

FOUNDATIONS (FD)

A reliable base of enabling infrastructure helps to connect, grow, and protect our communities, while also supporting logical investments that expand opportunities for residents and businesses.

IMPLEMENTATION (IM)

A commitment to the people of Wabash County to realize the vision and goals of the Imagine One 85 process through strategic investment, logical sequencing, and ongoing monitoring and maintenance.

"Good things can happen when a few capable citizens put their heads together toward a common cause."

Focus on the Future Participant

CHAPTER 6
THE ACTION AGENDA

The Imagine One 85 Comprehensive Plan is a collection of actions that, when achieved, will move the community closer to its vision and establish a strong growth trajectory for decades to come. These actions are discrete policies, projects or programs. They include existing initiatives to be lifted up and better supported and new actions applied from best practice research and community conversation. On the whole, the Action Agenda is a menu of community-supported and Wabash County-tailored opportunities to move the communities forward.

REPRESENTING THE COMMUNITIES

Wabash County is home to more than five unique communities each with its own story, stakeholders, and special set of opportunities. These places are connected by the county's rich agricultural heritage and abundant natural spaces. Each of these communities played a strong role in developing this plan. Through direct engagement and analysis the Steering Committee and planning team has gathered an action agenda (presented through the subsequent chapters) that will have a positive impact on each community.

WHY THESE RECOMMENDATIONS?

This Action Agenda includes dozens of proposals to enhance the quality of life and quality of place in Wabash County. These actions were derived through a robust community conversation, and strong research and analysis. These processes were conducted in parallel with the findings, one informing the other. The public process was an iterative conversation with the community and stakeholders about the future of the communities of Wabash County. Using real data and analysis to inform the discussion, community members were asked to consider the best way forward. At the same time, the planning team conducted its own research into the county's conditions and trends. This research, coupled with the input from the community, revealed areas for further study. Within the Imagine One 85 recommendations, specific actions have been identified as community priorities due to their ability for immediate and transformative impact. These are listed on Page 66 and identified with a unique icon in the Action Agenda.

HOW TO READ THE AGENDA

The action recommendations represent resonant areas of discussion through the process and are introduced in this section. Each of these recommendations is responding to a central challenge or opportunity identified through the research or community conversation. These actions vary significantly in terms of scale, timing, responsibility, and cost. They range from small ideas to help carry forward the existing community momentum to transformational projects that will require significant resources and collaboration. Every one of the action proposals has been linked to an implementation strategy, detailed in the Implementation Chapter.

Implementation is a critical focus within the Action Agenda and at its core, the ability to fund these recommendations. Through the process, a detailed fiscal analysis was conducted on the communities existing capacity and untapped revenue sources. These takeaways along with an overview of each community are provided on the following pages. This information provides an important foundation when considering how to implement Imagine One 85 actions.

FISCAL REVIEW OF WABASH COUNTY

Achieving the Imagine One 85 vision will require the creative use of limited public dollars. Community leaders will need to prioritize resources that are aligned with the strategic vision. This may require elected officials to implement new or alternative revenue sources to provide for the investments necessary for long term economic and fiscal growth.

LOCAL INCOME TAX

Wabash County imposes more income tax per-capita than any other county in the region. The local income tax is a flexible source of funding, and has strong potential for growth as wealth increases in Wabash County. However, the County should work to understand the competitive implications of its tax rate as it attracts new residents.

Wabash County has maximized the income tax rate, so there is no additional capacity to increase the rate in the future. This means income tax revenue growth is dependent on increasing personal income, the tax base, within the county and adding new residents.

PROPERTY TAX

Property tax rates in Indiana are limited by the State's constitution. In addition, the property tax base in Wabash County has grown slowly over the past decade. Combined, these factors limit the prospect for future property tax revenue growth for Wabash County and its communities.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Wabash County must increase its tax base to grow its revenues. The County has already maximized its income tax rate (for government expenditures), and has limited property tax rate capacity due to the constitutional rate caps. Therefore, the County must grow its tax base(s) to increase local government revenues.

In Indiana, local income taxes are paid to the county of residence, so population growth is a path to revenue growth. Even commuters, who live in Wabash County, but work elsewhere contribute to the income tax base.

Property tax base growth comes from capital investment – in housing, business,

Figure 6.1: Local Income Tax Revenue

PER CAPITA TAX (2021)
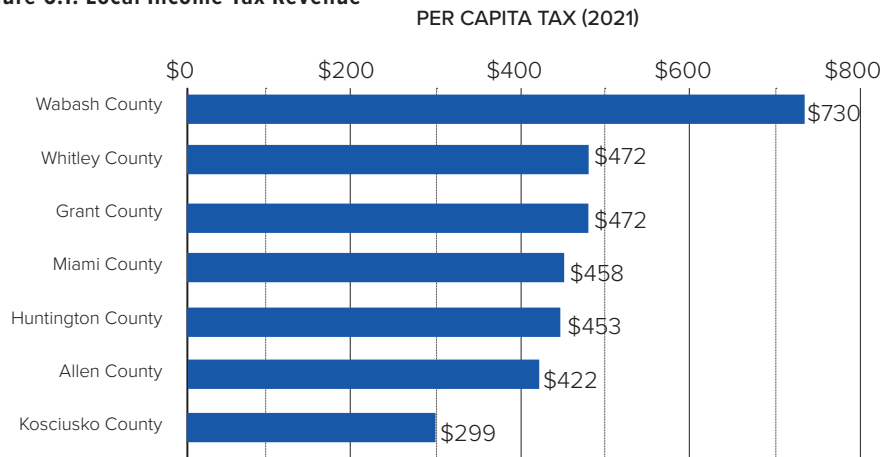
Source: *Policy Analytics*

and agriculture. Local leaders must balance the incentives necessary to attract private investment with the growth of the property tax base needed to maintain public services and infrastructure.

A capital plan is needed to match resources to priorities. Elected officials will need to make decisions regarding funding priorities and trade-offs. A comprehensive capital plan for each community will align investment priorities to available revenues to create realistic time horizons and inform phasing decisions. A capital plan will also identify resource shortfalls, so that elected officials can reallocate resources or leverage new revenue sources, however capital planning can pinpoint projects and expenditures which will enhance and expand revenue sources, new and existing.

Wabash county communities currently use debt on a very limited basis. While overextending municipal finances carries negative consequences, the smart, sustainable use of debt allows communities to leverage current resources into projects that will serve their communities for years. Capital planning will help communities

Figure 6.2: Allocation of Local Income Tax

14% Property Tax Relief
7% Correctional / Rehab Facilities
59% General Budget
8% Economic Development
12% Public Safety
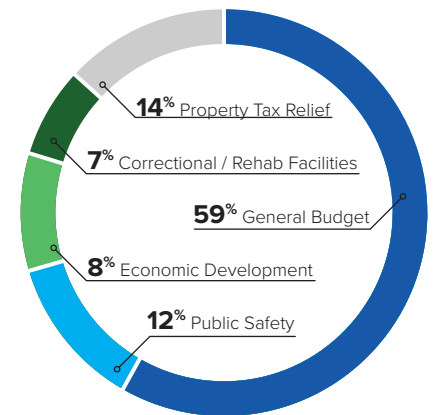
Source: *Wabash County LIT Expenditure Rates (CY 2022)*

efficiently use debt to invest in long-lived projects, and to understand when and where additional resources are needed.

New revenue sources should be considered for transformational projects. Nobody likes new taxes. However, new revenue sources can be leveraged to address historic underinvestment and invest in projects that will provide long-term economic returns. The local food and beverage tax, and the county and municipal wheel tax are revenue sources used by other peer communities in Indiana.

WABASH COUNTY

Successful plans require an understanding of a communities fiscal capacity and the availability of alternative or new revenue sources. These fiscal profiles provide a summary of key data points relevant to the strategic planning process and are intended as a resource when considering action implementation.

AVERAGE ANNUAL TAX BASE CHANGE (2015-2022)

+0.8 percent

Changes to farmland assessments caused volatility in the tax base through 2019, but the County has experienced three consecutive years of assessed value growth since.
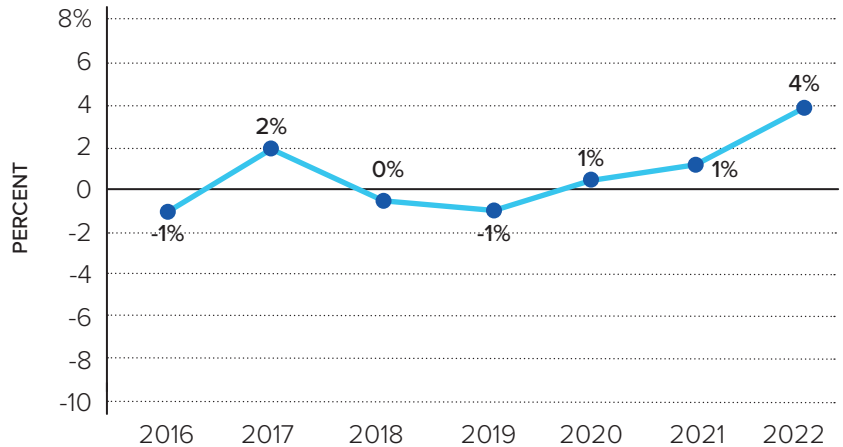
LOCAL FUNDING

$10.8 million

Wabash County receives roughly equal funding from property taxes and local income tax. Since 2016, income tax revenues have increased 38 percent. Circuit breaker impact is on an upward trend, reaching 6.5 percent of property tax levies in 2021.
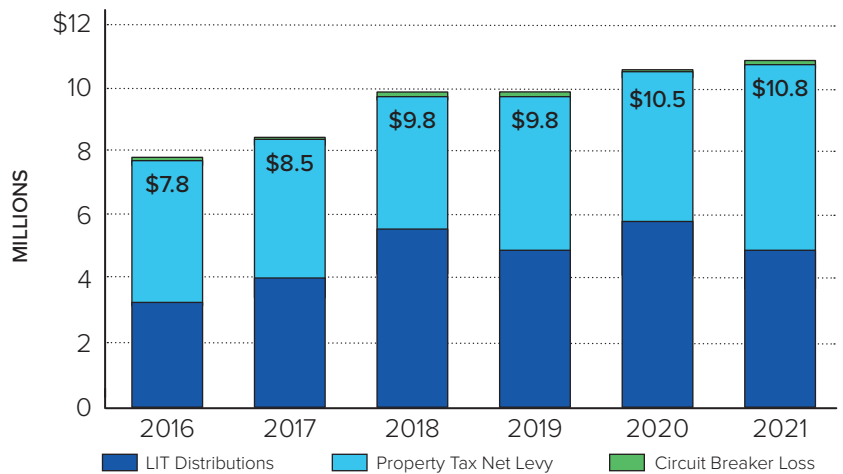
YEAR-END CASH BALANCE

$31 million

Strong cash reserves provide flexibility for unexpected revenue fluctuations or costly events / expenses. Year-end cash reserves have increased each year since 2018. In 2020, Wabash County held approximately four months worth of cash reserves.
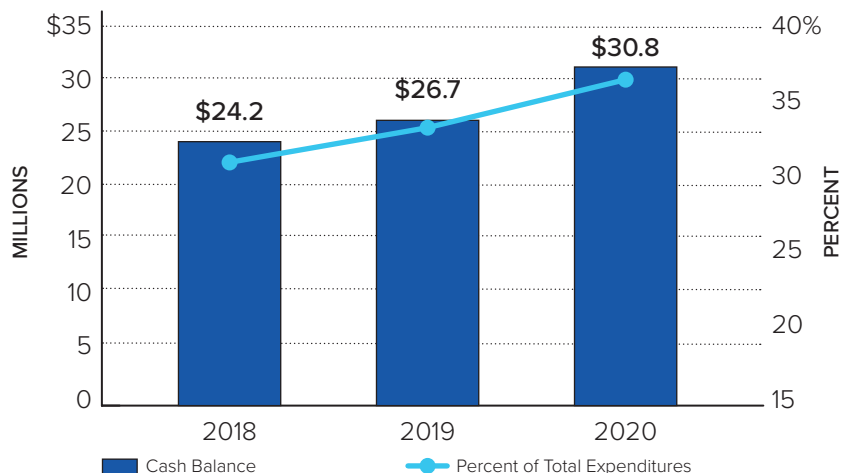
AVERAGE HOMESTEAD VALUE

$132,000

Wabash County's tax base is primarily agricultural and has been significantly impacted by changes in farmland assessment practices. Tax base growth has occurred primarily in the areas surrounding the City of Wabash and in the northeast portion of the county.

LEGEND

🟪	Greater than 10% Increase
🟦	5 to 10%
🟦	3 to 5%
🟩	0 to 3%
🟨	0 to -3%
🟧	-3 to -5%
🟧	-5 to -10%
🟥	Greater than 10% Decrease
⬜	Tax Exempt
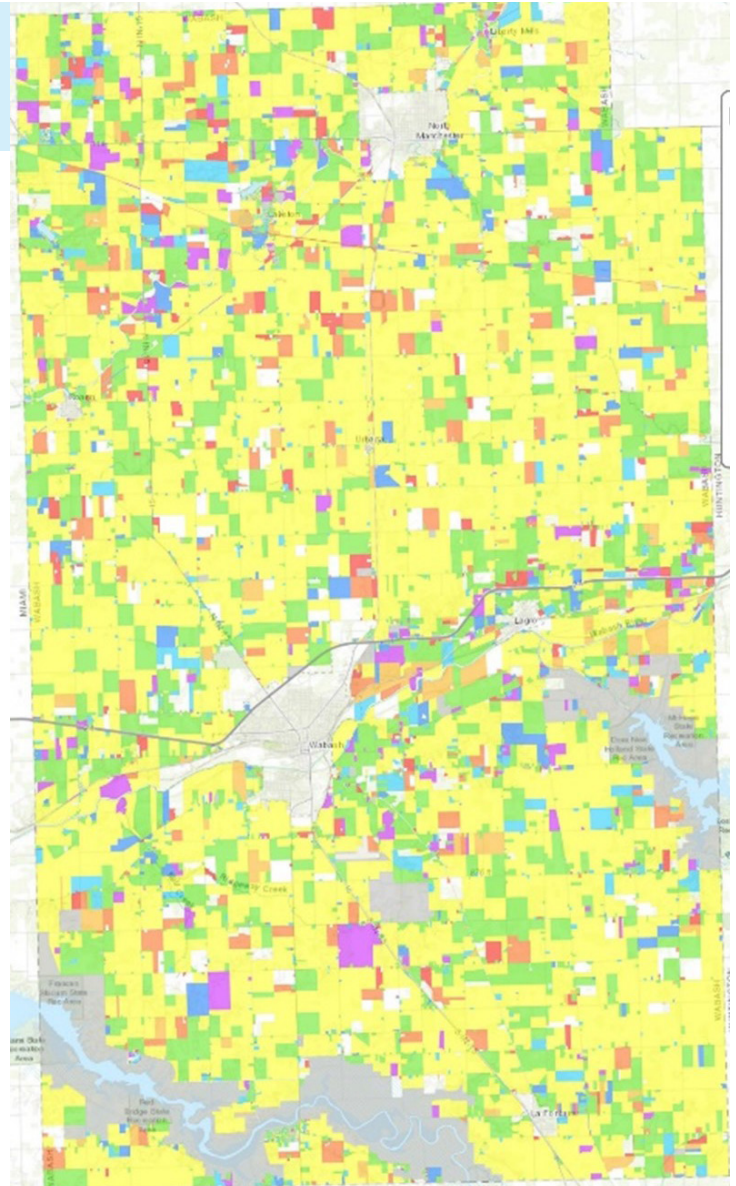
Figure 6.3: County Change in Assessed Land Value (2012-2021)

ADDITIONAL REVENUE SOURCES

SOURCE	PROJECTED VALUE	DESCRIPTION
County Wheel Tax and Excise Surtax Capacity	**$1.6 million**	Wabash County could generate $1.6 million annually from enacting a County Wheel Tax and Surtax.
County Food and Beverage Tax Capacity	**$450,000**	The County could generate $450,000 annually from enacting a one percent Food and Beverage Tax on all sales.
Tax Increment Financing as a Percentage of Tax Base	**6.5%**	Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is in use at the County level and could be further leveraged for economic development.
Cumulative Capital Development Capacity	**$468,000**	Counties can enact a cumulative capital fund with a rate up to $0.333, which would generate $500,000 annually.
Total Outstanding Debt	**$327,000**	Wabash County has $327,000 in outstanding principal as of its last report, but is in the process of financing a correctional facility

CITY OF WABASH

Successful plans require an understanding of a communities fiscal capacity and the availability of alternative or new revenue sources. These fiscal profiles provide a summary of key data points relevant to the strategic planning process and are intended as a resource when considering action implementation.

AVERAGE ANNUAL TAX BASE CHANGE (2015-2022)

+1.3 percent

The tax base for Wabash Civil City remained relatively flat through tax year 2020. However, the tax base has increased faster than the County average, and has had two consecutive years of strong growth.
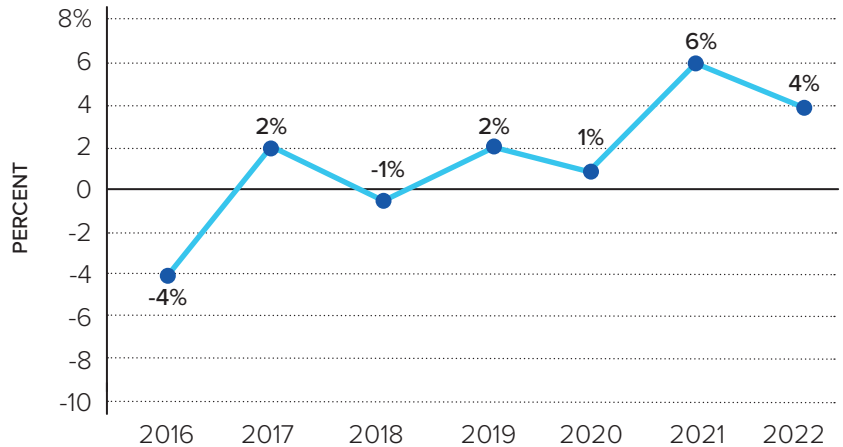
LOCAL FUNDING

$9.2 million

Wabash receives approximately $9.2 million in local funding via income and property taxes. Circuit breaker loss has had an increasing effect on the fiscal situation, 1.5 million in 2021.
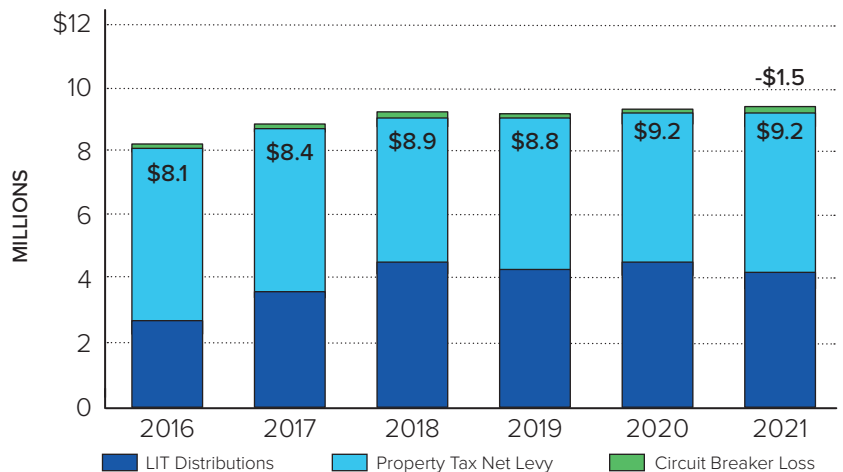
YEAR-END CASH BALANCE

$28 million

Wabash has managed its cash balance down over the period of 2016-2019, but still maintained nearly 10 months of cash reserves in balance.
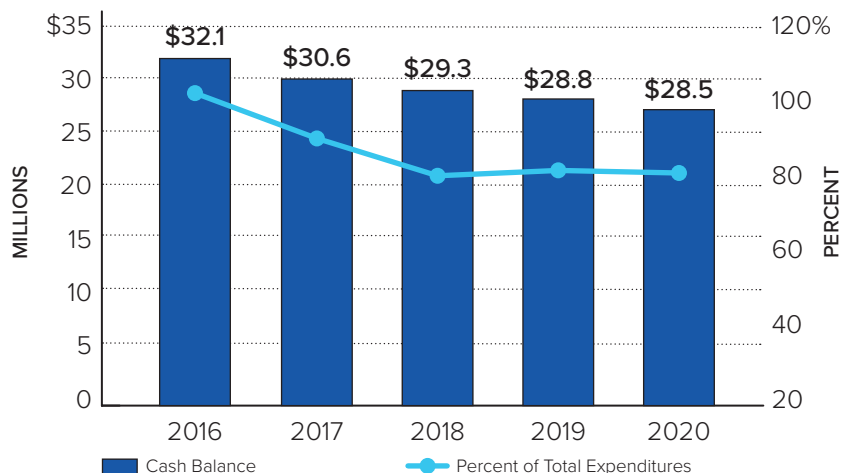
AVERAGE HOMESTEAD VALUE

$100,000

Wabash has experienced moderate growth in the residential sector, but less growth in non-residential assessed value. A major policy will be how and where to expand housing stock in order to attract and retain residents in the community.

LEGEND

- ▧ Greater than 10% Increase
- ▧ 5 to 10%
- ▧ 3 to 5%
- ▧ 0 to 3%
- ▧ 0 to -3%
- ▧ -3 to -5%
- ▧ -5 to -10%
- ▧ Greater than 10% Decrease
- ▧ Tax Exempt
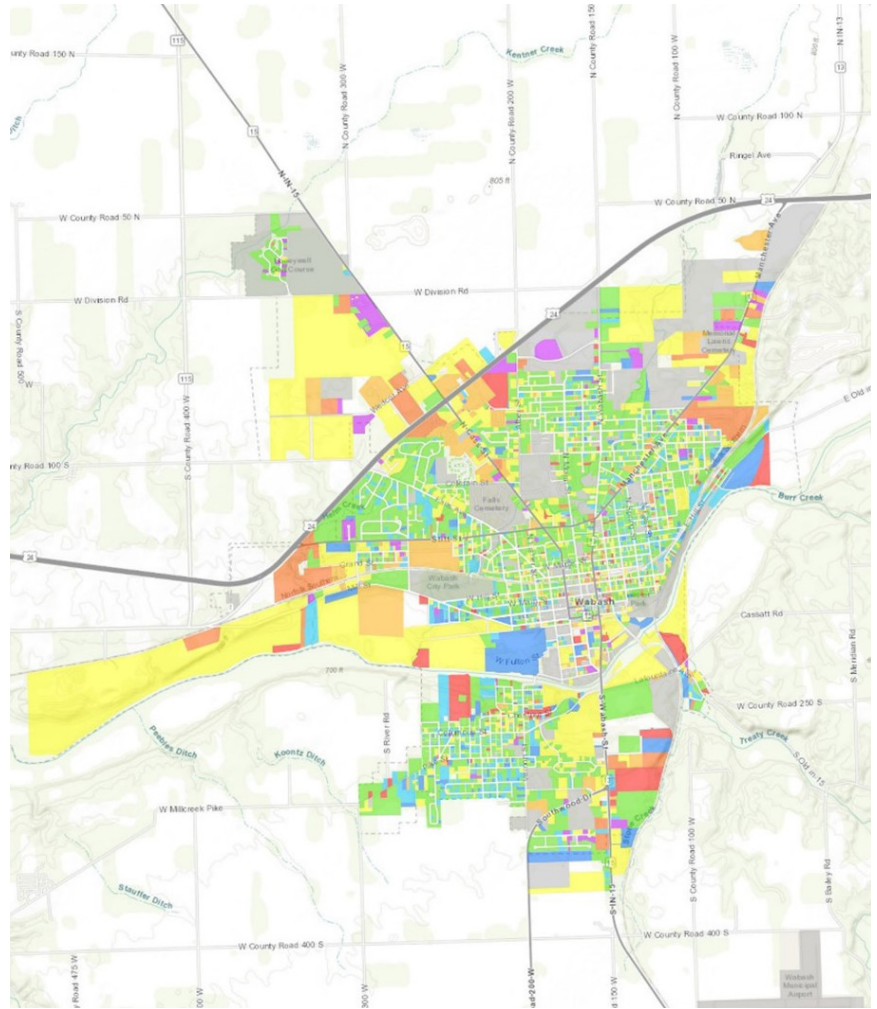
Figure 6.4: City of Wabash Change in Assessed Land Value (2012-2021)

ADDITIONAL REVENUE SOURCES

SOURCE	PROJECTED VALUE	DESCRIPTION
County Wheel Tax and Excise Surtax Capacity	**$273,000**	Enacting a County Wheel Tax would generate $273,000 annually for the City of Wabash.
Municipal Wheel and Excise Surtax Capacity	**$342,000**	A Municipal Wheel Tax could generate an additional $342,000 annually for the City. This tax requires a population size of 5,000 residents.
Tax Increment Financing as a Percentage of Tax Base	**16%**	Wabash captures a relatively high proportion of assessed value in the TIF increment.
Cumulative Capital Development Capacity	**$181,000**	Municipalities can levy a cumulative capital fund rate of $0.05 which would generate $181,000 in Certified Levy.
Total Outstanding Debt	**$16 million**	General obligation debt can be a source of funds for capital projects. Wabash currently carries $16 million in outstanding debt.

TOWN OF NORTH MANCHESTER

Successful plans require an understanding of a communities fiscal capacity and the availability of alternative or new revenue sources. These fiscal profiles provide a summary of key data points relevant to the strategic planning process and are intended as a resource when considering action implementation.

AVERAGE ANNUAL TAX BASE CHANGE (2015-2022)

+1.2 percent

After reductions from 2016-18, the North Manchester tax base has increased at a relatively consistent rate of between two to three percent per year since 2018.
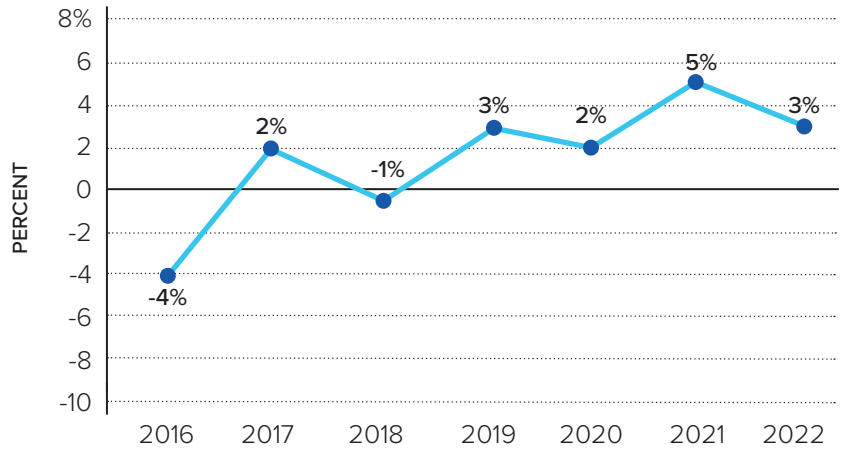
LOCAL FUNDING

$3 million

North Manchester has increased its annual revenues by 26 percent since 2016, indicating a greater investment in local services and fiscal stability.
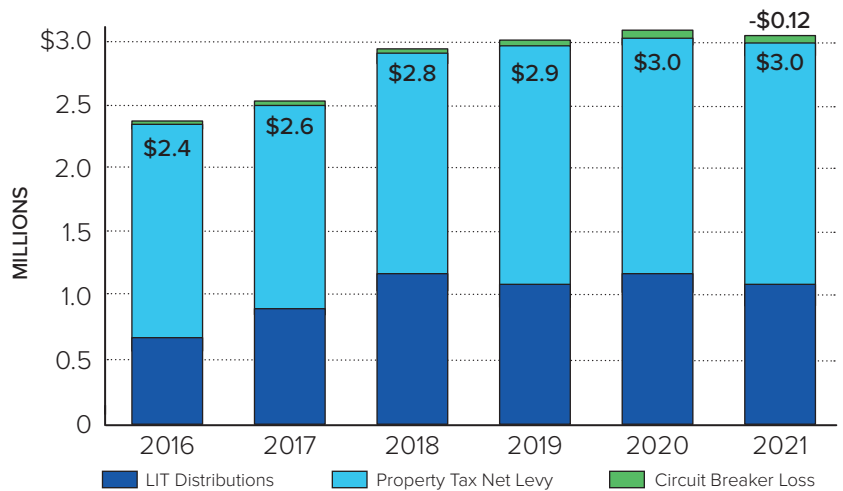
YEAR-END CASH BALANCE

$7.7 million

Cash reserves have increased since 2016 to 70 percent of the local budget, allowing for future flexibility and resiliency.
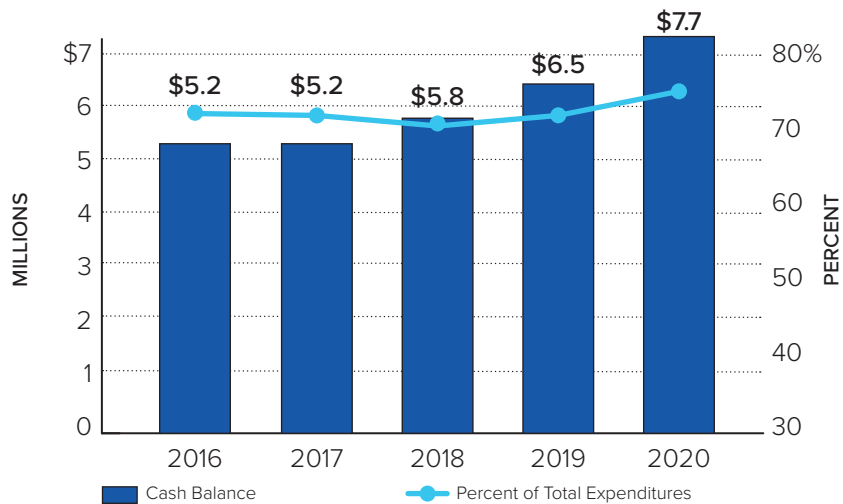
AVERAGE HOMESTEAD VALUE

$118,000

Housing values in North Manchester are higher than in many other areas of the county. Most residential areas have seen between a 0-3 percent in annual assessed value growth over the past decade.

LEGEND

🟪	Greater than 10% Increase
🟦	5 to 10%
🟦	3 to 5%
🟩	0 to 3%
🟨	0 to -3%
🟧	-3 to -5%
🟧	-5 to -10%
🟥	Greater than 10% Decrease
⬜	Tax Exempt
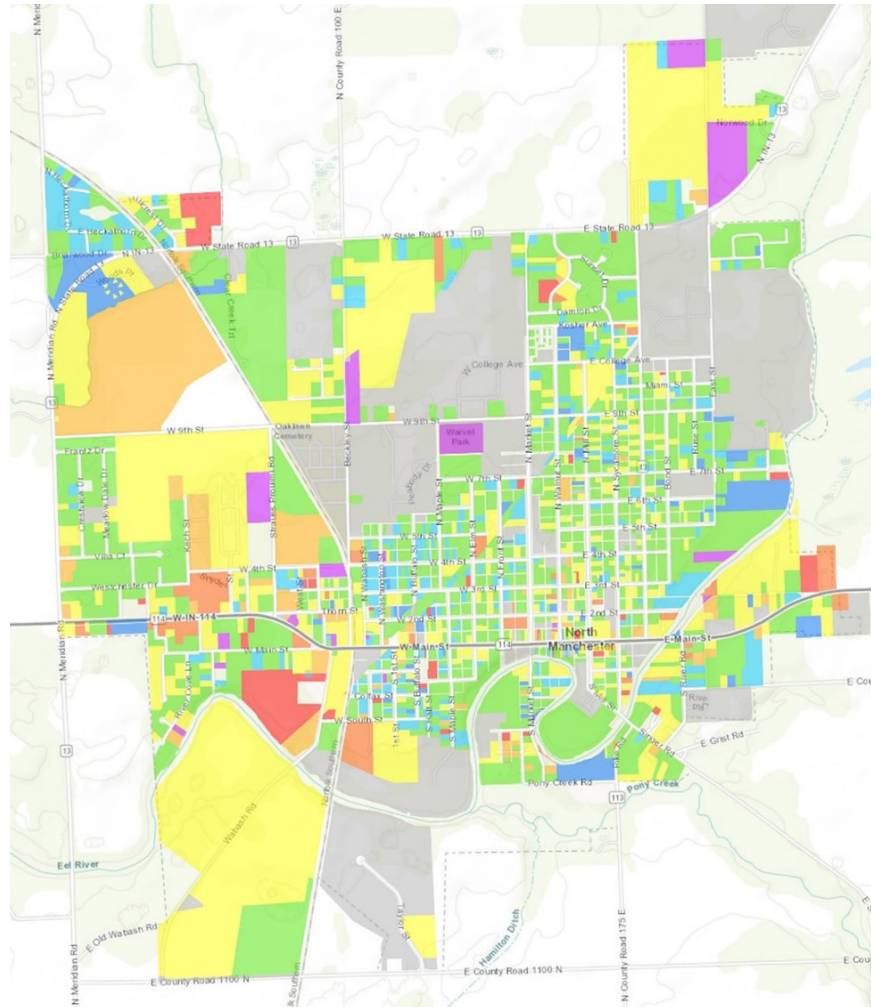
Figure 6.5: North Manchester Change in Assessed Land Value (2012-2021)

ADDITIONAL REVENUE SOURCES

SOURCE	PROJECTED VALUE	DESCRIPTION
County Wheel Tax and Excise Surtax Capacity	**$140,000**	Enacting a County Wheel Tax would generate $140,000 annually for the Town of North Manchester.
Municipal Wheel and Excise Surtax Capacity	**$196,000**	A Municipal Wheel Tax could generate an additional $196,000 annually for the Town. This tax requires a population size of 5,000 residents.
Tax Increment Financing as a Percentage of Tax Base	**2.7%**	North Manchester currently makes limited use of tax increment financing.
Cumulative Capital Development Capacity	**$66,000**	Municipalities can levy a cumulative capital fund rate of $0.05 which would generate $66,000 in Certified Levy.
Total Outstanding Debt	**$4.8 million**	General obligation debt can be a source of funds for capital projects. North Manchester currently carries $4.8 million in outstanding debt.

TOWN OF LA FONTAINE

Successful plans require an understanding of a communities fiscal capacity and the availability of alternative or new revenue sources. These fiscal profiles provide a summary of key data points relevant to the strategic planning process and are intended as a resource when considering action implementation.

AVERAGE ANNUAL TAX BASE CHANGE (2015-2022)

+1.0 percent

After four years of declining assessed value growth, the La Fontaine tax base began increasing in 2020, and is up by seven percent over the past five years.
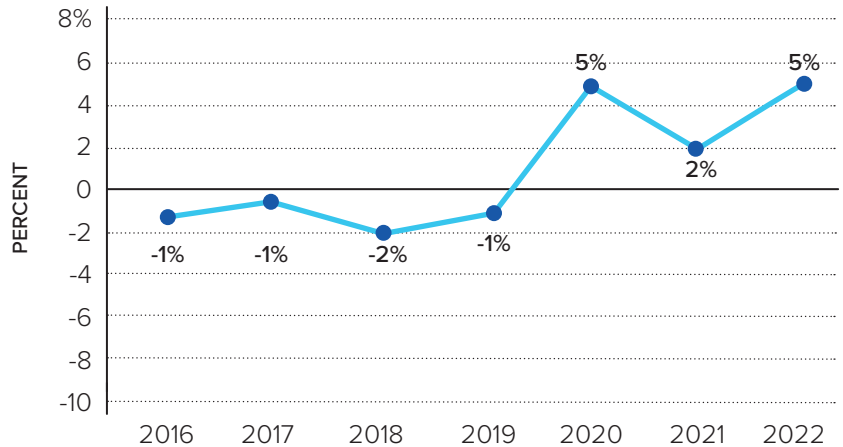
LOCAL FUNDING

$288,000

La Fontaine maintains relatively consistent levels of local funding for governmental services and is largely unaffected by circuit breaker losses. Alternative options should be explored if the demand for service delivery increases.
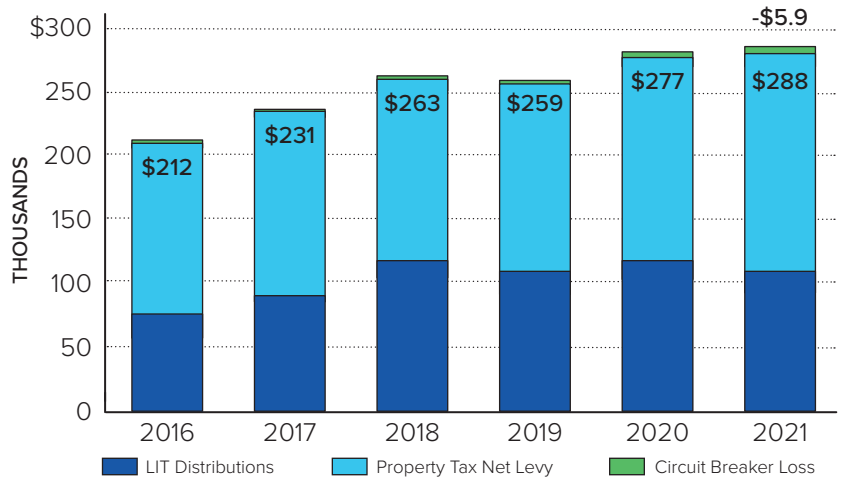
YEAR-END CASH BALANCE

$2.1 million

La Fontaine maintains relatively large cash reserves and has managed balances at a consistent level since 2018. As a small community, larger reserves provide protection in case of infrequent but often expensive events.
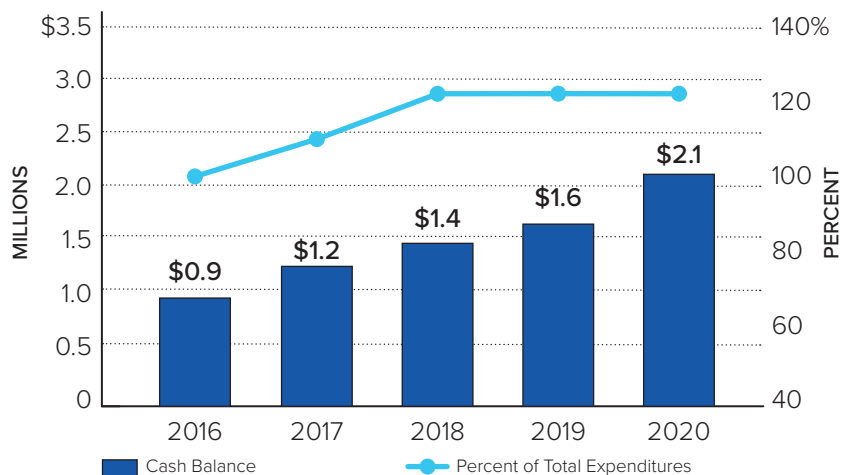
AVERAGE HOMESTEAD VALUE

$81,000

The housing stock in La Fontaine has appreciated by zero to three percent annually over the past decade. The tax base is predominantly residential, with a few non-residential land uses.

LEGEND

- Greater than 10% Increase
- 5 to 10%
- 3 to 5%
- 0 to 3%
- 0 to -3%
- -3 to -5%
- -5 to -10%
- Greater than 10% Decrease
- Tax Exempt
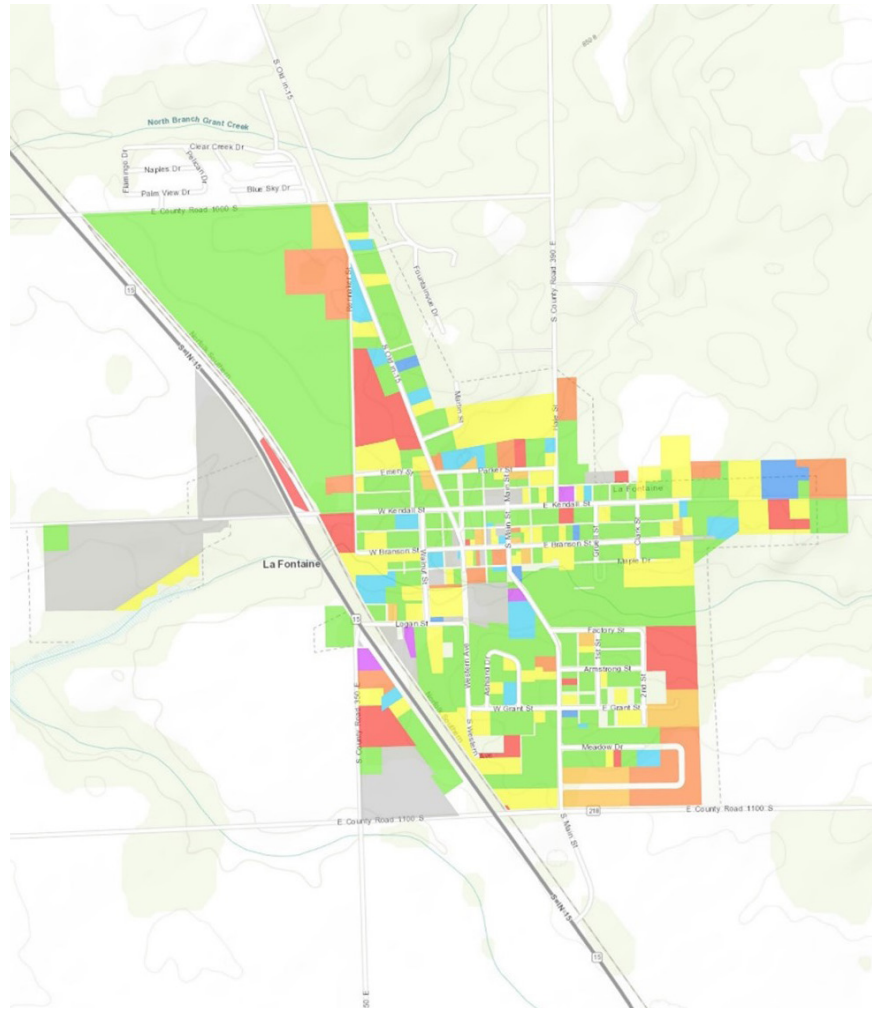
Figure 6.6: La Fontaine Change in Assessed Land Value (2012-2021)

ADDITIONAL REVENUE SOURCES

SOURCE	PROJECTED VALUE	DESCRIPTION
County Wheel Tax and Excise Surtax Capacity	**$26,000**	Enacting a County Wheel Tax would generate $26,000 annually for the Town of La Fontaine
Tax Increment Financing as a Percentage of Tax Base	**0%**	Tax Increment Financing is not currently utilized in La Fontaine but could be viable for financing an appropriate project.
Cumulative Capital Development Capacity	**$6,700**	Municipalities can levy a cumulative capital fund rate of $0.05 which would generate $6,700 in Certified Levy.
Total Outstanding Debt	**$1.5 million**	General obligation debt can be a source of funds for capital projects. La Fontaine currently carries $1.5 million in outstanding debt.

TOWN OF LAGRO

Successful plans require an understanding of a communities fiscal capacity and the availability of alternative or new revenue sources. These fiscal profiles provide a summary of key data points relevant to the strategic planning process and are intended as a resource when considering action implementation.

AVERAGE ANNUAL TAX BASE CHANGE (2015-2022)

-1.0 percent

Lagro has experienced a net reduction in tax base since 2016. Slow tax base appreciation limits the town's ability to generate new revenues without increasing property taxes.
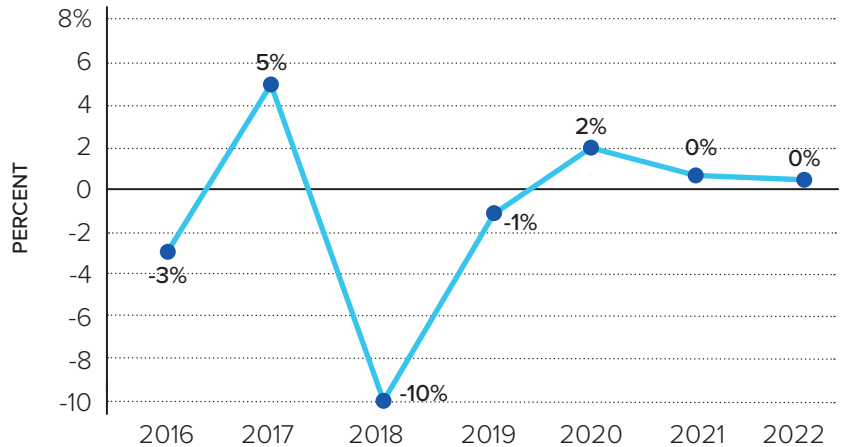
LOCAL FUNDING

$125,000

Local government services are funded predominantly by property taxes, though the share of income tax revenues has increased substantially since 2016.
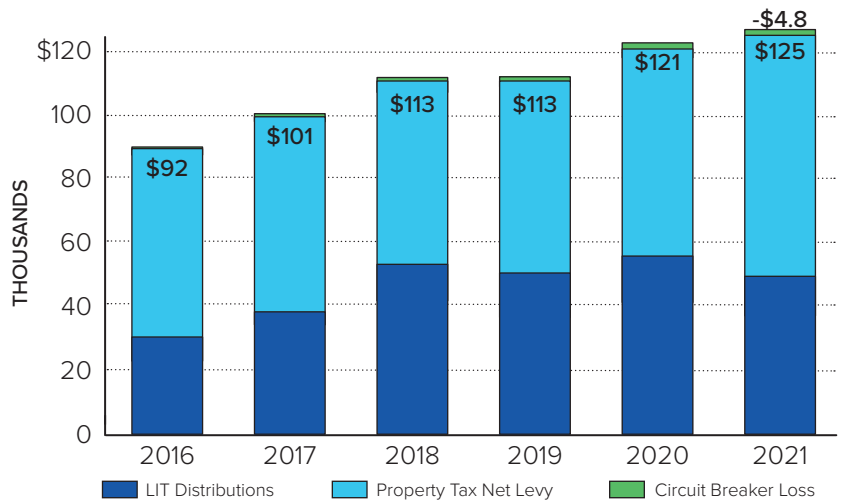
YEAR-END CASH BALANCE

$273,000

Lagro has increased its cash reserves since 2016, but holds a relatively small balance compared to other communities in Wabash County.
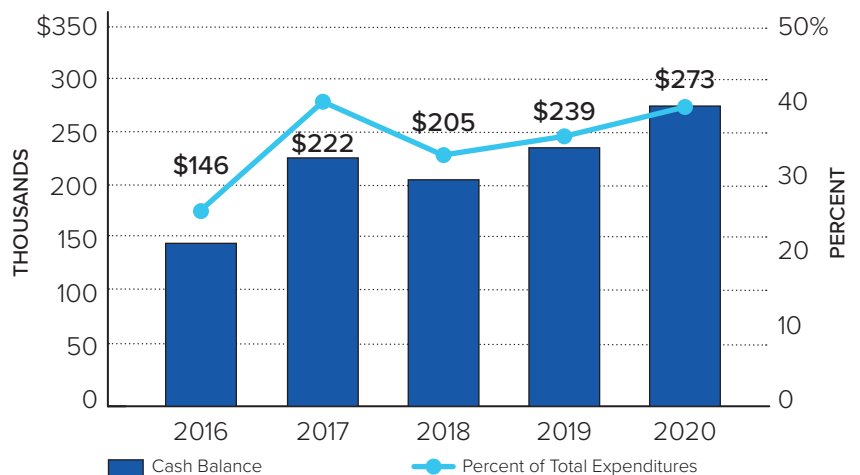
AVERAGE HOMESTEAD VALUE

$49,000

Lagro has the lowest average home value in the County. Its smaller and older housing stock limits the potential for long-term tax base growth without new investment.

LEGEND

![magenta]	Greater than 10% Increase
![blue]	5 to 10%
![cyan]	3 to 5%
![green]	0 to 3%
![yellow]	0 to -3%
![orange]	-3 to -5%
![salmon]	-5 to -10%
![red]	Greater than 10% Decrease
![gray]	Tax Exempt
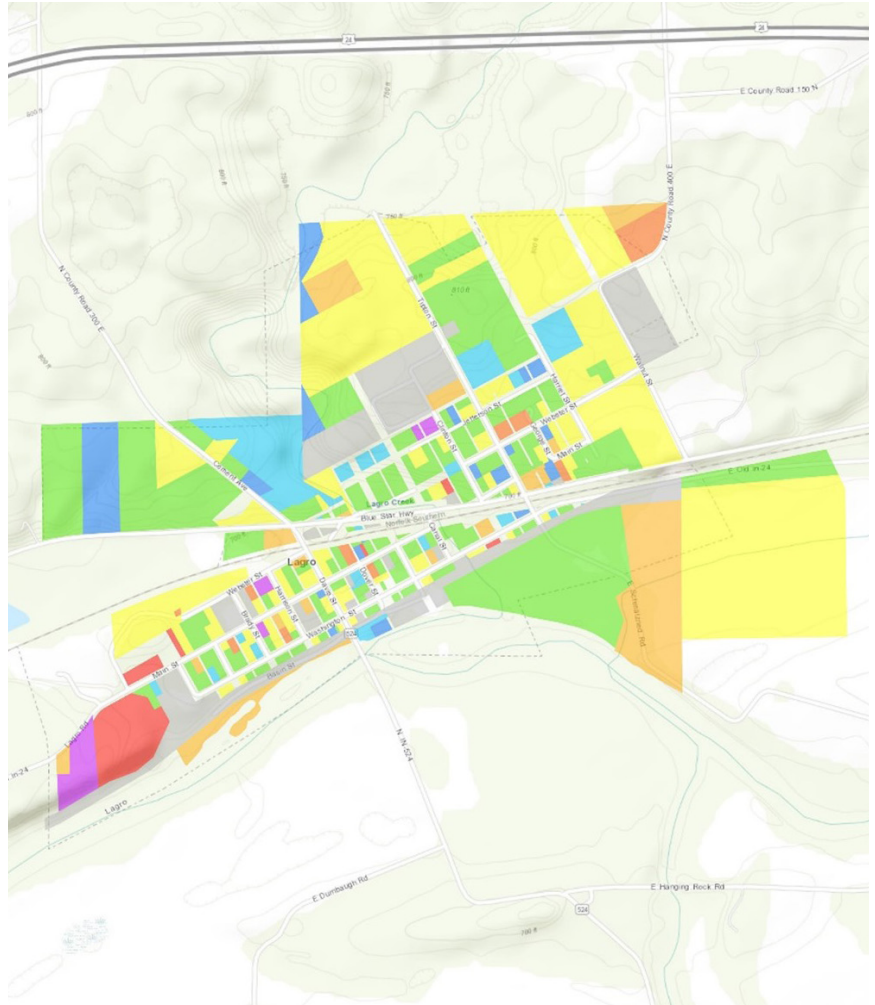
Figure 6.7: Lagro Change in Assessed Land Value (2012-2021)

ADDITIONAL REVENUE SOURCES

| SOURCE	PROJECTED VALUE	DESCRIPTION
County Wheel Tax and Excise Surtax Capacity	**$8,000**	Enacting a County Wheel Tax would generate $8,000 annually for the Town of Lagro.
Tax Increment Financing as a Percentage of Tax Base	**0%**	Tax Increment Financing is not currently utilized in Lagro but could be viable for financing an appropriate project.
Cumulative Capital Development Capacity	**$2,300**	Municipalities can levy a cumulative capital fund rate of $0.05 which would generate $2,300 in Certified Levy.
Total Outstanding Debt	**$259,000**	General obligation debt can be a source of funds for capital projects. Lagro currently carries $259,000 in outstanding debt.

TOWN OF ROANN

Successful plans require an understanding of a communities fiscal capacity and the availability of alternative or new revenue sources. These fiscal profiles provide a summary of key data points relevant to the strategic planning process and are intended as a resource when considering action implementation.

## AVERAGE ANNUAL TAX BASE CHANGE (2015-2022)

+2.0 percent

Roann's tax base has increased by over two percent annually since 2016, the fastest pace of any municipality in Wabash County.
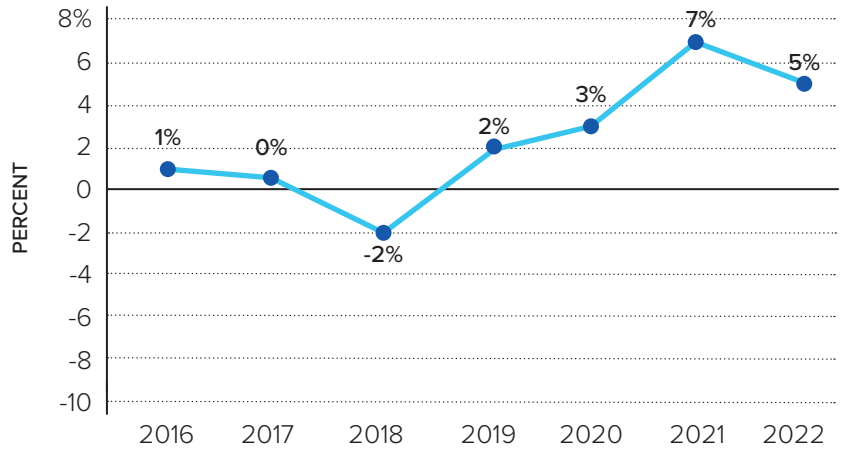
LOCAL FUNDING

$161,000

Local funding sources have remained at a relatively stable rate since 2017. Approximately 40 percent of Roann's local tax revenue is derived from income taxes.
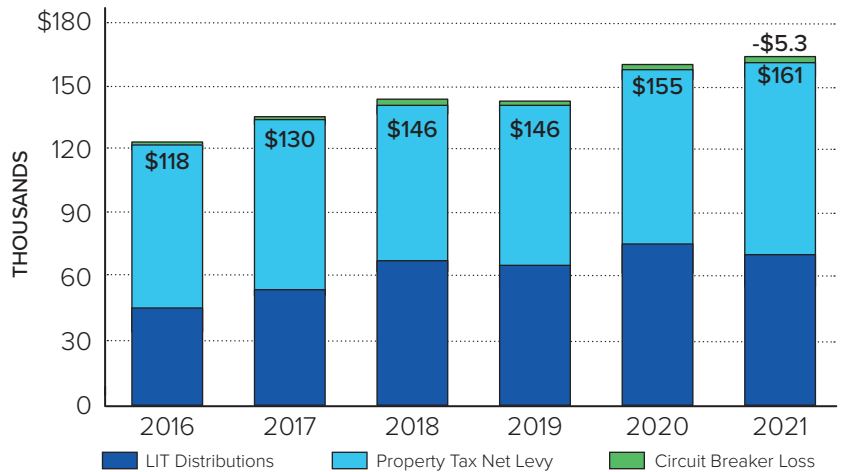
YEAR-END CASH BALANCE

$465,000

Roann's cash reserves have remained stable since 2018 and represent approximately 60 percent of annual expenditures. This provides seven months of ongoing cash reserves.
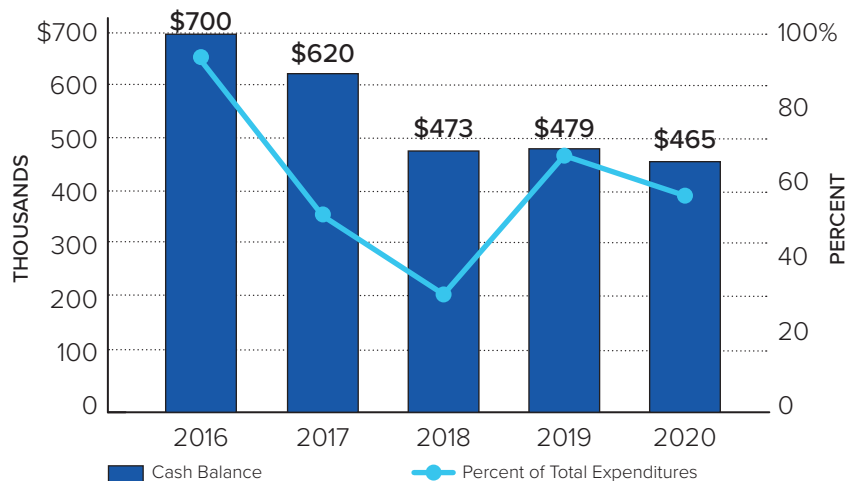
AVERAGE HOMESTEAD VALUE

$88,000

The average home value in Roann is $88K, the highest of the three smaller communities. Most residential property within the town tax base has increased by zero to three percent annually over the last decade.

LEGEND

🟪	Greater than 10% Increase
🟦	5 to 10%
🔵	3 to 5%
🟩	0 to 3%
🟨	0 to -3%
🟧	-3 to -5%
🟠	-5 to -10%
🟥	Greater than 10% Decrease
⬜	Tax Exempt
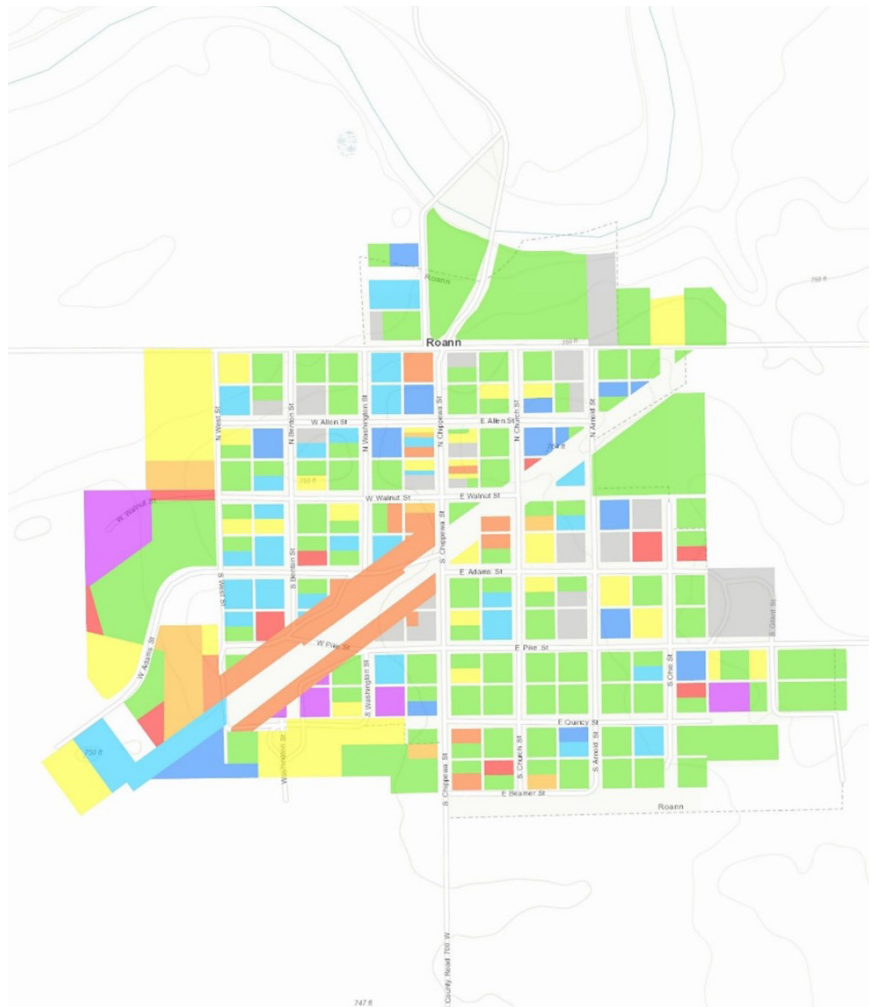
Figure 6.8: Roann Change in Assessed Land Value (2012-2021)

ADDITIONAL REVENUE SOURCES

SOURCE	PROJECTED VALUE	DESCRIPTION
County Wheel Tax and Excise Surtax Capacity	**$14,000**	Enacting a County Wheel Tax would generate $14,000 annually for the Town of Roann.
Tax Increment Financing as a Percentage of Tax Base	**0%**	Tax Increment Financing is not currently utilized in Roann but could be viable for financing an appropriate project.
Cumulative Capital Development Capacity	**$3,700**	Municipalities can levy a cumulative capital fund rate of $0.05 which would generate $3,700 in Certified Levy.
Total Outstanding Debt	**$89,000**	General obligation debt can be a source of funds for capital projects. Roann currently carries $89,000 in outstanding debt.

THE PRIORITIES

While all the actions identified in Imagine One 85 are important, several actions emerged as priorities for addressing the population decline. These priorities were identified based on community input and leadership insight to move the communities of Wabash County forward into the future. Criteria for evaluating priority actions is outlined below. The priorities are organized by the five topical areas and are not intended to be in a ranked order. The numbered actions are described in detail within the specific area of the action agenda.

CRITERIA FOR A "PRIORITY"

Priority actions serve a unique role within Imagine One 85. These represent pathways forward for the county and its communities by establishing a strong foundation for success. Listed below are the criteria used to evaluate the action recommendations and identify priorities.

Direct Challenge

The action squarely addresses the population decline in order to change the county's trajectory.

Foundation Building

The action has a strong potential impact that supports multiple goals of Imagine One 85.

Visible

The action demonstrates the influence of Imagine One 85 and will continue to show progress for the county over time.

Catalytic

The action is capable of opening pathways for other action recommendations.

Return-on-Investment

The action has the potential to generate substantial investment returns for funding partners.

THE PRIORITY ACTIONS

Great Places (GP)

- GP 1.1 Pursue a strategic approach to countywide development and growth.
- GP 1.2 Fund a strategic land acquisition program.
- GP 3.1 Pursue the North Manchester Riverfront redevelopment project.
- GP 5.6 Continue to support the County's commitment to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community for all.
- GP 5.8 Launch the "Mighty Wabash County" micro-grant program.

Prosperity (PR)

- PR 1.1 Further develop small business/ entrepreneur recruitment and development programs.
- PR 2.1 Build a spec, flexible industrial and warehouse facility.
- PR 2.4 Develop a robust business and industry retention program.
- PR 3.1 Establish the vision for excellent education in Wabash County.
- PR 3.2 Expand access to quality and affordable childcare.
- PR 5.1 Pursue a diversified tax revenue model through new sources.

Housing and Community (CO)

- CO 1.1 Develop and monitor a spec-housing program.
- CO 2.1 Launch a housing remodel revolving fund.
- CO 2.3 Identify opportunities for quality affordable housing.
- CO 3.1 Conduct and regularly update a countywide Residential Market Analysis.

Foundations (FD)

- FD 2.1 Significantly expand access to high-speed internet.
- FD 2.3 Increase wastewater capacity and utility access.
- FD 3.4 Complete active transportation plans and implement recommendations.

PLUS (85) PRIORITY

To address population decline, we will...

Look for this symbol next to priority actions identified in Imagine One 85.

FINDING THE FOCUS: WHAT DO WE CONTROL?

It's easy in community planning to try and "boil the ocean", with action recommendations that balloon in scale and intended impact. The scale of the challenges present a root cause dilemma where a solution to one challenge reveals the next, deeper challenge, and so on. The Imagine One 85 Steering Committee were committed to an open and iterative planning process where the emergent challenges would be studied and addressed. But the team also committed to taking on actions recommended through the plan. The Action Agenda is, therefore, tightly focused around the initiatives for which the communities of the county have some degree of control or influence.

ACTION AGENDA
GREAT PLACES

Great places are known for their unique character that is defined by the built and natural environment. Preserving, enhancing, and strengthening these places is a critical element of the Comprehensive Plan. This chapter provides guidance for Wabash County's physical development within the communities, preservation of agricultural land, and protection of natural resources and features. It addresses strategies for supporting main streets, efficient land distribution and use, physical connections between areas, and community experiences around historic, cultural, and natural assets.

GOAL

A range of diverse and beautiful environments – thriving town centers, productive agricultural lands, verdant natural spaces – that, collectively, define Wabash County.

OBJECTIVES

1. Strengthen the efficient use of developed and undeveloped land.

2. Enhance community character through the built environment.

3. Embrace rivers in city and town development.

4. Sustain agriculture as a critical part of the county's identity.

5. Celebrate unique community experiences through attractions and amenities.

6. Ensure physical connections within and between communities.

CHAPTER TOPICS

- Land Use
- Development
- Agriculture
- Natural Resources and Parks
- Historic and Archaeological Resources
- Placemaking

OBJECTIVE 1

Strengthen the efficient use of developed and undeveloped land.

Actions

GP 1.1 Pursue a strategic approach to countywide development and growth. The conceptual development framework leverages the county's previous planning efforts and existing zoning regulations to define appropriate areas for development. This framework along with the future land use and character types provide a pathway for redevelopment, infill development, and new development across the communities of Wabash County. Policies and regulations at all levels of government should strive to support the framework and future land use and character types. Zoning regulations should align with the recommendations of Imagine One 85 to encourage development that helps stimulate the local economy, elevates community character, and provides new attractions and amenities.

PLUS
85
PRIORITY

GP 1.2 Fund a strategic land acquisition program. Land acquisition and consolidation is one of many economic development tools for attracting business growth. Local organizations can monitor strategic properties to develop an incentive package and process that makes establishing a new business easier. By establishing a funded acquisition program, local economic professionals can purchase strategic sites for marketing to emerging or growing industries. This program could also support landbanking, where properties that are underused, abandoned, or foreclosed are purchased for future redevelopment opportunities. They can work with communities to understand zoning limitations, utility infrastructure, and site amenities that reduce barriers for relocating an industry to Wabash County. The fund should operate through a strong partnership to ensure that all groups are represented and involved when acquiring and selling property. Efforts should focus on promoting economic development and neighborhood revitalization that enhances the local community.

GP 1.3 Support continued reinvestment in Downtown Lagro. The Town of Lagro has seen significant recent investment. Where possible, programs and projects should build on this momentum to encourage additional investment in Downtown Lagro, providing local entrepreneurs incentives for enhancing the community. This includes leveraging opportunities for restaurants, trail connections, housing options, and other similar investments.

GP 1.4 Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of existing industrial structures. Projects that revitalize vacant or run down industrial sites - especially those located in central parts of a community - can bring new life to areas that have been neglected. These sites provide opportunities for creative and adaptive reuse tailored to each community.

GP 1.5 Develop a pop-up retail and temporary use program on vacant lots and in vacant buildings. This program would allow small businesses to rent tenant space in Downtown or Town Center areas of the county. Short-term leases would promote local business growth while activating vacant storefronts and reducing underutilized buildings.

PLUS 85 PRIORITY

LANDBANKING

Landbanking is an economic development tool where governmental entities or non-profit organizations purchase vacant, abandoned, or foreclosed properties. Consolidating land allows for future resale and redevelopment opportunities, converting the land into productive use that benefits local property taxes. Examples in Wabash County may include the ongoing redevelopment of the East Market Street corridor and the former General Tire site.

OBJECTIVE 2

Enhance community character through the built environment.

Actions

GP 2.1 Fund a countywide Facade Improvement Fund. The City of Wabash recently gained access to $1.3 million in matching funds to restore 23 historic building facades in the Downtown area. Expanding a facade improvement program to serve and benefit all communities will provide a greater distribution of revitalization efforts around the county.

GP 2.2 Maintain an endangered historic building list. This list would serve as an inventory of endangered historic buildings and could include a prioritization scheme for future preservation efforts.

GP 2.3 Support eligibility determinations and designation of structures and districts on the National Register of Historic Places. Wabash County has pursued historic designations for over four decades. Continuing this legacy of preservation will require proactive efforts to ensure that the county retains its historic character and heritage.

OBJECTIVE 3

Embrace rivers in city and town development.

Actions

GP 3.1 Pursue the North Manchester Riverfront redevelopment project. The riverfront redevelopment project is a significant recommendation that emerged from the North Manchester Comprehensive Plan. The project establishes a regional amenity along the Eel River that connects green and open space to Downtown North Manchester. It includes a river trailway, pedestrian plaza and boardwalk, community pavilion, river access, and many other amenities that build upon the core of the community. This project would redefine downtown, providing economic opportunities for local businesses and recreational attractions for residents and visitors. Efforts should strive to support the implementation of the riverfront redevelopment project as a catalyst for the community. Partnerships should be established to identify and advocate for funding to pursue property acquisition along the river. A phased buildout should be evaluated that seeks to establish the riverfront project over time, making design and funding less burdensome.

PLUS
85
PRIORITY

GP 3.2 Continue to build access and use of the Eel and Wabash Rivers. The county's rivers are great assets for outdoor recreation, but limited public access has kept these resources from reaching their full potential. Creating additional boat launches and other access points will provide community members and visitors with more opportunities to responsibly enjoy the county's natural features.

GP 3.3 Create incentives to encourage wide natural buffers along streams. Vegetative buffers offer environmental health incentives by filtering sediment and contaminants from stormwater before they reach the water body. Incentives to create and preserve these buffers may encourage developers and landowners to make wise environmental decisions that will help maintain water quality in the county.

OBJECTIVE 4

Sustain agriculture as a critical part of the county's identity.

Actions

GP 4.1 Expand opportunities for agritourism across the county. Attracting visitors to farms for recreational, educational, or retail purposes may increase profit margins for local farmers. Supporting and promoting activities such as farm tours, animal interactions, pick-your-own produce, and other experiences would capitalize on existing agricultural assets.

GP 4.2 Study the impact of tile drainage on local flooding. Tiling practices recently introduced in the county have raised concerns about increased flooding in communities downstream such as La Fontaine. A study should be conducted to understand the impacts of these tiling practices and how to mitigate potential flooding.

GP 4.3 Build on the local farm-to-table movement. In 2017, six percent of Wabash farms were already selling directly to consumers and several farms were selling directly to schools. Encouraging and expanding these types of transactions could help support the local economy and foster a greater sense of community.

OBJECTIVE 5

Celebrate unique community experiences through attractions and amenities.

Actions

GP 5.1 Explore a state park designation for the areas around Salamonie Lake. The Salamonie Lake Reservoir area covers more than 12,500 acres in the eastern part of the county. Attaining a State Park designation has the potential to increase tax revenues, drive tourism, increase amenities, and strengthen environmental preservation efforts.

GP 5.2 Work with local entrepreneurs to build a restaurant in Downtown La Fontaine. Increasing amenities and attractions along main streets can serve both nearby residents and members of other communities within the county. La Fontaine has an opportunity to grow local business while providing a destination for Wabash County residents.

GP 5.3 Build a community park in Roann. Roann is a small but beautiful community that would benefit immensely from a designated community park. Providing a park amenity would enhance the character of Roann while providing residents with direct access to recreational opportunities.

GP 5.4 Expand summer arts offerings. Building upon the successes of the Honeywell Arts Academy for professionally pathed musicians, opportunities to create additional summer arts (visual and performing) and other "camp" experiences for all ages should be explored. This initiative could involve connecting with agri-tourism, farm-to-table efforts, as well as rivers, trails, and reservoirs to build a summer "camp" experience.

GP 5.5 Prepare a comprehensive marketing plan. The communities of the county have important assets and opportunities. They could better realize their potential, but more needs to be done to "tell the story." A comprehensive marketing strategy would include research of the assets and opportunities and specific markets that could be targeted. It would also include the leadership of unique and impactful institutions like the Honeywell Foundation and Manchester University. The marketing strategy should look inward to the county as well as externally as the first step to advance the way residents, employees, businesses, and institutions experience the communities. Branding efforts around the County's economic opportunities, ecotourism, and agritourism along with wayfinding and county signage should further support the message. It should also identify opportunities for strengthening resident's and worker's emotional attachment to place.

GP 5.6 Continue to support the County's commitment to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community for all. Wabash County is committed to celebrating the diversity of its residents and welcoming all backgrounds to its communities. Resources should ensure that existing programs and initiatives are supported, accessible, and made available to all residents of the county. Efforts to celebrate the county's diversity should be explored, aligning with local opportunities including fairs, festivals, and civic events to share the unique characteristics of the community. Services should also encourage aging in place that provides resources for all age groups in the community.

GP 5.7 Establish a Wabash County peer community program. A peer community program encourages neighboring communities to evaluate and share programs, policies, or initiatives that have been successful in their community for potential countywide implementation. The communities would collaborate with one another to share lessons learned, discuss regional challenges and opportunities, and scale unique or strategic investments throughout the county.

GP 5.8 Launch the "Mighty Wabash County" micro-grant program. Micro-grants allow anyone to seek funds in small amounts (approximately $1000 or less) for fun creative projects that take place in the county. These efforts build pride in the community and encourage taking action around projects or programs that excite residents. Establishing a micro-grant program enables the community to get involved in shaping their quality of life and quality of place. The program could define different categories of projects that support the vision and objectives of Imagine One 85 such as entrepreneurship and beautification, offering annual opportunities to apply for funding. Grant opportunities can extend over several years to maintain ongoing success stories or help elevate programs or projects to new scales.

GP 5.9 Initiate an inter-community visitation program. The county should establish a program to encourage visiting local sites or businesses across the county. Local "passports" or unique trails can incentivize residents to explore the distinct places in their county and become a "visitor" in their own towns. Tourism connections can attract additional activity, showcasing the places that local residents frequent along with regional destinations.

PLUS
85
PRIORITY

OBJECTIVE 6

Ensure physical connections within and between communities.

Actions

GP 6.1 Improve connections between the University and Main Street in North Manchester. Manchester University is a distinct asset to the community and through increased and improved connections will strengthen ease of access for Manchester students to enjoy downtown North Manchester.

GP 6.2 Conduct a study on opportunities for trail extensions. Trails serve as a major recreational resource for residents and attract visitors to the County that help support local businesses. Conducting a study would identify major corridors for extending the existing trails based on community feedback and local destinations.

GP 6.3 Perform a feasibility analysis for pedestrian improvements on Miami Street in the City of Wabash. Improvements such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and other streetscape elements may increase pedestrian safety and enhance the overall design. Miami Street, in the City of Wabash, could serve as an initial pilot project for pursuing improvements that can be scaled to other corridors.

ACTION AGENDA
PROSPERITY

Prosperity, both personal and community, is a core element of the Comprehensive Plan. Wabash County's economy is dependent on fostering a strong entrepreneurial spirit that attracts growing industries and a talented workforce. This chapter emphasizes the economic advantages the county and its communities can leverage to grow its industrial portfolio, support educational and professional development, and advance the local economy. The strategies identified will ensure that the communities of Wabash County achieve a strong and sustainable future.

GOAL

A strong and growing network of communities built through their commitment to competitive and lifelong education, support for entrepreneurs and local businesses, and investment into bold projects and initiatives.

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide support for local entrepreneurs.
2. Encourage continued growth of the county's industrial areas.
3. Elevate an environment to develop, attract, and retain talent.
4. Advocate for improving personal prosperity, health, and safety.
5. Maintain a fiscally strong economy.

CHAPTER TOPICS

- Economic Development
- Fiscal Health and Resiliency
- Education
- Public Health

OBJECTIVE 1

Provide support for local entrepreneurs.

Actions

PR 1.1 Further develop small business / entrepreneur recruitment and development programs. The communities of Wabash County are supported by a strong network of local business owners and innovators. These individuals continue the tradition, providing new opportunities and investment to grow their unique industries. Building upon local entrepreneurs, a recruitment and development program would seek out like minded individuals who can provide essential goods and services to the greater Wabash County community. Emerging industries can be marketed to identify "what's missing" in the county today and the resources in place to support start-ups. Connecting these new businesses to the entrepreneurial community will ensure they leverage all of the county's assets in establishing, maintaining, and expanding their business. Economic incentives, both current and potential, can also be shared with local business start-ups as an incubation method for remaining in their community. Resources and local partnerships should be aligned to continue and expand programs offered through Grow Wabash County.

PLUS
85
PRIORITY

PR 1.2 Revisit local business support systems to ensure the right services are being provided. Many local partners have offered long standing and successful systems to support local business growth. As industries shift, these courses, incentives, and programs should be reviewed and evaluated for potential updates to ensure that the local business community has a strong and vibrant support network.

PR 1.3 Expand internship opportunities to support workforce needs. There is a widespread need for employees. The Grow Wabash County is working to address this need, but university students should be considered a resource, from short-term internships to long-term careers. Internships can be a pathway for the students and fill the needs of employers. This could be a comprehensive program or handled by the employers individually. With either option a tracking and reporting a process should be created.

OBJECTIVE 2

Encourage continued growth of the county's industrial areas.

Actions

PR 2.1 Build a spec, flexible industrial and warehouse facility. The county is currently limited in the diversity and availability of specific industrial spaces. Although land is readily available, the cost of new construction and infrastructure connectivity presents a considerable challenge for attracting business growth. To address this challenge, the county should collaborate on the construction of a spec industrial and warehouse facility within an industrial park. The facility would be an appropriate size to allow for large single-tenant users while also providing sufficient space for subdivision to encourage smaller, multi-tenant industries. The "skeleton" structure would provide the essential services and framework for companies to fit out their individual spaces in a timely and cost-effective manner. Similar communities across Indiana and the country have leveraged this as an economic incentive, paving the way for Wabash County to establish its own marketable facility.

PR 2.2 Continue to support and adapt the county's industrial parks. These industrial parks provide opportunities for economic growth and job creation for current and future residents. With significant land available for development, these parks should receive the support necessary to attract new industries such as zoning alignment, utility connections, marketing, and economic incentives.

PLUS
85
PRIORITY

PR 2.3 Establish a Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Strategy. Wabash County and the State of Indiana have a robust history of attracting international investment into the community as evidenced by the four internationally owned companies currently located in the county. Wabash County should create a robust foreign direct investment strategy to pursue international investment and further explore opportunities to support these efforts such as establishing key Sister City relationships and creating the environment to support these new investments.

PR 2.4 Develop a robust business and industry retention program. Wabash County should build upon its existing business retention and expansion (BRE) efforts to ensure that businesses already invested in Wabash County have the necessary support to not only survive but thrive. A strong existing industry base is critical to attracting new businesses to Wabash County.

OBJECTIVE 3

Elevate an environment to develop, attract, and retain talent.

Actions

PR 3.1 Establish the vision for excellent education in Wabash County. Recent studies have revealed opportunities for the county to strengthen and expand its educational system. As an important first step, the county should collaborate on a vision for the future of lifelong learning across the communities of Wabash County. Major stakeholders including school districts, public agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations, and private groups should convene an ongoing discussion around the existing educational system and desired outcomes for the county. This should result in a unified vision that defines the end result and clear steps towards achieving the outcomes identified by the group.

PR 3.2 Expand access to quality and affordable childcare. Early Childhood Education has many known benefits for the developing child. Early childhood education programs also has benefits for families who work full time, employers who want to attract young workers, and communities that count on workforce participation for revenue. Lack of reliable, high quality childcare in Wabash County was responsible for millions of dollars in lost wages, hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost tax revenue, and the loss of the full-time equivalent of nearly 200 employees. In 64% of households with children under five, all adults are working and in need of care for their children. Affordable, quality care is essential for positive education outcomes for children, our future workforce, the retention of current employees and the recruitment of new employees.

PR 3.3 Invest in arts-infused learning opportunities for students in grades 1 though 5. education. In collaboration with Honeywell Arts and Entertainment, opportunities should be explore to invest in Visual Thinking Strategies and Arts Integrated Residencies. These learning opportunities will strive to provide curriculum-based, arts-infused learning for all Wabash County students between grades 1-5.

PR 3.4 Strengthen Community Foundation Early Award Scholarship and the Wabash County Promise as public school/private charity collaborations. To create a generation of educated, engaged, and self-sufficient citizens who possess post-secondary preparedness, we champion investments in these programs, which harness the motivational power of saving and early scholarships to create identity, agency, self-sufficiency and a view of the future as education dependent. Early assets help families see post-secondary education and training as the pathway to success, higher paying jobs and a bright future. Assets earned early raise parental and student educational expectations and serve to reduce financial barriers to pursuing training and education after high school.

PR 3.5 Continue the Community Foundation's College Scholarship program for grades 9-12. Build on the consciousness-raising work of early award scholarships by exposing students in grades 9-12 to traditional senior scholarships. The longtime practice of awarding college scholarships to 12th grade students robs the foundation's substantial scholarship funds of the power they have to incentivize college-going during the early years of high school when school work gets more difficult and some students give up on education after high school. Expand senior scholarship application process downward to the ninth grade as a way to build self-confidence in one's own ability to afford college.

PR 3.6 Expand exposure programs for students to include advanced manufacturing and agricultural jobs. The County has a strong history with agricultural innovation and is home to several technical and vocational programs such as Heartland Career Center. These provide unique hands-on-training in emerging industries located within local communities. With the growth potential for advanced manufacturing and agricultural jobs, efforts should support connecting local school districts with local businesses to expose this as an alternative career paths to those currently covered.

PR 3.7 Work with employers to adapt workforce training for adults based on the needs of employees. As industry innovation continues and the workforce demographic changes, employee training needs will shift. Periodic review and evaluation of training courses, programs, and initiatives ensures that employees are provided essential skills to support local industries. Continue funding grants to employees and individuals who are willing to train for a high demand job or skill up in a high demand field.

PR 3.8 Explore the potential for a Purdue Polytech Campus. The Purdue Polytechnic Institute is a growing extension of Purdue University that offers access to technology degrees in a local setting. These extensions provide additional post-secondary options that align with the strong industries in Wabash County. An open dialogue should be established with Purdue University to explore a potential extension in the county, leveraging Wabash County' strong relationship with agricultural and manufacturing industries to guide the conversation.

OBJECTIVE 4

Advocate for improving personal prosperity, health, and safety.

Actions

PR 4.1 Prepare a countywide health response report to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The adequacy of the health system, resiliency of local businesses, and adaptability of the education system have all been dramatically tested throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. A countywide report will help to understand how various sectors within the county were affected and how they responded. It will also provide insights into strategies for improving resiliency in the future.

PR 4.2 Initiate a Safe Routes to School Program. The Safe Routes to School program encourages youth activity while defining safe and efficient ways for children to get from their neighborhood to school. Establishing this program will promote an active lifestyle through collaborative efforts to identify routes throughout every community.

PR 4.3 Connect residents without health insurance to applicable federal programs. 6.8% of the County's population age 19 and over does not have health insurance. Providing information and/or assistance in applying for relevant federal programs may decrease the portion of the population without health insurance coverage.

PR 4.4 Work with local hospitals and healthcare providers to address transportation gaps. Healthcare facilities are concentrated in the City of Wabash and North Manchester. Older residents, particularly from the smaller communities, often face difficulties accessing these locations due to transportation limitations and a lack of mobility options. Exploring new and creative transportation options may help improve health access and outcomes for community members. Partnerships with local institution can assist in funding mobility options that provide direct service for those individuals seeking healthcare.

PR 4.5 Create a kindness initiative. The past five or so years saw a significant decline in civility in the country. These are tough times for many people, whether it is a pandemic or economic opportunity. The communities of Wabash County are not immune to this phenomenon. In general, people are less inclined to live and or invest in places that are divisive. Some of this is about politics, some of it is about race and much of it could traced to fear and uncertainty. Some in the county are addressing this. In October 2021, the Board of Trustees of Manchester University adopted an anti-racism resolution to declare the institutions intent on treating people better. To facilitate greater civility and kindness—and stronger brand—a kindness initiative should be created and executed. This can start small and grow to be comprehensive, but it should with visible and impactful activities.

PR 4.6 Develop a strategic plan for a community support network for university students. Manchester University has numerous outwardly focused programs to assist the community. This asset—and its impact on Wabash County—could be greatly enhanced with a focused external program. In other words, a focus by the Town of North Manchester to look inward, to see what the community could do to impact the non-academic challenges of students. A strategic plan should be developed to understand the needs and to create opportunities to support the university students. This could take many forms, from providing additional amenities to addressing food insecurity to expanding internship opportunities in the community.

OBJECTIVE 5

Maintain a fiscally strong economy.

Actions

PR 5.1 Pursue a diversified tax revenue model through new sources. Wabash County is dependent on two primary sources of revenue for local services: property tax and income tax. The fiscal analysis identified that while the county has seen significant growth in income tax, it is nearing the maximum threshold leaving little room for additional revenue. Property taxes on the other hand, while more consistent, have seen little change over time due to the lack of development across the county. As the communities of Wabash County plan for the future, additional revenue sources should be incorporated into the general services stream. Wheel tax and Food and Beverage taxes represent two primary streams that can greatly improve the financial stability of the county. Pursuing these and additional revenue streams will strengthen resources that can be used for capital improvements and county services, providing long-term benefits and returns.

PR 5.2 Review the fiscal model for county and city expenditure allocations. Complementing new revenue streams, the county and city should evaluate how funding is allocated based on the detailed fiscal model. This analysis identified critical areas for how the county and city could better utilize existing revenue to provide high-levels of service and address essential infrastructure. An annual or periodic review cycle should be established to monitor progress of new revenue streams and allocations for expenditures to maximize return-on-investments.

PR 5.3 Communicate bonding capacity and "best use" analysis to local leadership. The analysis and evaluation revealed through Imagine One 85 provides an in-depth understanding of the county's financial structure. This information will have a significant impact on how local governments can and should operate moving forward. Local leadership should be convened in a series of conversations to share the results of the analysis and discuss potential pathways forward that improve the fiscal resiliency of Wabash County.

PR 5.4 Align local plans and Imagine One 85 priorities for federal funding opportunities. Several federal programs, such as the American Rescue Plan of 2021 and the pending national Infrastructure Bill, offer a variety of resources to local governments. Establishing partnerships and collaboration among different agencies may help to apply for federal funding to implement priority actions.

PR 5.5 Adopt a countywide Capital Improvement Plan funding model.

A Capital Improvement Plan identifies priority investments for the County that support the business community and residents. Major infrastructure is monitored for maintenance and significant upgrades, allowing the county to plan for large-scale investments several years in advance. The Plan should be continuously monitored and updated to align investment with other local and regional agencies to repair aging infrastructure and pursue improvement projects to bring systems and networks to modern standards.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

Neighborhoods represent the quality of life characteristics that attract people to a community. They reflect the lifestyles, personality, and features that residents desire and are essential to the future of Wabash County and its communities. This chapter focuses on the residential options and design elements that compose neighborhood character. It addresses strategies for diversifying housing stock across each community, elevating aesthetics in established neighborhoods, and pursuing opportunities for appropriate growth and revitalization efforts.

GOAL

A healthy housing system with a wide range of options, safe and attractive neighborhoods, and choices for residents of all ages and lifestyles.

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase community housing options and opportunities.

2. Strengthen the vitality, character, and design of existing neighborhoods.

3. Establish models for monitoring housing demand and promoting Wabash County as a welcoming community.

CHAPTER TOPICS

- Housing
- Neighborhoods

OBJECTIVE 1

Increase community housing options and opportunities.

Actions

CO 1.1 **Develop and monitor a new spec-housing program.** Spec-housing refers to move-in ready homes that are constructed by a homebuilder for a target residential market. The county has seen little to no recent residential development with many homebuilders focused on other areas of the region. Developing a program in collaboration with local homebuilders can provide the county and its communities with new residential growth. A partnership should be established to analyze the residential market to identify specific housing types to pursue. Model home plans should consider existing character in each community, matching the aesthetic and architectural features. Expedited permitting and inspections can ensure the spec-housing is constructed quickly and timely, further supporting new residential growth. Periodic review and updates should occur that refine the program as new housing is constructed across the county.

PLUS
(85)
PRIORITY

CO 1.2 Expand housing options for students and workers. Supporting the next generation of workforce is an essential component for the county's population growth. The county should encourage the creation of diverse housing options that serve students, young professionals, and working families. Housing may include single-family, small-lot single-family, townhomes, triplexes and duplexes, or other similar missing housing types.

CO 1.3 Build and launch a countywide housing development task force. Stimulating the housing market will require a diverse group of stakeholders. A task force composed of key public, private, and non-profit organizations should be established to identify the critical challenges for the housing market and develop methods for supporting new residential growth.

CO 1.4 Enable Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) countywide. ADUs provide increased housing diversity and affordability without altering the character of a neighborhood. Allowing development of ADUs countywide, through the zoning ordinance, reduces barriers that would increase the cost of housing development and provides unique options for current and future residents.

CO 1.5 Align resources and regulations to support infill development. Resources for funding opportunities, loan programs, and development regulations should be reviewed and updated to support strategic infill development. Prioritizing smaller communities protects outward growth and encourages investment outside of main streets.

CO 1.6 Establish a countywide Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO). Wabash County should establish a countywide housing development organization (CHDO) responsible for launching and monitoring new housing initiatives. This can include incentives for residential development or programs like My Chatt House which reduce barriers for constructing infill residential while protecting existing neighborhoods.

CO 1.7 Explore the establishment of residential housing incentives. The county should explore establishing residential development tools that will help incentivize further investment in the community such as new residential Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts or other housing designations as available. Local, state, and federal initiatives should also be monitored as they become available to implement.

MY CHATT HOUSE

My Chatt House is a resource developed for the Chattanooga, TN community to encourage appropriate development in two established neighborhoods. A key component of this program is the preparation of pre-designed building plans for both single-family and multi-family homes. The homes are based on architectural styles found in the neighborhoods and include details for the minimum lot size, floor plans, gross square footage, and design elements such as porches, patios, etc. These plans streamline the process for homebuilders by outlining the requirements for homes that match the existing neighborhood character. Local manufacturers are identified for building material specifications to further encourage high-quality design from local industries. The information and supporting graphics reduce the risk for infill development, defining clear expectations for architectural character while reducing overall building costs for the homebuilder.

OBJECTIVE 2

Strengthen the vitality, character, and design of existing neighborhoods.

Actions

CO 2.1 Launch a housing remodel revolving fund. Wabash County has an aging housing stock which places an increasing burden on homeowners to maintain and modernize their homes. Providing financial incentives to lessen this burden provides residents with a system for seeking renovations that enhance return-of-investment for individuals and the surrounding neighborhoods. A remodel revolving fund is one potential option where renovation funding is provided to a homeowner, in partnership with a local lender. These loans provide low interest options with specific deadlines for repayment where the money returned through the loan is leveraged to fund additional remodels. As more residents use the loan, more funding returns allowing the application to expand across the county and its communities. This financial incentive ensures the housing stock, despite its overall age, retains modern amenities and investment is continuously provided toward neighborhood revitalization. The county should identify local partners to support the initial fund and develop clear application guidelines and requirements based on best management practices.

CO 2.2 Launch a rental property registration and management program. Renters are often vulnerable to cost, condition, and maintenance factors due to lack of policy and management. Requiring registration and adherence to general requirements will ensure that rental properties protect renters and contribute to the aesthetics of the community.

CO 2.3 Identify opportunities for quality affordable housing. Providing a diverse array of housing includes ensuring that quality affordable housing options are readily available. In some areas, properties have deteriorated or been neglected to the point where they become health and safety hazards for the neighborhood. Efforts should inventory where existing quality affordable housing exists today, where options are needed, and align resources to support expanding the quality housing stock. Priority should be given to those areas where housing was removed due to condition to ensure communities have a access to a wide array of types, available to all income levels in the county.

CO 2.4 Establish development standards for "complete" neighborhood design. These standards should specify a street pattern of walkable blocks and multiple connections to adjacent neighborhoods. Residents living in these neighborhoods should have easy access to pocket or community parks and direct connection to local businesses.

CO 2.5 Create countywide blight abatement guidelines. Targeted demolition for deteriorating buildings can serve to improve neighborhood safety and promote stabilization. The program should include evaluation criteria for a structure's viability and procedures for supporting efforts to redevelop the site that benefits the neighborhood and greater community. Support should be given to existing code enforcement officers and procedures to assist with addressing blight across the county.

OBJECTIVE 3

Establish models for monitoring housing demand and promoting Wabash County as a welcoming community.

Actions

CO 3.1 **Conduct and regularly update a countywide Residential Market Analysis.** A market analysis will reveal the latent demand for certain types of housing which can be leveraged for strategic housing development. Maintaining an up-to-date analysis will ensure that Wabash County is attracting the right type of housing for current and future residents.

PLUS
85
PRIORITY

CO 3.2 **Update and modernize the County Government website.** By improving the user-friendliness and connections to local resources, the website can serve as an online gateway for Wabash County and its communities.

CO 3.3 **Build a "Welcome to Wabash County" package and program for new residents.** Developing a welcome package for new residents embraces the people who make the county unique and offers an opportunity to share highlights about the assets and amenities available across the county.

CO 3.4 **Develop a model short-term rental policy (AirBnB, VRBO, etc.).** Short-term or seasonal rentals can impact a neighborhood if not monitored or managed. Establishing a policy on nuisance, maintenance, and registration requirements will prevent short-term rentals from negatively impacting the surrounding community.

CO 3.5 **Create a model employment-residence policy.** A major institution/employer recently created policy the requires senior-level employees (executive and directors) to live in Wabash County. This is a new (2021) policy intended to increase the number of residents living in Wabash County. Given the significant trend of declining population in the county, a model employment-residence policy should be created. This model could be used by any employer in the County on a voluntary basis.

CO 3.6 **Design a "Welcome to the Communities of Wabash County" program for college students.** The 1,500 students of Manchester University represent about 25 percent of the population of North Manchester and significant part of Wabash County. Every one of these students represents a potential resident and/or employee of the County. In the short-term, they also represent four-year tourists. While there are efforts to welcome students in North Manchester, the efforts could me more robust and include other parts of the County. It is reported that many students do not feel comfortable on their adopted community. A welcome program could be collaborative and impactful to connect students to the community and, in doing so, strengthen the community.

ACTION AGENDA
FOUNDATION

A community is strengthened by foundational elements including infrastructure, mobility, and emergency preparedness. These components have a strong correlation to how the community experiences the built and natural environment and will support the realization of many recommendations. This chapter explores the relationship of the county's infrastructure systems, roadway network, and mobility options on achieving the vision for Wabash County. It outlines strategies that build upon the recommendations of the previous chapters, providing the pathway towards a strong, safe, and vibrant future.

GOAL
A reliable base of enabling infrastructure helps to connect, grow, and protect our communities, while also supporting logical investments that expand opportunities for residents and businesses.

OBJECTIVES
1. Strengthen infrastructure management programs and funding.
2. Modernize and upgrade infrastructure throughout the county.
3. Improve community connections, design, and efficiency.

CHAPTER TOPICS
- Transportation
- Facilities and Infrastructure
- Hazard Mitigation

OBJECTIVE 1

Strengthen infrastructure management programs and funding sources.

Actions

FD 1.1 Increase funding for maintenance of local roads and bridges, and continue pursuing matching funds. The calculated deferred maintenance backlog is quite large for Wabash County, La Fontaine and, to a less extent for Wabash and North Manchester. Roads in poor condition often have degraded to the point that they need an overlay of asphalt or to be reconstructed, driving most of the backlog - estimated to be at least $146 million for the County and $1.2 million for La Fontaine. While pavement conditions are generally better in Wabash and North Manchester, pavement condition backlogs are estimated at $4.5 million and $1.2 million respectively. With respect to local bridges which are maintained by the county, a backlog of at least $34 million has been estimated. The need is great and additional funding will be needed to slow the decline and make progress toward improving pavement and bridge condition ratings. Additional work may need to be performed by area maintenance superintendents to forecast

pavement deterioration and the construction and maintenance program that can be funded given anticipated revenues. With this information, it should be possible to estimate the amount of additional funding required to slowly improve conditions to state standards over a plan horizon, e.g. 10 years. This may serve as a justification for pursuing additional funding from taxpayers.

FD 1.2 Prioritize maintenance activities across the roadway network. While roadway pavement conditions are reported in aggregate, poor conditions on heavily traveled roads create a disproportionate impact on the traveling public. As such, some agencies prioritize maintenance based on a road's importance within the overall network. With such a system, routes are assigned to a tier based on functional classification, importance to emergency response, and/or traffic volumes. Each tier may then have corresponding pavement condition standards, funding priority, or both. Over time, conditions will improve and be more consistent across the network of higher tier (priority) roads, and this may be achieved more quickly. This is of particular importance given how large the pavement maintenance is, and presumably how many years and more funding it may take to substantially address this issue. Local maintaining agencies should add a tiered maintenance approach to the strategies listed in their Asset Management Plans. This approach should include the establishment of tier categories and their respective condition rating targets. This could be done by assigning a higher share of funding per lane mile to higher tiers, tackling rehabilitation projects on high tier roads first, and / or by some other strategy.

OBJECTIVE 2

Modernize and upgrade infrastructure throughout the county.

Actions

FD 2.1 Significantly expand access to high-speed internet. The COVID-19 Pandemic revealed the importance of internet connectivity for both education and work and the discrepancies with the current infrastructure network. As an essential utility for the county, priority should be placed on rural areas with communities that are underserved in this respect. Additionally, the availability of high speed internet can assist in attracting businesses considering locating in the County. Ensuring communities and specifically employment centers have access to high-speed internet will provide an additional asset for attracting and retaining emerging businesses.

PLUS
85
PRIORITY

FD 2.2 Pursue a phased approach to improving downtown streetscapes in Wabash and North Manchester. The downtowns of Wabash and North Manchester are both charming places supported by substantial streetscape investments. Yet, more could be done to help activate and enhance these places. Examples may include the creating sidewalk dining parklets and introducing more planters or street trees. Further, some crosswalks may benefit from being marked with high-visibility pavement markings patterns such as ladder style crosswalks. For this recommendation, local leaders and businesses are encouraged to assess their respective downtowns and look for opportunities to enhance these spaces with a focus being increasing comfort, safety, and access through incremental improvements.

FD 2.3 Increase wastewater capacity and utility access. Access to utilities is critical to both public health and economic development. Efforts should strive to provide additional capacity for all utilities but specifically with wastewater management. The City of Wabash and Town of North Manchester in particular has an immediate need for additional capacity due to outward development growth. State and federal funding should be explored for expanding and upgrading existing facilities.

FD 2.4 Plan for the long-term phase out of community septic in small communities. Several areas in the county are dependent on outdated and aging septic systems. The county should collaborate with small communities to identify critical infrastructure needs and the long-term removal of private septic systems.

FD 2.5 Support opportunities for "homegrown" ridesharing businesses and organizations. Alternative mobility options would both serve community members with limited access to transportation and promote small business development. Efforts in line with these priorities should be encouraged and supported.

FD 2.6 Improve Cass Street (SR-15) between Harrison and Wedcor avenues in the City of Wabash to include complete street accommodations. Today, N. Cass Street has no sidewalk or path to serve those walking and biking in the corridor between Harrison and Wedcor avenues. This is particularly problematic because this stretch likely has pedestrian and bicyclist activity due to a high concentration of retail uses and multifamily residential developments. Preferable accommodations may include a shared use path on both sides of the road, a shared use path on one side and sidewalk on the other side, or buffered bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the road. The same multimodal treatment does not need to be used along the entire corridor. Beyond these improvements, the corridor could benefit from the addition of street trees, aesthetic enhancements, and consolidation of access points.

PLUS
85
PRIORITY

FD 2.7 Improve County Road 1200 N (SR-114) in North Manchester to include complete street accommodations. The most recent traffic counts in INDOT's count database show traffic volumes vary from 6,200 to 6,500, much less than the 25,000 to 35,000 vehicles a similar five-lane road facility can typically accommodate. Given the lack of sidewalks or side paths and lack of traffic, it's recommended to consider reallocating some of the roadway for pedestrians and bicyclists. Practically, this may occur by closing the outside or curb-adjacent travel lanes. In the short-run, these can be marked as a shoulder; however, the best long-term option is to provide physical separation between traffic and both pedestrians and bicyclists. Separation can be provided by removing pavement, followed by possibly installing curb and gutter adjacent to the remaining travel lanes. A tree lawn and either sidewalks or path should be placed behind the curb.

OBJECTIVE 3

Improve community connections, design, and efficiency.

Actions

FD 3.1 Explore rerouting SR-15 around Canal and Market streets to reduce traffic in downtown Wabash. While there is an official truck route for SR-15 that avoids Market and Canal streets, the route is circuitous and at least some truck drivers don't take it. Rerouting SR-15 along a more direct alignment will reduce traffic volumes on Market and Canal streets, reducing noise and pollution. This will improve the experience of visiting downtown Wabash and make activities such as sidewalk dining more attractive. Further, it may be possible to adjust traffic operations on both streets such as allowing two-way traffic. If implemented, the project is likely to impact some residents or businesses. The intent would be to improve or build one of the options as a two-way connection. Options south of Market and Canal show optional realignments of Cass Street to allow a more direct connection to existing or proposed streets leading to Wabash Street (SR-13).

FD 3.2 Establish a task force to consider transit operations, and methods to maintain and even expand service. There is a need for community leaders to come together to consider how to best support and even expand transit operations. Before and now into the pandemic, Wabash Transit's budget has been tight and it struggles to find skilled workers at pay rates it can afford. And without sufficient staffing, some customers may not be able to schedule trips when desired. Further, the cost of providing some trips for out-of-county medical care vastly exceeds reimbursement rates and funding provided by Medicaid, Medicare, and/or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). At the same time, there is a desire to maintain a fixed-route service between Wabash and North Manchester. Clarity is needed to define these and other specific issues, and to work with local leaders to consider how those issues can be addressed, potentially through expanded partnerships.

FD 3.3 Establish a cycling connection between North Manchester and Wabash. Improving connectivity between North Manchester and Wabash is a priority of the plan, including for bicyclists. A two-pronged approach may be pursued, including signing an alternate route along parallel local roads, most of which are paved but have very low traffic volumes. Signage along local roads, parallel to SR-13, such as CR 400 E, which directly connects to the City of Wabash and Town of North Manchester, would help create a dedicated and safe route. Extending the asphalt paved shoulder to six feet would effectively provide a bike lane but the speed of traffic is still a substantial safety and comfort issue.

FD 3.4 Complete active transportation plans and implement recommendations. Each community is encouraged to perform an active transportation plan to further understand barriers and identify countermeasures to make their community more walkable and bikeable. These planning processes should be led by local agencies and supported by a consulting engineer familiar with pedestrian and bicyclist planning, as well as best practices and Indiana design standards for streets, traffic control, and ped/bike facilities. At minimum, these plans should identify desired destinations and travel corridors as well as areas where walking and biking is difficult due to lack of facilities and high traffic volumes and/or speeds. The final plan should address any proposed policy changes and provide a list of locations where capital improvements such as new crosswalks, sidewalks, and trails are recommended.

FD 3.5 Pursue an extension of the primary runway at Wabash Municipal Airport using cost-containment strategies. Aviation insurance companies will only cover jets hangared at airports with a runway that exceeds 5,000 feet in length. Wabash's runway is just 4,401-feet and needs to be extended an additional 600 feet to satisfy this requirement. This extension may improve the attractiveness of doing business in Wabash County; however, the airfield is less than 22 miles away from three airports which have longer runways and hangar space. Clarity is needed to determine if this investment will pay off and, if possible, allow for cost-containment so resources are not diverted from other needs in the community.

FD 3.6 Evaluate options for improved mobility for university students. The students at Manchester University are reliant on walking, biking, public transit, or carpooling in and around Wabash County. If the students are to experience the County—including spending their money, accessing key services—other mobility options are needed. Alternatives such as bike share programs, electric scooter rentals, bus routes, and ride share programs should be evaluated that improve their access to opportunity and provide potential benefits to local businesses and institutions.

PLUS 85 PRIORITY

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

A number of resources are available to help guide the process for walking and biking plans. These include FHWA's Guide for Improving Pedestrian Safety at Uncontrolled Crossing Locations. This guide describes a thorough and effective planning process for improving pedestrian and bicyclist accommodations. It also provides the latest guidance for choosing appropriate countermeasures at unsignalized crossings. A second resource to consider is the Ohio Department of Transportation's Active Transportation Plan Guide which provides a step by step planning process and resources to support those undertaking such a project. Available INDOT resources pertain to trail development, which has been identified as a statewide priority.

CHAPTER 7
IMPLEMENTATION

Imagine One 85 is intended to be used on a daily basis as both public and private decisions are made for the future of Wabash County and its communities. It is recommended that businesses, community groups, and organizations align their efforts with the priorities of this plan to help realize recommendations and achieve a Might Wabash County. The following is a summary of how decisions and processes should align with the goals and actions of Imagine One 85.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

A comprehensive plan is a decision making guide for community leaders. The process to develop the plan integrated thorough technical research and analysis with robust community and stakeholder engagement. The vision, goals, and recommendations reflect the best thinking of the Imagine One 85 Steering Committee based on these two crucial sources.

Plan implementation is an ongoing process that invokes a regular cycle of prioritization, work planning, funding, evaluation, and celebration. This is a management cycle that involves multiple organizations around the community. More broadly, however, long term implementation involves several practices summarized or through the governance-focused action recommendations.

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMS AND BUDGETS

Individual departments, administrators, boards, and commissions should familiarize themselves with the plan's actions when preparing annual work programs and budgets. Specific actions that align with the vision and mission of an organization can guide investment in achieving the unified vision for Wabash County.

DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS

Administrative and legislative approvals of development proposals may be pursued as a means of implementing recommendations of the plan. Decisions by appropriate entities and organizations should reference the Imagine One 85 Comprehensive Plan in their analysis.

ECONOMIC INCENTIVES

Economic incentives should be reviewed to ensure consistency with supporting the actions of the plan.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Decisions regarding infrastructure investment such as utilities or transportation should align with recommendations and intended growth areas throughout the county.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS

Property owners and developers should consider the goals and strategies of the plan in their land planning and investment decisions. New development, infill development, or redevelopment should complement the plan's actions.

CONSISTENT INTERPRETATION

Planners and policymakers throughout the County should collaborate to ensure clear and consistent interpretation of major actions in this plan.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The following actions support the ongoing implementation of Imagine One 85.

OBJECTIVE 1

Promote Imagine One 85 and its recommendations.

Actions

IM 1.1 **Appoint a Director of Imagine One 85.** As the first step towards implementation, a position should be established to facilitate the recommendations of Imagine One 85. This director will coordinate efforts across the communities to achieve the recommendations of the comprehensive plan.

IM 1.2 **Provide copies of the Plan throughout the communities.** Once adopted, Imagine One 85 should be made available in each community as well as online on partner websites.

IM 1.3 **Provide educational sessions and training on the plan recommendations.** Many policies, programs, and projects may be new to Wabash County while others seek to strengthen the county's assets. Sessions should be held throughout the county where residents and business owners can learn more about Imagine One 85 and ask questions about the plan's recommendations.

OBJECTIVE 2

Support, monitor, and share implementation progress.

Actions

IM 2.1 **Identify and secure funding for plan recommendations.** Funding sources could include grants, tax measures, bonds, private investments, public-private partnerships, and many others. These should be identified and implemented based on the community priorities.

IM 2.2 **Prepare a countywide Annual Growth Report about development, population change and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.** On an annual basis, the county should release a progress report for Imagine One 85 and its effect on the communities of Wabash County.

IM 2.3 **Prepare updates to Imagine One 85 at regular milestones.** The county should anticipate the need for updating the plan and action recommendations at major milestones. Minor updates should be considered every five years with major updates occurring every 10 years to ensure Imagine One 85 remains up-to-date.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

The following table summarizes the plan's objectives and actions. The table is organized by the plan's five thematic chapters to assist with tracking implementation over time. Priority recommendations are shown below followed by a list of all recommendations organized under the goals and objectives. For each action, essential details are defined including the tentative timeframe for implementation, lead group / organization, potential partners, and the level of resources necessary to implement the recommendation. A legend is provided below.

Timeframe

Ongoing	Underway and expected to continue
Immediate	Implemented in 2022
Short-Term	1 to 3 years
Mid-Term	3 to 6 years
Long-Term	Beyond 6 years

Cost

Low level of resources; for example, a minimal amount of staff time and/or a nominal amount of funding.

Moderate level of resources; for example, a moderate amount of staff time and/or a notable amount of funding that could be covered by normal budgets or may depend on multiple sources.

Significant resources; for example, a high amount of staff time and/or funding from multiple sources beyond normal budgets.

Community Priorities

Priority actions for establishing a strong foundation for success

Group / Organization Abbreviations

CFWC	Community Foundation of Wabash County
CHDO	Community Housing Development Organizations
COA	Council on Aging
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
EMA	Emergency Management Agency
FFA	Future Farmers of America
GWC	Grow Wabash County
HLC	Higher Learning Commission
IDNR	Indiana Department of Natural Resources
IEDC	Indiana Economic Development Corporation
INDOT	Indiana Department of Transportation
IO85	Imagine One 85 Committee
LMC	Learn More Center
MA	Manchester Alive
MU	Manchester University
NCI-SHRM	North Central Indiana SHRM

NIPSCO	Northern Indiana Public Service Company
PU	Purdue University
PUE	Purdue University Extension
SBDC	Small Business Development Center
VWC	Visit Wabash County
WCHSEC	Wabash County High School Entrepreneurship Collaborative
WCSWCD	Wabash County Soil and Water Conservation District
WMI	Wabash Marketplace, Inc.
WRT	Wabash River Trail
YPWC	Young Professionals of Wabash County

GREAT PLACES (GP)

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST

OBJECTIVE 1: STRENGTHEN THE EFFICIENT USE OF DEVELOPED AND UNDEVELOPED LAND

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
PLUS 85 PRIORITY GP 1.1	Pursue a strategic approach to countywide development and growth.	Ongoing	IO85	Plan Commissions, Local Governments, GWC, MA	
PLUS 85 PRIORITY GP 1.2	Fund a strategic land acquisition program.	Short-Term	Local Governments	County Government, Plan Commissions	
GP 1.3	Support continued reinvestment in Downtown Lagro.	Ongoing	Canal Foundation	GWC, Town of Lagro	
GP 1.4	Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of existing industrial structures.	Ongoing	GWC	Local Government, Private Businesses	
GP 1.5	Develop a pop-up retail and temporary use program on vacant lots and in vacant buildings in small towns and cities.	Short-term	GWC	MA, WMI	

OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCE COMMUNITY CHARACTER THROUGH THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
GP 2.1	Fund a countywide Facade Improvement Fund.	Mid-Term	Local Governments	County Government, Property Owners	
GP 2.2	Maintain an endangered historic building list.	Short-Term	Indiana Landmarks	Local Government, Property Owners	
GP 2.3	Support eligibility determinations and designation of structures and districts on the National Register of Historic Places.	Ongoing	Indiana Landmarks	Property Owners	

OBJECTIVE 3: EMBRACE RIVERS IN CITY AND TOWN DEVELOPMENT

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
PLUS 85 PRIORITY GP 3.1	Pursue the North Manchester Riverfront redevelopment project.	Immediate	Local Governments	MA, Property Owners, Non-Profits	
GP 3.2	Continue to build access and use of the Eel and Wabash Rivers.	Ongoing	WRT, Upper Eel River Watershed Alliance	White Rock, Wander Brand, IDNR, River Defenders, WCSWCD, Sweeten	
GP 3.3	Create incentives to encourage wide natural buffers along streams.	Ongoing	WCSWCD	IDNR, Upper Eel River Watershed Alliance	

OBJECTIVE 4: SUSTAIN AGRICULTURE AS A CRITICAL PART OF THE COUNTY'S IDENTITY

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
GP 4.1	Expand opportunities for agritourism across the county.	Short-Term	VWC	Local Farms, CSA	
GP 4.2	Study the impact of tile drainage on local flooding.	Immediate	County Government	Town of La Fontaine, Wabash County Drainage Board	

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
GP 4.3	Build on the local farm-to-table movement.	Ongoing	Local Farms	School Districts, Private Businesses	🏷️

OBJECTIVE 5: CELEBRATE UNIQUE COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES THROUGH ATTRACTIONS AND AMENITIES

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
GP 5.1	Explore a state park designation for the areas around Salamonie Lake.	Short-Term	Wabash River Defenders	IDNR, State Government, Army Corps of Engineers	🏷️
GP 5.2	Work with local entrepreneurs to build a restaurant in Downtown La Fontaine.	Mid-Term	Town of La Fontaine	Private Businesses	🏷️
GP 5.3	Build a community park in Roann.	Short-Term	Town of Roann	Non-Profits	🏷️
GP 5.4	Expand summer arts offerings.	Mid-Term	Honeywell Foundation	MU, Eagles	🏷️
GP 5.5	Prepare a comprehensive marketing plan.	Short-Term	IO85	VWC, GWC, CFWC, MA, County Government, Local Governments	🏷️
PLUS 85 PRIORITY · GP 5.6	Continue to support the County's commitment to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community for all.	Ongoing	DEI	County Government, Local Governments, GWC, CFWC, MU, School Districts	🏷️
GP 5.7	Establish a Wabash County, peer community program.	Short-Term	VWC	MA, GWC	🏷️
PLUS 85 PRIORITY · GP 5.8	Launch the "Mighty Wabash County" micro-grant program.	Mid-Term	CFWC	IO85	🏷️
GP 5.9	Initiate an inter-community visitation program.	Ongoing	VWC	MA, GWC	🏷️

OBJECTIVE 6: ENSURE PHYSICAL CONNECTIONS WITHIN AND BETWEEN COMMUNITIES

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
GP 6.1	Improve connections between the University and Main Street in North Manchester.	Ongoing	Town of North Manchester	MU	🏷️
GP 6.2	Conduct a study on opportunities for trail extensions.	Mid-Term	Local Governments	Plan Commissions, IDNR, WRT, Property Owners	🏷️
GP 6.3	Perform a feasibility analysis for pedestrian improvements on Miami Street in the City of Wabash.	Short-Term	City of Wabash	Plan Commissions, VWC	🏷️

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST

OBJECTIVE 1: PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
PLUS 85 PRIORITY — PR 1.1	Further develop small business / entrepreneur recruitment and development programs.	Ongoing	GWC	SBDC, SCORE, MU, INGUARD, IEDC	🏷️
PR 1.2	Revisit local business support systems to ensure the right services are being provided.	Immediate	GWC	SBDC, MU	🏷️
PR 1.3	Expand internship opportunities to support workforce needs.	Mid-Term	MU	GWC, Private Businesses, Local Governments	🏷️

OBJECTIVE 2: ENCOURAGE CONTINUED GROWTH OF THE COUNTY'S INDUSTRIAL AREAS

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
PLUS 85 PRIORITY — PR 2.1	Build a spec, flexible industrial and warehouse facility.	Short-Term	City of Wabash, County Government	GWC, NIPSCO, IEDC, Duke	🏷️
PR 2.2	Continue to support and adapt the county's industrial parks.	Ongoing	GWC	County Government, City of Wabash, Town of North Manchester	🏷️
PR 2.3	Establish a Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Strategy.	Ongoing	GWC	County Government, Local Governments, Private Businesses	🏷️
PLUS 85 PRIORITY — PR 2.4	Develop a robust business and industry retention program.	Ongoing	GWC	WMI, MA	🏷️

OBJECTIVE 3: ELEVATE AN ENVIRONMENT TO DEVELOP, ATTRACT, AND RETAIN TALENT

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
PLUS 85 PRIORITY — PR 3.1	Establish the vision for excellent education in Wabash County.	Short-Term	CFWC	School Districts, GWC, MU, Local Governments	🏷️
PLUS 85 PRIORITY — PR 3.2	Expand access to quality and affordable childcare.	Ongoing	CFWC	School Districts, First Five Committee, Transform Consulting	🏷️
PR 3.3	Invest in arts-infused learning opportunities for early childhood education.	Immediate	CFWC	School Districts, Non-Profits, Honeywell Foundation	🏷️
PR 3.4	Strengthen Community Foundation Early Award Scholarship and the Wabash County Promise as public school/private charity collaborations.	Immediate	CFWC	School Districts, Non-Profits	🏷️
PR 3.5	Continue the Community Foundation's College Scholarship program for grades 9-12.	Ongoing	CFWC	School Districts, Non-Profits	🏷️
PR 3.6	Expand exposure programs for students to include advanced manufacturing and agricultural jobs.	Short-Term	Private Businesses	GWC, Ivy Tech, WorkOne, HLC	🏷️

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
PR 3.7	Work with employers to adapt workforce training for adults based on the needs of employees.	Ongoing	Private Businesses	GWC, Ivy Tech, CFWC, WorkOne, HLC, UFWC, LMC, NCI-SHRM	
PR 3.8	Explore the potential for a Purdue Polytech Campus.	Mid-Term	PU	School Districts, HLC, GWC, CFWC	

OBJECTIVE 4: ADVOCATE FOR IMPROVING PERSONAL PROSPERITY, HEALTH, AND SAFETY

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
PR 4.1	Prepare a countywide health response report to the COVID-19 Pandemic.	Immediate	Health Department	Local Governments, UFWC, EMA, Bowen Center	
PR 4.2	Initiate a Safe Routes to School Program.	Mid-Term	Local Governments	School Districts, EMA, Property Owners	
PR 4.3	Connect residents without health insurance to applicable federal programs.	Mid-Term	CFWC	UFWC, Non-Profits, Health Department, Bowen Center, Parkview Hospital	
PR 4.4	Work with local hospitals and healthcare providers to address transportation gaps.	Mid-Term	Living Well Wabash County	Parkview Hospital, CFWC, Non-Profits	
PR 4.5	Create a kindness initiative.	Short-Term	CFWC	MU, School Districts	
PR 4.6	Develop a strategic plan for a community support network for university students.	Short-Term	Town of North Manchester	MU, CFWC, GWC, VWC, Local Governments, Private Businesses	

OBJECTIVE 5: MAINTAIN A FISCALLY STRONG ECONOMY

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
PR 5.1 (PLUS 85 PRIORITY)	Pursue a diversified tax revenue model through new sources.	Short-Term	Local Governments	-	
PR 5.2	Review the fiscal model for county and city expenditure allocations.	Short-Term	Local Governments	-	
PR 5.3	Communicate bonding capacity and "best use" analysis to local leadership.	Short-Term	IO85	GWC, CFWC	
PR 5.4	Align local plans and Imagine One 85 priorities for federal funding opportunities.	Immediate	IO85	GWC, CFWC, Living Well Wabash County, UFWC	
PR 5.5	Adopt a countywide Capital Improvement Plan funding model.	Mid-Term	Local Governments	GWC	

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY (CO)

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST

OBJECTIVE 1: INCREASE COMMUNITY HOUSING OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
PLUS 85 PRIORITY CO 1.1	Develop and monitor a new spec-housing program.	Short-Term	County Government	GWC, HPG Network, Local Governments, Plan Commissions, Private Businesses, Developers	
CO 1.2	Expand housing options for students and workers.	Mid-Term	Local Government	GWC, MU, Local Governments, HPG Network, Plan Commissions, Developers, Private Businesses	
CO 1.3	Build and launch a countywide housing development task force.	Short-Term	IO85	GWC, Plan Commissions, HPG Network, Developers, Private Businesses	
CO 1.4	Enable Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) countywide.	Short-Term	Local Governments	GWC, Plan Commissions, HPG Network, Developers, Prviate Businesses, Property Owners	
CO 1.5	Align resources and regulations to support infill development.	Mid-Term	Local Governments	GWC, Plan Commissions, HPG Network, Developers, Private Businesses, Property Owners	
CO 1.6	Establish a countywide Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO).	Mid-Term	IO85	GWC, Plan Commissions, HPG Network, Developers, Private Businesses, Property Owners	
CO 1.7	Explore the establishment of residential housing incentives.	Ongoing	Local Governments	GWC, Plan Commissions, HPG Network, Developers, Private Businesses, Property Owners	

OBJECTIVE 2: STRENGTHEN THE VITALITY, CHARACTER, AND DESIGN OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
PLUS 85 PRIORITY CO 2.1	Launch a housing remodel revolving fund.	Mid-Term	GWC	CFWC, Local Governments, Non-Profits, Developers, Private Businesses	
CO 2.2	Launch a rental property registration and management program.	Long-Term	CHDO	Local Governments, Plan Commissions	
PLUS 85 PRIORITY CO 2.3	Identify opportunities for quality affordable housing.	Long-Term	CHDO	Local Governments, Plan Commissions	
CO 2.4	Establish development standards for "complete" neighborhood design.	Long-Term	CHDO	Local Governments, Plan Commissions, Developers	
CO 2.5	Create countywide blight abatement guidelines.	Mid-Term	CHDO	Local Governments, Plan Commissions	

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST

OBJECTIVE 3: ESTABLISH MODELS FOR MONITORING HOUSING DEMAND AND PROMOTING WABASH COUNTY AS A WELCOMING COMMUNITY

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
CO 3.1	Conduct and regularly update a countywide Residential Market Analysis.	Short-Term	CHDO	GWC, Local Governments	
CO 3.2	Update and modernize the County Government website.	Short-Term	County Government	-	
CO 3.3	Build a "Welcome to Wabash County" package and program for new residents.	Short-Term	VWC	GWC, CFWC, Private Businesses, Local Governments	
CO 3.4	Develop a model short-term rental policy (AirBnB, VRBO, etc.).	Short-Term	Local Governments	-	
CO 3.5	Create a model employment-residence policy.	Short-Term	CHDO	Private Businesses, Non-Profits, Local Governments	
CO 3.6	Design a "Welcome to the Communities of Wabash County" program for college students.	Short-Term	VWC	MU, GWC, YPWC, Local Governments	

FOUNDATION (FD)   15 ACTIONS

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST

OBJECTIVE 1: STRENGTHEN INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND FUNDING

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
FD 1.1	Increase funding for maintenance of local roads and bridges, and continue pursuing matching funds.	Immediate	Local Governments	County Government, INDOT	🏷️
FD 1.2	Prioritize maintenance activities across the roadway network.	Immediate	Local Governments	County Government, INDOT	🏷️

OBJECTIVE 2: MODERNIZE AND UPGRADE INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY

	CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
PLUS 85 PRIORITY	FD 2.1	Significantly expand access to high-speed internet.	Immediate	Local Governments	Utility Providers	🏷️🏷️
	FD 2.2	Pursue an incremental approach to improving downtown streetscapes in Wabash and North Manchester.	Ongoing	City of Wabash, Town of North Manchester	Manchester Alive, Wabash Marketplace, Private Businesses	🏷️
PLUS 85 PRIORITY	FD 2.3	Increase wastewater capacity and utility access.	Immediate	Local Government	Utility Providers	🏷️🏷️
	FD 2.4	Plan for the long-term phase out of community septic in small communities.	Long-Term	County Government	State Government, WCSWCD	🏷️🏷️
	FD 2.5	Support opportunities for "homegrown" ridesharing businesses or organizations.	Mid-Term	Local Governments	GWC, Private Businesses	🏷️
	FD 2.6	Improve Cass Street (SR-15) between Harrison and Wedcor avenues in the City of Wabash to include complete street accommodations.	Long-Term	INDOT	Local Government, Private Businesses	🏷️🏷️
	FD 2.7	Improve County Road 1200 N (SR-114) in North Manchester to include complete street accommodations.	Long-Term	INDOT	Local Government, Private Businesses	🏷️🏷️

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST

OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS, DESIGN, AND EFFICIENCY

CODE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST
FD 3.1	Explore rerouting SR-15 around Canal and Market streets to reduce traffic in downtown Wabash.	Mid-Term	INDOT	Local Governments	
FD 3.2	Establish a task force to consider transit operations, and methods to maintain and even expand service.	Mid-Term	COA	INDOT	
FD 3.3	Establish a cycling connection between North Manchester and Wabash.	Mid-Term	IO85	County Government, VWC, Manchester Alive	
FD 3.4	Complete active transportation plans and implement recommendations.	Mid-Term	IO85	County Government, VWC, Manchester Alive	
FD 3.5	Pursue an extension of the primary runway at Wabash Municipal Airport using cost-containment strategies.	Mid-Term	Wabash Airport Board	State Government, Property Owners	
FD 3.6	Evaluate options for improved mobility for university students.	Short-Term	Manchester University	Local Government, County Government	

PLUS 85 PRIORITY

IMAGINE ONE 85
APPENDICES

The following are appendices that support the plan:

Appendix A: Engagement

Round One Engagement Summary Memo: Focus on the Future

Round Two Engagement Summary Memo: Growth Summit

Appendix B: Analysis

Technical Analysis Memos (People, Prosperity, Place, and Foundation)
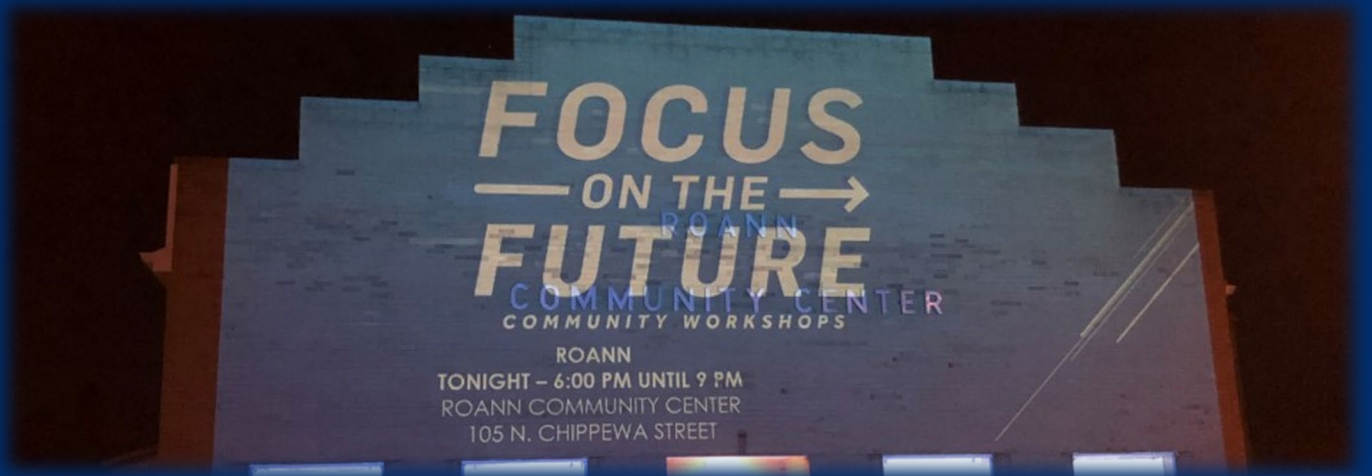
Focus on the Future!

Round One Community Engagement Summary | Wabash County Comprehensive Plan

March 2021
IMAGINEONE85.ORG

DRAFT

Focus on the Future!

Round One Community Engagement Summary | Wabash County Comprehensive Plan

MARCH 2021 **DRAFT**

The following report provides an overview of Focus on the Future, the first round of public engagement in support of the Wabash County Comprehensive Plan. For questions on this report please contact the project manager for Imagine One 85, Kyle May, senior planner with planning NEXT, at kyle@planning-next.com.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the purpose and background for the initial round of community engagement as part of the Imagine One 85 comprehensive planning effort for the communities of Wabash County.

1.1 Purpose

The Imagine One 85 Steering Committee hosted in-person and virtual workshops between November 2020 and March 2021. More than 250 people participated in a Focus on the Future discussion and, together, generated thousands of comments and ideas. Taking on the challenges posed by population decline, participants structured their comments as a response or solution. These ideas were wide-ranging, but clustered around several topics, including housing, jobs, education, and amenities.

The initial round of community and stakeholder engagement was designed to generate open comments on paths to improving the county's qualities of place, life, and opportunities. Respondents were primed on key conditions and trends before each workshop. This included the principle focus of the Imagine One 85 planning effort, the county's decreasing population. The input shared through round one will serve as a foundation for major elements of the plan including the community's vision, goals, and general direction. These elements will be tested back with the public during the second round of engagement.

This report provides an overview of the activities, themes, and conclusions from this first round of community and stakeholder engagement.

1.2 Overview

Imagine One 85 is a process to develop a comprehensive plan for the communities of Wabash County led by a coalition of leaders from all sectors, including the Community Foundation of Wabash County and Grow Wabash County.

A comprehensive plan is a broad, multi-topic policy statement that includes goals, strategies, and action recommendations (future policies, projects, or programs). These recommendations support the long-term, community-derived vision statement (where we – as a collection of communities – want to be in 20 years). While Northeast Indiana's 11-county region has consistently grown for four decades, Wabash County has not. A bold, comprehensive plan for the future is the best possible way to arrest—and reverse—our population decline.

The Comprehensive Plan will address a wide-ranging set of topics including land use, development, housing, transportation, fiscal conditions, economic development, parks, public health, education, and several others. The planning team has prepared a series of briefing memos in parallel with the opening round of engagement that present the critical findings across each of the 12 plan topics. These are available for review on the process website, www.imagineone85.org.

The process began in the fall of 2020 with regular convening of the project steering committee. This 19-member Committee is made up of elected and appointed officials from each of the county's communities and county government. In addition, an Outreach Team – consisting of more than 100 community members – have assisted the steering committee in spreading the word about the process and key community engagement opportunities. A multi-disciplinary consultant team led by Planning NEXT of Columbus, Ohio, is facilitating the process in close coordination with leadership from the Community Foundation of Wabash County (CFWC) and Grow Wabash County (GWC).

Imagine One 85 is an open and inclusive process. While ultimately adopted by town councils and county government, the plan is created by the communities of Wabash County. If you care about the future of our communities, you are invited to participate.

ENGAGEMENT PHASE

Preparation & Planning

Kick-off the plan process

Develop a strategy for promoting the plan and motivating participation

Create a plan for community engagement

Technical Analysis

Research and understand key topics impacting Wabash County

Focus on the Future!

Begin the conversation through a series of community workshops and imagine a bold future

PLANNING PHASE

Plan Development

Develop recommendations and strategies for the plan

Engagement Round II

Affirm vision & goals and begin building actions to achieve vision

Final Plan

Review and refine the draft plan

Develop implementation plan and structure

Finalize the plan and launch implementation

Figure 1: The Imagine One 85 Planning Process will take place over a 14-month period with multiple opportunities for the public to share and explore the plan.

Additional questions and answers …

Why now? The population decline that spans decades is partly the result of little or no countywide planning. Communities, like businesses, cannot reach their potential without a deliberate and thoughtful blueprint.

How long will the process last? The plan will be completed this year with multiple opportunities for the community to participate and contribute.

Is this about school consolidation? No. Education–in all its forms–will be studied through the process because of its importance to our ability to attract population and our long-term survival as communities. There are, however, no pre-determined conclusions for this study.

Where can I go for more information? The process website, www.imagineone85.org.

1.3 Activities & Sources of Input

The first round of community engagement took place between November 2020 and March 2021. The phase was extended due to a postponement of the in-person workshop opportunities based on safety precautions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a response to the in-person limitations, the steering committee and planning team developed and deployed virtual engagement methods including Zoom-hosted workshops and a static online survey platform.

Stakeholder Interviews

The planning team hosted a series of stakeholder group and individual interviews throughout the engagement round. These interviews were not agenda driven like the community conversations but rather, facilitated by the planning team based on the organizing topic. A summary of these interviews is included in section 4. Groups included social service providers, leadership from small and large business, elected or appointed officials, etc.

In-Person Workshops

In-person workshops were re-scheduled and conducted the first week of March in locations across the county.

Roann	**Lagro**	**La Fontaine**	**Wabash**	**North Manchester**
Monday, Mar. 1 – 6:00 PM	Tuesday, Mar. 2 – 6:30 PM	Tuesday, Mar. 2 – 6:00 PM	Wednesday, Mar. 3 – 6:00 PM	Thursday, Mar. 4 Time 6:30 PM
Roann Community Center	Lagro Town Hall 230 Buchanan St.	The Learning Center 207 N Wabash Ave	Honeywell Center, Legacy Center 275 W Market St.	Manchester Community Schools Admin Building Auditorium 404 W. 9th St.
105 N. Chippewa St.				

Virtual workshops and survey

Four virtual workshops were also held in November and December on the Zoom platform. During these hour-long sessions, participants received a brief presentation from the planning team followed by a live-polling and feedback period. These comments, as well as comments gathered through the static web survey, were databased by the planning team and are considered in this analysis.

Agenda and Prompts

Each meeting during the Focus on the Future round centered around a consistent set of prompts and discussions. Whenever possible, participants were also provided a background presentation from a member of the planning team. This priming information was intended to help place the process, share key findings related to conditions and trends, and lay out additional steps to come in the planning process.

The following are major prompts from the community survey. The results from these are summarized in section 2: Major Themes from the Focus on the Future Conversations and section 3: Results by Prompt. For verbatim responses, please refer to the document appendix.

Possible Outcomes Activity

1.a.   What are the most important outcomes of Imagine One 85 that can impact population decline and make for better communities in the future? Choose three. (Multiple Choice)

OPTIONS:
   a.   A diverse mix of employment industries
   b.   Greater supply and variety of housing types and costs
   c.   Well-funded and competitive education system
   d.   A well-known county that is thought of positively regionally
   e.   Vibrant cities and towns that are rich with retail and social offerings
   f.   New partnerships formed across communities and sectors
   g.   Increase in the quality and number of jobs

      h.   Fiscally strong and resilient local government
      i.   Talented young people stay and are attracted to our communities
      j.   Something else?

1.b.   If you said "Something else" what other outcome should we aspire to achieve? (Short Answer)
2.   Why did you select these outcomes? (Short Answer)
3.   Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why? (Short Answer)
4.   How will we achieve your priority outcomes? Do you have ideas or actions to achieve this? (Short Answer)
5.   How can we measure progress toward your priority outcomes? What is / are the indicator(s)? (Short Answer)

Qualities of Place Mapping Activity

1.   Think about specific locations/places in your community or in Wabash County that this plan should address. Use the map application below to share your Strong places or Areas of Opportunity. (Use green and red dots to mark specific locations on the map that correspond to strong and opportunity places, respectively. Provide short answer comments on why)

2. 1.   MAJOR THEMES FROM THE FOCUS ON THE FUTURE CONVERSATIONS

The Focus on the Future engagement series elicited more than a thousand comments and ideas on how to improve the qualities of life, place, and opportunity across the communities of Wabash County. Whether participants convened online or in-person, each conversation began with a priming presentation on state of the county. The principle finding and the driving force behind Imagine One 85 is the slow decline in the county's population. With this and other helpful findings shared, the planning team engaged community members and key stakeholders in a discussion about the future.

The themes presented below represent particularly resonant responses from the first round of engagement. *These statements are representative of the full collection of comments and were prepared by the planning team to provide a summary of the larger data set. They are not listed in priority order. Many of the ideas and comments from the public are interrelated; improvements in areas like housing, education, and jobs are connected to one another and are essential for population growth.*

To address population decline, we will …

Enrich our education system

Many respondents noted that the strength of local schools is a major factor when young families are deciding where to live. Diminishing enrollment levels contribute to limited academic and extracurricular activities, teacher retention, funding, and inter-district collaboration to strengthen the public schools. Respondents also recommended increasing access and affordability to early childhood education and quality childcare opportunities, significant factors in recruiting and retaining young families. A more robust public education system could attract young families, contributing to an increase in population and a decrease in average age.

Create more and higher paying jobs

Quality and well-paying jobs may encourage residents to stay in the County or entice non-residents to move in. Currently, a lack of diversity in job opportunities and wages contributes to out-migration of those seeking employment, particularly college graduates and other "talented young adults." Measures to attract new industries and employers would expand employment opportunities and offer young people more reasons to stay in or move to Wabash County.

Increase housing options and affordability

Housing availability and affordability are essential to attracting new residents to a community. Participants noted a lack of diversity in housing types, high housing costs, and aging housing stock as barriers to younger residents, renters, and first-time home buyers. Expanding the housing options in the County, including more affordable choices, will be key to attracting and retaining a younger demographic.

Expand and improve high-speed internet access

Internet access is essential for families, workers, and students. This was made clear by the pandemic and the related economic shutdowns. But as respondents indicated, many residents in the County lack access altogether or have poor, slow connections. In addition to the everyday conveniences that high-speed internet provides, it is necessary for many students to complete assignments and for the growing contingent of work-

from-home employees to perform their duties. Improving and expanding high-speed internet access would not only improve the lives of current residents, but it would also allow for people who work remotely to move into the County.

Create great places

Wabash County is home to beautiful natural features and historic charm. Some residents, however, feel that their communities are lacking in the types of amenities that draw in outsiders and retain locals. Suggestions for improvements include developing more outdoor recreation opportunities and gathering spaces, capitalizing on the riverfront, creating entertainment venues, and offering more community activities. Developing these kinds of amenities could encourage current residents to spend their leisure time within the County and give prospective residents another reason to make Wabash County their home.

Embrace diversity

For Wabash to grow in population, each resident or prospective resident should feel welcomed and included, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, or cultural background. Intentional efforts to include a more diverse group of community members will be integral to promoting population growth.

Strengthen our health and social support services

People want to live where they have access to the best health and social service opportunities. Struggling families are enabled to stay in an area if they have adequate support; families seeking a new home may be drawn to places that offer strong resources for healthy communities. Several residents expressed particular concern for mental health and addiction and recovery support. By strengthening these areas, the County would serve current residents and may create a more appealing community for those considering relocating to the County.

Broadcast our image

"Wabash County already has a lot to offer!" Some residents suggest that people would move to the County if they only knew how great it already is. By building or expanding the brand and extending the reach of marketing efforts, the County may be able to attract new residents from the Midwest and beyond.

Improve coordination and collaboration across our organizations and institutions

Working together is a key to promoting growth in the county. With a population of just over 30,000 people, the county could be more effective and efficient by consolidating certain services and sharing resources across different communities and organizations. There is an opportunity to learn from the successes of past and current collaborative efforts and to apply those principles in new ways. As institutions and organizations shift toward a more collective rather than individualistic mentality, the entire county will benefit.

Protect our natural features and develop outstanding new amenities

While Wabash County is already rich in natural amenities, it will be imperative to proactively preserve and improve upon the existing assets. These features include parks, trails, open spaces, riverfronts, and other greenspaces throughout the county. Participants noted, for example, that the Eel River is underutilized due to limited physical access and visibility; although it is beautiful and ideal for recreation activities, people have a difficult time accessing boat launches or even getting a nice view of the river, despite its proximity to downtown Manchester. Improving and increasing programming, access, and visibility to the natural features of the county could improve the quality of place for both residents and visitors alike.

Attract and retain young, talented individuals

Achieving sustained population growth will depend on bringing in new individuals from a younger demographic and retaining those who are already in the county. Young professionals and families could support other goals by bolstering local school enrollment, buying homes, starting new businesses, and contributing diversity. Manchester University is a great entry point for these types of individuals; prioritizing retaining these young people in the county could be a significant factor in reaching this end. Creating great places, providing engaging amenities, and offering diverse job opportunities could help attract this young talent.

Continue to grow a skilled workforce

A limiting factor in scaling up a community is the availability and skillset of the workforce. Every year, commuting time increases as employers cast a wider net for qualified employees. To address population decline, the county will need to grow and "skill-up" its workforce along with the population, providing employers with skilled workers and residents with more opportunities for professional development.

3. RESULTS BY PROMPT

The Focus on the Future events and online engagement activities asked respondents five main questions related to the most important outcomes of the Imagine One 85 process. The following section is organized by each of the questions and includes a representative sample of the responses. Themes or representative responses were derived by the Planning NEXT team after reading and categorizing the input. These statements are not organized by frequency and do not represent an order or hierarchy. They are representative responses to help the reader better understand the hundreds of comments received during round one. A full database of all responses is also available for reading and review.

3.1 (a) What are the most important outcomes of Imagine One 85 that can impact population decline and make for better communities in the future? Choose three.

TOTAL RESPONSES: 234

Participants were given ten options and asked to choose three. They did not rank their choices. The results are ranked in the table below, along with the number and percent of total votes.

Rank	Outcome	Votes	%
1	C. Well-funded and competitive education system	135	19%
2	I. Talented young people stay and are attracted to our communities	125	18%
3	G. Increase in the quality and number of jobs	93	13%
4	B. Greater supply and variety of housing types and costs	84	12%
5	A. A diverse mix of employment industries	82	12%
6	E. Vibrant cities and towns that are rich with retail and social offerings	75	11%
7	D. A well-known county that is thought of positively regionally	39	6%
8	F. New partnerships formed across communities and sectors	29	4%
9	J. Something else	17	2%
10	H. Fiscally strong and resilient local government	14	2%

3.1 (b) If you said "Something else" what other outcome should we aspire to achieve?

TOTAL RESPONSES: 83

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES:

- Cultural and racial diversity
- Internet for everyone
- Amenities for young people and families
- Robust high quality early education and childcare
- Family resources for healthy communities
- Focus on gathering spaces
- Trail networks in all communities

See Appendix (p. 1) for a full list of responses

> **Sample Quote**
>
> "Cultural diversity. Be a truly welcoming community."
>
> *-Community Respondent*

3.2 Why did you select these outcomes?

TOTAL RESPONSES: 238

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES:

- Jobs and education are two of the most important things for many young families
- People move out of the county for better jobs, more interesting activities, and cultural opportunities
- Wabash schools face several challenges
  - Teacher retention
  - Funding
  - Academic and extracurricular activities
  - Enrollment
  - Inter-district cooperation
- People of all ages need social and shopping options
- Families need housing options they can afford
  - Variety of housing types
  - Affordability of home ownership
  - Age of housing stock often makes owning difficult because of the cost of remodeling/improvements
- Industry and business are vital for new jobs
  - New jobs bring new residents
  - If new people come for jobs, they will need other incentives to stay (good education, amenities, housing, etc.)
- Gathering spaces help people to connect
- Reliable internet access is vital for people who work remotely and for students
- Quality and affordable early childhood education is essential
  - Childcare is also a major factor
- We need to market ourselves so that others can visit and take advantage of our beauty and history
- Welcome and encourage diversity
  - Not just in theory, but in practice
- The county needs to give young people a reason to stay

> ### Sample Quote
>
> "If there is a good education system, affordable homes, and a number of good jobs to choose from, people might consider moving back"
>
> *-Community Respondent*

3.3 Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?

TOTAL RESPONSES: 201

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES:

- Schools
    - Manchester University
    - Ivy Tech
    - Three public school corporations
    - Heartland Career Center
- Local governments
- Civic groups
- County officials
- Educators
- Parents
- Manchester Alive
- Grow Wabash County
- Chambers of Commerce
- Agriculture community / small farmers
- Business community
    - Entrepreneurs
- Realtors and developers
- Investors
- Young Professionals of Wabash County
- Churches
- Not-for-profit organizations
    - Habitat for Humanity
- Honeywell Foundation
- Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership
- Mental health facilities
- Law enforcement
- Childcare agencies
- Students

See Appendix (p. 18) for a full list of responses

Sample Quote

"Diverse set of individuals. Accurate reflection of actual population/stakeholders (and) residents"

-Community Respondent

3.4 How will we achieve your priority outcomes? Do you have ideas or actions to achieve this?

TOTAL RESPONSES: 193

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES:

- Community awareness through social media and public hearings
- Strengthen partnerships
    - Businesses and schools
    - Grow Wabash County
    - Visit Wabash County
    - Manchester University
- Collaboration among the school districts
- Tax incentives and credits
    - For investors
    - For businesses
    - For homeowners (improvements)
        - Neighborhood improvement program
- Zoning changes to enable housing and business
- Develop more single-family homes and townhomes
- Continue to include the community throughout the process
- Recruit new industries
    - Technology
    - Manufacturing
    - Warehousing
- Support agricultural education programs in the schools
- Transform large downtown retail into boutique shops, "maker spaces," and apartments
- Establish a brand and market the county
- Have a permanent farmer's market and food co-ops in smaller communities
- Contact government representatives to advocate for internet

Sample Quote

"Offer incentives to small businesses to train and attract young people to their employment. Offer incentives for trade school or training programs to draw people back to the area or into the area from other places"

-Community Respondent

3.5 How can we measure progress toward your priority outcomes? What is / are the indicator(s)?

TOTAL RESPONSES: **190**

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES:

- Increase in number and diversity of people involved in the process
- Increase of people moving into the county
- Retaining young adults and MU graduates
- Increase in number and types of housing units
- Increase in number of people employed in higher paying jobs
- Number of training programs
- Number of businesses opened
- Increase in tax revenue
  - Income
  - Property
- New programming at schools
- Higher average wage
- Demonstrated cooperation of schools
- Increased home values
- Stabilization or increase in small farms
- Number of households with affordable high speed internet access
- Community morale
- Increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic
- Birth rates
- Number of amenities
- School enrollment and degree completion
- Median age of housing stock
- Increase in young leaders

See Appendix (p. 37) for a full list of responses

> **Sample Quote**
>
> "Population age and size will be some indicator. Also, diversity of business and entertainment options growth will likely indicate (a) shift"
>
> *-Community Respondent*

3.6 Strong places and places with opportunity map and summary

Participants were invited to think about specific locations / places in their community or in Wabash County that the plan should address. They could then mark those places on a map (either on paper or online) and designate them as "Strong Places" or "Areas of Opportunity," sharing why they marked each place. Participants were offered the following guidance in determining strong places and opportunity areas:

Strong places might be…

- Somewhere you take someone who is new to the community or visiting for the first time
- Places that are working well and reflect well on the community
- Places to be protected, maintained, or preserved for future generations
- Places that are simply unique to your community and help define its authentic character
- Places that represent good precedents that could be replicated elsewhere
- Or … however you define it!

Opportunity Areas might include…

- Places that need to be improved or change to better serve the community
- Places that reflect poorly on the community and are at odds with its underlying character
- Places at risk or are threatened and need attention
- Places that have a significant untapped potential
- Or … like with strong places, however you define it.

The composite results, summarized below, reveal both general qualities of strong and opportunity places and specific locations across the county to highlight or to improve. Strong places with a significant number of dots (eight or more) include a description and are indicated on the composite map. Opportunity areas with four to five dots or more also include a description and are indicated on the map.

TOTAL DOTS DROPPED: 739

STRONG PLACES SUMMARY 🟢

Strong may be places that are desirable to visit, reflect well on the community, or represent conditions you'd like to replicate. The Qualities of Strong Places section summarizes, at a high level, the unifying characteristics of the specific places that were identified. The list of strong places below is not exhaustive, but rather includes places that received at least two mentions by participants.

QUALITIES OF STRONG PLACES
- **Historic / rural charm –**The county is home to a range of historic buildings, structures, and bridges, offering a variety of character types from main streets to farmland.
- **Natural beauty –** Reservoirs, blue ways, forests, and waterfalls dot the County, providing scenic views and peaceful outdoor spaces in formal parks and informal greenspaces.
- **Opportunities for outdoor recreation –** From canoeing and kayaking the rivers to biking and hiking the trails, Wabash county has abundant options for actively enjoying the outdoors.
- **Gathering spaces –** People enjoy coming together in public spaces like the Honeywell Center, community downtowns and main streets, parks, and community centers like the YMCA.

- **Locally owned shops and restaurants –** Strong places in Wabash rely on local merchants, including coffee shops, restaurants, and antique shops.
- **Employment opportunities –** Excellent employers, like the Ford Meter Box, provide jobs and contribute to the strength of a community.
- **Quality housing and neighborhoods –** Beautiful old homes, tight-knit neighborhoods, and new housing additions make up some of the favorite places in Wabash.
- **Variety of activities –** Eagles Theater, the Honeywell Center, various community and recreation centers, museums, and parks supply varied entertainment and recreation options around the county.
- **Educational opportunities –** Strong places in the community are associated with learning, such as Manchester University, Ivy Tech, Heartland Career Center, libraries, and several the local schools.
- **Downtowns and main streets –** Residents enjoy the proximity and diversity of shops, walkability, and community gathering opportunities provided by the downtowns and main streets throughout the county.

STRONG PLACES
- North Manchester
  - **(A) Manchester University** – Manchester University brings culture, diversity, beauty, and high-quality education to the community.
  - **(B) Downtown / Main Street –** Historic buildings with beautiful facades, a walkable district, local shops and restaurants, and a variety of community activities make the downtown area of North Manchester a community favorite.
  - Kenapocomocha Coffee Shop
  - Eel River / Ogan's Landing
  - Covered Bridge
  - North Manchester Center for History
  - North Manchester Public Library
  - Strauss Peabody Aquatic Center
  - MPS Egg Farms
- Roann
  - **(C) Roann Covered Bridge** – Adored for both its history and its beauty, the Roann Covered Bridge is a source of pride for residents and as an attraction for visitors.
  - Roann Historic District
- Lagro
  - Downtown / Main Street
  - River Walk
- La Fontaine
  - Downtown
- Wabash
  - **(D) Honeywell Center** – The Honeywell Center is a major asset for a community like Wabash, bringing in excellent programming and providing entertainment and cultural resources to locals and visitors alike.
  - **(E) Eagles Theater –** Recently renovated, the Eagles Theater is a source of pride and entertainment.
  - **(F) Charley Creek Gardens –** Natural beauty near the downtown area is a serene and peaceful place.
  - **(G) YMCA –** The local YMCA is a great resource for kids and adults, with many recreation and enrichment opportunities.

- o **(H) Downtown Wabash –** History, walkability, local shops, and a concentration of activities like museums, theaters, and the library make downtown Wabash a destination within the community.
- o **(I) River Walk and Trail** – The Wabash River Trail connects several communities and is currently under construction to expand the trail network in the county.
- o Drive-in theater
- o Field of Dreams Athletic Complex
- o Ford Meter Box
- o Honeywell Park and Pool
- o Parkview Wabash Hospital
- o Heartland Career / Learning Center
- o Wabash Middle and High Schools
- o Mi Pueblo's Mexican Restaurant
- o Ivy Tech
- o Wabash City Park
- o Wabash Carnegie Public Library
- o Courthouse / Lincoln Monument
- o Ford Theater
- o Honeywell Golf Course
- o Modoc's Coffee Shop
- o Friendship Hill Inclusive Playground
- o Wabash County Historical Museum
- o Paradise Spring Park
- o White Rock Recreation
- o Habanero Grill
- o Friends Counseling Center
- Unincorporated Areas
  - o **(J) Salamonie Reservoir & Forest –** Cherished for its beauty and abundant recreation amenities, the Salamonie area is a favorite among Wabash residents.
  - o Hawkins Family Farm
  - o River Ridge Farm
  - o Stockdale Mill
  - o Hanging Rock
  - o Hathaway Preserve
  - o Mississinewa Reservoir

OPPORTUNITY AREAS SUMMARY 🔴

Opportunities may reflect negatively on the community, represent conditions you would like to see changed, or offer great potential for improvement. The Qualities of Opportunity Areas section summarizes, at a high level, the unifying characteristics of the specific places that were identified. The list of opportunity places below is not exhaustive, but rather includes places that received at least two mentions by participants.

QUALITIES OF OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- **Industrial sites –** Sites that are no longer in use take up valuable land, create environmental hazards, and are generally eyesores in a community. Underutilized industrial sites present opportunities for expanded industrial and economic growth or redevelopment strategies.
- **Redundant commercial areas –** Retail areas that are auto-oriented, like strip malls with large parking lots in front, are outdated and lack a sense of inviting community character. These spaces could be transformed through a variety of methods to become greater assets in the communities.
- **Underutilized natural amenities –** The presence of natural amenities does not guarantee that their value is maximized; some natural features, like the Eel River in particular, would benefit from improved access and views.
- **Storefronts in community centers / main streets –** Vacant storefronts detract from the intangible feel of a vibrant community and represent economic challenges. Filling them with strong local businesses would add great value to local places.
- **Failing infrastructure –** Crumbling sidewalks, missing crosswalks, and poor internet access are among the infrastructure challenges that detract from a strong community. Improving walkability and connectivity are good first steps toward transformation.
- **Outdated and neglected structures, store fronts, and housing –** Rundown buildings give the impression of a place that is uncared for and unvalued. Restoring such locations represents an opportunity to reinvest and strengthen the communities in Wabash.
- **Places that have potential draw for tourism** – Several locations throughout the county could likely draw tourists but are not currently meeting their full potential. Strategies to inform and promote about these places could be beneficial to the county.

OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- North Manchester
  - **(A) River front –** The riverfront near downtown and Main Street is underutilized, and various opportunities exist to develop new businesses and attractions in the area.
  - **(B) Farmers Market / Ogen's Landing area –** Suggestions for improvement in this area near downtown include a covered pavilion, electric service, and restrooms.
  - Manchester University
  - Pond and wooded area near Strauss Provimi Street
  - Former Taco Bell location
  - West 9th St (for housing)
  - Downtown / Main Street
  - Industrial Park
- Roann
  - Downtown / Main Street
- Lagro
  - River / trail
  - The town in general
- LaFontaine
  - Fountain View Mobile Homes
  - Downtown
- Wabash

- o **(C) Former GDX / General Tire Site –** Concerns about environmental hazards and being an eyesore make this site a prime target for redevelopment.
- o **(D) Former hospital site –** When Parkview Wabash Hospital relocated to its new site, the former hospital was left vacant and is now a strategic location for reinvestment.
- o **(E) Riverfront and trail –** Though residents appreciate the Wabash riverfront and trail, they also would like to see more development along the river, better access for boating, and extensions to the trail.
- o Industrial Park north of 24
- o Hampton Inn Out lots
- o Area north of Walmart
- o Land north of Honeywell Golf Course
- o Wabash County Industrial Park
- o Strip mall / Kroger
- o Wabash Middle School
- o Wabash City Park
- o Eagles Theater
- o East side of Wabash
- o Wabash Municipal Airport
- o Salamonie
- o Bulldog Battery
- Unincorporated Areas
  - o Urbana
  - o Stockdale Mill
  - o Northfield Jr / Sr High School

Note: If you would like to review the full map read all comments,
please click this link to view the composite map.
https://imagineone85.org/focuscompositemap/

KEY

Strong Places
(A) Manchester University
(B) NM Downtown / Main Street
(C) Roann Covered Bridge
(D) Honeywell Center
(E) Eagles Theater
(F) Charley Creek Gardens
(G) Wabash YMCA
(H) Wabash Downtown Area
(I) Wabash River Walk and Trail
(J) Salamonie Reservoir and Forest

Opportunity Areas
(A) NM Riverfront
(B) NM Farmer's Market / Ogan's Landing
(C) Former GDX / General Tire Site
(D) Former Wabash Hospital Site
(E) Wabash Riverfront and Trail

IMAGINE ONE 85

STRONG PLACES & OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- ▭ Wabash County
- ㉔ US Highway
- ⑬ State Highway
- � Water
- ● Strong Places
- ● Opportunity Areas

3. STAKEHOLDER SUMMARIES

The planning team facilitated a series of stakeholder interviews in parallel with the public engagement workshops. The sessions were organized around topical or organizational themes and included between three and ten participants. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and an hour and included an opportunity for follow-up comments via a web-based survey. The team conducted just under 20 interviews total. The following provides a summary of each of the groups, their organizing theme / organization, and key items shared during the session. The content of these sessions is also reflected in the overarching themes shared in section 1: Major Themes from the Focus on the Future Conversations.

OUTDOOR PURSUITS
Professionals and advocates for parks, trails, preservation, and open space.

Major themes from the discussion

- *The county's parks and natural areas are a real and unique asset.*
- *The past year especially, there is a real growth in enthusiasm for biking, canoeing, and kayaking as well as the use of the county's parks and recreational resources.*
- *Eel and Wabash Rivers are an especially rich asset that are only just now being discovered in terms of their value and opportunity; there is much more that can / should be done to capitalize on these.*
- *Maintenance of existing park infrastructure is important and is challenging with current staffing.*
- *Wildlife and the health of county ecosystems are a primary concern and opportunity (ex. migratory patterns for rare bird species).*

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS OF WABASH COUNTY
Network of young professionals connected through networking, philanthropic, educational, and community events.

Major themes from the discussion

- *Talent is THE driver of community health, growth, and vitality.*
- *The communities need to invest in themselves and ensure they're adding the right mix of amenities to attract and retain young and energetic residents. They've done good work on this already.*
- *Housing is a primary concern, both among prospective renters and owners. It is increasingly difficult to find quality housing in the community and, because of a lack of inventory, the prices are not that much cheaper than larger markets, especially for renters.*
- *Diversity, inclusion, and general levels of openness have improved, especially at the leadership level, but there is room to continue to grow. Openness is a prime enabler of growth.*
- *Leadership groups across the county should include more young people.*

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS
Students from local middle schools.

Major themes from the discussion

- *The county and its communities should consider young people when investing in new amenities.*
- *"Need more stuff for kids to do!"*

- *Building long-term connections between young people and their community starts with the experiences in middle school and high school.*
- *It is important to include young people in positions to help make decisions, especially when the decisions impact them.*

COMMUTERS
County workers who commute into the county for work.

Major themes from the discussion

- *Commuting direction for dual-income households is the primary factor when considering home location. Many households are commuting in different directions and it's rare for a household with two jobholders to both work in Wabash County.*
- *Housing is a critical factor when evaluating the county and its communities as places to raise a family. Costs are rising and there is limited stock when compared to commutable communities, especially toward Allen County.*
- *Quality-of-life amenities are not a limiting factor for the county, and the communities have a few attractive qualities / characteristics. It's difficult to compete with larger metropolitan areas when it comes to the variety of services and amenities.*
- *Making the communities more attractive for prospective residents would mean capitalizing the central assets of each of the communities. This includes the small-town charm, main street vibrancy, connection to nature, competitive schools, etc.*

HONEYWELL CENTER
Leadership from the Honeywell Center.

Major themes from the discussion

- *Honeywell has held a central role in downtown Wabash since the 1940's and the success of the Center and other nearby projects like the Eagles Theatre demonstrate the value and potential of these investments.*
- *The Center also provides important and unique programming (like the Arts Academy) that enhance cultural opportunities for students and residents.*
- *It's not clear whether the community is fully aware of how unique this amenity and these programs really are, especially for a community the size of Wabash.*
- *The Center can and should play a strong role in the storytelling aspects of the plan, or "why to move / live / invest in Wabash County."*

HUMAN RESOURCE PROFESSIONALS
Professionals representing companies from around the county. Several conversations took place with the group at various times.

Major themes from the discussion

- *Talented workers can go anywhere, and this can be a challenge with recruiting to the county, especially based on the distance to "big city" attractions.*

- *It's not just about recruiting the worker, but also the spouse. They may have a job or a specific idea about where they want to live / be. Therefore, it can be easier to pull in younger, less experienced individuals than to try and convince a couple.*
- *Housing, education, and amenities are the items couples are evaluating when they make the decision. The county's communities make a strong case and can (in most instances) land the jobholder, but they may lose out on the householder; the job is successfully filled, but the family lives elsewhere.*
- *There is a need for a cohesive recruitment package and a set of young recruiters. These peers can help share the advantages of the community and help the recruit picture themselves within the environment.*
- *Manchester University is a major advantage / talent engine for the county and its employers.*

MAJOR EMPLOYERS
Representatives from some of the major employers in the County.

Major themes from the discussion

- *The County is a great place to start a business with significant legacy infrastructure, enormous proximate markets, and an engaged and supportive government / non-government policies.*
- *Connections to workforce are paramount. Employers are having to cast a wider and wider net each year to meet their needs. Turnover, especially among non-skilled jobs, is very high and can be upwards of 20%.*
- *Workforce is also becoming more diverse, but not necessarily translating to increased diversity within the communities themselves. Workers are commuting from farther afield.*
- *Workforce questions also affect business owners' decision on "where" to scale their operations.*

NON-PROFIT LEADERS & SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS
Leadership from local organizations and programs. Several conversations took place with the group at various times.

Major themes from the discussion

- *Wabash County is a giving community, second highest levels of philanthropic activity among all Indiana counties. This is reflected in the plethora of non-profit organizations, programs, and social services.*
- *There are, however, high levels of need especially related to public health. Drug issues have increased dramatically and contributed to several connected issues like homelessness, domestic violence, chronic unemployment, hunger, child neglect, etc.*
- *There is a strong network of local and regional groups responding to needs in the county but there can be issues related to resources, redundancy, and collaboration.*
- *Given the size of the county, communication and collaboration are essential. Building stronger relationships across the services web will build a stronger system and help illuminate blind spots.*

NORTH MANCHESTER TOWN AND GOWN
Community and university leadership.

Major themes from the discussion

- *The town and university enjoy a strong and mutually beneficial relationship but there is room for growth and deepening of the connection.*

- *Leadership have had a strong working relationship built over years of collaboration; this is not always the case for students / faculty and the surrounding community. There is an opportunity to be more intentional with relationship building at all levels.*
- *Real projects include improving the physical connections between the university and the downtown (sidewalks and trails).*
- *University adds demographic diversity to the county and exposes cohorts of talented young people to the community. This is a real advantage and opportunity for North Manchester and the larger county.*
- *Transportation is a challenge, both within N. Manchester and around the region.*

KIWANIS WABASH CLUB

Club members convened twice during the Focus on the Future round.

Major themes from the discussion

- *Wabash County and its communities are great places to live and start a business, but there is also tremendous potential for new growth and investment.*
- *Limiting factors right now focus squarely on broadband internet. The pandemic has made remote work a real possibility for large portions of the workforce and the communities could and should benefit from this by attracting new residents, but connectivity will limit how we can take advantage.*
- *Housing is another important issue, and the communities need to continue to work hard to broaden their housing stock over time.*
- *Jobs are the central factor and without local opportunities, our growth potential will always be truncated.*

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY

Leadership from the university.

Major themes from the discussion

- *The University has and will continue to play a central community role in North Manchester and in the broader Wabash County community. There is a long history shared between the university and the community and the relationship has been mutually beneficial.*
- *The institution's students and faculty are younger and more diverse than the surrounding community. This infusion of youth and diversity are a benefit to the communities, and especially the more proximate North Manchester.*
- *There are opportunities to forge more physical and non-physical connections between the university and the surrounding communities. The quality of transportation options, appropriate attractions, and other factors get in the way. The relationship has room to grow with the benefits shared broadly.*
- *Talent capture can also improve. The communities greatly benefit from the students' four year "try out" of the places around the county, and through a more deliberate effort, more may be encouraged to stay, grow, and invest in the community long-term.*

PLAN COMMISSION OF WABASH

Members of the commission and related staff

Major themes from the discussion

- *There has been real progress in the city over the last ten years, evidenced by the re-emergence of downtown. Significant coordination and strategic planning of investments have helped the district become a strong central amenity once again. There is still a lot of growth potential.*
- *Housing is a primary concern. The city's stock is older and there has been very little built in the past three decades. Many homes require major re-modeling or repairs to maintain. The city can do a better job of streamlining this process for prospective buyers.*
- *The city should focus on "livability". Wabash offers many of the benefits of a small town (community connectedness, walkability, charm, etc.) with the connection a strong jobs market and lower costs of living. There are, however, many more investments the city can be making to enhance this.*
- *Internet access must improve to take advantage of the urban professional worker diaspora.*
- *Plan coordination is important. The city has completed several recent plans and studies for its various interests / departments. The comprehensive plan should seek to align and accent this work.*

PLAN COMMISSION NORTH MANCHESTER

Members of the commission and related staff

Major themes from the discussion

- *North Manchester is a strong, attractive, and giving community, but one with un-met potential. The city has several quite unique assets like the university, the Eel River, it's downtown, and recent new housing projects.*
- *This is a particularly giving/caring community as evidenced by its philanthropic energy and care providers. Places like the Peabody Retirement Community or Daniel's Place are extraordinarily unique especially for a community the size of the city.*
- *There is great potential for quality of place investments centering on the Eel River and Main Street. There should be a relationship between the two.*
- *The university poses a special opportunity. The relationship is strong, but the city community continue to build stronger connections, especially between the student body and residents. Improvements to sidewalks, considerations related to off-campus housing, and community programming are areas of interest.*
- *Housing plays an important role in community vitality and there has been very little new stock built in the past several decades. The city's newest subdivision is the first in 40 years and will add 34 units to the city's west side. There is significant demand, but the challenge has been connecting developers / builders with the potential projects. This is a shared challenge across the county.*

WABASH COUNTY ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION AND BZA

Members of the two bodies and related staff

Major themes from the discussion

- *The communities outside the city's play an important role in defining the character and feel of the county. They're also home a particularly productive side of the county's economy which includes*

farming, processing, and other agricultural pursuits. Mixed-in are the county's small towns (formally designated) and unincorporated hamlets. These have their own unique assets and challenges.

- *"Farmland" is not a monolith and there are important variations in types and quality. This should plan a role in zoning and development evaluations. Primary farmland is rare generally but found in abundance across the county.*
- *There are several rural issues that could be lifted-up through the process including tile drainage, rural sanitation, small town vitality, and others.*
- *There's an opportunity to better capitalize on the county's agricultural legacy and activity. The region's small farms and operations can be lifted through initiatives like agri-tourism and connections to the county's extension.*

4. APPENDIX

The following pages list all comments given during the first round of engagement and are organized by question. Most of the comments were typed and submitted directly by community members and are presented without edits to spelling, punctuation, grammar, or content.

If you said "Something else" what other outcome should we aspire to achieve?

ID	Source	If you said "Something else" what other outcome should we aspire to achieve?
5	In-Person (paper)	Need new or older residents to get involved in projects
9	In-Person (paper)	Better phone and internet systems.
37	Online Only	Healthier Families...as they are the building block of a healthy society.
55	Online Only	Welcoming of diversity
98	Virtual Sessions	Chick fil a
99	Virtual Sessions	Cultural diversity
100	Virtual Sessions	spec industrial buildings
101	Virtual Sessions	Focus on gathering spaces
102	Virtual Sessions	More diversity
103	Virtual Sessions	High Quality, affordable childcare
104	Virtual Sessions	Develop riverfront parks and activities
105	Virtual Sessions	positive perception for current residents to help attract new
107	Virtual Sessions	Increased diversity of population
108	Virtual Sessions	Vibrant Arts in schools and communtiy
109	Virtual Sessions	More welcoming to immigrants
110	Virtual Sessions	Better internet in county
111	Virtual Sessions	More opportunities for young people to stay connected when they leave for college.
113	Virtual Sessions	Outdoor recreation destination (lifestyle)
114	Virtual Sessions	Training in music/ arts and opportunities to share
116	Virtual Sessions	Broadband connection for rural and cities and towns. 5G
120	Virtual Sessions	Trail networks in all communities
121	Virtual Sessions	Competitive living advantage
122	Virtual Sessions	internet for everyone
123	Virtual Sessions	More open to diversity
124	Virtual Sessions	Woulda put housing and internet next

3.1 (b) "Something Else"

ID	Source	If you said "Something else" what other outcome should we aspire to achieve?
125	Virtual Sessions	Become known as environmental leader: regenerative farming, organic crops, clean air and water
126	Virtual Sessions	More diverse recreational opportunities and eateries so people do not have to leave the county.
128	Virtual Sessions	Cultural diversity
129	Virtual Sessions	Substance abuse counseling and treatment
131	Virtual Sessions	Diverse entertainment opportunities
133	Virtual Sessions	Amenities for young people and families
134	Virtual Sessions	Robust high quality early education and childcare, and support for post secondary education
135	Virtual Sessions	quality childcare
137	Virtual Sessions	We need to have better housing options for the people that commute into Wabash for work.

Better communication in our schools systems. |
139	Virtual Sessions	Family resources for healthy communities
141	Virtual Sessions	Cultural and racial diversity
143	Virtual Sessions	Cultural diversity. Be a truly welcoming community.
144	Virtual Sessions	Political and cultural diversity
147	Virtual Sessions	Cultural Diversity
154	Virtual Sessions	Active community
157	Virtual Sessions	Diversity
158	Virtual Sessions	Need well paying jobs
162	Virtual Sessions	Healthy community/envirnment
163	Virtual Sessions	Opportunities to meet and socialize with other single people
165	Virtual Sessions	Everyone receives a living wage/income
167	Virtual Sessions	Destination marketing
168	Virtual Sessions	Continuing education
171	Virtual Sessions	Quality productive youth programming (sports, social, care, edu)
172	Virtual Sessions	Healthcare
174	Virtual Sessions	Funding and trainings for entrepreneurs to start business in our communities.

3.1 (b) "Something Else"

ID	Source	If you said "Something else" what other outcome should we aspire to achieve?
177	Virtual Sessions	Strong public transportation
180	Virtual Sessions	Quality childcare
182	Virtual Sessions	Long term success
183	Virtual Sessions	We are producing talented well educated young people, but there is lack of diverse employment in Wabash Co to retain them
185	Virtual Sessions	Diversity in population
186	Virtual Sessions	Cultural diversity
196	Virtual Sessions	More inclusive local government
197	Virtual Sessions	Future of Wabash County. Moving forward together. Unity.
198	Virtual Sessions	Quality of communal spaces. Where people gather.
200	Virtual Sessions	Opportunities
205	Virtual Sessions	Parks and trails
208	Virtual Sessions	No pverty
210	Virtual Sessions	Social support infrastructure
211	Virtual Sessions	More opportunities for students
213	Virtual Sessions	They are attainable.
214	Virtual Sessions	Racial and Cultural Diversity
215	Virtual Sessions	Outdoor venues like farmer's market pavilion, music/theater, ice rink, ropes course, gardens, pubs, and other places for people to gather
218	Virtual Sessions	People can't move here if no housing.
219	Virtual Sessions	Quantity of quality childcare
220	Virtual Sessions	Attractions for young families
221	Virtual Sessions	Connectivity
222	Virtual Sessions	More accessible child care
223	Virtual Sessions	Increase educational opportunities
224	Virtual Sessions	Integrated local governments
226	Virtual Sessions	Strong internet access
227	Virtual Sessions	Minority integration into the community.

3.1 (b) "Something Else"

ID	Source	If you said "Something else" what other outcome should we aspire to achieve?
228	Virtual Sessions	More things for our younger citizens
230	Virtual Sessions	Change "ignorant" midset
233	Virtual Sessions	Access to high speed for everyone
234	Virtual Sessions	Strong child care
236	Virtual Sessions	Reliable Youth 'net access
237	Virtual Sessions	Cutting edge schools
238	Virtual Sessions	Have shovel ready sites for business

Why did you select these outcomes?

ID	Source	Why did you select these outcomes?
1	In-Person (paper)	People need to have a reason to live here. Education is key, as well as cultural offerings and retail possibilities - use our natural resources to attract families.
2	In-Person (paper)	E. Attract more commerce G. New jobs would bring in younger people I. In the end it would increase the population
3	In-Person (paper)	More jobs for our young to keep them in our communities. More education for our kids locally. Hope for people to clean up their homes and have pride in the community.
4	In-Person (paper)	Roann is a VERY small community and very quiet. I would like to see more activities and get-togethers to unite the town. I am a senior.
5	In-Person (paper)	I would like to see a better view coming into town and a clean up by the old school. We would like to have people from different parts of the county to give tours of the Stockdale Mill and explore the fish ladder.
7	In-Person (paper)	Educations is the only answer for Roann. The people that owned the land here are mostly dead. Use that land with knowledge and state funding to grow. Make this a safe haven for disabled vets. Where the school was, build a small nursing facility for vets. Students that plan for medicine or nursing for a career could be educated and provided a career to further themselves. It could be presented as a student's major in school. The vets facility woudl grow, they would have free housing and there would be an adequate turn over for students as the decided to "move on."
8	In-Person (paper)	In our small community, good affordable housing helps- we serve as a bedroom community for Wabash and Warsaw. Roann would welcome an industry type business. Keeping youth in the community.
9	In-Person (paper)	Towers in area are inadequate - drop calls constantly. Internet cannot get on line during the day.
11	In-Person (paper)	Seem to be the most important factors to me. Am not sure exactly why.
12	In-Person (paper)	I think letter C would be a good outcome because speaking from my perspective I would say that a good education system would be a very good message not just to the community but to surrounding areas to show them that we care about education.
14	In-Person (paper)	D. We don't need people to live and work here. That's ideal, but we need one or the other first as a baby step. F. Pooling resources is always better. I. Is the future of this county.
15	In-Person (paper)	Failure of school districts to unite or work together is sad. This is essential. Wide variety of housing for limited income personnel. Employment opportunities are the base.
16	In-Person (paper)	B. If people move in they need to find housing. C. Young families want and demand strong schools. G. More quality jobs with better pay will attract others to come here and will encourage our young people to stay.
17	In-Person (paper)	There is a housing shortage in Wabash County. Young adults / unemployed leave County for training. County needs more jobs that pay more than minimum wage - something other than fast food, service jobs
18	In-Person (paper)	C) Education will bring families to the area E) People want interesting and a variety of offerings when they visit F) Working successfully and sincerely across communities will contribute to success If these are accomplished, the other options should follow as a natural outcome.
19	In-Person (paper)	Without good paying jobs people will continue to leave the county. By cleaning up the small towns and investing in restoring and building in these small communities, people will come if the jobs are there.

3.2 Why

ID	Source	Why did you select these outcomes?
20	In-Person (paper)	B. My own family members moved to a nearby community due to lack of available housing in Wabash County. We need to encourage more development of housing options. G. Increase in quality good paying jobs - many Wabash County citizens work outside the County due to limited, low paying jobs in Wabash I. Talented young people to stay in our community - if there are good employment opportunities and housing options it will be a draw for young people.
21	In-Person (paper)	We need housing for starter homes, low income and high income - redevelopment. People want to live in a place that has a positive community. If you can attract people to your town other opportunities will come. People want to live in a place that has options. State park, recreation.
23	In-Person (paper)	Need jobs and housing
24	Online Only	NA
25	Online Only	I believe that we must have a common goal for the county. Focus on many different jobs, such a technology, workforce development, manufacturing, retail must be coordinated. I believe you also need the right people to go and seek out these industries and attract them to our area. I believe with the ability to attract and form relationships with other government entities, non for profits, and businesses, we also need to make a conscious effort on place making. Social gathering spaces, social events, utilizing our river resource for a place of gathering, responsible development, and use of outdoor recreation is key. I believe the potential to come together as a tourism center, a cultural district is vital. However we cannot afford to be held back by the history or past. Embrace it, but we need to adapt the attractive to 21st century businesses and young professionals. By place making, you attract the businesses. Businesses don't make the town or city or county. Businesses come because it's a place where the owners and investors want to live, because of a promenade, and vibrant cultural district, and river trails. The businesses will come if we invest in ourselves and become attractive, not the other way around.
26	Online Only	They are the cornerstone of our communities future success
27	Online Only	They seems like the most pressing issues that could be solved. Greater housing supply, more people attracted to our community, vibrant communities to keep them happy.

3.2 Why

ID	Source	Why did you select these outcomes?
28	Online Only	A. A healthy mix of business and industry, particularly those that have local ownership and/or those that import capital, would provide not only an economic engine locally but also provide talent from which the not-for-profit sector, government sector, and educational sector could draw capable volunteer leadership. This business/industry priority isn't just a generic "jobs" or "pay" issue, since county businesses today advertise many unfilled position at a spectrum of compensation levels. Rather, this should be viewed as an economic growth effort with the side benefit of talent attraction from which multiple community sectors could benefit. B. Housing is an identified issue locally. The company for whom I work recruits executive talent from time to time, and these individuals, without exception, find housing outside the Wabash city limits and often outside the County. Similarly, young people coming to work at this firm are often unable to find suitable rentals. As a consequence of the foregoing, these individuals center their personal lives outside of the community. By the way, amenities such as the extraordinary Honeywell Center help to attract visitors and retain residents, but by themselves, haven't proven to be a significant "recruiting" or "buy local" tool since such amenities are within convenient driving distance of nearby communities where housing exists in greater variety and numbers. C. When recruiting families to the local firm where I am employed, education is invariably part of the conversation. It's not necessarily the primary driver of a relocation decision -- we've found those to be personal circumstances/goals and housing availability -- but it's in the next tier. Some questions concern class availability; others are directed at extracurriculars, e.g. speech teams, show choirs, science clubs, and athletics. The toughest questions to address satisfactorily are those exploring the perceived non-cooperation of local educational bodies.
29	Online Only	First of all I am not a businessman, I know nothing about fundraising, and I have never been remotely near what I am going to propose, in any way. Second, I know my idea is going to be damn tough to pull off but I think the possibilities may be there. I suggest we need to get the existing businesses in Wabash county together, and likely individuals, establish some kind of financial pool or money in escrow, establish a group of qualified business people from within the county to make intelligent decisions, and start looking for an emerging technology to make Wabash County home for. It is a big risk, and would be sort of like the consortium of fifteen countries running the International Space Station, but it has been done and could be done again. We get some realistic businesses in the county connected with an emerging technology, and I think the county will turn around; and it will be good for everybody.
30	Online Only	We have to increase the quality of job offerings to attract professional to our town and provide a place for those newly employed to live, and we make them stay and engage with a vibrant downtown.
31	Online Only	Better employment options will both support the county economy and increase the draw to our county. Retaining and attracting young people to come and live and support the county will add to long term growth. And we have to have vibrant communities with activities to draw people.
32	Online Only	They keep the young families in town, which is critical to growth.
33	Online Only	Jobs and education are 2 of the most important things for many young families. People are tired of wasting precious family time traveling back and forth to work. Parents also want to be sure their kids get a great education.
34	Online Only	we need young people to choose our communities to live and work in Education/good schools is a draw for young people

3.2 Why

ID	Source	Why did you select these outcomes?
35	Online Only	Based on my experience, the education system is Wabash is a major factor when families are deciding where to live after getting employment in the area. Additionally, the lack of employment industries limits the number of new jobs that attract employees outside of the Wabash area. Lastly, I feel there are a very limited number of opportunities for young talented people to either stay or move to our area. Lastly, I feel the local taxes are a big deterrent to outside people moving in.
36	Online Only	People leave here for better jobs and more interesting activities and culture. If you can correct those weaknesses, people may stay or come back.
37	Online Only	If families are not functioning well, nothing will function well as those families will be a drain on the economic and moral fabric of the community. This will require a collaborative work between government agencies, businesses, and the various faith communities in our county to investigate the broken aspects of divorce, single parents, delinquency, addictive behaviors and address those aspects in or to relieve the pressures working against a thriving and fully functional community.
38	Online Only	people need a reason to live here and without jobs, unless the perks are that much better, they will live where they can find work.
39	Online Only	Well-paying, interesting jobs will attract new people to the area and also will encourage our young people to stay. The last fifteen years I worked before I retired, I worked in Huntington County because the type of job I was performing paid much better over there. I also don't see a problem with people choosing to live in Wabash County and work outside the county. To get people to do that, we must have a good reputation in the area as a safe place with lots of fun things to do and places to go. One outcome you didn't list which might help is better internet in all corners and areas of the county.
40	Online Only	If these items are worked on everything else will fall in to place.
41	Online Only	People move out or kids don't come back because jobs they are seeing are not here and don't pay enough.
42	Online Only	These are areas where growing cities are excelling in and have used that advantage to attract people to move towards these population centers.
43	Online Only	Wabash is in need of schools that are funded appropriately so that there is increased teacher retention and student's can be challenged by academic and training offerings that are not currently in our community. Additionally, when there are increased employment options, the brain drain will slow down creating a need for increased and varying retail, entertainment, and other attractions that draw and keep younger families in our community.
44	Online Only	Earning a living and housing are essential if we want people to live in the county, however, people of all ages need social and shopping options. We already have great schools. Good government should be a given.
45	Online Only	Having jobs and vibrant communities will attract families.
46	Online Only	Families need housing they can afford. If they can afford their housing, their families and children are better equipped to handle life. A good education in a small town is ideal because people want the small town feel, but the big-town schools that are funded and offer more. Partnerships across communities are important in Wabash because if we travel within our county to provide for everyone instead of traveling outside of it -we all win.
47	Online Only	We have to keep and /or attract young folks and people who think outside of the box to start small businesses in our area.
48	Online Only	Important to mec
49	Online Only	Jobs, housing, and social options are the core to a strong community. Wabash needs more housing OPTIONS in order to drive down the cost of housing; home ownership is out of reach for so many. Employment options need to increase; options for "jobs of the future," we need to attract a wider variety of business and industry to set up shop in Wabash County.

3.2 Why

ID	Source	Why did you select these outcomes?
50	Online Only	I think that these 3 choices are the foundation of your movement. We NEED them to build on.
51	Online Only	Keep young people here through jobs and affordable housing...it's a start, and will lead to progress in the other initiatives.
52	Online Only	Education is foremost for families. Young people staying create new families. Shops and social activities for all to enjoy and also bring in visitors.
53	Online Only	You need housing for jobs and you need jobs for housing. Education needs to be outstanding especially K-4 where children who have challenges can helped and those challenges hopefully resolved.
54	Online Only	Without jobs, why would people stay or move here? Many people consider school districts when they choose to move to a new area. We need to have a well educated community. One area that has lost many jobs is agriculture. With fewer small family farms, consolidation into huge farm operations and giant tillage/harvesting equipment, fewer people are needed in this type of system. However, I believe there us a growth opportunity in producing more food for local consumption. More could be done than hosting a farmers market weekly in the summer.
55	Online Only	Jobs, education, diversity- looking to the future
56	Online Only	.
57	Online Only	Because if there's no room to grow or to expand . People will venture out in to other towns, or city's. That have more to offer. People need good quality paying jobs and opportunities to support families .
58	Online Only	I'm "big into" employment and education being "huge draws" for a community/county. I believe jobs attract people to the community/county... and having the best K-12 education in the area is HUGE. Parents will drive across district/county lines for a quality school system.
59	Online Only	We have to be able to attract or maintain young talent. It appears the largest sector of people leaving are young people and the reason is for attracted opportunity elsewhere. If we expect to grow in population, we have to either keep what we produce or attract people to replace those leaving. Our housing supply is very limited and dated. The cost and process to buy and fix up a property is costly and not efficient as your market value doesn't keep up with your cost to improve. Even as we have seen an increase in new builds the last few years, we need to provide an area were multiple lots of affordable new builds can be completed. Improvement programs for neighborhoods could be another idea to champion homeowners to take pride in updating their properties as well. This was shown with downtown facade grants to buildings and neighbors jumped on board wanting to improve their building as well. We must better unify relationships and teamwork across communities and different sectors. Making a significant change to grow our communities will take all teamwork within Wabash County and surrounding counties.
60	Online Only	These areas are more of an interest to me, not to say that the others are not important.
61	In-Person (electronic)	I live in Wabash County but work in a different county and would like to work closer to home. I'm also starting my family so schools are important to me.
62	In-Person (electronic)	Without jobs you won't have people who spend consistent money in the community. Hopefully young people will stay and grow their families here
63	In-Person (electronic)	Commerce brings visitors Jobs bring more residents Young people keep the population growing

3.2 Why

ID	Source	Why did you select these outcomes?
64	In-Person (electronic)	We need to keep our young adults in our communities. They are our future
65	In-Person (electronic)	Bringing younger people into and help run the community is key for growth
66	In-Person (electronic)	Young people are our future. We need families to have stable and quality jobs with income to grow young people into productive community members as adults. EDUCATION is the key to a better life. More opportunities to learn will produce community members to be able grow our community. We need the State of Indiana to adjust their funding to allow PUBIC schools to receive better funding. Private schools are given public money to run. Professional employment is lacking in our area. We need diversity to our job force. We could attract professionals from other areas of the country to be inspired to live in our community. We need to attract young families to stay or come back to live in Wabash County. We need a job force to provide opportunities for them to come back or to stay to raise a family.
67	In-Person (electronic)	Growth is focused around education and employment.
68	In-Person (electronic)	As my four children have grown and are looking for their place to land or have already, I'm most interested in how we can keep and get young people in our community!
69	In-Person (electronic)	There is a lack of those 3 and will improve the the growth the fastest. C. Already competitive but unfortunately it is for student enrollment for money. D & E. This is an emotion that is difficult to implement and will happen with growth. F. This will happen with the implementation of A, B, G. H. Smart spending on behalf of our county will help this. I. They are here but leave for A, B, & C
70	In-Person (electronic)	Local town governments and the city is great - county commissioners do a fine job, county council is way too political and only cares about unincorporated WC and seems to forget that the cities and towns are part of the community too.
71	In-Person (electronic)	Because well paying jobs that treat employees well breeds loyalty to the community and encourages living g in the county.
72	In-Person (electronic)	These are the things the county seems to lack.
73	In-Person (electronic)	Stronger schools attract people to live in a community. Diverse kinds of jobs and more job opportunities with good pay and a chance for advancement will bring people to the community and encourage our young people to stay.
74	In-Person (electronic)	I've found employment to be a primary driver against population decline.
75	In-Person (electronic)	I feel these are some of the important things a new family looking to move into the community may look at when making their decision. Or a collage graduate looking to settle down in the town he was raised.
76	In-Person (electronic)	If people know about our county, they might decide to live therefor our lovely quality of life. More jobs are important, but more and more young professionals can work remotely. So they could live here IF we had high speed Internet.
77	In-Person (electronic)	Good jobs are important
78	In-Person (electronic)	Education, quality jobs and positive place to be will drive the increase demand for the other outcomes. More demand will help diversify and build a more stable financial government along with opportunities for better housing.
79	In-Person (electronic)	I see these sectors as a priority to a vibrant community and attracting others to Wabash County.
80	In-Person (electronic)	The best and brightest out county produces need a reason to stay.

3.2 Why

ID	Source	Why did you select these outcomes?
81	In-Person (electronic)	I think housing quality is very poor in wabash County . There isn't very many quality places to rent. The job opportunities are there but the pay is very low for the cost of living here unless u work out of town. There is very little to do in wabash County for fun and excitement. There are plenty of outdoor opportunities but need some entertainment businesses. Id like to see small town living with at least some big city activities. Utilizing the drive in and Honeywell theater/gym for concerts or conventions would be a plus. You would need proper marketing to reach all surrounding areas to bring in the value of people to attend until more housing and population increases.
82	In-Person (electronic)	Create a place where educated people want to be good schools, vibrant cities, and good jobs, and people will come.
83	In-Person (electronic)	We moved to the area 2 years ago. We had a hard time finding a house and the one we did needs a lot work work updating and improving. More housing for upper middle class is needed. One of the reasons we moved here was that our kids had graduated. I wanted a school that had more academic and extracurricular activities than the Wabash schools offer. If MSD and Wabash city consolidated, they would save money and have a larger school system that could offer more options. More retail and social options will draw more young people and enhance the community. I selected this rather than the young person choice because I believe of you make the area more attractive and bring in jobs, the young people will come.
84	In-Person (electronic)	I believe if you can address these, the other things might come along naturally.
85	In-Person (electronic)	Quality education is often a draw to a community. Vibrant cities rich with retail and social offerings might attract a younger population. New partnerships that involve collaborative efforts tend to be more innovative.
86	In-Person (electronic)	LaFontaine has almost 0 jobs outside of family owned/operated places. There is nothing bringing a younger crowd and there is nothing keeping people from leaving.
87	In-Person (electronic)	Housing and education attract people to a location, a variety of employment opportunities will keep them here.
88	In-Person (electronic)	Jobs equal grown in any town or county. If you bring people into the county for work you have to be able to offer a strong educational system to support it.
89	In-Person (electronic)	Bringing back industry is vital for the reconstruction of our county. Building residential zones will only take you so far if major career paths are in places like Warsaw. The implementation of smart growth development policies will allow for this growth to take place in a more vibrant and community-oriented manner, and will incentivize more people to invest in and stay here.
90	In-Person (electronic)	All very important. Could only choose three.
91	In-Person (electronic)	Based on the data, need places for people to live and there is a deficit of housing. Jobs are obviously crucial, and need diversity of jobs, but when imagining the future of work, there is much done virtually, both in jobs and education; people may choose place based on quality of life.
92	Online Only	I chose these three outcomes because I want there to be more job opportunities and more reasonable housing costs. This would bring more people to our town.
93	Online Only	I selected that Wabash was well known regionally because that would attract tourists and more people to the area. I selected that Wabash had a diverse variety of employment industries because then more people could move because they could find a job. I selected that Wabash had a wide variety of houses and costs because more people could find what they're looking for and could afford it
94	Online Only	I selected these outcomes because Wabash doesn't have a lot of nice houses. We also don't have a lot of places to shop. Our town is very boring.
95	Online Only	If there is a good education system, affordable homes, and a number of good jobs to choose from, people might consider moving back.

3.2 Why

ID	Source	Why did you select these outcomes?
96	Online Only	I chose these outcomes because there needs to be more job opportunities to bring more people to Wabash and lowering to price of houses will bring more people as well.
97	Online Only	I selected these because I think Wabash's main problem is that the town isn't interesting enough for people to stick around. These options would make the town more exciting to live in.
98	Virtual Sessions	Just cuz
99	Virtual Sessions	Outcome I: Young professionals are such a key aspect of shaping the future. More needs to be done to make WC an appealing place to live and get involved. Wabash County needs to embrace change and they are currently injuring the county by avoiding it
100	Virtual Sessions	C. Education - we have declining numbers of enrollees in three of our four high schools and yet insist on being completely separate - and we form pacs to elect school board members instead of having a conversation Jobs - need to equip the community with the tools to attract diverse jobs with higher wages and train those workers
101	Virtual Sessions	Move-in ready housing and strong educational institutions (and amazing internet) are what I hear from younger people. Good gathering spaces help people get out and see each other across the spectrums.
102	Virtual Sessions	Stronger schools provide more opportunities for students and attract more families L. Youth are the community's future
103	Virtual Sessions	It's all about talent
104	Virtual Sessions	C Competitive public 21century education to attract young families, supply an able workforce, engage the region, raise incomes, advance diversity
105	Virtual Sessions	A+B+C= I
106	Virtual Sessions	Good schools lead to happier and more families and more jobs and more dollars in community which helps promote vibrant diversity in the economy and more folks excited to join it.
107	Virtual Sessions	They contribute to population growth
108	Virtual Sessions	Need to draw young families who will stay
109	Virtual Sessions	More people will come here if there are good job opportunities
110	Virtual Sessions	Promote great place to live. Beautiful, safe small town America. Place to raise children.
111	Virtual Sessions	I have kids in the school system, it's difficult to find local candidates for our job openings requiring more education and experience, I am a young person who left for a number of years and came back because of a job opportunity.
112	Virtual Sessions	Make raising a family a process that is community focused. Kids have a great appreciation for the arts and for community engagement.
113	Virtual Sessions	Outside people looking to move here laugh at 3 school districts and no available housing 3 school districts need to talk with each other and work together for all
114	Virtual Sessions	If people flee the cities right now because if Covid, come settle here.
115	Virtual Sessions	B. Known several people from all walks of life who would have loved to move here, but couldnt find an appropriate housing sokution
116	Virtual Sessions	If people are going to be able to work or go to school at a distant location but live in our county, 5G Internet is vital. County students in particular need good broadband. Workers won't come if they can connect.
118	Virtual Sessions	Education is important to families that are considering where they want to live. Keeping our talented, creative people here is our best chance for a strong future. Education is important to young families who are looking at where they want to live.

3.2 Why

ID	Source	Why did you select these outcomes?
120	Virtual Sessions	Education unlocks so many barriers to achieving the other qualities Outdoor gathering space and trail networks improve mental health
121	Virtual Sessions	People and employers select Wabash over all other regional cities.
123	Virtual Sessions	Personal experience and feedback from others
124	Virtual Sessions	These serve as a foundation for quantitative growth as well as qualitative growth They serve as foundation for quantitative and qualitative growth
125	Virtual Sessions	Need a healthy place for people to live: job, housing, education, clean environment attract people
126	Virtual Sessions	They are the largest gaps I see missing in a small town that is going against the trend of other small towns that are boarding up.
127	Virtual Sessions	Outcome A: people need to have good paying employment to draw them to the community. Without it, it is like trying to build a "field of dreams". B. There is not much opportunity for housing. If it is available, it is usually not feasible for today's standards. Fiscal responsibility is important. If you have elected officials that continually make poor choices like the mentality "if we build it they will come", the community will fail
128	Virtual Sessions	Jobs follow people so we need to focus more on what people want and need over corporations/businesses Lack of diversity can cause close-mindedness Wabash County is often seen as afraid of change, but change is necessary
129	Virtual Sessions	Consolidation of schools is key to improving education through diversity of offerings; strong well funded education is the key to strong diverse jib offerings; strong workforce is key to more vibrant cities and towns and retailers will follow
130	Virtual Sessions	If we become a well-known county that is thought of positively regionally, the rest will come along.
131	Virtual Sessions	Need a good balance of opportunities
132	Virtual Sessions	In order to attract young families you must have housing stock and a quality school system.
133	Virtual Sessions	All other things on the list hinge on talent development and attraction
134	Virtual Sessions	To attract young families. Demonstrate early childhood education is available, and support for education is important to our community We must have quality schools and childcare and housing to attract young families
135	Virtual Sessions	B. Can't move here without housing or rental options I- HR Group, Young Professionals Group, Grow Wabash County, Community Foundation of Wabash County, Visit Wabash County, Realtors, Schools, front line employees (Disney approach) C: School Admin, Students themselves, Teachers, Employers, Gov, Grow Wabash County, Community Foundation, State, Regional partners, Heartland Career Center, Learn More Center, Ivy Tech, Manchester Unv
136	Virtual Sessions	We need more quality jobs, but we also need to sell our area as a great place to live. We need to have people from throughout Indiana visit and take advantage of our beauty and history.
137	Virtual Sessions	City and county government Focus group to help develop a plan Lots of media hype and billboards.
138	Virtual Sessions	Should reflect success of our work done with Imag185
139	Virtual Sessions	The cost and financial drain on community resources from unhealthy families struggling to live in community The need for a robust education in order to compete in the global marketplace
140	Virtual Sessions	They seem key to our future growth

3.2 Why

ID	Source	Why did you select these outcomes?
141	Virtual Sessions	I'd feel more welcomed if I saw more people that look like me. Also, if I raised my kids here the ones I picked would affect their future.
142	Virtual Sessions	Young families considering moving here want good schools/education. Vibrant cities make people want to live close and spend money at local shops and events
143	Virtual Sessions	Attract and retain young people. Although we see our selves as a welcoming community, in reality we are often only welcoming those who "look like us"
144	Virtual Sessions	I teach here, and want to raise a family here but my partner DOES NOT see quality in staying here. Diversity and employment options aren't great.
147	Virtual Sessions	Strengthen Community Foundation
149	Virtual Sessions	Seems that employment is key to population growth
150	Virtual Sessions	C - brings families and keep them in Wabash County to establish roots and connection. D - brings people to wabash county to explore and get to know our community
151	Virtual Sessions	Option B: Current renter and potential future buyer Option C: I am considering starting a family Option I: I want to connect with other young people and form a community
153	Virtual Sessions	Strong education and provide good paying and diverse market of jobs for those after higher education achieved
154	Virtual Sessions	Why would my kids want to stay here
155	Virtual Sessions	We miss out on talented young adults from the university because of the lack of push by university employees to sell our county as a place to stay after school. We won't become more progressive or diverse without this pipeline of young adults.
157	Virtual Sessions	Young people and good paying jobs are the future. Keeping people here or attracting them.
158	Virtual Sessions	Well paying jobs are needed to bring people as well as quality homes that the younger people are interested in living.
159	Virtual Sessions	Jobs bring workers and schools bring residents It's important for our communities to cooperate and form partnerships. Old rivalries are anathema to growth
160	Virtual Sessions	Need reasons to stay here
161	Virtual Sessions	People do not understand how bad our fragmented education system looks to those who might consider coming
162	Virtual Sessions	Makes community inviting. Keeps youth in county
163	Virtual Sessions	I'm committed to working locally and feel there are few options for educated people. I want to live here a long time. I'm rooted.
164	Virtual Sessions	You need to be able to see yourself here, living, working, engaged with the community and feel like you belong. More diversity, more opportunity means more people can see themselves here and our community grows.
165	Virtual Sessions	Young people being interested in staying will automatically produce benefits for all
166	Virtual Sessions	Mix of employment
167	Virtual Sessions	Successful towns need diverse housing, Value added and diverse employment
168	Virtual Sessions	Attracting young people - and raising families— is hope for future Mix of employment with a livable wage attracts welcomes wider population A. Town councils and anyone responsible for economic incentives to attract diverse businesses
169	Virtual Sessions	Without people/talent job opportunities won't come into the county

3.2 Why

ID	Source	Why did you select these outcomes?
170	Virtual Sessions	Must have good jobs Must have good jobs with liveable wages and chances to advance to attract new residents.
171	Virtual Sessions	We need fresh blood and new perspectives Find ways to deviate from "this is always how it's been" with stale ideas
172	Virtual Sessions	Resiliency requires jobs, housing and education
173	Virtual Sessions	key to keeping young families here
174	Virtual Sessions	When you have a stong retail and social selection, uou create a better quality of life, which attracts people.
177	Virtual Sessions	With an aging community/county we need a strong support system. We want retirees to age here. When they leave they take their investments snd spending power with them.
178	Virtual Sessions	Lacking educational opportunities is detrimetal to both attracting and keeping our population.
180	Virtual Sessions	Items that contribute to quality for all ages
184	Virtual Sessions	Attract younger generation
185	Virtual Sessions	Housing - Trying to recruit professionals is hard where we have no quality housing. Education - we have to get all our schools competitive and offering the best opportunities for our students.
186	Virtual Sessions	Businesses follow people and as our current workforce retires we'll need skilled people to fill those places
187	Virtual Sessions	Integration. Many of those items will be complimentary as we work through these goals. Housing, jobs, schools.
188	Virtual Sessions	Without housing, there is a huge barrier for people who do want to live here and cannot
190	Virtual Sessions	Must have housing and rentals for new talent
191	Virtual Sessions	Competitive schools attract young families, build talent, attract jobs, build community
193	Virtual Sessions	Keeping or drawing the younger professionals in the community is important
195	Virtual Sessions	Young families bring energy and attract other young families Business, industry, social orgs, and education will improve and expand when the talent they rely on are present.
196	Virtual Sessions	A good job with a competitive wage can solve a lot of problems; we need additional 21st century thought economy jobs and our schools and local Universities to prepare them; we need new and diverse housing We have housing needs at all levels from multi family to workforce to executive style
197	Virtual Sessions	Unity. Growth. Future
198	Virtual Sessions	Strength of relationship
199	Virtual Sessions	Quality education is a big draw. Being well thought of in the region will draw people to us.
200	Virtual Sessions	All great oucomes depend on inputs of education, talent, opportunity
201	Virtual Sessions	To me they are key to our future development
202	Virtual Sessions	Retaining and training young people is a positive way to grow the community and it's assets.

3.2 Why

ID	Source	Why did you select these outcomes?
203	Virtual Sessions	Because youth is the future. Well funded competitive education would attract good parents.
204	Virtual Sessions	I believe that we need to have an attractive and vibrant city, to attract the jobs and the talent, which will increase housing opportunities and grow tax base
205	Virtual Sessions	Will improve population in the county Quality of life Improving outdoor opportunities is so important
206	Virtual Sessions	Crucial to reversing the population loss
208	Virtual Sessions	Done
209	Virtual Sessions	If we are attracting young talent we are likely doing a great many things right
211	Virtual Sessions	Need housing variety Quality of place
212	Virtual Sessions	Best way to sustain growth of population, economy, and quality of place
214	Virtual Sessions	We will not attract a new generation of Wabash residents unless we embrace major change
215	Virtual Sessions	Affordable, quality housing attracts young people. Great education attracts families. Attractive downtown living helps create a good vibe Education raises the level of Communtiy engagement.
216	Virtual Sessions	Education and good jobs are key to keeping talent in community or attracting new members to our community
217	Virtual Sessions	Education, jobs and housing represent the major decisions about where to live
218	Virtual Sessions	A strong education system is the backbone for future success and for attracting people to the area.
219	Virtual Sessions	Quality schools attract and secure young families as residents
220	Virtual Sessions	These seemed important to attract and hold people-growth inducing
221	Virtual Sessions	Young people are essential to our county's future. Without an active countywide effort to attract and retain young people, the population will continue declining.
222	Virtual Sessions	Education opens opportunities and viewpoints Social interaction is key to community growth
224	Virtual Sessions	A good job solves a lot of issues / diversity in job offerings requiring higher skill sets vital to long term community growth / need strong intelligent schools to accomplish this / housing is a key driver for attraction of professionals & workforce Population growth is the largest long term threat to Wabash county We need people
225	Virtual Sessions	To build our community for future generations
226	Virtual Sessions	Education is the seed for the next and all future generations to come, stay and grow our population Jobs are key to support the population
227	Virtual Sessions	No good jobs, no growth.
228	Virtual Sessions	Because I want Roann to be a place a person would want to live
229	Virtual Sessions	Keeping and growing base employers is critical to the future of the county. Among the efforts should be a focus on quality sites, buildings, and workforce.
230	Virtual Sessions	There is no "one" answer. We need multiple priorities working together to be successful. We can't do everything so we need to focus on the most synergistic items to leverage the best outcome.

3.2 Why

ID	Source	Why did you select these outcomes?
231	Virtual Sessions	Education draws families to the community
232	Virtual Sessions	I was part of the school system and I know it needs to grow .
233	Virtual Sessions	Jobs motivate people to move
234	Virtual Sessions	A good education system, amenities, and job opportunities work together to attract and retain young people
235	Virtual Sessions	we need jobs to grow
236	Virtual Sessions	Can't advance without viable education level All Lead to growth
237	Virtual Sessions	Great schools and affordable daycare and housing attract
238	Virtual Sessions	Growth in communities is important Growth is key
239	Virtual Sessions	Education is the fundamental foundation of all growth.
240	Virtual Sessions	We need a strong marketing channel to raise awareness to NE Indiana of the things we already have to offer
241	Virtual Sessions	School Consolidation will be key for us to produce the strongest form of college and life ready students.
242	Virtual Sessions	Need for population growth

Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
1	In-Person (paper)	Schools, realtors, government, foundations, civic groups, churches, Manchester Alive, Grow Wabash County
3	In-Person (paper)	County officials, educators, parents
4	In-Person (paper)	As many people and ideas we can come up with. All genders, all ages
5	In-Person (paper)	Would like the schools to be involved in Wabash County history.
7	In-Person (paper)	Town, government, and Wabash schools. (any town in this area)
8	In-Person (paper)	Roann has an active _____ club, community heritage group, and town board. State and government funding is used and needed.
9	In-Person (paper)	It's my understanding REMC is working on an internet system. I have signed up for it. You will not get new businesses or young people if they don't have access to high speed internet.
10	In-Person (paper)	I think individual leadership as local as possible - not "out of county" entities - fine for consultation, but if the local individuals don't lead, I don't think local people will buy-in. NM Chamber / Manchester Alive; Wabash Chamber / Main Street; school board members - not supts - they aren't local; diversify leadership - not dependent on Ford / Strauss / Krouse farms. Include them but don't exclude others.
11	In-Person (paper)	Educators, government officials, and so many others
12	In-Person (paper)	All schools in the county, the access, City of Wabash
13	In-Person (paper)	Both ag and business communities
14	In-Person (paper)	Town of NM and Wabash bridging gap. GWC, Community Foundation, Wabash Marketplace, Visit Wabash Co., Manchester Alive, YP of Wabash Co.
15	In-Person (paper)	Businesses of all kinds, agriculture-farm land owners, school boards of all 3 sky school districts and home school groups and private schools, realtors and developers - housing.
16	In-Person (paper)	b. Investors who might develop housing areas. C. Consolidation in some form. At least combine the administrations - the 3 systems. G. Keep working to bring new manufacturing and business and help current ones to expand (Grow Wabash County)
17	In-Person (paper)	Organizations like Wabash Marketplace, Grow Wabash County, Habitat for Humanity, Town Governments, churches, realtors, county government, school administrators, Manchester College administrators
18	In-Person (paper)	Cross section of members across/throughout the county: town government, businesses, individuals, churches, not for profit organizations
19	In-Person (paper)	Local and state governments, local investors
20	In-Person (paper)	All Wabash County communities and leadership Ensure businesses are educated about financial resources available to grow their business
21	In-Person (paper)	This will take local people to support redevelopment projects. Investors who are willing to take risks on investments. Lending institutions that are able to lend on businesses such as restaurants and retail.
22	In-Person (paper)	Town and town people, businesses
23	In-Person (paper)	People and town of Lagro

3.3 Who

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
25	Online Only	I believe local investors, entrepreneurs, young professional representative, Grow Wabash County, Mayor, city department leaders, county commission, North Manchester, Manchester University and people like me.
26	Online Only	It's all about jobs, quality education, and keeping our people here (and attracting new ones). Partners - Grow Wabash County, Community Foundation, all school corporations, local governments, young professionals group, Honeywell Foundation, local universities (MU & Ivy Tech), Heartland Career Center
27	Online Only	Realtors to discuss housing needs. Colleges for recruitment of young people. Communities for quality of place.
28	Online Only	Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership and Grow Wabash County City and County government School boards and administration Invested individuals
29	Online Only	See A2 notes
30	Online Only	Obviously we need the economic development organizations heavily involved, but government needs to come alongside and make sure we have fertile ground to attract new employers. Other connected organizations such as education could also offer support.
34	Online Only	School administrators College administrators Parks and Rec Town Council Manchester Alive
35	Online Only	Leaders in the community, including education, business, and government sectors. I feel the key is to have a wide diversity of ages and background. I also think it is key to have businesses involved as I feel jobs are the key to getting people to Wabash.
36	Online Only	Local government probably (Ugh!), and all of the groups trying to make Wabash better, but who are skipping the essentials in favor of glossy facades.
37	Online Only	Churches, mental health facilities, Government agencies, business and banking, law enforcement-courts-probation. Childcare agencies. Professionals such as COMMUNIO.ORG
38	Online Only	local gov. in setting tax incentives, other local businesses that provide the support and environment companies need, and a work force population. (which came first, the jobs or the people. . .)
39	Online Only	The people who have been here and who plan to stay should be involved. The residents of the small communities need to make the decisions for their areas, not the leaders of the city of Wabash. My husband is a Manchester College graduate and I am a former employee of the college. Unfortunately, Manchester University faculty do not accurately represent the views of most Wabash County residents in my opinion. Your steering committee seems to be people who have pushed the hardest for consolidation of the schools. How about getting someone on there who sees the matter differently. How about getting some people with an open mind as to other solutions to problems Wabash may or may not have.
40	Online Only	Business people that work with the public every day. Businesses that want to network. Not school, not university. Real working people.
41	Online Only	Economically developed needs to seek companies looking to expand or grow and convince them we are atheist best spot
42	Online Only	School boards, local government, private businesses, community stakeholders, former residents of the county

3.3 Who

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
43	Online Only	Education leadership, strategic forward-thinking business leaders in differing sectors, representatives of towns that have a hand in developing properties, and our local economic development organizations (Grow Wabash Co, Wabash Marketplace, Manchester Alive, etc.). The reason that we need these groups in the same room is so that the multifaceted game plan to address our prioritize needs can be developed, divided, and conquered.
44	Online Only	Everyone needs to be involved, even if if it's just being informed about what's going on. The Community Foundation is a great example of an organization that has great outcomes and that communicates with the community.
45	Online Only	County, each town/ city lead, Manchester Alive, Grow Wabash, Visit Wabash County, Wabash County Marketplace, Small business owners, larger business owners, school leaders, Wabash Community Foundations, Non Profit Leaders, etc.
46	Online Only	The public, not just the well-known and wealthy individuals.
47	Online Only	Not government! Forward thinking entrepreneurs who want a return on investment but not seeking to get rich , to invest in spaces for small businesses to get started.
48	Online Only	Community and elected officials
49	Online Only	Government officials, business and industry leaders, and local citizens.
50	Online Only	In my opinion I think we need more affordable and modern housing. The Lofts were a great start! We need investors and builders to make this happen.
51	Online Only	Chamber of commerce, community leaders, economic development.
52	Online Only	A strong school board with a clear vision/path to make our schools the best in the area. More local involvement with MU to help creat community with the college kids so they will stay. Continue to develop our beautiful downtown, including the river front by attracting businesses that reflect.
53	Online Only	school systems and local governments
54	Online Only	Does the Farm Bureau have a way to connect/list/promote small producers of fruits, vegetables, and meat/dairy? Do high school ag classes and 4H teach about small farming?
55	Online Only	Community leaders, students, representative community members
58	Online Only	re: employment -- community and county leaders MUST do active recruiting of corporations to locate their businesses in the area. A lot more CREATIVE THINKING is needed to bring jobs to Wabash County. SUCH A GREAT WORK FORCE -- SUCH A "LOW COST" LIVING AREA -- such a wonderful place for a corporation to have "committed employees" that want to work and live in a great area for a great company. I still think Honeywell should be contacted be build a "legacy factory" in the county that "helped start it all"... also, what about an ICE detention center, or more landfills in the county, or detention facilities... there's LOTS of available property. (I know, it can sound a bit crazy, but this is exactly the kind of "creative" thinking that folks in Wabash County need!) TV/film locations, etc... look at the Eagles, the drive-in -- these are RIPE for filming production!!! It's going to take real LEADERS in the county to step up and "see the vision"... Chamber of Commerce, city/county personnel, economic development personnel, Community Foundation visionaries -- the talent is THERE in Wabash County to make this happen -- it's just a matter of "getting the right people on the bus!" VET THEM before they join the team!
59	Online Only	It takes us all. We must have an organization or person to lead leaders and champion the hopeful outcomes. It is a continuous process and not just a timed campaign. A change this big for this community will take years. Each outcome will require different individuals. This can be segmented at that time

3.3 Who

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
60	Online Only	If the goal is to bring, or keep young adults "home", those individuals need input. What changes might be made in our county to attract and keep them? Might it be outdoor activity and adventure? Maybe more selections/types of social gathering places? Of course they need jobs too, but in this world of remote jobs, can the attraction be just where you live, and what there is to do?
63	In-Person (electronic)	Business owners Young entrepreneurs
64	In-Person (electronic)	Everyone. This will affect all ages
65	In-Person (electronic)	Everybody
66	In-Person (electronic)	Educators, professionals, and community members all need to come together to grow our community. State of Indiana needs to adjust their education funding for public schools so our schools can retain and hire excellent educators.
67	In-Person (electronic)	County and city leadership, parents
69	In-Person (electronic)	Business leaders willing to move, agricultural land owners for residential housing additions.
70	In-Person (electronic)	Local government; Indiana; grow Wabash county, community foundation
71	In-Person (electronic)	Businesses and local government.
73	In-Person (electronic)	A consolidated school system would help, or at least work together under one administration. Encouraging small companies that can work anywhere depends on city, county, and Grow Wabash County working together.
74	In-Person (electronic)	Local government deregulation and fiscal incentives, local businesses afforded opportunities to expand and innovate, entrepreneurs allowed to launch new businesses and endeavors because these three things work together to create jobs and career opportunities.
75	In-Person (electronic)	Local Government, business owners, talented persons with ideas
76	In-Person (electronic)	churches, town governments, Visit Wabash County, Honeywell Foundation
77	In-Person (electronic)	Local government and citizens
78	In-Person (electronic)	Educators (superintendents, Manchester University), Honeywell, Grow Wabash, City/County planners and the individuals that are the heart and soul of this county.
79	In-Person (electronic)	Everybody! Especially those who are concerned about the outcome of our community. MU, educators, Honeywell, EDG, CF, and leaders who are willing to dig in.
80	In-Person (electronic)	Leaders of the community, and more importantly the people they lead. It's one thing to have an idea it's another to get the regular folks engaged too.
81	In-Person (electronic)	All community leaders especially small business owners to be on board and not vote out new businesses.
82	In-Person (electronic)	Public School systems, private schools, early education representatives, Grow Wabash County, local Main Street organizations, businesses (including downtown mom and pops and larger industry), Indiana Landmarks
83	In-Person (electronic)	Perhaps we need a mandate from the state to encourage school consolidation. Taxpayers also need to know how much money is wasted with three small high schools. Wabash county has a beautiful river, woods, and natural areas.
84	In-Person (electronic)	Mayor, community leaders, school officials, development groups, community.
85	In-Person (electronic)	Educators and parents. Young adults who have a sense of what might draw others of the same age to the area.

3.3 Who

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
86	In-Person (electronic)	Younger generation. Currently the town is "ran" by the other generation that has a hard time letting other people become involved. They also turn down ideas brought to them that would appeal to the "younger" crowd that could bring new growing families to the community.
87	In-Person (electronic)	Local government, school leaders and coomunity
88	In-Person (electronic)	Local & county government, and all of the school districts.
89	In-Person (electronic)	Aspiring business owners. They need to be the ones to take the initial step in creating new jobs for North Manchester.
90	In-Person (electronic)	County's tribal fathers. Those who influence public opinion and who have access to resources. Include outside consultants who have data to show us direction.
91	In-Person (electronic)	Government Community organizations Major institutions Philanthropists Business leaders Somehow need organizers, marketers, leaders to create community support
92	Online Only	The mayor has to approve to build the new businesses. Then, the business would have to be something people would by from. The housing prices need to be a reasonable price for the house or people won't want to buy houses.
93	Online Only	Wabash would need plenty of funds to build more houses and buildings for new jobs.
94	Online Only	The people and the government need to help with the houses. If people would clean the houses and not trash them, they would still be nice. The government needs to rebuild those houses so we have more people living here.
95	Online Only	The city of Wabash needs to be involved. We need to lower housing prices, make better jobs available, and make our education system better.
96	Online Only	The government needs to approve to build new businesses. Then, the business has to be something people will buy from. Lowering the price of houses will bring more people to Wabash, which means more jobs.
97	Online Only	The government probably since they dictate what the town is.
99	Virtual Sessions	Manchester University
100	Virtual Sessions	Spec building/expansion of Ivy Tech snd Heartland/ quality investments in schools Ed programs and CTE
101	Virtual Sessions	Town councils
102	Virtual Sessions	More young people on boards and involved in decision making to make them feel better connected
103	Virtual Sessions	Investors from government, business, education
104	Virtual Sessions	How to demonstrate what Southwest Allen Co schools have by comparison.
105	Virtual Sessions	I- TalentMindful, Growth Minded Citizens, Gov, Nonprofits, HR Prof, Schools, Business & Support Orgs, Tourism
106	Virtual Sessions	I. Community leaders and Economic development teams
108	Virtual Sessions	Creative out-of-the-box thinkers and investors
110	Virtual Sessions	Everyone needs to be involved not just City insiders.
112	Virtual Sessions	Local citizens

3.3 Who

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
113	Virtual Sessions	School administrators and boards
114	Virtual Sessions	Manchester University
115	Virtual Sessions	B. Realtors, business people, builders, zoning/goverment officials. Citizens, educators
116	Virtual Sessions	Education, Grow Wabash, City Town county Govt, Business
118	Virtual Sessions	The whole county
119	Virtual Sessions	Grow Wabash Cty and Community Foundation
120	Virtual Sessions	Outcome I: chamber and Main Street organizations, foundation, colleges, OCRA,
122	Virtual Sessions	Investors including the government, private individuals, banks, trust funds (College, Community Foundation)
123	Virtual Sessions	Key stakeholders in community, city officials, education leaders, economic development , youth
124	Virtual Sessions	Interested stakeholders
125	Virtual Sessions	Government, education, grass root activists ,community and business organizations
126	Virtual Sessions	All of us.
127	Virtual Sessions	Local officials that are over bringing jobs to Wabash
128	Virtual Sessions	People of all races, beliefs, sexualities, identities etc not the same people seen on every board/committee
129	Virtual Sessions	Schools,, state of Indians , local government, Grow Wabash County, Mainstreet groups, Community Foundatiion, local governments, cities towns
130	Virtual Sessions	All municipalities--elected and non-elected leaders (tribal chiefs)
131	Virtual Sessions	NFPs, Government, Planners, philanthropist, businesses
132	Virtual Sessions	Everyone!
133	Virtual Sessions	Cross sector group of educators and economic development
134	Virtual Sessions	Business leadership,
136	Virtual Sessions	Residents outside the city must be involved because they are the ones who will pay if property taxes are raised.
138	Virtual Sessions	Diverse sat of individuals. Accurate Reflection of actual population/stakeholders residents
139	Virtual Sessions	Judges, mayors, churches, youth and family services
140	Virtual Sessions	School boards, teachers, community leaders
141	Virtual Sessions	More collaboration and talking. I think mask is good example. City seems more on board than county.
142	Virtual Sessions	Downtown groups for outcome E

3.3 Who

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
143	Virtual Sessions	Leaders from each community in the county working together, utilizing not just the "old guard" in the count, but inviting new faces...thosei
144	Virtual Sessions	Local and state governments, and people not being afraid of new ideas when they vote.
146	Virtual Sessions	Consolidation of schools and resources ...
147	Virtual Sessions	C. Restructuring
149	Virtual Sessions	Local and state gvmt, land owners, community growth organizations
150	Virtual Sessions	Young people need to be involved 18-35. Those that live here, work here, and attend college. They're the future of the community.
151	Virtual Sessions	Diverse range of interests
153	Virtual Sessions	Community and regional leaders, Business owners., school administrators
156	Virtual Sessions	schools, community groups, local businesses, community leaders
157	Virtual Sessions	Everyone is important. Especially the ones deciding on local politics and development decision.
158	Virtual Sessions	The entire community
159	Virtual Sessions	Increased income, turning the tide on population drop
161	Virtual Sessions	C. School boards need to work cooperatively not competitively
162	Virtual Sessions	Business leaders & educators
163	Virtual Sessions	Manchester University
164	Virtual Sessions	Someone who can rezone to provide more housing.
165	Virtual Sessions	Foundations willing and able to support those dreams to become reality
166	Virtual Sessions	David McFadden and other business Owners
167	Virtual Sessions	Everyone in community to attract outsiders!
169	Virtual Sessions	Business leaders, parents, education leadership
170	Virtual Sessions	Entire city,town, county governments
171	Virtual Sessions	Mayor, supts
172	Virtual Sessions	Government, business and community
173	Virtual Sessions	educators, the town, community organizations
174	Virtual Sessions	I would hope that every citizen would be involved. If not , leadership from all community organizations should be involved.
175	Virtual Sessions	Business owners and political officials

3.3 Who

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
176	Virtual Sessions	Community leaders who are knowledgeable and have had success in bringing ideas to life
177	Virtual Sessions	Government, non-profit, cultural groups.
178	Virtual Sessions	Our farmers who are currently finishing up harvest.
180	Virtual Sessions	Much has gone into this already. Extremely tough nut to crack. Little by little. Keep conversation growing CFWC is huge catalyst
181	Virtual Sessions	Churches and university and schools
182	Virtual Sessions	Business Owners. Local Government (Where Necessary). Community Members.
183	Virtual Sessions	Grow Wabash County
185	Virtual Sessions	Housing - city, county, GWC, developer
194	Virtual Sessions	schools and their "career"/scheduling counselors
195	Virtual Sessions	MU
196	Virtual Sessions	Young professionals; grow Wabash county; city of Wabash; town councils; workforce development; state of Indiana
197	Virtual Sessions	City and County working together. Not separate
198	Virtual Sessions	Communtiy Foundation
199	Virtual Sessions	Coallition of government (local and state), business leaders, tribal chiefs, those who hild the history, philanthropistssts
200	Virtual Sessions	Excellent educators, adventurous leaders, investors
201	Virtual Sessions	Baby steps towards increased collaboration in joint classes and other cooperative endeavors
202	Virtual Sessions	Anyone who is willing to help.
203	Virtual Sessions	Community Institutions (gov't, private, nonprofits, etc.)
204	Virtual Sessions	Local governments, Wabashmarketplace, grow Wabash county, visit Wabash county
205	Virtual Sessions	City/town councils , civic groups, public schools, university
207	Virtual Sessions	Young, diverse community members
208	Virtual Sessions	Courts and justice system
209	Virtual Sessions	People who can make housing happen
210	Virtual Sessions	Young professionals / residents
211	Virtual Sessions	Mayor, Economic Development Group,business leaders
212	Virtual Sessions	Broad demographic - inclusive committees

3.3 Who

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
213	Virtual Sessions	Business and governmental leaders. They are in positions of influence.
215	Virtual Sessions	School Admins, CFWC, town/city councils, Grow Wabash County and at large individuals
216	Virtual Sessions	School administrators/ community leaders
217	Virtual Sessions	Social services, government, individuals, universities, churches
219	Virtual Sessions	Parents, and leading county orgs to advocate for school funding
220	Virtual Sessions	All stakeholders especially community leaders
222	Virtual Sessions	Government
223	Virtual Sessions	Community, business and government leaders
224	Virtual Sessions	Grow Wabash Count, local government, HCC, Ivy Tech, state, schools, Community Foundation, Honeywell,
225	Virtual Sessions	Get the younger generation involved
226	Virtual Sessions	Schools, employers, parents, community Foundation
227	Virtual Sessions	Young leaders
228	Virtual Sessions	The complete community not just the 10%
229	Virtual Sessions	Economic and workforce developers, existing business community, elected and non-elected officials, etc.
230	Virtual Sessions	Everyone
231	Virtual Sessions	More young people involved in this planning process- this is their future
233	Virtual Sessions	Grow Wabash county, local governments, heartland career center, Manchester university
234	Virtual Sessions	As diverse a group as possible
235	Virtual Sessions	the whole county
236	Virtual Sessions	Entire or nearly entire population
238	Virtual Sessions	Grow Wabash, K12, Higher Ed, business owners
239	Virtual Sessions	Businesses abd Educational Partners
242	Virtual Sessions	People moving into Wabash

How will we achieve your priority outcomes? Do you have ideas or actions to achieve

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
1	In-Person (paper)	Community awareness of possibilities through social media and public hearings Better advertising via social media about realty options
3	In-Person (paper)	If we have people to work they will buy homes and stay in our county to live. Taxes will help get better salaries for teachers.
4	In-Person (paper)	Town meetings for the sole purpose of brainstorming. Maybe a carry-in to entice folks.
5	In-Person (paper)	Have students come to town and see what is available for them to do.
7	In-Person (paper)	There must be a lot of land here that is fallow. What happens to that land if no one claims it? After so many years who owns it? No one except the state. Have the state donate it back to the town and bring constructioners in to build. Again, the vets would be involved and it wouldn't cost Roann anything. Provide land and a safe and growing haven, and the government will return it. A win-win situation. Brings in government money, education, and a future for people moving here. And don't forget the seniors!
8	In-Person (paper)	Roann needs better internet so "working from home" is possible.
9	In-Person (paper)	Need more towers in the area. The Paw Paw Township library now has hot-spot available to check out.
10	In-Person (paper)	For young people, I have long felt Manchester U could play a greater role in developing a local-oriented entrepreneurial development program. Ivy Tech is OK but not suited for strong leadership development.
12	In-Person (paper)	Having all schools be on the same page and all trying to achieve the same outcome.
14	In-Person (paper)	Getting group of 10-20 investors together to buy up buildings and develop/flip them that utilizes all community resources available (GWC, County Gov., OCRA, etc.)
15	In-Person (paper)	Attracting employment opportunities. How do we get school boards to be willing to walk away from old ideas? - Obviously - not an answer.
16	In-Person (paper)	I wish I knew.
17	In-Person (paper)	This is achieved by focusing on a few of these areas to begin with and establish a committee/commission/board to focus on these areas. Posisble a board for each area.
18	In-Person (paper)	It is imperative that it include all communities and all communities must be viewed as valuable to the process
19	In-Person (paper)	Tax incentives for local investors for housing improvements in specific areas
21	In-Person (paper)	We need people who are willing to act on their ideas rather than talk about them. Most people are not willing to take risks alone. Need organizations to assist in researching available grants or loan options. Zoning to protect investors - proper zoning.
22	In-Person (paper)	Need to have people open new businesses. Little less talk, a lot more action
23	In-Person (paper)	need to get jobs here

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
25	Online Only	Yes. We have to have incremental growth and strategic investment in our downtown, riverfront, creating a cultural district. We invest in attractions that not only serve a social and gathering purpose, but fuels further development that shows our entrepreneurs that the county and city and non for profits are there for development. I believe we send the right people to attract certain industries that would be utilized here such as more metal industry, orthopedic industry, retail. Continue to work with developers and reach out to more for development for more single family homes and townhomes in multiple communities. We make a more conscious effort in reaching out to Manchester University. We have to think of several groundbreaking projects, that really attracts visitors and business. This will then drive a better economy, then more citizens, a growing workforce, thereby increasing our tax base and further increasing the above in a cyclical way that will compound growth. We can utilize new development and areas of business into special taxation zones for further, cents on the dollar to help further fuel these projects.
26	Online Only	Better fund GWC to lead initiatives; invest money into our community currently sitting on Wall St as opposed to Main St; an honest effort at school collaboration/consolidation, which has not been tried; Arm the YP group with real funds to engage young professionals, employers, et al; growth at Heartland Career Center; local governments to enact additional funding mechanisms such as wheel tax to help pay for initiatives
28	Online Only	Success will eventually breed success, but it does take time to turn things around. Good things can happen when a few capable citizens put their heads together toward a common cause. There's no single solution; much would depend on the interests, talents, connections, etc. of those pursuing the outcomes.
29	Online Only	See A2 notes
30	Online Only	I feel like creating a vibrant downtown is vital. I would have liked to add a well funded education system because I believe new employers won't move to a town without a good education system in place. I believe a vibrant downtown and great education system could attract new employers and housing will come along to meet the new demand.
34	Online Only	Community forums for discussion continue to gather input from a bigger segment of the population
35	Online Only	As families make decisions on where to locate, I think the education system, cost and availability of housing, and job opportunities are key. We need to find a way to attract good employers with good paying jobs.
36	Online Only	Get some tech industries here, some innovative workplaces that attract educated people. Have activities and entertainment that appeals to people from ages 15-50. The kids are ok, and the old people. The rest of us have one coffee shop and a couple of funky thrift stores.
37	Online Only	Targeting financial drains on the community e.g. bank loan defaults, court costs, lost income and wages, educational impact... and collaborating to reach those families & individuals who need interventions and assistance in order to flourish and thus become a resource to the community rather than a drain on resources.
38	Online Only	aim small miss small. pick a narrow focus and knock it out of the park. then aim at the next. Too broad of an approach will not see much impact. Target local gov. to get jobs back and industry back, then work on the rest.
39	Online Only	The ag community is a big part of Wabash County. Involve land owning farmers in the discussions. Meetings should be open door and not taking place in the city offices without open discussion about the steering committee's desired outcomes. Support the ag education programs in the schools and try to bring ag related businesses to the county. Forget about Japan and focus on the Midwest. Try to bring people to Wabash who will appreciate the kind of community we are. Forget about trying to attract minimum wage jobs.

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
41	Online Only	If there is a certain sector of companies we are looking at we have to get kids in high schools prepared for these jobs through Heartland. We send them to college we loose them. College is definitely not the secret to all our kids and definitely not what keeps them here.
42	Online Only	Community buy-in by the majority
43	Online Only	I believe that a serious discussion regarding our county's education needs to be had. Three school districts in our meager populated community is a lot. Resources are not being maximized, competition is not fueled by improvement, but by pride and our county is impacted negatively. We have great schools and teachers, why not work together? We have great businesses in town with some being here for generations and others being smaller and bringing variety to our county. Using the wealth of knowledge from each sector alongside our economic growth cheerleaders at the same table can bring about a discussion on how to bring more jobs to current employers and attract differing employers. We have the transportation infrastructure down with 13/15/24 running through our county, we have people who need competitive work options, and we have academic pipelines (Manchester, Huntington, IWU) in close proximity to bring an educated and varied workforce to our community. What are we doing to bring them to the future of our community through incentives? I probably have more questions here than ideas and answers.
44	Online Only	Wabash County had a history of achievement in efforts to improve various aspects including education, revitalization, and much more.
45	Online Only	We need to make achievable plans and accomplish them. Our communities need to see things happening so start with something smaller first and then reach for the larger goals. Make sure the community is involved... sometimes this is harder than we think! They want to voice online but not actually help. But if we make them feel needed and important we can pull them in.
46	Online Only	You need to listen to the people who make up the majority of the county. Working-class individuals who are struggling to stay ahead.
47	Online Only	I would like to see a large downtown retail space in North Manchester (Red Moon Building for example) be converted to small boutique shop spaces and possibly "maker" spaces. Small apartments could possibly be made upstairs. It could be a resource for someone wanting to start a small retail business but is daunted by the cost of rent in a full storefront.
48	Online Only	We need to promote our communities
49	Online Only	Wabash County needs to have a collaborated strategic plan: what is our vision, what is our mission, what are our objectives to reach our mission, and what are the action steps for each objective to move us toward our mission. Perhaps we need to hire experts in the fields of attracting business and industry, and in the fields of affordable housing, and small town planning, and experts in the fields of marketing and PR. Wabash County needs to advertise all around the Midwest to "recruit" new residents to the area. Wabash County needs to establish its "brand" and market that brand all around the Midwest
50	Online Only	I have no idea how to achieve this but maybe through tax incentives and credits.
52	Online Only	See above. Also, connect to other communities on the Eel River and utilize this natural resource to grow all communities along its shores.
53	Online Only	Government-private enterprise for housing and jobs. Extremely more focus on early childhood issues from daycare to 4th grade. Educationally, probably the most important time in a child's life to get them on track for success and minimize problems in years 8-12 and really throughout life.
54	Online Only	Having a site/building/old warehouse for a permanent farmer's market. Food co-ops in outlying towns to make access to fresh food easier.

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
55	Online Only	Having some common goals as a community to work toward, everyone contributing as they can.
58	Online Only	Everything you are doing is GREAT! "Keep doing what you are doing" and then don't sit on the results. There ARE visionaries in the county... I trust Patty Grant to "get all the folks together"... but there must be funding set aside to produce results. WHO IS COORDINATING ALL OF THIS? Is there a "one-stop shop" to process all the ideas and then FOLLOW-THROUGH???
59	Online Only	talent: discover where people are migrating to, then decide if we want to mirror or create new what is being offered there. housing: create neighborhood program for home occupied owners to want to enhance their dwellings. Create incentive to build new homes in certain designated areas. new relationships: find common ground with different groups who want the same or similar thing and champion them together to excite their sphere of influence to join in
60	Online Only	My interest in completing this survey, is mainly to encourage the use of the Eel River in Wabash County. It amazes me how many people on the river are not from Wabash County. You can paddle 20 miles on the Eel, just in the county! The launch sites have a lot to be desired. Putting in at the Liberty Mills launch is usually terribly muddy. Sometimes the concrete pad is the lease desirable option. There is a launch at Ogden Landing in North Manchester, but it will only launch kayaks and canoes. Tubes and floats don't work well at this sight, because one doesn't have access to the water, except by jumping in. There is access to the river at the street department, but again, it is not easy to maneuver vehicles, and have easy access to the river. The easiest accesses to get in and out of the Eel are in Laketon and on State Road 15 at Bear Grass Creek. I feel that better river accommodations to begin the journey from Liberty Mills to Stockdale MIll (or somewhere along the way, like North Manchester) could increase "traffic" to our county. Availability of canoes, kayaks, food, snacks, drinks, and transportation might increase activity on the Eel River. And of course it is a real treasure and pleasure to float under the covered bridge! The Eel River is a beautiful trip, and this gem sits in our backyards.
63	In-Person (electronic)	Marketing
66	In-Person (electronic)	We need Indiana Government to change the public school funding to fully fund public schools. Offer incentives to small businesses to train and attract young people to their employment. Offer incentives for trade school or training programs to draw people back to the are or into the area from other places. Allow small business to offer employment incentives to attract quality employees such as sign on bonuses
67	In-Person (electronic)	Collaboration
69	In-Person (electronic)	There is probably more info than what I have to initiate the growth. I know there are leaders that are trying passionately to accomplish growth.
70	In-Person (electronic)	Better funding for community organizations; consolidation of schools
71	In-Person (electronic)	I believe people are willing to work, but they need jobs in order to do so. I believe it's a matter of bringing good paying jobs to our county.
73	In-Person (electronic)	We must continue to work on these things, talk about them, discuss them, search for them. No easy answer.
74	In-Person (electronic)	Deregulate as much as possible, and then some more. Offer tax incentives for business growth. Sponsor entrepreneurs and help them get off the ground, with networking, mentoring, and financial support.

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
75	In-Person (electronic)	I think the community leaders in the past few years have done very well at networking with/ and in addressing the job situations. To get a manufacturer or large business (warehousing, ect) to consider Wabash for their permanent location I am sure is trying and takes time.
76	In-Person (electronic)	As many people as possible must contact state and federal representative and prioritize high speed Internet for our entire country.
77	In-Person (electronic)	Focus on positive attributes of Wabash County
78	In-Person (electronic)	Connected eduction system (I.e., pre-K through university), creating local incentives to bring or create jobs in Wabash County, local incentives to drive connectivity amongst groups to drive the greater good, look at green initiatives which might attract visionaries to the area, analyze paths to bring technology firms to the area which would bring talent, create new housing zones around Lake Mississinewa to attract lake crowd or 2nd home purchases and make Salamonie a State Park.
79	In-Person (electronic)	A strong/progressive superintendent of Wabash, school collaboration, additional apartments as well as housing across the board, property tax incentives, business tax incentives, educational programming for families, highlighting trails, additional green space and hangout areas in all towns.
80	In-Person (electronic)	Doing this is a start. Acting out on some of these ideas is another.
81	In-Person (electronic)	Set up grants or tax breaks for entertainment businesses. Build quality townhouses/apartments close to shopping areas/ the college
82	In-Person (electronic)	Preserve historic buildings and put businesses in them. Improve residential offerings in historic neighborhoods, which are walkable to downtown amenities. Create school programs, including before/after/sick/snow day/summer care that is inclusive and enriching. Work with businesses to find what they need to succeed and grow.
83	In-Person (electronic)	We need to sell that and bring people in. That will lead to more restaurants. Outdoor activities will also bring young people.
84	In-Person (electronic)	Schools kept us from moving here sooner. Housing and neighborhoods may drive us out of the community. There are no move in ready homes for us. The grocery stores offer few choices encouraging us to shop out of town. How to fix, I'm not sure. Companies drive jobs, jobs drive revenue and revenue drives change. But I'm not sure we offer the housing and infrastructure to entice large new companies. I didn't offer much of a solution I'm afraid.
85	In-Person (electronic)	Target early education/literacy, especially to help with education.
86	In-Person (electronic)	I think bringing more businesses to town such as child clothing boutiques, icecream shop, mom & pop food place, would improve LaFontaine tremendously. We have nothing that brings people to us. There is nothing that screams, "hey let's make the trip to LaFontaine." Peru has east end that is always booming with business, wabash has the little shops, and Marion had more shopping. Sadly there are very little options building wise to put in one of these suggestions. Many of the buildings that are sitting empty would be great for these ideas but they will remain empty due to lack of interest in selling.
87	In-Person (electronic)	When we see growth in our local economies and population.
88	In-Person (electronic)	That's a fine line between offing tax cuts and special offers to bring in businesses, but you also can't put a huge tax burden on the tax payers.
89	In-Person (electronic)	I think the big thing is creating an environmentally clean community. That beauty will drive acknowledgement to business owners that North Manchester is a viable town to expand or create their businesses in.
90	In-Person (electronic)	Keep up the momentum.

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
91	In-Person (electronic)	Landowners, developers, and government leaders to create housing opportunities. Identify, develop, strengthen, and market the unique resources that improve quality of life (rivers, forests, outdoor activities, art, education). Focus on infrastructure that supports quality work and living: cellular service and high speed internet throughout the county, sidewalks, trails, river walks, bike trails, green spaces.
92	Online Only	We need more job opportunities like factories, schools, or the medical field. Also, house prices are really high and it is hard for people to buy houses. I think that if we lower the housing prices, people would move here for a cheaper price. Then, more people would be in our town, so we would have to add more businesses and factories.
93	Online Only	Wabash could host charities and fun activities to raise money.
94	Online Only	Most people think that our town is full of drug addicts. That makes our town not positive. The people need to stop doing drugs.
95	Online Only	I dont have any ideas as of this point, but the outcome is that hopefully people move back to Wabash.
96	Online Only	We can achieve these outcomes by lowering the price of houses to bring more people which will make the town have to bring more jobs.
97	Online Only	I think we should just add more places of interest around Wabash.
99	Virtual Sessions	Finding ways to bring more high- level jobs for people with bachelor's/masters degrees
100	Virtual Sessions	Schools, state government to force consolidation as locals will not get it done; for housing and jobs we need financial assistance
101	Virtual Sessions	Develop a housing committee to develop affordable downtown housing
102	Virtual Sessions	L. Young individuals and high school students in the commiunity...high school students may become inspired to come back and youth have energ
103	Virtual Sessions	Investment to build permanent support for education and workforce development
104	Virtual Sessions	The community has to first understand what a competitive Ed is, and then demand it through influence, advocacy and election s
105	Virtual Sessions	Easy to understand and accessible "live here" information with the why in focus
106	Virtual Sessions	It will take some key players taking a large financial risk to invest in what will be a long term return.
108	Virtual Sessions	This can't just be about profit. Other things have value.
110	Virtual Sessions	There needs to be a deeper respect for differing opinions on how to get "there". Understand the importance of the ag community in Wabash Co
112	Virtual Sessions	Ensure representation form each neighborhood and community.
113	Virtual Sessions	Partner to expand educational opportunities
114	Virtual Sessions	Offer community interest night classes on all kinds of areas
115	Virtual Sessions	B. I think conversations about how we address perceived andcresl barriers
116	Virtual Sessions	Provide specific programs (education), facilities (housing), and connections to the world (Internet).
118	Virtual Sessions	Consolidation would probably help
119	Virtual Sessions	I need more time to think

3.4 How

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
120	Virtual Sessions	Make sure childcare is available, improve eating out options, improve farmers market publicity, marketing of local schools
122	Virtual Sessions	Fund entrepreneurial ventures on a larger scale. Not just retail stores or pizza shops, but larger manufacturing employers
123	Virtual Sessions	New housing developments, increase in number of Wabash students attending MU
124	Virtual Sessions	Set up an appropriate rubric
125	Virtual Sessions	Disseminate information, educate, convene various groups,
126	Virtual Sessions	Residents might have to change their views of what they think small town USA is.
127	Virtual Sessions	Communication, positive PR, financial responsibility
128	Virtual Sessions	Connecting with Manchester University more
129	Virtual Sessions	Better fund GWC, school consolidation must come from the state as locals will not get it done
130	Virtual Sessions	Collaboration and paying attention to research. Use of consultants.
131	Virtual Sessions	All working together toward a common goal
132	Virtual Sessions	Achieve goals by working together.
133	Virtual Sessions	Major investments in housing, early education, careers to attract young families
134	Virtual Sessions	Informed voters to elect school and county officials to prioritize housing, early childhood education and eliminating barriers to post seco
136	Virtual Sessions	City leaders must stop trying to force their ideas down the throats of rural residents.
138	Virtual Sessions	Obtain interim feedback
139	Virtual Sessions	Engaging resources to identify problems that drain money and resources
140	Virtual Sessions	More across district cooperation
141	Virtual Sessions	H. City and County Government on 1 accord
142	Virtual Sessions	Helping new businesses and aiding in building renovations for historic buildings
143	Virtual Sessions	Involve new fresh faces in city/town government. Introduce transparency in leadership. This allows for honest conversations and new ideas
144	Virtual Sessions	People must see value in diversity. Our political reps don't need to help sow fear of movements like BLM.
147	Virtual Sessions	C. Community residents/Board
149	Virtual Sessions	Incentives for employers
150	Virtual Sessions	Stronger partnership with Manchester University and local city/county leaders (town/city leaders, Grow Wabash County, Visit Wabash County,)
151	Virtual Sessions	Outreach to sources of potential migrants

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
153	Virtual Sessions	Partnerships and collaboration across the board. Consolidate schools.
154	Virtual Sessions	Teachers and parents to help kids see the value in working in Wabash Creating Jobs that will continue to be around in the future. Remote job opportunities. Better WiFi
155	Virtual Sessions	University and community leaders need to establish more programming for university students to see Wabash Co. as more than just farmland
156	Virtual Sessions	set goals, create initiatives, get people involved, monitor progress, celebrate success
157	Virtual Sessions	Present and work with local community leaders and developers often and track progress.
158	Virtual Sessions	You need to go to all the communities in wabash county and solicit their leaders to encourage local talks possibly at church or in local com
159	Virtual Sessions	An honest assessment of our institutional structure and an acceptance of change
161	Virtual Sessions	May need the state to step in
162	Virtual Sessions	Population growth. Community attitude
163	Virtual Sessions	Have Human Resources really talk up our town! Help facilitate people finding housing here.
164	Virtual Sessions	Prorated tax abatement for individuals that purchase land zoned residentially or am existing home in city limits - inside the community.
165	Virtual Sessions	Young adults who come together to dream
166	Virtual Sessions	Special Task Force
167	Virtual Sessions	Engage the community
170	Virtual Sessions	work on lowering our taxes, back efforts on housing, services
172	Virtual Sessions	Expand housing, amenities and make us an exceedingly easy place for business
173	Virtual Sessions	agreement on K12 educational goals, funding early childhood education
174	Virtual Sessions	Small businesses growth, families coming to residene here from other cities.
175	Virtual Sessions	Excellent communication
179	Virtual Sessions	I don't know! I need someone experienced in this work to tell me.
180	Virtual Sessions	Community must grow to value education. Some still fear kids will leave if they learn beyond the limits of the county
181	Virtual Sessions	Involve these groups
182	Virtual Sessions	Let's incentivize non-residents to move into the area. ie: Attract remote workers to live here.
183	Virtual Sessions	Collaboration business new attraction to cluster strong employers we already have
185	Virtual Sessions	We are already working in this. 2 areas are being prepared for development
194	Virtual Sessions	provide concrete pathways for the students and talk to them about it. Are parents having conversations about the future with their HS kids

3.4 How

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
195	Virtual Sessions	We need to remove obstacles to access to enrollment and transferring credit from previous education, and create through-ways for learners.
196	Virtual Sessions	Legislative action to force consolidation; local government to be open to change; industry buy-in
197	Virtual Sessions	Attractiveness of our county. People WANT to move here to experience a great life
199	Virtual Sessions	Get everyone on the same page going the same direction
200	Virtual Sessions	world class education
201	Virtual Sessions	Teachers school boards and administrators trusted lay leaders
202	Virtual Sessions	Get the young people involved in the processes, and the local government and leadership.
204	Virtual Sessions	Increased income rates, decreased vacancy rates of homes and commercial properties, increased permits for both
205	Virtual Sessions	Public/private partnerships ; grant submissions to OCRA
207	Virtual Sessions	More sessions like this. More young professional networking opportunities.
208	Virtual Sessions	????
209	Virtual Sessions	Social opportunities, housing, jobs
210	Virtual Sessions	Share love of Wabash Co with peers. Connect with local youth to speak positively about community. Provide internships to youth.
211	Virtual Sessions	Coordinated groups working to common goals
212	Virtual Sessions	Investment, marketing, and broad participation
215	Virtual Sessions	An Ad hoc planning group to inspire and enable goals
216	Virtual Sessions	What we currently have is not giving our young people the quality of education they deserve
217	Virtual Sessions	Continued communication and team building
219	Virtual Sessions	Define competitive education, understand it and distribute promote the components to drive decision making. Demonstrate what is needed,
220	Virtual Sessions	Amplifying what we and others are doing in this activity
223	Virtual Sessions	Working together for common goals and objectives
224	Virtual Sessions	Better funding for organizations leading efforts; workforce education training, funding to impactful projects and setting politics aside
225	Virtual Sessions	We need to involve oinvolve ouryouth to keep here & grow county
226	Virtual Sessions	Inspire our youth so that they are motivated to stay on the path of life long learning
227	Virtual Sessions	Focus on three main objectives. Engaged businesses, strong education, young involved leaders
228	Virtual Sessions	By the way our citizens react to the changes

3.4 How

ID	Source	Who needs to be involved to achieve your priority outcomes and why?
229	Virtual Sessions	Inventory specific existing assets, identify gaps, close the gaps.
230	Virtual Sessions	Consistent action over time
231	Virtual Sessions	Each one of us needs to involve youth in all areas - educational decisions, volunteer activities., jobs
233	Virtual Sessions	Target people from here that have moved away
234	Virtual Sessions	Surveys, Population growth, school size, employment data
235	Virtual Sessions	offering tax breaks and making our community appealing
236	Virtual Sessions	Making everyone feel valued
237	Virtual Sessions	Schools need to mi
238	Virtual Sessions	Set goals assign and hold people accountable
239	Virtual Sessions	Partnerships
242	Virtual Sessions	Education

How can we measure progress toward your priority outcomes? What is / are the indicator(s)?

ID	Source	How can we measure progress toward your priority outcomes? What is / are the indicator(s)?
1	In-Person (paper)	# of people who are involved attendance at events # of people moving to the community
4	In-Person (paper)	Fundraisers to raise money to restore old buildings. Maybe to repurpose buildings for veterans, senior living, etc.
7	In-Person (paper)	This area is centralized to S. Bend, Indy, Fort Wayne. There are hospitals there for vets or families. Build a small clinic here so the service people don't have to travel so far for shots, meds, mental help. Help people with free housing and industries will follow. This is one of the best places on earth to raise a kid. The river is here for recreation and there is history. Offer all you can with funding, a safe place to live or farm. Please make it a town again, make it so you can walk anywhere safely.
8	In-Person (paper)	Our town has received State grants thanks to a strong leader in Bob Ferguson.
10	In-Person (paper)	I'm not so big on population growth - one reason we live here is because Wabash Co. is small and we like it that way. I would go to a slow, sustainable growth model based on retaining young adults and encouraging them to rear their families here.
12	In-Person (paper)	You can measure this by the number of kids that transfer schools because of maybe teaching abilities or even from bullying.
14	In-Person (paper)	Population increase. More MU students staying after grad. Small, incremental changes in right direction.
15	In-Person (paper)	This would be obvious - by growth.
16	In-Person (paper)	These would all be visible
17	In-Person (paper)	The areas that I have checked can be measured by number of training programs, increase in housing units, number of people employed in higher paying jobs
18	In-Person (paper)	If the process is successful, the population should begin to increase and the communities should see an increase in revenue.
20	In-Person (paper)	1. New and diverse housing options 2. New higher paying job opportunities 3. Increase or stabilization of population
21	In-Person (paper)	Visible change is easy to see.
22	In-Person (paper)	Amount of businesses that open and community involvement
23	In-Person (paper)	People moving to town and more businesses open
25	Online Only	You'll measure by vacancy rates of downtown businesses in all communities. Increased money flow from local taxes. The amount of traffic increase, both pedestrian and vehicle in main corridors. We will then see growth and building of new facilities, new industry, and with that demand new homes will be built, Singtel family and multi family units, and you will see the income tax and property tax collection increase.
26	Online Only	growth in population; new jobs, investment, and higher wages; additional workers trained at HCC; new programming offered at local schools;
28	Online Only	Business/Industry -- employment numbers, imported capital and philanthropy, Housing -- apartment/rental counts, subdivision development, building permits, etc. Schools -- demonstrated cooperation of direct and ancillary leadership
29	Online Only	See A2 notes

3.5 Indicators

ID	Source	How can we measure progress toward your priority outcomes? What is / are the indicator(s)?
30	Online Only	Employment is the most obvious, but I would like to see it desegregated by employer and industry. Additionally, it would be great to study the demographics of those employed in Wabash County to see where they choose to live and why. The nominal wages of each job would begin to reveal the quality of our employment. We do not need more low paying jobs.
35	Online Only	Population growth is the goal, so that is the first measurement. Sub goals for me include unemployment numbers, job and employer growth, housing costs and availability, and increased educational opportunities.
36	Online Only	The population of 22-38 year olds. Are people staying/coming back when normally they would be elsewhere for better opportunities or interesting cultural atmospheres?
37	Online Only	Court records diminished in areas of restraining orders, divorce, addiction related arrests, parole records, defaulted loans, school disciplinary records, violent crime records, and hospital records of cases of suspected or confirmed abuses both physical and addiction related.
38	Online Only	Increase in job demand, new industries showing interest, and finally more business/jobs created
39	Online Only	You tell us how many leave each year, but you do not say how many people move in to Wabash County. The type of businesses and jobs we attract should be more about quality and less about quantity. Bringing in low paying, minimum wage jobs will only attract more people for the rest of the community to help support with free clinics, free education, and housing assistance. It seems to me an indicator that we are doing something right is the fact that Wabash County average income was the only one in the area to increase. I would also guess the average home value has increased because there are a lot of very nice estates that have sold in the last few years in this area.
41	Online Only	By jobs that come to the county and are filled with county residents not from other counties
42	Online Only	population increase, school enrollment, housing stock increase
43	Online Only	Goals, we must makes goals and prioritize our efforts to make them happen. We cannot be too widespread or we will continue to miss out and fall behind more. New businesses, more jobs, census indicators, and improved standings (enrollment, academic programming, teacher retention, etc.) in our schools will be ways to tally our progress. I'm sure our economic development groups have ways to measure where we are now and can use them to measure where we will be in time so there isn't a reason to reinvent that wheel. I do believe that more people need to pay more attention to what is being said and unselfishly work towards progress instead of merely hoping things will get better by doing the same stuff.
44	Online Only	Ultimately, it would be a stabilization of our population, and hopefully growth. The number of thriving small businesses and jobs would be indicators.
45	Online Only	SMART goals and follow up
46	Online Only	Who are you talking to? Is it just those people who are well known or are you getting into the public? If you're talking to people whose names you really don't know, you're heading in the right direction. If the same last names are on your calendars, then you're not doing the county the service it deserves
47	Online Only	not sure
48	Online Only	Wabash Visitors and Tourism Bureau does an excellent job of tracking outside interests

3.5 Indicators

ID	Source	How can we measure progress toward your priority outcomes? What is / are the indicator(s)?
49	Online Only	We need to measure: how many citizens rent vs own, the average county wage compared to state and national numbers, the skill sets required to work in current Wabash business and industry, the skill sets required to work in "jobs of the future," average cost of a home compared to regional and national levels, how much does it cost the average family to "live, work, and play" comparing Wabash to the regional and national average, what necessary public services are available in Wabash and what is the average cost compared to the regional and national numbers, what are the numbers of available work force in Wabash, how many available workers are working and how many are not and why not, what is crime like in Wabash, how much crime, what type of crime, what is a necessary prevailing wage to live an enjoyable life in Wabash compared to regional and national levels, what are the quality of life indicators in Wabash County compared to regional and national indicators, ...
50	Online Only	There are many ran down properties where nice duplexes or small apartments could be established.
52	Online Only	Home values is a big one. Other nuances are not as easy to measure, but activity/use downtown and at parks. Seeing people walk around (post pandemic) would be some positive indicators.
53	Online Only	Assessed value going up. Building permits up. Survey teachers yearly for their experiences. they will easily know.
54	Online Only	More people able to stay on or start small farms. Food is a basic human necessary. Why does so much of it have to come only from a grocery? I think people would rather buy locally more IF it could be more convenient for them.
55	Online Only	Keep some data on agreed upon goals from a point in time, moving forward
58	Online Only	The progress will be measurable by the number of actual businesses and/or families that choose to involve themselves with Wabash County (or a particular town)... ALL of the towns in Wabash County don't want to see "their death"... they WANT to see new families move into their communities... THIS is measurable. Additional businesses on Main Street IS measurable. Increased enrollments at schools ARE measurable. We can have "all the meetings in the world" but if we don't see an "increase in numbers in our outcomes," then we are not accomplishing our goals. Sorry for rattling, but I am impassioned about Wabash County.
59	Online Only	young talent/population growth - this can be tracked through survey of schools and college students and followup after graduation or skilled training. We can work with education platforms to recruit young talent. housing - this can be tracked through permits and or applied for grants relationships - some sort of measure of engagement of people or collaboration for projects.
60	Online Only	The improvement of access sites on the Eel River, could lead to a situation similar to the one on the Wabash River in Wabash. That seems to attract a lot of people to Wabash!
63	In-Person (electronic)	Population increase More commerce outlets More business opportunities
66	In-Person (electronic)	Businesses would report new employees to the imagine one 85 or community foundation. . Indicators of a positive change would include increase population. Young adults would be attracted to the area to live and work here.
67	In-Person (electronic)	Growth
69	In-Person (electronic)	Increase in residency, population, and increasing jobs/employment.

3.5 Indicators

ID	Source	How can we measure progress toward your priority outcomes? What is / are the indicator(s)?
71	In-Person (electronic)	Unemployment rates and rates of employees working within the county.
73	In-Person (electronic)	If school administration is combined, we will see the difference. We will know if a local company expands or a new company or business opens.
74	In-Person (electronic)	Number of new businesses launched and jobs created, capital spent by existing businesses to expand and add jobs, number of regulations eliminated vs new regulations.
75	In-Person (electronic)	Indicators would be the local economy, tax rates, real-estate needs.
76	In-Person (electronic)	The actual number of households who have affordable high speed Internet access throughout the county-all rural areas included. We have met several young families over the years who loved it here, but couldn't buy and live here due to lack of connectivity.
77	In-Person (electronic)	Surveys. What are the businesses that are thriving doing
78	In-Person (electronic)	Population growth, new jobs, community morale
79	In-Person (electronic)	Jobs, educational goals, population, community morale, state park visits, new businesses.
80	In-Person (electronic)	New ideas being acted on.
81	In-Person (electronic)	Less people traveling to fort wayne for things. Breaking ground on modern housing amenities
82	In-Person (electronic)	Schools have measures of best practices. Downtowns and businessds should measure new businesses/number of new employees/dollars invested in buildings/increase in pay.
83	In-Person (electronic)	Successful school consolidation for sure. The number of retail and restaurants is another.
84	In-Person (electronic)	Population increase, new companies moving here, increases housing starts, improvements in schools (I know schools are measured, but I'm not involved in specifics)
85	In-Person (electronic)	Track who moves to town and stays.
86	In-Person (electronic)	Population growth & more foot traffic throughout the town.
87	In-Person (electronic)	GDP, population, housing growth.
88	In-Person (electronic)	Measure the new jobs and businesses coming into the county vs what we had in the past. Measure the unemployment rate vs the past. Economic development takes time so a measurable growth isn't going to happen overnight so this has to be a long-term objective.
89	In-Person (electronic)	Track certain outcomes of this growth like GDP increases, alternative transportation and energy options, a sense of a vibrant community, as well as a healthy and environmentally clean town.
90	In-Person (electronic)	Investment in priorities, community support, measurable outcomes such as improved educational outcomes.
91	In-Person (electronic)	Population, educational outcomes, median income, diminished poverty indices
92	Online Only	You can measure the progress by seeing how many people live in our town to know when to bring in more jobs. The indicator is the people.
93	Online Only	We could have a set goal of money. Every time we reach a certain amount we could make an announcement to keep people excited.
94	Online Only	We need to put bigger businesses in the areas that have no stores.
95	Online Only	We can measure progress by how many people move back to Wabash.

3.5 Indicators

ID	Source	How can we measure progress toward your priority outcomes? What is / are the indicator(s)?
96	Online Only	We can measure the progress by looking at the population. If the population goes up, the job options need to go up. The indicator is the population.
97	Online Only	We will know if it's working if the population grows or stays steady over a period of time.
99	Virtual Sessions	Lowered median age, higher birth rate, open to necessary changes
100	Virtual Sessions	Investment, leads, dual credit courses, number of credits and certifications graduates leave with
101	Virtual Sessions	Units available and then rented/purchased by persons under 40
102	Virtual Sessions	Increase in young families moving here, increase in school enrollment, more youth coming to social and cultural events
103	Virtual Sessions	Rise in population, increase number of people who live AND work here, increase in high quality jobs
104	Virtual Sessions	Enrollment
105	Virtual Sessions	Population #, Poulation demographics, school enrollment, housing purchases, lenght of time job positions are filled
106	Virtual Sessions	Population age and size will be some indicator. Also diversity of business and entertainment options growth will likely indicate shift
108	Virtual Sessions	Ideas seem prevalent, funding less-so. Investors are key.
112	Virtual Sessions	Convince local leaders to actually listen and not assume they know what the solution is.
113	Virtual Sessions	People will want to raise families here
114	Virtual Sessions	Increase in visitors, move-backs
115	Virtual Sessions	Tracking housing inquiries vs. Landing people in housing. Avsilable housing versus occupancy
116	Virtual Sessions	Not total population growth but growth of younger generations.
118	Virtual Sessions	Success of the students who graduate from our high schools.
119	Virtual Sessions	More population. Measuring school enrollment, home sales, employment numbers
120	Virtual Sessions	Surveys, school and childcare enrollment
121	Virtual Sessions	Population and business growth
122	Virtual Sessions	increased GDP of the county, increased tax revenues, increased population, increased # of jobs/businesses
123	Virtual Sessions	By the numbers
124	Virtual Sessions	Continuous qualitative growth
125	Virtual Sessions	Numbers, new housing, new jobs, environmental monitors, trail and outdoor usage numbers
126	Virtual Sessions	When we start to reverse the population trend decline.
127	Virtual Sessions	New jobs

3.5 Indicators

ID	Source	How can we measure progress toward your priority outcomes? What is / are the indicator(s)?
128	Virtual Sessions	Number of people staying, how long people usually stay, amount of money going back into the county
129	Virtual Sessions	New investment, number of jobs, wages, philanthropy, retained jobs, young people involved in YP group, entrepreneurial starts
130	Virtual Sessions	Create a plan, assign tasks, hold feet to the fire.
131	Virtual Sessions	Each topic has its own data point. More quality housing. More people employed. Stable businesses. Strong safety net for those that are struy
132	Virtual Sessions	School enrollment, housing sales/stock.
133	Virtual Sessions	Rising value of housing stock, number of well-paying jobs, number of college degrees and certifications, number of amenities.
134	Virtual Sessions	How many graduates pursue workforce development opportunities, how many kids are in quality care.
136	Virtual Sessions	It seems many of the people involved in this session are planners and work for non profits. Need to hear from business owners.
138	Virtual Sessions	Define community with a rubric to make sure of accurate demogrphics
139	Virtual Sessions	Court systems, banking systems, government expenses to meet family needs
140	Virtual Sessions	Actual educational focus towards meeting actual county employment needs and anticipated future needs.
141	Virtual Sessions	Policies, procedures and laws. Example county and city smoking regulations same
142	Virtual Sessions	How many new businesses per year/how long businesses are in business/how many buildings renovated
143	Virtual Sessions	Involement!
144	Virtual Sessions	Look at a ballot, and see the trend in only electing republicans. Our county government is mostly conservative.
147	Virtual Sessions	C. Transfer/Enrollment data
149	Virtual Sessions	Jobs growth
150	Virtual Sessions	Enrollment in K-12 and the University.
151	Virtual Sessions	Retail traffic, demand for home construction
153	Virtual Sessions	Benchmarks set with specific outcomes in mind
154	Virtual Sessions	Young people move back after college
155	Virtual Sessions	Programming % of students who stay in wabash co. after graduation
156	Virtual Sessions	look for increased enrollment and achievement markers in schools; increased economic activity; more housing options; measure engagement
157	Virtual Sessions	New business and increase population
158	Virtual Sessions	To start measure the percent of people on these calls to future in person meetings.
159	Virtual Sessions	Leaders from business, education, government

3.5 Indicators

ID	Source	How can we measure progress toward your priority outcomes? What is / are the indicator(s)?
161	Virtual Sessions	College matriculation rates, employer feedback, increased opportunities for post high school technical training
162	Virtual Sessions	It is important to follow through with plan, not put finish project on the shelf
163	Virtual Sessions	How many faculty and staff live in North Manchester
164	Virtual Sessions	You can track % zoned housing/residential and balance the growth of that number with other economic zoning needs.
165	Virtual Sessions	Observe who is involved and expressing those dreams
166	Virtual Sessions	Number of new homes being built and growth in number of new students.
167	Virtual Sessions	New people trail that they came!
169	Virtual Sessions	Measure # people commuting in/out of county for work, track businesses/employment coming or going in/out of county
170	Virtual Sessions	increase in new residents, increase in new housing
172	Virtual Sessions	Population and job growth, average wage growth and folks from outside the county coming here to play or work
173	Virtual Sessions	increase in young family demographic
174	Virtual Sessions	Small business growth, new housing projects.
175	Virtual Sessions	By local population in future years, housing, job growth
176	Virtual Sessions	Involve the whole community, assign tasks to people who are engaged
177	Virtual Sessions	Strategic plan to make the county a good place to both grow up and age. A community for a lifetime.
180	Virtual Sessions	Ed attainment numbers are pretty easy to track. Also watch for greater cooperation between school sistricts
181	Virtual Sessions	Positive changes in outcomes
182	Virtual Sessions	Census. Tax Revenue. Anecdotal evidence.
183	Virtual Sessions	# job growth
185	Virtual Sessions	Deter number of houses in a certain price range. Track/count available houses quarterly in the level identified (especially as we start to b
190	Virtual Sessions	Median age of housing stock, units
194	Virtual Sessions	tracking graduates after HS and college to see if they return to the county
195	Virtual Sessions	Enrollment and certificate/degree completion at Heartland, Ivy Tech, and MU.
196	Virtual Sessions	Population increase
197	Virtual Sessions	Unification of all people. All moving to the greatness that we we can achieve together!
199	Virtual Sessions	Growth

3.5 Indicators

ID	Source	How can we measure progress toward your priority outcomes? What is / are the indicator(s)?
200	Virtual Sessions	Population rise, economic gains, educational attainment
201	Virtual Sessions	Wider Ed opportunities and tested outcomes
202	Virtual Sessions	Increase in local young leaders under 40
203	Virtual Sessions	Long-term studies of population, jobs, income, etc.
204	Virtual Sessions	Increase quality of life by arts and culture, trails and engaging activities. , increase different job sectors ,
205	Virtual Sessions	Increased number of trails and outdoor venues
207	Virtual Sessions	Increased population
208	Virtual Sessions	Rate of recidivism
209	Virtual Sessions	Population growth among young professionals
210	Virtual Sessions	Measure engagement activities. Mentions of Wabash Co (or locales) on LinkedIn and professional sites. Number internships
211	Virtual Sessions	Population numbers, retention rate, school enrollment numbers, housing availability,
212	Virtual Sessions	Census, economic indicators, citizen and tourist surveys
215	Virtual Sessions	Downtown apartments, school census up, new seasonal events for getting people out and together.
216	Virtual Sessions	School consolidation to strengthen or education system in county
217	Virtual Sessions	Surveys, state reports, census, establish metrics for measurement and tracking,
219	Virtual Sessions	Define the indicators of competitive ed, and demonstrate that we have them in WC, or not
220	Virtual Sessions	Constant assessment of our ongoing development across these areas
223	Virtual Sessions	Itemize list of measurable objectives such as population per age group, ethnicity etc. , housing starts, new business starts
224	Virtual Sessions	Increase in jobs; increase in graduates, number of students enrolled in school; students in
226	Virtual Sessions	Growing % of post secondary education achievement
227	Virtual Sessions	Population growth, increased personal income, education metrics.
228	Virtual Sessions	By having change and the people seeing the difference. Small and large
229	Virtual Sessions	Growth in Employment, GDP, Number of Business Entities., etc.
230	Virtual Sessions	population, per capita income, some regional reputation metric, a resident satisfaction metrix
231	Virtual Sessions	Population growth, increase in housing units
233	Virtual Sessions	Employment metrics (role and industry), wage metrics

3.5 Indicators

ID	Source	How can we measure progress toward your priority outcomes? What is / are the indicator(s)?
235	Virtual Sessions	number of jobs in the county
236	Virtual Sessions	Halt population decline and begin to see growth
237	Virtual Sessions	Tax base
238	Virtual Sessions	Getting the community involved and setting goals that can be measured and tracked
239	Virtual Sessions	Financial stability and Educational successes
242	Virtual Sessions	Putting individual agenda aside

Share your strong places that the plan should address.

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Neighbors pool	strong	I asked it because it is a nice little pool and a way to cool down in the summer
Salamonie Reservoir	strong	Boating, Fishing, Hiking, Biking, Camping, Outdoor sports, Beach, Swimming, Nature
13/24 drive in	strong	Unique\nHistorical\nEvents\nMust visit location. \nOffer lodging for after movie in Charlie Creek in with Groupon deal. \n
13-24 Drive In	strong	Great place for entertainment
2nd Street	strong	It's a beautiful street!
7th St --driving west --on a fall afternoon	strong	I take visitors down this street in the fall to see the beautiful and peaceful "arcade" of colorful trees. Other NM streets have brilliant tree colors too (East, Market, 3rd.) Great for videos!
950 Speakeasy	strong	New cafe opening 2021
Acres Hathaway Preserve	strong	Great for hikes and nature (forest baths).
Acres Land Trust	strong	Hiking and outdoor adventure trails\nHistory\nFamily events.
Acres land trust (Hathaway)	strong	Strong
Airbnb	strong	Very cool restoration
all Main Street shops	strong	Several new shops are going in, I love to shop local!
Ancient fish trap in the Eel River	strong	Incredible native American history here
Art colony	strong	Art colony
atge	strong	aega
Automated Egg Producers	strong	It's a great egg farm that employs about 100 people. The Lieutenant Governor visited here in 2019, and US Representative Jackie Walorski in 2017.
aweg	strong	awegaweg
Ball park	strong	Because its a popular place to go
Big City Paints	strong	It's a fairly well-known area that specializes in a market that works well locally.
Bike trails	strong	Great new option for the community to take advantage of the outdoors
Bike trails	strong	New bike trails are safe and fun. Also an opportunity to draw people for races and fun rides.

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Bowen center	strong	I marked this place because I've been inside a couple of times and I see that they have amazing hard workers.
Bridge	strong	Roann
Candlelite Village	strong	Safe, sought after, close-knit neighborhood. Strong sense of community with neighborhood activities, fundraisers and more. I live here and I think it's wonderful that there is a place like this to live in Wabash. Everyone takes pride in their home.
Center Court Barber Shop	strong	If you want the essence of Wabash and it's people. It's the guys at Center Court.
Central downtown	strong	I marked the central downtown area because I think that with a little more work it could become a strong place of historical interest.
Charley Creek Inn - Twenty	strong	Usually good food and fun atmosphere.
Charley Creek	strong	unique
Charley creek garden	strong	Beautiful and tranquil
Charley Creek Gardens	strong	Amazing place - kudos to the HWF for keeping this strong
Charley Creek Gardens	strong	This place is a nice place for people to go and socialize.
Charley Creek Inn	strong	Great food, good place to stay for out of town guest, great boutique shopping.
Charley Creek Inn	strong	Historical Hotel
Charlie Creek Gardens	strong	Scenic walk path, well kept, serine
Charlie Creek Gardens	strong	The garden area is beautiful and there are several nice older homes along Wabash street
Charlie Creek Gardens	strong	I marked this place because there is a lot of people that go there and it is a very nice place to visit.
Charlie Creek Inn and Gardens	strong	Gardens are pretty and relaxing. Inn is nice and has fun stores.
Church	strong	Because
Church	strong	Interesting
City of Wabash	strong	

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
City Park	strong	Has potential for improvement, but many nice things presently including frisbee golf, revamped picnic areas; some of the amenities are crumbling and needing updated. Summer programming for kids would be great, even refreshment stand like the old days, improved bathrooms for encouraging use of this great asset.
Class street and highway 24	strong	This area is the busy part of Wabash.
Court house	strong	It is our courthouse and we only have one.
Covered Bridge	strong	Our covered bridge is unique and attracts a handful of visitors. Personally, I don't get it, maybe I take it for granted because I grew up here.
Covered Bridge	strong	Visitors are always interested in seeing the covered bridge
Covered Bridge "country block" walk	strong	A one-mile "country block" walk from Main Street, Covered Bridge, and Market St. (with public parking on Main, if needed).
Di	strong	Uf
Down town	strong	It's the most important thing we have it what I believe our town is based on
Down town area	strong	Historic, well kept, variety of shops, and restaurants
downtown	strong	Honeywell Center, Wabash County Museum, Charley Creek Inn, Eagles Theater, overall revitalization effort
Downtown	strong	Many beautiful buildings under utilized for unique businesses
Downtown	strong	Our downtown is our strongest draw to tourists and attracts future residents. We need to support the businesses and I would like to close Miami St between Market and Canal to make a downtown gathering space for music and festivals.
downtown	strong	several buildings that could be used for maker spaces, boutique shops and co-work spaces
Downtown	strong	Shopping activity
Downtown area (Wabash)	strong	a lot of history
Downtown LaFontaine	strong	The downtown area has been upgraded by the town but only 2 businesses are open. We need the owners of the empty buildings to work with the town and see how those buildings can be used to make the town active again.
Downtown Wabash	strong	Great places to show people around for business places or housing spaces. Some open buildings lots of great places to eat.
Downtown Wabash	strong	It is beautifully developed, and full of vibrant businesses, restaurants, and community.

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
downtown wabash	strong	love First Fridays and shopping in local shops including Modoc's - beautiful downtown streets when lit up at night
Downtown Wabash	strong	Shopping and eating places. First Friday and Farmer Markets draw people into the city.
Downtown Wabash	strong	Whatever downtown Wabash does, other parts of Wabash County can replicate. \n\nCoffee shops, brewery, movie theatre...places for people to go and start/end their day with some fun. \n
Downtown Wabash	strong	Things to do, attractive, events like First Fridays and Farmers Market, restaurants, Modocs. Charlie Creek Inn and Honeywell Center impress out of towners.
Downtown Wabash shops	strong	I feel like people are drawn to our downtown.
Drive in	strong	Fun place in the summer
Drive in	strong	Not many left and it is a unique way to see a movie.
Drive-in Theater	strong	one of the few remaining drive-in theaters
Eagle's Theater	strong	This place was recently renovated, and it is very nice. I just went to a wedding here where the reception was in the ballroom. I've lived in Wabash my whole life, but I truly didn't feel like I was in Wabash when I was in the ballroom. It felt like I was in a big city somewhere. It's such a good place right now!
Eagles	strong	Greta place for young people to work, great social place
Eagles	strong	Newly renovated and increases our quality of life with a movie theatre, ballroom, and classrooms to teach innovative ideas to our youth.
Eagles Theater	strong	Another great part of the downtown area.
Eagles Theater	strong	Close, convenient, affordable, beautiful
Eagles Theater	strong	Historic, well revamped to original look, and different practical uses of building
Eagles theater	strong	It is a really nice place
Eagles Theater	strong	Renovated Theater and education/entertainment complex
Eagles Theater	strong	The only movie theater in town.
Eagles Theater	strong	This is a place where everyone can go and have a good time.
Eagles Theater	strong	Wonderful addition to the downtown entertainment and hospitality.

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Eagles theatre	strong	This shows that government and non for profit can make a difference and revitalize a landmark
Eagles Theatre	strong	I have many memories of going here with my family.
Eel River	strong	Eel River tourism is big - canoes, kayaks, boards
Eel River in Wabash County	strong	I feel that there is a need for better access to the river in North Manchester, so that visitors can float under the historic covered bridge. Better access allows for greater use of the river, and a possible development of visitor services, like boat rentals, transportation, and food. Wabash seems to have accomplished this with success!
Eel/Kenapocomocha River	strong	Place of beauty, wildlife, recreation
El Mez	strong	good food
Field of Dreams	strong	Great place for soccer, baseball, etc.
Field of Dreams	strong	Great YMCA owned facility for youth sports - baseball, softball, football, soccer, et al. Strong.
Field of Dreams	strong	Many people visit this place for sports events.
Field of Dreams	strong	Significant attraction for out-of-county families.
Field of Dreams Athletic Complex	strong	Large athletic complex draws participants from many surrounding communities
Fields	strong	Played lots of softball here in the summers
Football field	strong	Gives the community chance to do something
Ford Meter Bos	strong	This is a very good place for Wabash because this has a lot of job opportunities.
Ford Meter Box	strong	An outstanding company! I have 12 previous employment sites for comparison.
Ford Meter Box	strong	I chose this place because it has a lot of job opportunities. A lot of the people in Wabash work there. If it were to go out of business, the majority of the population would leave.
Ford Meter Box	strong	I marked this place because it has a lot of job opportunities. A lot of people work there wands if they left, the majority of Wabash's population would leave.
Ford Theater	strong	Gem of the City for Arts
Ford Theater	strong	I have dance recitals here, and also attend other shows that happen here.

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Ford Theater	strong	I know that a lot of people, especially kids and teens, enjoys the Ford Theater. It's a spot where the entertainment comes to you and you can have fun for a few hours. It's a great place.
Ford Theater	strong	It's a main source of entertainment.
Ford theatre	strong	
Friends Counseling Center	strong	FCC provides counseling by our highly qualified and dedicated therapist. FCC has five locations, with the main office in Wabash, Indiana. FCC also provides counseling services in Huntington, Kokomo, Marion, and Logansport, Indiana.
Friends Counseling Center	strong	A resource working to help individuals and families in crisis and distress to restore emotional and relational health.
Friendship Hill Inclusive Playground	strong	Great example of community collaboration to build an area for all ages and physical abilities to play together - this is the best of Wabash when we come together as one\n
Friendship Hill Inclusive Playground	strong	Such an asset to our community!
Golf course	strong	Activity
Golf Course	strong	We need more neighborhoods like the Gardens
Grow Wabash County	strong	Strong leader in our community - taking on housing, economic development, community development, et al - anchor institution that should be supported\n
GW Corp site	strong	Blight on city.
Habanero Grill	strong	Great locally owned restaurant.
Habanero Grill	strong	It has good food
Habenero Grill	strong	good food
Habenro Grill	strong	
Hanging Rock	strong	Hanging rock
Hanging Rock	strong	Hiking, viewpoint, scenery.
Hanging Rock	strong	It's a great place to take a look at nature and maybe even some pictures
Hanging Rock	strong	This place and the other Acres land trust places are incredible.
Hanging Rock National Natural Landmark	strong	This place is so cool! Wabash County has some great NATURE scenes and hiking areas.

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Hanna park	strong	I think that this place should have more there. There's only stuff like for little kids and a run down swing set. When I go there it smells like bad.
Harry's Old Kettle	strong	It's good
Harter's Grove	strong	A beautiful wooded area by the park and Peabody Retirement Community--and very accessible.
Hathaway Preserve	strong	Great hiking and creek stomping with kids.
Hathaway Preserve	strong	Such a refreshing place to visit and with such varied land formations! A wonderful walk in the woods, with waterfalls, and changing scenery in various seasons. A great place for repeat visits. A topographical treasure in Wabash County.
Hathaway Preserve	strong	This Acres preserve is a great walking area.
Hawkins Family Farm	strong	Great, locally sourced food, love the Pizza on the Farm Fridays during the summer. Owners are wonderful!
Hawkins Family Farm	strong	Local CSA, Pizza on the Farm-great local food options
Hawkins Family Farm	strong	This farm store and pizza venue is a wonderful gathering space in the out of doors. The farm grown vegetables add to our community "locally grown" options.
Hawkins Farm	strong	Great place that provides local produces, meats, cheese, and more to the community. Wonderful experience opportunity at Friday Night Pizza on the Farm during the summer. Great asset to the and region
Hdhe	strong	Hdhe
Hdhs	strong	Jdjd
Healthy hub	strong	My favorite place for breakfast with a super nice staff and owner
Heartland Career Center	strong	A great asset to Wabash, but it would be nice if the exterior could look a little shinier...not everything is about looks, but as a student, you want to feel proud to go here.
Heartland Career Center	strong	CTE place that is underutilized for adult education but great at secondary students. \n
Heartland Learning Center	strong	New adult certification training center coming 2022
Hi-Grade Egg Producers & Processors	strong	It's a great egg farm that employs almost 100 people.
Home	strong	I \nI live there
honey well park and pool	strong	Because of how many people go there, it is a very strong business financially

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Honeywell	strong	Because i really enjoy coming there to watch shows
Honeywell	strong	It brings in so much outside talent and tourism to our community.
Honeywell	strong	Top notch venue
Honeywell Centee	strong	This is an attraction that no community this size has and is to be coveted and protected, and exploited for the greater community due to the attractive power Jr. has
Honeywell Center	strong	\nOutstanding facility for arts and entertainment.
Honeywell Center	strong	Draws for many surrounding counties
Honeywell Center	strong	Good gathering spot, great access to entertainment and arts.
Honeywell Center	strong	Great entertainment opportunities and place to convene
Honeywell Center	strong	Great feature for a smaller community
Honeywell Center	strong	Honeywell center
Honeywell Center	strong	Iconic cultural center of Wabash
Honeywell Center	strong	Magnificent asset
Honeywell Center	strong	Need I say more - THE driver for tourism in Wabash County
Honeywell Center	strong	Quality of place. Vast majority of buyers are from outside Wabash County
Honeywell Center	strong	They bring in great shows! Also great local talent.
Honeywell Center	strong	They get pretty big music artists to perform there
Honeywell Center	strong	This is a strong place in the county because most big events happen here. They also recently renovated with cosmetic renovations. Thousands of people enjoy concerts, recitals, performances, pageants, etc. here.
Honeywell Center	strong	Wonderful for a community our size.
Honeywell Center	strong	This place is where a lot of things and shows happen. A lot of people go here.
Honeywell Center and Clark Gallery	strong	Theatrical performances and community art gallery. Outstanding cultural center and facilities for our region
Honeywell Golf Course	strong	Affordable, quality golf course.

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Honeywell Golf Course	strong	I marked this place because this is where I spend a lot of time. The golf course is one of my favorite places to go in Wabash county. The course has just been renovated and should be a highlighted spot in Wabash.
Honeywell Golf Course	strong	Nice golf course and housing addition
Honeywell Golf Course	strong	Great golfing experience.
Honeywell pool	strong	Because a lot of people come here
Honeywell pool	strong	Everyone can go here and have a good time.
Honeywell Pool	strong	Popular venue for kids and families, though could use some updating and more attractive outside appearance
Honeywell Pool	strong	This place is a place that can bring in money.
Honeywell Theater	strong	I marked this place because it is important that towns have places where people can perform or watch entertainment.
House	strong	My house
housing	strong	terrain and can be closely connected to city paths and easy access to US24.
INGUARD	strong	Parker Beauchamp is a thought leader in our community and a great philanthropist. INGUARD supports numerous efforts from the HWF and GWC and Manchester University to health food, recreation, and many others.
Intercultural center	strong	Wonderful, unique resource, gathering place
Interurban Ice Cream Shoppe in Lagro	strong	This is a gem right on the river walk in Lagro. Wonderful hotdogs and ice cream treats. great when visiting the Acres properties near Lagro too.
It's north Miami street	strong	I marked this because it has a lot of stuff to do down there.
Ivy Tech Community College	strong	I marked this place because I feel it is important that Wabash County has some after high school options.
Ivy Tech Wabash	strong	Great adult education center with strong leadership with Josn & WCS. Need to better integrate into Heartland at the new building
Jayden's pool	strong	My favorite pool
Kelly's ice cream	strong	Best ice cream ever for the best price
Kenapocamocha Coffee Shop	strong	A beautiful coffee shop in our historic district in a home with rich history. Offers both drinks and food. Has a wrap around porch for outside dining. This is not your average coffee shop you would find in another community.

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Kenapocomocha	strong	Great food. Great coffee. Great vibe! Friends and family from outside the county always make return trips here when they visit.
KenapocoMocha	strong	Local small town coffee shop full of charm and character. It connects many of the local farms to the community with a farm to food menu. It's a community gathering place. Local coffee shops are a highlight and stopping point for those going through a town.
Kenapocomocha Coffee Shop	strong	A great place to take guests! Historic charm, specialty coffees, contemporary food, community owned, and all-around goodness!
Kenapocomocha Coffee shop	strong	unique community supported coffee shop
Kenapocomocha Coffee Shop	strong	Unique place to bring friends for breakfast, lunch or a cup of coffee. The staff are amazing!
Kindy Farm near Liberty Mills	strong	This is another wonderful locally grown produce farm that provides our community with farm to fork food.
Kokiwaee ACRES land preserve	strong	(not sure the dot is in the right place) \n\nGood place for walking/hiking in the woods.
kokiwanee Preserve	strong	This Acres Preserve (Kokiwanni) is the best forest bathing/hiking area in Wabash County
Kroger	strong	It gets people the things they need for beneficial things.
Lafontaine	strong	I love the livability of LaFontaine!
Lagro boat ramp area	strong	It's a wonderful gathering place for the neighbors around Lagro.
Lagro Downtown	strong	Nice views of the Wabash river, more trails, and a great ice cream place.
Lagro Park	strong	by the community building and fire station - shows the small town environment
Lincoln Monument and Courthouse	strong	iconic for our city
M U	strong	excellent source for thoughts and ideas
Main Street	strong	Needs many more businesses. But new businesses have been good! (strong and opportunity)
Main Street	strong	prime for shops, businesses
Main View	strong	A place where a diversity of people gather
Manchester Alive: Main Street Chamber Alliance	strong	Important to our community as they focus on improving our vibrant community, pulling our community together for celebrations, promoting small businesses and much more!
Manchester Church of the Brethren	strong	Wonderful church community!

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Manchester College of Business	strong	Great business and accounting program - good opportunity for a more robust internship program for local business community\n
Manchester Public Library	strong	Great library.
Manchester U.	strong	We have a university in our community. We are not leveraging them enough to keep the educated and more innovative minds in our community.
Manchester Univeristy	strong	Young students, with potential to be young professionals that we can keep local
Manchester University	strong	Beautiful campus, community asset, historic significance, nation-wide network,
Manchester University	strong	First Peace Studies program in the nation, alumni discovered Acid Rain and Teflon. Early connections with MLK and Andrew Young. Andrew Young's wife, Jean, was a grad of MU. Lots of great contributions to the world.
Manchester University	strong	Higher education
Manchester University	strong	Manchester is a great, small, liberal arts school that brings in students from around Indiana and the US.
Manchester University	strong	Nice private college in a smaller community
Manchester University	strong	The culture, diversity, and beauty Manchester University provides the county is priceless.
Manchester University	strong	The Uni is an anchor of this Town. Unfortunately I think there is some animus between the Uni people and the community folks. This needs a concerted effort to be changed. Without the University this town likely would not even exist. The University helps to support the entire community during hard times and it is a huge asset that we need to all understand. Although the University should not be the be all and end all of community discussions, a strong path of communication needs to be established to bring the community and the university together in purpose to benefit everyone.
Manchester University	strong	Important source of culture and broad education and draw from outside of community
Manchester University	strong	It's nice to see Manchester University continue to grow.
Manchester University	strong	It's a wonderful university, but it is lacking a potentially valuable connection with the county.
Manchester University	strong	Wonderful asset for our small community/county. \nMU brings students from all over the state and the county. Many of these students leave with a connection to the community and want to stay/ return. There is also opportunity to here for the university to work more with the community.county in building and growing.

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Manchester University campus	strong	Campus is very attractive, well maintained, inviting place to walk, and offers many cultural programs available to the community. MU's rich educational history includes Peace Studies, is a place of global education and celebrates diversity, honors Andrew Cordier et al. and publicly flies the United Nations flag.
Market Street	strong	For people over 21, this is the place to go for great food, drinks, and fun atmosphere.
MCS Soccer Fields	strong	
MELC	strong	Great child care center
Mhm	strong	Because
Mi Pueblo	strong	an absolutely phenomenal mexican restaurant to introduce new members of the community to
Mi Pueblo	strong	Best Mexican food ever
Mi pueblo	strong	I love it
Mi Pueblo	strong	This is great restaurant that serves great Mexican food.
Mi Pueblo's	strong	Such a good restaurant. Eat here the most in Wabash county
Mi Pueblos	strong	It's a great Mexican restaurant to eat at, most people love to eat here and socialize with people
Middle school	strong	Its where i go to school, i found all my friends there.
Mill Street	strong	It's a beautiful street!
Missisinewa Reservoir	strong	Camping, water activities, hiking. A nice place just to drive and look at the sites.
Missisinewa Resevoir	strong	
Mississenewa Resorvoir	strong	Beautiful area. Nature preserves and recreational
Mississinewa Lake	strong	Another beautiful lake with boating, fishing, and hiking.
Mississinewa Lake	strong	Awesome lake with camping, beach, boating
Mississinewa Lake	strong	This is a place I go during the summer to boat and I love it!
Mississinewa Lake / Reservoir	strong	Very cool recreational opportunity - opportunity here is for a public access site in Wabash County, which doesn't currently exist for boating and swimming

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Modoc Coffee Shop	strong	It is a main source for the youth to hang out.
Modoc's	strong	Because its well known and is a good place to take someone new.
Modoc's Coffee Shop	strong	I think this is a strong place because it is the only coffee shop in the city of Wabash. They do takeout orders also, which has helped a lot during the pandemic.
Modocs	strong	good
Modocs	strong	It has good service and people.
Modocs	strong	It is clean and they have good beverages and good people and service.
Modoc's	strong	It's a great meeting place to meet people and have meaningful discussions
Modocs	strong	I marked this place because it is a locally owned coffee shop. It draws a lot of attention in town. This is a good place for people to visit.
Montessori School at WPC	strong	Great Montessori preschool.
MPS Egg Farms	strong	MPS Egg Farms moved their headquarters here in 2019!
MPS Egg Farms	strong	I'm a little biased, but this is a large business that recently relocated it's headquarters here from a nearby county.
Mr Dave's	strong	Classic fast food with quality ingredients and friendly service. Local business with downtown location.
MU	strong	interesting, pretty
Muesuem	strong	Popular place in Wabash
Museum	strong	Cultural resource
Museum	strong	It's the best museum around. Staff does a great job with displays.
My home	strong	It's beautiful
My house	strong	Bc i live here
My House	strong	Because it is beautiful! for these
My House	strong	Because it's my house...
My house	strong	Because its where i feel protected and its where i live.
My house	strong	It is the place I feel most comfortable

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
My house	strong	It's ,my house
My house	strong	Scenic place to live
My house	strong	Becouse it's my house
New Hospital	strong	Strong place
Ninja express	strong	Best sushi
NM public library	strong	So many activities for kids, feels vibrant
North Manchester	strong	Beautiful leaves in the fall
North Manchester	strong	Great resturants. Little shops. Active community.
North Manchester	strong	I live there
North Manchester	strong	It is my hometown (age 0-22)... and it may be the town where we retire in a few years...
North Manchester Center for History	strong	Great place for locals and visitors to learn the history of North Manchester.
North Manchester Center for History	strong	Great!
North Manchester Covered Bridge	strong	I take every visitor to North Manchester here! The #1 spot in NM. It is both historic and current, is architectural combined with nature, is a walkable location, and gives an incredible sense of place. Not many places in the world have a covered bridge--and we do!
North Manchester Covered Bridge	strong	Strong Cultural icon for the town
North Manchester Main Street	strong	beautiful building facades and a walkable downtown district
North Manchester Public Library	strong	An amazing family and community resource and ranks high in the state. Excellent community programming and outreach. \n Beautiful facilities and helpful staff.
North Wabash	strong	Additional businesses could go here. Downtown Wabash seems to be growing and has a lot of businesses, restaurants, etc
Not specified	strong	Places that show me our strong history and foundation woudl be Hanging Rock, Roann Bridge, Manchester University. Strong places in my view are the Honeywell Center, recreational areas like the Riverwalk, schools, local government, libraries, etc. Unsure where the opportunity areas are but am sure are there.

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Not specified	strong	We have so much to offer. Acres properties, 2 reservoirs areas and a hike/bike river trail for outdoor activities, great parks, the Honeywell Center, Eagles, Honeywell House for entertainment, a first class Y in Wabash and facility in N.M., Manchester University, M. Symphony
Not specified	strong	With COVID-19 restrictions, families are spending more time enjoying activities out-of-doors. Wabash County offers many opportunities for this - Eel River, Wabash River, Stockdale Dam, Salamonie Lake, Salamonie State Forest, Roann Covered Bridge area, playgrounds in many of the communities, Paradise Springs, Bike Trail from Wabash to Lagro, etc.
Ogan's Landing	strong	Farmers' Market! Yay! Local goodness, local farmers, local artisans, and excellent location. Love this place!\nAlso, nice to have a park in this part of town, south of Main Street, for families and smaller children in this area.\nAlso, river access from town.
Ogan's Landing	strong	My family loves to kayak the Eel river, nice place to put in and take out. I would mark the whole river if I could.
Old General Tire ground	strong	It's a blight. Time to do something about it.
Our current camp site, Future retirement cabin??	strong	We love it here. Hard to pack up for the winter and leave. I have started testing lavender plants to hopefully have a small lavender farm when I retire.
Paradise Spring	strong	I believe this place could be further developed to accommodate festivals and even concerts.
Paradise Spring	strong	Love the area for events like chili cook-off, etc.
Paradise spring	strong	Because i really enjoy walking here and riding bikes.
Paradise Spring Park	strong	A great set of trails connected to the riverwalk.
Paradise Springs	strong	Large gathering place
Paradise Springs	strong	Nice park area and festival location
Paradise Springs	strong	Outdoor activities \nBiking trails \nPark\nChili cook off —opportunities for other similar community events
Paradise Springs	strong	Such a great park...not enough people know its history and that it's the birthplace of Wabash
Paradise Springs	strong	This place has some historical buildings on it. Its also a good place to walk.
Parkview	strong	Excellent healthcare locally with regional connection.
Parkview Hospital	strong	New facility is impressive to locals and visitors

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Parkview Hospital	strong	This is a strong place because it brings in money and helps people keep healthy.
Parkview Wabash Hospital	strong	It is very beneficial to the ill.
Parkview Wabash Hospital	strong	This is a very strong place because it was just built a few years ago! They also offer internships here for high school students.
Parkview Wabash hospital	strong	I marked this place because I like the view around it.
Pond	strong	My favorite place to swim in the summer.
Poole's Meat Market	strong	Has started selling produce and meat from more local Farmers...I bet this could be expanded with more Farm to Fork initiatives
public restrooms in Lagro	strong	Having public restrooms next to the river walk is a huge asset!\n
Reservoir	strong	Activities
Reservoir	strong	Activities
Reservoirs	strong	Great options to get people in the community
Rhinestones and Roses, Chillz	strong	Two fun new businesses are making it here, when it often feels like new retail and restaurants are doomed to fail. they show it can be done!
River	strong	River development awesome
River Access/Farmer's Market	strong	It would be great to make this more of a park with a pavillion for the farmer's market and some playground equipment. Plant trees.
River Ridge Farm	strong	Local, affordable organic produce
River trail	strong	Excellent outdoor activity.
River trail	strong	Strong asset of Wabash county
river walk	strong	so proud we have all the trails, campsite, bike paths, businesses along the River Walk
River Walk and Trail	strong	Beautiful outdoor biking and walking Space.
Riveridge Farm	strong	This family owned produce farm provides fresh greens year round. It's an unbelievable asset!
Roann	strong	Our whole town is a strong place - so much to say
Roann - Chippewa St	strong	Has a lot of history including the old log cabin

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Roann Covered Bridge	strong	Beautiful setting.
Roann Covered Bridge	strong	Historical. \nTourist. \nQR code with information or story of the history of the bridge. Fire that destroyed bridge. Reason it was built. \nPoint of interest.
Roann Covered Bridge	strong	If you are in Roann visiting the mill, you must stop for photos at the bridge.
Roann Covered Bridge	strong	Important cultural heritage for the community
Roann Covered Bridge	strong	Our community has a beautiful focal place.
Roann Covered Bridge	strong	This is a huge attraction from people across the state. It's a beautiful bridge, but could be an even greater attraction with places to sit, and a better place to load kayaks into the water
Roann Covered Bridge	strong	This bridge is basically what Roann is known for. A lot of things has happened to it like it was set on fire and rebuild but on the inside it still has some of the burnt structure.
Roann covered bridge	strong	We get off the River here when we go kayaking.
Roann Historic District	strong	Roann historic district is a big plus
Roann IN	strong	Small, quaint shops. Very active community. Great festival.
Roann Mill	strong	We have visitors from Florida last year. They loved the mill, dam, and fish ladder.
Ronan covered brige	strong	It is old and on the national register of historic places
Salamoni State Forest	strong	Beautiful scenery, trails, camping, nature
Salamonie	strong	It is beautiful and great for hiking and picnics.
Salamonie	strong	Nice place to visit for nature walks, birding, picnics. A nice place to take visitors.
Salamonie	strong	This is definitely a location that needs to be preserved for future generations. It's a great place to go and clear your head and get away from the business of life.
Salamonie Dam and Forest	strong	The outdoors adventurer's paradise. \n\nHiking, boating, kayaking, camping, fishing, etc.
Salamonie Lake	strong	Nice place to boat, fish, and hike.
Salamonie lake and dam	strong	Numerous trails and areas for people to swim
Salamonie Lake Campgrounds	strong	This is a very strong place! It has opportunity also because the marina could be updated to get better business. I love coming here in the summer.

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
salamonie reservoir	strong	Good place to run and hike on trails. Beautiful
Salamonie Reservoir	strong	Strong opportunties for recreation
Salamonie Reservoir	strong	Very pretty area. Water activities, hiking trails, camping, picnic.
Salomonie State Forest	strong	Walking trails, fishing, camping, family fun.
School	strong	Because its where i spend most of my time
School	strong	Its where i go to school
School	strong	This is where I am
Shabby Owl Antiques	strong	Unique items, prices are reasonable, owners are very pleasant
Somerset	strong	Great little community with homes on the reservoir.
Son Shine Greenhouse	strong	Excellent greenhouse & garden supply store.
South Elm Street	strong	Beautifully restored historic homes.
South Maple Street	strong	Neighborhood of beautiful historic homes
Southside Park	strong	This neighborhood park is refreshed and a great asset to the southside.
Stockdale Mill	strong	Historical interest. \nTourist location. \nPoint of interest. \nFocus on health. Could we look into the whole grain health benefits? Could this location produce a unique and healthy option for better living through our food choices
Stockdale Mill	strong	Roann is blessed by the Stockdale Mill. Roann is fortunate to have a wonderful antique shop.
Strauss Peabody Fitness Center	strong	This place is phenomonal and not enough people know about it. To have a faciility of this caliber in such a small community is a huge asset and I am amazed that I don't see this being bragged on everywhere I see anything about North Manchester.
Strauss Veal Feeds	strong	Headquarters of the largest veal feed producer in the country! They expanded in 2020 and hired 4 more people.
Strauss-Peabody Aquatic and Fitness Facility	strong	strong local health facility for the community
Sunnyside Farms	strong	It's a 100% cage-free egg farm that employs about 80 people.
Test	strong	Test
Test	strong	Test test

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Test	strong	
test	strong	
test	strong	
The Arc Wabash County	strong	Nonprofit providing programs and services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities since 1954. Social services are very important to a strong and growing community.
The Fried Egg	strong	This is the busiest breakfast place that quickly took Bob Evan's business. I think it's a very strong place because it's everyone's favorite breakfast place.
The Honeywell Foundation, aka The Honeywell Center	strong	The Honeywell Center provides enriching and engaging arts entertainment and education opportunities. The Center also offers a regional draw to Wabash and makes a significant economic contribution to the community by attracting people from outside our community.
The new hospital	strong	It was vital to build the new hospital and to grow this area.
The new housing addition	strong	It's really nice to see this new housing development go up here, I hope to see it continue to grow during this housing boom.
Theater	strong	Place that represents Wabash
Time Out Inn	strong	Fun atmosphere for younger crowd over 21.
Town Life Center	strong	Historic building, location of several non-profit organizations,
Very large place	strong	This place is really open and should be used.
Wabash Carnegie Library	strong	Great library.
Wabash Carnegie Public Library	strong	Outstanding library.
Wabash city park	strong	A good place for a playground
Wabash City Park	strong	Amazing location, well maintained
Wabash City Park	strong	A safe and a very good place to play
Wabash City Schools Admin	strong	Jason Callahan is a thought leader in education in the state of Indiana. We need to work with WCS and Jason more to strengthen all of our schools\n
Wabash County Historical Museum	strong	Exhibits are well done. An excellent place to take visitors.
Wabash County Historical Museum	strong	Great place - strong tie to local history, preserving the past - strong childrens programming and play area.

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Wabash County Historical Museum	strong	Great!
Wabash county Historical Museum	strong	It's a very nice place to see the history of Wabash County
Wabash County Historical Museum	strong	One of the top museums in the state
Wabash county history Museum	strong	A town the size again doesn't have a quality museum like this and must continue to thrive for cultural attractiveness to visitors, citizens and potential businesses.
Wabash County Museum	strong	Great for all ages
Wabash County Museum	strong	The Museum is a great asset to attract young families from throughout the region.
Wabash County Museum	strong	A treasure of information.
Wabash County Trails	strong	Excellent place to get exercise. Beautiful scenery.
Wabash County Visitor Center	strong	Helpful people that are dedicated to promoting Wabash
Wabash County YMCA	strong	Sports complex is a large attraction
Wabash County YMCA	strong	What an asset. Dean is a strong leader, they do a great job in youth sports and encouraging public health and wellness, and they should be supported\n
Wabash downtown and county historical places	strong	Wabash downtown is great compared to counties around us. We have many places in the county to showcase.
Wabash Friends Counseling	strong	A key location for family health
Wabash High and Middle School	strong	strong schools, strong leadership, and looking to the future to build a global citizen. \n
Wabash High School	strong	I marked this place because it is a great education system and I think more people need to see that.
Wabash Indiana	strong	This is where i live
Wabash Middle School	strong	I go to school here and I am very encouraged by my teachers.
Wabash Middle School	strong	It's a safe place for a lot of kids
Wabash middle school	strong	I marked this place because to me it feels very safe and I love being here. The teachers are amazing and the students are so fun to be around.
Wabash Museum	strong	This is actually a pretty populated place, and most people go here for first friday.
Wabash Museum	strong	The museum has the history of the town in it. If you visit this city, it's good to go and see the history of it.

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Wabash River Trail	strong	Incredible Asset!
Wabash River Trail	strong	New trail is popular attraction
Wabash River Trail	strong	Remarkable - opportunity is to continue to expand east and west with the Wabash River Trails group\n
Wabash River Walk	strong	Riverfront attraction
Wabash River Walk	strong	This Riverwalk is well maintained and a great family outing.
Wabash Riverfront	strong	I love the river and would love to see the development of river activities both free and paid to expand on this great amenity.
Wabash/Lagro River Walk	strong	a wonderful paved walking/biking trail between Wabash and Lagro; its such an asset!
Walmart	strong	Walmart is a location that offers groceries and all other amenities.
Warvel Park	strong	Central location within the community. Near schools, downtown, university, baseball park, Peabody Retirement, etc
Warvel Park	strong	Fun
Warvel Park	strong	Nice park, well maintained. Great outdoor space for gatherings
Warvel Park	strong	Nice variety in a community park for various ages and family groups. Nice sledding hill, too! (Dish sleds are best. ;-) Nice waterfall feature also. Kids park, pavilions for community fundraisers, near pool and school, etc. Overall, a real plus along Market Street "corridor."
Warvel Park	strong	Well-maintained park. Great for gatherings, children, taking in nature. The Harter's Grove nature trail is a wonderfully calming spot.
White Rock	strong	Potential, but the start up was hindered with Covid.
White Rock ice cream and canoeing	strong	Fun place to see river and have a treat. Canoeing trip is great way to see river and wild life.
White Rock Recreation	strong	Our family loves visiting White Rock Recreation as part of our adventures to the Wabash River Walk.
White Rock Recreation	strong	Strong addition to recreation, health, and wellness in the community. would like to see a N Manchester/Eel River version\n
White Rock Recreation	strong	This was my summer job and is a great place to go and get some ice cream in the summer. It has a great atmosphere and friendly workers.
White's Residential Services	strong	Focused on healing youth that are struggling with family, addictions, and mental health
YMCA	strong	A wonderful facility.

3.6 Strong Places

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
YMCA	strong	Because it helps youth stay active in sports during winter time and they offer activities for all ages, and have a wide variety of activities to do while you're there.
YMCA	strong	Fantastic organization.
Ymca	strong	Great resourceo
YMCA	strong	I marked this as strong point because a lot kid spend time here. Also adults like to exercise there. The YMCA also hold event and daycare services that help parents a lot.
YMCA	strong	I visit here a lot to workout and play tennis.
YMCA	strong	It is a beautifully maintained facility.
YMCA	strong	Nice big facility for a small town.
YMCA	strong	I marked this place because everyone can go there and be safe.

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
broken or missing sidewalks around town	opportunity	Broken or missing sidewalks make it difficult for North Manchester to be a "walkable town." Uneven surfaces are dangerous for elderly and impossible for families with small children on trikes. Handicapper access is increasing, which is excellent. Improvements are being made and this helps. Sidewalks are key to quality of life for all ages.
bulldog battery	opportunity	not a good look down Wabash Street; listed on environmental sites as potential for environmental hazards
Bulldog Battery	opportunity	Good company but would be better moved out of downtown and to one of the business or industrial parks so this site could be redeveloped - acquisition of this site, remediation, and moving the You Store It facility and junk car lot would open up a new riverfront development
Cannonball lanes	opportunity	I marked this place as opportunity because i think we could make this place more entertaining for our generation by adding things to it. Better decorations, better food, making it a better atmosphere. This place has potential to become an awesome hangout place.
Cass St.	opportunity	This is where all the restaurants are we need new restaurants or more sit down restaurants.
Cass St. Dollar General Parking Lot	opportunity	Many of the spaces are out of business and empty
Cass Street	opportunity	The roads around here are terrible done and I hate driving through them.
Cass Street corridor	opportunity	shopping areas are run down and not well maintained or landscaped by property owners
cement pads on South Street where Invensys Controls used to be	opportunity	This is a huge unused space that could become a skate park, a street hockey area, or a roller rink, or housing lots. Or, the town could use it for some of the storage that should be moved from the Mill Street green space (just north of Ogan's landing)
Charley creak garden	opportunity	I picked this place because it is a beautiful place to walk and look at nature.
Charley Creek Garden Maze	opportunity	It is a hidden gem in our community.
Charley Creek Gardens	opportunity	This is a really nice place to go and has so much potential but doesnt get used
Chester Heights housing development	opportunity	There is a large space that will not be developed into housing and a circular path and other athletic options would fit well in this space
City Park	opportunity	City park could be upgraded
Community Building	opportunity	Update please!!!

3.6 Opportunity Areas

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Community Pool	opportunity	Good amenity in the community but underutilized by the City Parks Department - tough to figure out hours when it is going to be open and for the money reinvested in it it seems to not open until June and closes in August - underutilized at best and not recognized as the asset it should be
Cross street in Roann	opportunity	I think we need a crosswalk (test)
Current space used for farmers market.	opportunity	It's the perfect location for a fabulous market like one of the covered mercados in Madrid, Spain,\neg., Mercado de San Miguel
D & B Auto	opportunity	This is such an eyesore to the south gateway into Wabash.
dage	opportunity	ae
Dangerous Pedestrian crossing	opportunity	Busy pedestrian crossing with no protection of crosswalk or sidewalks for walkers
Downtown North Manchester	opportunity	I'd like to see the second and third stories of these buildings developed into apartments and the flat roofs be covered in solar panels to power them.
Downtown North Manchester	opportunity	This has opportunity to thrive even more with the proper investment and opportunities that would utilize the university and be attractive to those students
Downtown Nutrition	opportunity	This is a protein shake shop that has a lot of potential. They opened a little while ago and get a lot of business.
Downtown Wabash	opportunity	Often, it's older individuals that are walking the streets of Wabash. With investment targeted towards young people, Wabash could become a more vibrate downtown.
Downtown Wabash	opportunity	Businesses can open and become successful
Downtown Window front properties	opportunity	Boutiques, shopping, other things that could go in to bring business.
Downtown-behind business	opportunity	River frontage, recreational area
dumping area along the river at Parke Ave	opportunity	This is another river front area that should become a public area for walking along the river. Anything the town uses this for, could be placed at a spot away from our river!
E Maple St/Elm St Area	opportunity	This part of town seems to be petty-crime ridden. It would be great to see a focus on drug rehabilitation and its relation to petty crime in Wabash as well. Although it's a generally safe place to raise kids, it seems like crime has increased in recent years.
E Market St Housing Opportunity	opportunity	Opportunity to develop higher end housing development - urban feel with Grow Wabash County\n
E Market Street Houses	opportunity	Future housing

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Eagles	opportunity	Opportunities for professionals!!\nOpportunities for education!!!\nOpportunities for tourism!!!\nOpportunities for events!!!\nDraw people into our community to spend their money and to create the need for jobs!
Eagles Theater	opportunity	Eagles Theater will provide significant attraction to people outside our county and younger generations once programming can start after the pandemic.
Eagles theater	opportunity	This place has potential. Maybe amping it up a bit, playing a more diverse selection movies. Advertising this theater more. Making it a warm and welcoming place.
Eagles Theater	opportunity	They just remodeled and it looks great. There is a lot of potential.
Eagles theatre	opportunity	I marked this place because it will open soon and it will need staff.
East end of Wabash	opportunity	Some neat old homes, but not a safe neighborhood.
East Hill Street	opportunity	So many homes have potential in this area of town, but I wouldn't feel safe living there.
East Market Street	opportunity	New housing development close to downtown.
Eel River	opportunity	River trail, recreation spot
Eel River access	opportunity	Experience the Eel River by kayak or canoe. \nRiver trips for tourism\nEnd at covered bridge or stockdale mill.
Eel River on the South side of Main Street	opportunity	We have a beatiful water front in North Manchester that is unused.
empty lot on main street, access to north side of river	opportunity	empty lot among historic buildings. and street behind main street is not a public street but private property, somebody build an outdoor restaurant on the street, on the river.
empty storefronts along Main Street	opportunity	Various storefronts and in various sizes along Main Street are empty. A sign of economic decline? It would be nice to have additional "anchor" stores/businesses combined with smaller shops, to encourage a walkable and lively Main Street with more outdoor seating.
Empty(?)	opportunity	This area is a large spot of seemingly wasted land that could likely be used in the near future for more housing and/or business.
End of River Trail	opportunity	Great place to connect the parks and trail system to City Park
Everywhere downtown	opportunity	These stores downtown are too expensive and some people can't afford them. That's why I think we need to put more affordable stores in.
Falls avenue	opportunity	I marked it because its a nice town but it needs more sidewalks
Family Video	opportunity	It allows access to stuff like games, movies and so on.

3.6 Opportunity Areas

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Farmer's market	opportunity	Expand to include canoe livery and gathering space by the river
farmers market area	opportunity	I think a covered pavilion with electric service and restrooms would be a great asset to the farmers market and open opportunities for use for other events. Of course the current pole buildings would need to be removed. The pavilion would have to have a river view.
Field North of Walmart	opportunity	Industrial opportunities
Fish & Wildlife Ramp	opportunity	Wabash River is enjoying tremendous growth, and this ramp is an important point of connection on the river.
Ford Theater	opportunity	It is inside of the Honeywell Center. I marked it because I always enjoy the plays and musicals they come up with, I even act in some of them. However, I feel as though it'd be even better if it did more than just in the summer, you know?
former factory	opportunity	utilized for storage only currently
Former Location of General Tire	opportunity	I grew up on this street and it's sad to see what it looks like now after General Tire/GDX was demolished. It used to be a vibrant community where many people would come and watch city fireworks, there were more businesses, and its current state definitely lowers the value of the homes on this street.
former Yarnelle's Lumber	opportunity	This burned down several years but is sitting vacant next to the Honeywell Center. Acquiring this to redevelop is a vital opportunity for the community
Foundry	opportunity	Eyesore and underutilized for industry along the railroad
Fountain View mobile homes	opportunity	This needs cleaned up and redeveloped - great opportunity for new modular homes
Gas Station / Parking Lot	opportunity	This old gas station (now parking lot) is such an eye sore. Everyone sees it, because this is where one stops to wait for the train. It probably can't become a new building since it was a gas station, but even a cleaned up parking lot would look nicer.
GDX - General Tire Site	opportunity	biggest eyesore in Wabash - city and Grow Wabash County leading a massive redevelopment effort however which should be supported by all
General Tire location	opportunity	Lots of areas around Wabash like this that are eyesores and leave a bad taste in your mouth
go kart track	opportunity	it's close to the highway and the town of wabash so it would bring attraction
Good Appliance	opportunity	This is a family business that has lots of potential to grow. It has that tight knit family feel that fits Wabash well. They sell & fix appliances, which is better for the environment than just buying new all the time.

3.6 Opportunity Areas

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Granstaff-Hentgen Funeral Home	opportunity	I marked this place because this funeral home has been in Roann for years and its know around some places in indiana like Wabash, Manchester I believe.
green space on river bend on South Market	opportunity	this is property that should be part of our parks and rec. I know it's part of the 2015 plan for the town, that created a park in this area. we need to continue those plans!
green space on South Mill next to Ogan's Landing	opportunity	This space owned by the Town of North Manchester is now the space the Farmer's Market uses seasonally. With the addition of a large pavilion the market could be under roof for a more accessible market year round. The location next to the river is an excellent area for a river walk or gathering spaces along the river. Outdoor concerts, food trucks, weddings, etc could be held there.
Hampton Inn	opportunity	This is the site of the new Hampton Inn - there are two commercial outlots available here as well
Hampton Inn Outlots	opportunity	Great opportunity for retail development - gas station and restaurants\n
hanging rock	opportunity	There are so many people in this county who have never bern here. It, and the other natural areas, need better promotion for recreation and tourism
Heartland Career Center	opportunity	Improving the facade and general appearance of school would help make it a more attractive venue for students
Hill St. Historic District	opportunity	The historic district in Wabash is full of opportunities. While some homes on this street are well kept, there are others that are run down and not taken care of, but were obviously beautiful homes at some point. I'd love to see more projects taking place to revitalize our historic district of homes.
Historic Downtown	opportunity	Just as Wabash has done in the past five or so years, North Manchester greatly needs some investment in improving the Historic Downtown. Although it has begun in some instances we need additional funding as well as ordinances to make sure we maintain this district in a healthy way that promotes economic growth and continued development of diverse offerings.
Hogsback	opportunity	fix this bridge. This area is great for hiking and fishing and even has a boat ramp but isn't accessible since the road washed away from the bridge a few years ago.
Honeywell Center	opportunity	In a non-pandemic time, more people are drawn to the center from out of town than in town. Big attraction
Honeywell Gardens	opportunity	Expand new housing opportunity.
House	opportunity	dilapidated housing
Houses	opportunity	dilapidated housing
Housing Opportunity	opportunity	Additional housing development opportunity for rural living but close to an amenity\n

3.6 Opportunity Areas

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Housing opportunity	opportunity	Town of North Manchester working to build new housing here and it should be universally supported
Ijamsville	opportunity	opportunity
Independent order of odd fellows cemetery	opportunity	It's by my house
Indiana fish and wildlife ramp	opportunity	This location is just outside of Wabash County, but it provides an important river access point for canoeing/kayaking. Many people from inside/outside the county use this access.
Industrial park expansion	opportunity	This parcel could easily join the existing industrial park and allow for future large scale development.
industrial zoned land	opportunity	could be a potential opportunity - located in an opportunity zone - underutilized
Industry	opportunity	Create attractive incentives for businesses to expand, move, or be created here.
Jewish Cemetery	opportunity	From a historical perspective, the Jewish population was significant in Wabash. The cemetery, for example, may be the oldest Jewish cemetery in Indiana. I think we may be missing an opportunity to attract present Jewish interest to our city as an historic attraction.
John Drook Memorial Bike and Skate Park	opportunity	There are a lot of things that the skatepark could use in order to make more people want to come to Wabash. There is a drug problem and I have even seen needles on the ground. This is terrible for the health of teens that come to the skatepark in order to hang out
Kellys Ice Cream	opportunity	It has a strong opportunity to succeed very well
key churches in our community	opportunity	resources for reaching broken families
Klare land	opportunity	opportunity for commercial development
Kroger	opportunity	More grocery store options and improve quality of stores.
Kroger	opportunity	Offerings should be expanded with options for pickup and delivery. Fresh fish, ready meals, and more produce needed.
Kroger Parking Lot	opportunity	This whole strip mall is just in terrible condition and not attractive...it needs some major updating. Unfortunately this is one of the first things people see if they are from out of town since it's right off 24.
La Fontaine Elementary	opportunity	Lots of potential to be a strong anchor in the southern part of the county.
LaFontaine	opportunity	The downtown is dying. Needs new things, shops and businesses. 218 is a straight shot to the I interstate and railroad is near as well. Could be a great place for a large industry to move in.

3.6 Opportunity Areas

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
LaFontaine TIF District	opportunity	Opportunity for Agri-business ventures. one limitation is no access to natural gas
Lagro	opportunity	I think the Town Of LaGro may be an untapped gem. The historic Catholic Church, the access point to the river, hanging rock, the Old Canal Coffee I scream shop, a trailhead for the Wabash River Trail and new downtown restoration projects provide a baseline for a future interest.
Lagro	opportunity	Needs to have better enforcement of trash and decay over town. Many people have been investing and it's headed in the right direction. Just needs more enforcement of ordinances.
Lagro	opportunity	Things are developing in Lagro. It needs to have some housing Renovations and better town ordinances to improve the appearances of the Town.
Lagro Area	opportunity	Need restaurants and eateries. Develop the old two story homes into bed and breakfasts. Develop canoeing on the river. Develop bike and scooter rentals to sight see the area. Use the Locks and the Old Cabin to have a summer festival to teach history (arts and crafts) to attract school age as well as families. Pair with Wabash as well as to the East (Andrews/Huntington) to continue developing trails.
Lagro close to the river	opportunity	People have bought houses and are turning them into businesses and an air b&b
Lagro ice cream shop	opportunity	ice cream
Lagro Industrial Site	opportunity	Opportunity for redevelopment
Lagro Trail	opportunity	complete the trail to Wabash then east towards Huntington
Laketon	opportunity	opportunity
Laketon	opportunity	Urbana get a lot of traffic since it's on a major highway in the County. The 7 mile Mini Mart was a smashing success 10 years ago. \n\nThere is potential in this area.
Learn More Center	opportunity	Many people don't realize we have an amazing Adult Education center right here at IVY TECH. We don't only work on HSE's but collage and career readiness, life skills and life coaching.
Legacy Hospital site	opportunity	Housing opportunity
Limited Transport Services	opportunity	Lack of transportation options: No Uber, No Lyft, No Delivery Services
Little league baseball field	opportunity	It has an opportunity to gets kids more involved in sports
Lot by old WC Mills School	opportunity	This green space is used by many local sports teams. It is a significant amount of green space that has a lot of potential to better serve local youth sports leagues.

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Lynn's restaurant	opportunity	Good restaurant ran by a family. Struggling to find workers, need to keep these open
Main Street	opportunity	Update store fronts. \nImproved signs similar to downtown Wabash\nBanners or signs on telephone poles. \nFlowers for spring and summer maintained by town employees.\n
Main View	opportunity	Revive this important community gathering space.
Main View	opportunity	Food is and service is not consistent
Manchester Early Learning Center	opportunity	brand new high quality early learning center - under-utilized I think due to staffing restrictions and funding but the need for the community is severe\n
Manchester University	opportunity	Great institution - very insular however to their campus and to an extent the Town of North Manchester - not very integrated throughout the county and I am not sure everyone outside of North Manchester views them as being a "player" in the community - strong opportunity here\n
Manchester University	opportunity	Great local private college - not overly integrated into greater Wabash County outside of the town.
Manchester University	opportunity	Isolated, doesn't engage as much with the community as it could and should.
McCann Land	opportunity	Great opportunity for higher end housing development
Miami Street	opportunity	This should be made into a central gathering place, a promenade, with focus in outdoor seating, outdoor dining, gathering places, a fountain, that can be closed off to vehicles during First Fridays, or weekends, or special events. This could hold a temporary ice rink, a central Christmas tree, concerts. Potential is endless. This would be developed locally but with the same development such as The Landing in Fort Wayne.
Michigan Street	opportunity	It is where I grew up.
Mississenewa	opportunity	great reservoir. Having two top reservoirs should be a greater attraction
Modocs Coffee Shop	opportunity	My friends and I meet up here often and do school work or just talk, its a great place that will bring tourist in.
Morrett Commercial park	opportunity	Opportunity for new retail and commercial development.
Mr Dave's patio on Main Street	opportunity	This space is on the most public space in our downtown. If Mr Dave's could get a grant and private/public partnership to create a more welcoming space in that area, it would be a big asset. Add better seating, give the building a facelift, add public restrooms (managed by the town), keep the ally open to the parking lot behind it.
My boyfriends house	opportunity	This is a very safe place for me to get out of my house and feel relaxed for a bit.

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
My hometown	opportunity	We need help!! One small business starting in downtown. Most citizens know we need to do something, but where do we start? Many retired citizens live here. Many of the young families want our park to be better. Our community in general needs a face lift.
Neighborhoods	opportunity	There seem to be a LOT of houses that are run down and are rentals. How you entice landlords to correct this, I don't know
Nightlife	opportunity	Not many night life options for young adults
No Wayfinder	opportunity	Wayfinder to welcome and encourage travelers to stop in City of Wabash recommended
North Cass Street	opportunity	Redo the north entrance to the city. Add sidewalks, a roundabout or two to deter semi traffic. Add large sign like on south end.
North Manchester	opportunity	North Manchester can't seem to keep a Restaurant to save it's life. The Main View was a great place to eat until they closed this past year. Taco bell closed. Hardees closed. \n\nOpportunity for a great food place and lodging.
North Manchester Covered Bridge area	opportunity	This area could be improved and feel safer to walk around this area near the Covered Bridge. Perhaps a public picnic area (when not flooded)? \nPerhaps also develop some eating area with a vista of the bridge or a vista of the river? Here or somewhere in town?
north manchester industrial park	opportunity	industrial growth area\n
North Manchester Industrial Park	opportunity	Opportunity for industrial development - spec and shell buildings should be considered
Northfield High School	opportunity	Possible school consolidation.
Northfield High school	opportunity	Good school but could use more funding to allow for better classes for students
Northfield Schools	opportunity	Opportunity for consolidation of schools between MSD & Wabash City Schools\n
Not specified	opportunity	We need: shoe store, more diverse restaurants, a good bread bakery, dry cleaners. Develop the old General Tire site and the old hospital grounds.
Not specified	opportunity	I tend to see these projects as "Wabash-centered" rather than county-centered. North Manchester is not a little town compared to Wabash
Not specified	opportunity	One single consolidated high school
Not specified	opportunity	Opportunity areas are primarily the numerous vacant buildings in many of the towns in the County - many have been renovated and there is a need for businesses to occupy them.

3.6 Opportunity Areas

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
NW corner of county around Roann	opportunity	Terrible internet service
NW Corner SR 114 & SR 13	opportunity	Strong opportunity for commerical/industrial development fo the town
O.J Neighbors woods/field	opportunity	possible residential site close to community, schools, and Field of Dreams complex
Ogan's Landing	opportunity	Ogan's Landing is a river access near downtown and the covered bridge
Old abandoned gas station	opportunity	eyesore
Old Building	opportunity	Eyesore in the heart of downtown
old country club vicinity	opportunity	possible home/condo sites east and northwest of old country club building
Old GDX	opportunity	This is a major eyesore and representation of a failed rust-belt economy. We should cleanup and expand the park if we can't get a university or employer.
Old GDX Building	opportunity	The place is an industrial waste area that many people are coming from 24. I know the place is toxic, but if there is a plan in place to do something with it this area can be put to good use. Maybe green energy location?
Old GDX factory site	opportunity	This is an eyesore, but potential place of growth. I would love to see an extension of the City Park, a small college campus with student housing, or industry that isn't ugly or smelly as it is adjacent to residential area.
Old GDX property	opportunity	Could be used for just about anything if the radiation is taken care of
Old General tire	opportunity	Ground for development. ie. Sports training/complex. Similar to the plex in FW.
Old General Tire Area	opportunity	An eye sore that needs to be developed into something else.
Old General Tire facility	opportunity	New residential and commercial development and cleans up a mess that exists today
Old General Tire location	opportunity	Right now an eyesore but with financial resources could be cleaned up and become a new housing area
Old General Tire property	opportunity	Can't we make a park, housing addition, trails, something?
Old Grocery	opportunity	Empty and sad and the space could be turned into something cool
Old Hospital	opportunity	Housing development
Old hospital grounds	opportunity	opportunity to add some additional housing. There's a huge need for high quality apartments and all ranges of housing
Old hospital grounds	opportunity	Now an empty space that will soon hopefully become affordable housing site(s).
Old Hospital location	opportunity	Needs to be developed into something.

3.6 Opportunity Areas

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Old Mutual Bank	opportunity	Great place for coffee or smoothie; quick drink place with drivethrough
Old Next Marketing Building	opportunity	This factory is an eyesore to the neighborhood and could be used for new housing development.
Old railroad	opportunity	This could be a great hiking/running trail moving Southwest. Beautiful part of Roann
Old Red Restaurant	opportunity	Restaurant possibilities. Sits empty.
Old restaurant	opportunity	Former restaurant building in need of redevelopment
OLD Roann School	opportunity	Park\nBaseball\nNeeds updates to playground & equipment. \nOpen space can create a community garden Or community space to have picnics.\nRoann Baseball league
OLD Wabash County Hospital	opportunity	Promising opportunity to develop the area into something!!
Old Wabash Hospital site	opportunity	Develop single family homes in the 100-175k range with a pocket park.
Open space managed by town next to Ogan's Landing	opportunity	This would make an excellent spot for a Farmer's Market Pavilion and deck or platform seating along the Eel River.
Palm Drive (Fountainview)	opportunity	It's a place I think has room to grow much more than what it is now
Paper Mill	opportunity	This is an eyesore and super smelly and off putting. It's a black eye on a beautiful downtown and park area. Can the exhaust be scrubbed to remove the sulfur? Can we create a wall with a mural--stack some of those trailers and paint it!
Paradise Springs	opportunity	Strong Park - could use an ampitheatre to best utilize the space. Trail head for the River Walk as well
Paridise Spring	opportunity	Walking and festivals. The festivals are a huge attraction drawing people to Wabash
Parker House	opportunity	Beautiful historic home in need of repairs
Parkview Hospital Legacy Site	opportunity	Housing redevelopment opportunity
Peabody Mansion	opportunity	Beautiful and historic local landmark.
Peabody Mansion	opportunity	The time may come when it might be made into a unique tourist attraction for tours, weddings, special events.
pond and wooded area west of RR on Strauss Provimi	opportunity	This pond and wooded area would make a great walking path from the town out to the 9th street addition. The town should pursue purchasing this and adding it to our parks department. We need more wooded areas for walking.
Pond at old Peabody Chair Co	opportunity	This is one of the few wooded areas in town and is very close to the new Chester Heights development and could easily have a path connection for walking.

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
pony creek	opportunity	we need to make more walking trails along our creeks and rivers. This would be good area to connect with the covered bridge are and walk along the Eel, if the town could convert some of the town properties to public spaces.
Potential Roann Town Park	opportunity	A great spot for a town park for Roann\n
Prime Real Estate on River	opportunity	Junk yard like site right along the river in downtown
Rager Land South of Town Hall	opportunity	Great opportunity for a park for the Town of North Manchester to couple with a pedestrian bridge or ampitheatre as outlined in the town 2015 comp plan\n
Railroad track crossing on Main Street	opportunity	Always bumpy, frustrating and embarrassing to the town. It seems those from outside our town responsible for maintaining the tracks don't think our town matters. It's demoralizing daily. Meanwhile, our town's crew members work very hard for us.
Red Bridge Marina (Mississinewa Lake)	opportunity	I basically live on this lake in the summertime; I am here ALL THE TIME boating! It's one of my favorite places in the county and people travel from all over to boat/camp here. Many people in our county aren't even aware that this is here, though. I think that more marinas could be built here to improve the economic aspect of the lake. It has already accomplished the social aspect!!
Rhinestones and Roses	opportunity	I work here and it brings a bunch of people from out of town to come and visit.
Right to life facility	opportunity	ministering to unwanted pregnancy issues
River	opportunity	We can take advantage of the beautiful river to bring in people for canoeing, floating, and fishing.
River	opportunity	Missing opportunities for a river walk and development of river bank property downtown
River Bar	opportunity	Create a patio for outdoor dinning and drinks
river front property	opportunity	can be developed?
river front property at Water Treatment plant	opportunity	This large green space along the river is currently off limits to the public. The access to the river, would make it a great river walk area. The water plant could still be fenced off, but the green space and the river frontage should become public areas.
river south of main street	opportunity	recreation,
River Trail	opportunity	Continue to extend to Lagro and other communities
River Trail	opportunity	Connect university to downtown via river trail
River Walk	opportunity	I marked this place because it's great for exercise. At the same time I think we can make it feel safer after any flooding/ river rising in areas.
Riverfront	opportunity	Develop riverfront

3.6 Opportunity Areas

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Roann	opportunity	i believe along the river in roann would present a great opportunity for a spot of entertainment
Roann	opportunity	We have the bridge, mill, restaurants, small businesses so there is a good foundation. Adding a park and better internet would be helpful for young families
Roann	opportunity	Diversify retail beyond antiques
Roann	opportunity	Some great architecture, lovely businesses, 2 restaurants, and a Carnegie Library
Roann	opportunity	It has a lot of open space.
Roann park	opportunity	Nice large park that is largely underutilized. Could be a great attraction for young families
Robin's Way	opportunity	Path from Timbercrest to 13, potential to link in to a larger path system within town (county). In North Manchester the sidewalks are well known to not be great, nearly everyone walks in the streets for recreation. A safe walking/biking path option would be a major improvement
Rundown Housing	opportunity	There are several houses that are an eye sore in this area.
Rural unnamed	opportunity	Opportunity
Salamonie Lake	opportunity	We need to take back land used by Army Corp for homes development along the lake. This has happened in other communities and I have the blueprint of how this was accomplished. This would attract investors in the area because of the coveted land along a body of water, and would only increase our property tax base.
Salamonie Reservoir, and State Forest	opportunity	These physical assets attract many people from outside our county, but it seems to me that there is untapped opportunity here.
Salamonie State forest	opportunity	great park for hiking, boating etc.., but poorly marketed
Salamonie: Trails	opportunity	Trails are under utilized. This area is a strength, but I feel that only the water is utilized well.
Sale Barn	opportunity	Great potential to expand park into this area. Maybe get equipment like wabash's new park has.
Schools	opportunity	Consolidate the schools to provide more opportunities for our students!
Scout Hall	opportunity	Upgrade this building; it is used by a variety of groups.
SE corner of Wabash County	opportunity	Terrible internet service
Servia	opportunity	Opportunity

3.6 Opportunity Areas

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Shopping Centers - North Side of Town	opportunity	Many store fronts sit empty on the north side of town. There has been a lot of focus on downtown and the north side has been neglected. Although it houses fast food restaurants and some other chain businesses, there are local businesses that could benefit from being on this bustling side of town (and many currently there already). I'd love to see this side of town revitalized as well.
Site of old recycling bins	opportunity	This empty lot has become an eyesore and the hang out for local stray cats. It should be a priority for development either as housing lots or commercial.
Skatepark	opportunity	A lot of bad kids go here
Small town charm	opportunity	Covered Bridge\nAntique shops\n
Somerset	opportunity	Location is perfect. A lot of travelers go through here on their way to the Mississinewa Reservoir.
south side of eel river west	opportunity	recreation
Stockdale Mill	opportunity	Culturally significant and maybe unknown in the county
Stockdale Mill	opportunity	Develop more historical and river front
Stockdale Mill	opportunity	Tours need to be given more often, give an opportunity for us to learn about our community's past.
Stockdale Mill & Roann covered bridge	opportunity	Interesting landmarks-first place we take out of town visitors\n
Storywalk	opportunity	Could use a paved path for storywalk for strollers
Strauss-Peabody Aquatic Facility	opportunity	Great gym and pool. Would like to see more variety in evening fitness/wellness classes.
Strip	opportunity	This old strip mall next to Kroger has certainly seen better days. While that can be said about much of Cass St, this is an area that a lot of people have to see because of its proximity to the grocery.
SW corner of county	opportunity	Terrible internet service
Taco Bell	opportunity	No more chili cheese burritos...
test	opportunity	dateta
test3	opportunity	test
The Access	opportunity	Street level ministries to youth and their families
The Access	opportunity	It is a place for youth to hang out in Wabash that very few people know about it. Adults there act as mentors and help kids with homework/life advice.
The Fried Egg	opportunity	It's a newer business compared to all the others on Cass St. On top of that, it's only open during breakfast times. Thus, not a lot of customers would be coming in than if it were open all day. On top of that, employees only get a few hours of pay. Due to the small amount of time the restaurant's open and all the other factors, not many are able to work there due to the small amount of employees needed.

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
The industrial area around the Brodbeck seeds location	opportunity	We need to continue to build up this area and expanding businesses. I love seeing this area grow.
The old Big R location	opportunity	We need to make sure we get another business in this location and it let this potential store front waste away.
The old Taco Bell location	opportunity	We need to repurpose this location for something else, the last thing Manchester needs is another failed business and another empty building.
The Salamonie Reservoir	opportunity	It is already a strong place that many people go, but we need to get youth more interesting in nature and hiking to great them into places like this.
The south side park	opportunity	It's a hot spot for drugs and if we put more love into it, it would create a place for teens/kids who live on south side to be able to hang out.
The storage units next to the new hotel	opportunity	This is an example of why we need better planning/zoning codes in Wabash. A storage unit next to a an upper scale (for Wabash) hotel is poor planning.
The strip area there	opportunity	I feel like if needs more work and looks kinda schetchy
Town Owned Park w River Access	opportunity	This entire area is totally under utilized. It's realtion to Historic Downtown as well as it's position on the Eel River would make this a phantastic place to have a real investment in a small park venue. Community events like the Farmers Market, Outdoor Concerts, Community Cook Outs and so on could be hosted here. This reminds me of the area in Fort Wayne that has been recently invested in where they have a park, the kayak rental place, an outdoor pavillion and indoor options as well. Granted we are not Fort Wayne and will not be able to invest the same amount but I think something could be created here that would be beautiful and enjoyed by our community as well as enticing to surrounding communities visitors.
Troyer Memorial Library	opportunity	Long time community involvement. History of Mr. Troyer aka Corn King
Under the bridge	opportunity	there are a number of individuals struggling with mental health and addiction related issues that live under our bridges near the river
Urbana	opportunity	Potential industrial growth area
Urbana	opportunity	opportunity
US 24 Land	opportunity	Opportunity for commercial development\n
US 24 Land	opportunity	Opportunity for Commercial development\n

3.6 Opportunity Areas

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
vacant lot	opportunity	Opportunity to expand White Rock and City beautification efforts, but it is privately owned and basically just has random used semi's for sale and is blocked off so no one can even park on it - adds nothing to the city and is a detractor \n
Vacant Lot - Bulldog Battery	opportunity	opportunity to redevelopment into a commercial outlot\n
vacant lumber warehouse	opportunity	great potential for providing a education & resources to low income/challenged families that are in this neighborhood and struggling
Village Pantry	opportunity	This place has a lot of bad people that stay around there.
Wabash Business Park	opportunity	We need to pursue a shell or spec building program in this park as new businesses are looking for space not sites
Wabash City Park	opportunity	could use some updating, though the disc golf course has become a popular attraction and is regarded as one of the better ones in the state
Wabash City Park	opportunity	Quality could be improved but people visits this spot often.
Wabash City Park	opportunity	Enjoying sports, nature, fun
Wabash County Airport	opportunity	We need new energy into the airport. I have heard from users that it needs to have better hangers, better service facilities and longer runway so it's able to be utilized by small jets. This is better use of funds than past projects. Having longer runway for jets will also provide businesses to be able to fly in directly to Wabash to check on their facilities easier.
Wabash County Courthouse	opportunity	Could be potential tourist attraction if renovated clock tower into a possible lookout over the City
Wabash County Industrial Pakr	opportunity	Opportunity for commercial and industrial development
Wabash County Industrial Park	opportunity	opportunity for commercial and industrial development\n
Wabash County Industrial Park	opportunity	Opportunity for future park expansion here. Difficult negotiations in the past however.
Wabash County Property	opportunity	Industrialize or create a new jail that will bring varied recovery/rehabilitative opportunities such as drug re-entry programs, Work Release for women, etc.
Wabash County Solid Waste Mgt	opportunity	Should offer curbside recycling; only 1 site in City of Wabash for recycling center
Wabash CrossFit	opportunity	An opportunity for our community to become stronger at any age.
Wabash Friends Church	opportunity	Key church to reach community families in need

3.6 Opportunity Areas

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Wabash High School	opportunity	Potential consolidation of 3 high schools within about 5 miles would greatly offer more opportunities for students
Wabash Historical museum	opportunity	Because it could use some hands on kind of stuff.
Wabash Industrial Park	opportunity	Good open space for additional businesses. we could construct some spec buildings
Wabash middle school	opportunity	This is where I go to school
Wabash middle school	opportunity	It's full of opportunities
Wabash middle school	opportunity	Bc it's where I'm at
Wabash Municipal Airport	opportunity	Adding a longer runaway could potential attract more private jet traffic for fuel stops and could be attractive to potential businesses
Wabash Municipal Airport	opportunity	Good opportunities for development - extension of runway needed to be able to store small business jets there for insurance purposes\n
Wabash Parks Frisbee Golf	opportunity	The golf facility is short on promotion, and I don't feel that it is attracting the potential that it could
Wabash River	opportunity	We have a famous river and are finally starting to develop attractions around it...river walks, bike trails, canoeing. Overlooking restaurant would be a good addition
Wabash River Trail	opportunity	It is in it's infancy but this trail is promising. Where ever trails are built, they help spur economic development
Wabash riverfront	opportunity	I think this will be a great opportunity because it's a great worst place and if we want to bring in more towards the week and show people that this is a great place to live and possibly get more people to move in.
Wabash Riverfront	opportunity	We need to utilize our biggest assert. More development along the banks, for homes that can be built safely above the flood zone. Restaurants that overlook the river. More recreational attractions along the way like swings.
Wabash road	opportunity	I marked it because it could use some work
Wabash RV park	opportunity	provide a better place to camp than a lot with no trees that is next to the sewage treatment plant.
Wabash skate park	opportunity	I marked this place because i think it needs major help. It is very dirty because people have ruined it by throwing trash everywhere and by doing bad things at the park.
Walnut street	opportunity	This part of the street is creepy and dark. Making improvements would make this place a nicer place to walk around in. Walking to get to Hannah park isn't that fun.

3.6 Opportunity Areas

Location Name	Type	Why did you mark this place?
Was ash River Trails	opportunity	There are many trails developing around Indiana and the Wabash River Trail has the opportunity to connect. This holds a great opportunity for attracting outdoor exercise and recreation for many age groups.
waterfront	opportunity	Negotiate waterfront housing with DNR
waterfront part	opportunity	put in for kayak rentals? \npicnic benches, bird watching, fishing, wading?
Wayfinder	opportunity	Wayfinder to welcome and encourage travelers to stop in City of Wabash recommended
Wayfinder	opportunity	More signage to point downtown needed
West 9th	opportunity	Large area that is in beltline that is underutilized for housing
White building on corner	opportunity	Perfect place for mom/pop icecream joint that offered food. Sits empty now and has since I was little (I'm 29 now.)
wooded area between RR and Strauss Provimi Street	opportunity	this would be a good walking area in the woods which is complete with a water element. It could hook up with the new housing development walking trail along the RR. We need more wooded walking trails.
wooded area on South Mill on the river	opportunity	These 10 acres would make a wonderful walking path in the woods along the river. Easy access from Ogan's Landing as the trailhead.
YMCA	opportunity	Because i like going there
Zion evangelical Lutheran church	opportunity	The church is not strong in welcoming newcomers

Growth Summit

**Round Two Community Engagement Summary |
Wabash County Comprehensive Plan**

September 2021
IMAGINEONE85.ORG

Growth Summit

Round Two Community Engagement Summary | Wabash County Comprehensive Plan

September 2021

The following report provides an overview of the Growth Summit, the second round of public engagement in support of the Wabash County Comprehensive Plan. For questions on this report please contact the project manager for Imagine One 85, Logan Stang, planner with planning NEXT, at logan@planning-next.com*.*

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the purpose and overview for the second round of community engagement as part of the Imagine One 85 comprehensive planning effort for the communities of Wabash County.

1.1 Purpose

The Imagine One 85 Steering Committee hosted a single, in-person event called the Imagine One 85 Growth Summit in July 2021. More than 200 people gathered at the Honeywell Center Plaza to celebrate the communities' strengths and progress, and to provide feedback on the development of the comprehensive plan. The Summit was intended to:

- **Convene** - Gather community members from across the county to safely participate in a large-scale community event;

- **Celebrate** - Provide an "exhale" opportunity and showcase all the great things about the communities of Wabash County;

- **Share -** Present key takeaways from the Focus on the Future and the technical research and analysis; and

- **Build** – Collect ideas from community members about the actions we can take to ensure strong and regular growth in the county.

The second round of community and stakeholder engagement sought to encourage residents about the strengths and values of the county through three testimonials. Dave Haist shared a message called "Coming Home" about his journey back to Wabash County after years away; Shane Waters described his journey to Wabash and his experience as a preeminent podcast host; and Kelsey-Jo (KJ) Kessie shared about her decision to move into the county, including both the joys and the challenges. These inspirational stories highlighted the potential of the communities within Wabash County.

Participants were invited to imagine a future where the goals established through this process have been realized. The first prompt focused on outcomes: "What will the headlines say?" Based on the understanding that the county would need to grow by 85 households each year to achieve its previous population high in the next 25 years, residents were then asked to share their "BIG Ideas" that would ensure this kind of growth. Finally, working in groups, participants decided on their "MIGHTY Ideas," the actions that would have the greatest impact on population growth in the county. Major themes from the public input include green energy, infrastructure (cell phone and internet), housing / retail / mixed-use development, and outdoor recreation. These themes have informed the development of the action agenda of the final comprehensive plan.

This report provides an overview of the activities, themes, and conclusions from this second round of community and stakeholder engagement.

1.2 Overview

Imagine One 85 is a process to develop a comprehensive plan for the communities of Wabash County led by a coalition of leaders from all sectors, including the Community Foundation of Wabash County and Grow Wabash County.

A comprehensive plan is a broad, multi-topic policy statement that includes goals, strategies, and action recommendations (future policies, projects, or programs). These recommendations support the long-term, community-derived vision statement (where we – as a collection of communities – want to be in 20 years). While Northeast Indiana's 11-county region has consistently grown for four decades, Wabash County has not. A bold, comprehensive plan for the future is the best possible way to arrest—and reverse—our population decline.

Imagine One 85 is an open and inclusive process. While ultimately adopted by town councils and county government, the plan is created by the communities of Wabash County. For more information regarding the process, please visit www.imagineone85.org.

Figure 1: The Imagine One 85 Planning Process will take place over a 14-month period with the summit representing the second round of engagement.

2. ACTIVITIES & RESULTS

The Growth Summit was hosted on July 14, 2021, at the Hopewell Center Plaza in Wabash. Participants were seated at tables of eight to listen to a presentation from the planning team and testimonials of exemplary residents. The Summit also included individual and group activities which are summarized below. Each section includes a description of the activity, total number of responses, major themes, and example responses. A complete list of all responses is included in the appendix.

2.1 Write the Headline!

Participants were given a variety of cards with the names and logos of national or local newspapers. They were asked to fill in a blank space with a headline based on the prompt:

When we reflect on the work of this process in 25 years, what will the headline say? What does success look like? Write the headline below.
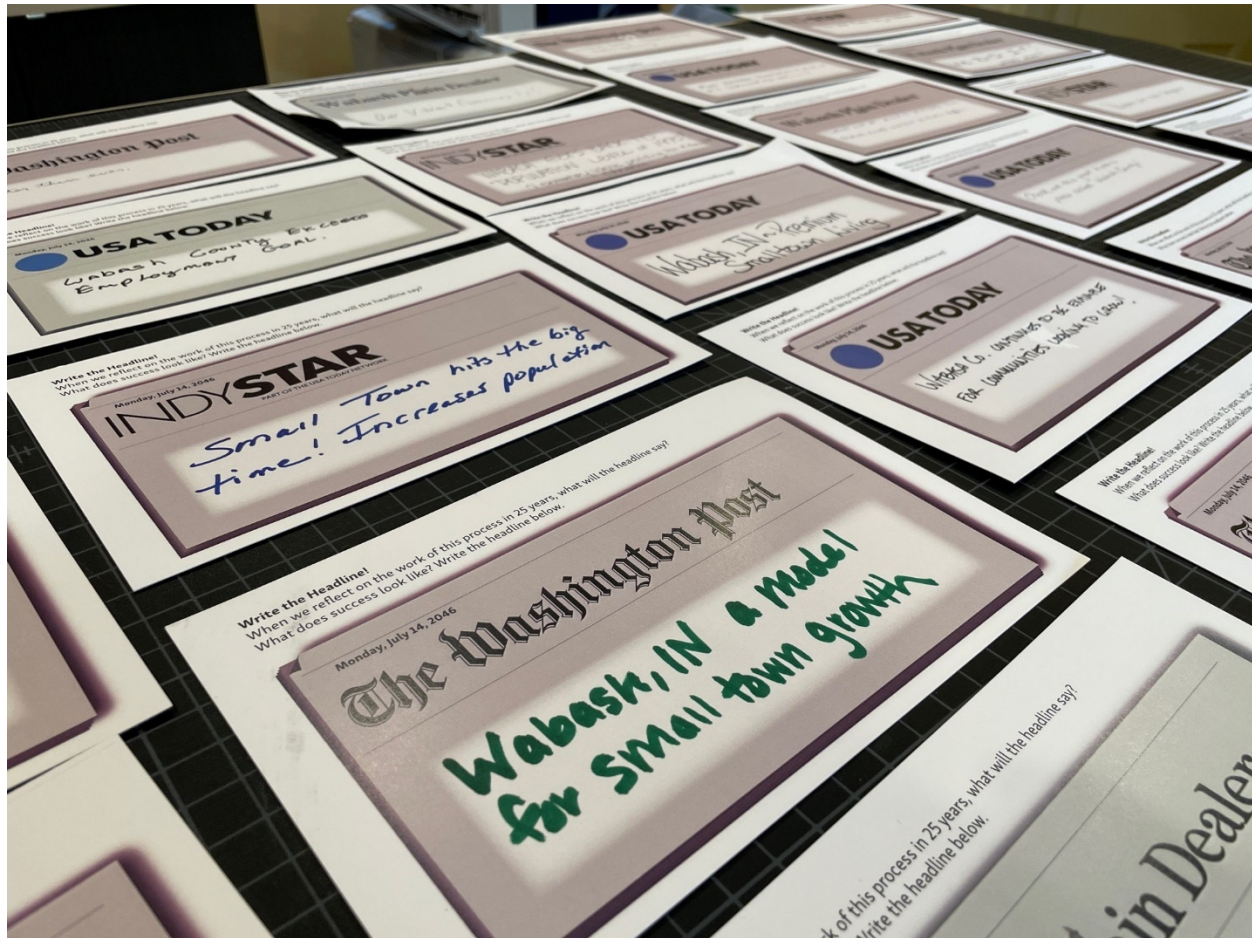
TOTAL RESPONSES: 77

KEY THEMES: Economic growth, population growth, quality of life

EXAMPLES:

- Wabash County – The place for family and growth
- Wabash County, Indiana ranks top community to live for young families throughout the Midwest
- Small Town Hits the Big Time! Increases Population

2.2 BIG Ideas and MIGHTY Ideas

Participants were seated in groups that had one large group recording form, many individual "BIG Idea" cards, and several "MIGHTY Idea" cards. The BIG Idea activity was for individuals, whereas the MIGHTY Idea activity was for the group; these activities were interrelated. Participants were given the following background and instructions to complete these activities.

2.2.1 BIG Ideas

What's the BIG Idea?

To regain our population and continue to grow as communities, we'll need to add 85 households each year. What action can we take to make our communities magnets for people and investment? Try to think of specific projects, policies, or programs. We call those "actions" and our final plan will include dozens of them. But we need your help and your ideas!

a. **Idea Name** *(Try to lead with a verb, "Build a trail…")*
b. **Description** *(Tell us a little about your idea. Why this, why now, who's involved, how does it help us grow, etc.)*
c. **Topic** *(Does your idea respond to a specific chapter? If so, which? (Great Places, Prosperity, Neighborhoods and Community, Foundations, Something Else).*

TOTAL RESPONSES: 291

TOPICS:

- Great Places – 73
- Prosperity – 105
- Neighborhoods and Community – 29
- Foundations – 24

KEY THEMES:

- Building diverse housing (senior, multigenerational, etc.)
- Infrastructure: high speed/fiber internet
- Rivers for recreational activities, more green space and trails

EXAMPLES:

Idea Name	Tell Us More
Highlight natural amenities (rivers, reservoirs) with development, trails, etc.	People want to live close to natural spaces with multiple activity options.
Acquire land on outskirts of town for future housing.	Work with landowners to acquire properties conductive to future housing additions.
Improve transportation through public transit.	Offer a better transportation system so parents can send their kids to pool, parks, or any recreation location.

2.2.2 MIGHTY Ideas

What is the formula for growth?

To regain our population and continue to grow as communities, we'll need to add 85 households each year. What action can we take to make our communities magnets for people and investment? Try to think of specific projects, policies, or programs. We call those "actions." Our final plan will include dozens of them, but we need your help and your ideas!

1. ***Brainstorm ideas individually.*** *Write your ideas on the BIG Idea cards. Don't forget to explain why that idea is so important.* [See above]
2. ***Share and collect ideas as a group.*** *Go around the table and share your ideas one-at-a-time please). Arrange BIG Idea cards in the space provided below.*
3. ***Discuss the mix of ideas and identify missing pieces.*** *As a group consider any missing pieces and identify new ideas together.*
4. ***Identify your group's MIGHTY Ideas!*** *What ideas on your group's board will have the biggest impact on our challenge?*

Once each small group had written down several MIGHTY Ideas, they were invited to attach them to the MIGHTY Ideas Wall and share with the large group.

MAKE WABASH COUNTY MIGHTY!

OUR MIGHTY IDEA:

WILL LEAD TO A FUTURE WITH:

Imagining a bold, comprehensive plan for the future of the communities of Wabash County.

IMAGINEONE85.ORG

LA FONTAINE • LAGRO • NORTH MANCHESTER • ROANN • WABASH

TOTAL RESPONSES: 40

KEY THEMES:

- Green energy
- Infrastructure: cell phone and internet service
- Housing / retail / mixed-use development

EXAMPLES:

Our Mighty Idea	Will Lead to a Future With
Develop new apartments/condos/townhouses.	More young people drawn to the county and possibly for increasing population.
Improve existing housing with high speed internet, grants to renovate historic homes, green energy.	Attractive homes for new residents and improve neighborhoods and communities.
Build out rivers as easy-to-find destinations!	More outdoor recreation and healthy, adventurous citizens.

3. APPENDICES

The following pages list all comments given during the second round of engagement and are organized by question. The comments are recorded as written by participants and presented without edits to spelling, punctuation, grammar, or content.

Contents:

When we reflect on the work of this process in 25 years, what will the headline say? What does success look like?

ID	Write the Headline!
1	Check out this great historic place called Wabash County!
2	Wabash, Indiana named first most wholesome city to raise a family in U.S.
3	Wabash County - The place for family and growth.
4	Wabash: Welcoming Heart of Indiana
5	Wabash County leading Midwest in divrsity initiatives for population growth.
6	Small Midwestern town breaks the Rust Belt.
7	The people of Wabash are still working together to make it an amazing place.
8	Record number of new kids enrolled in Wabash County Schools, New School on the ballot
9	County continues to set records: Wabash to break ground on tech start-up.
10	Wabash County…The Fastest Growing Indiana Community
11	Wabash, IN a model for small town growth
12	Our Vibrant Community!
13	The best River City in Indiana
14	We DID IT! …what's next?
15	There are no houseless people in Wabash County
16	Wabash - Unified Community - Working Together
17	Wabash, the new staycation
18	Wabash …
19	Happy, Healthy Families Low Crime
20	Wabash County Now #1 in the State of Indiana with Growth
21	Local community Leads Nation in Green Energy initiatives
22	Congratulations to Wabash County for continuing to grow and prosperity in all areas..
23	Small town in Indiana is a big destination for its variety of festivals
24	Most desirable community to live in U.S. (Population Less than ___)
25	2,000 persons expected of the annual Liberty Mills - Manchester Eel river race. MU students tie to hold 1st place Championship.
26	Wabash - still thriving, still growing!
27	Wabash hosts river regatta
28	Small Rural Town Explodes in Population, Recreational Opportunities and Life Satisfaction
29	Wabash County Turns it Around!
30	The gem of Northeast Indiana
31	Outstanding Place to Visit.
32	Wabash Rocks…and More!
33	Hidden treasure has been discovered!
34	Investment in small town community pays off. Residents benefit in business prosperity and improved quailty of living
35	Schools Finally Consolidated
36	Wabash County, Indiana ranks top community to live for young families throughout the Midwest.
37	Sammy Hagan Played Here!!
38	25 Years of Inceasing Quality Early Learning Seats!

ID	Write the Headline!
39	Looking for quality childcare? Visit Wabash County!
40	Wabash the place in the Midwest where life is good. Where raising your family and living a good life is possible.
41	Wabash County Exceeds Employment Goal.
42	Community a … higher than life goals.
43	New School under Construction Due to Population Explosion!
44	3rd New Industry Locates in Wabash County
45	Fastest growing city in the Midwest
46	Wabash Indiana Shines Brighter than Ever!!! First Electricity … City Grow Exponentially!!!
47	Wabash High School is expanding again to meet tremendous growth
48	We made it! Population increased for the 12th year in a row!
49	One school corporation in the county, a new large industry coming to Wabash Co. County continues to grow 2% per year
50	Wabash County, Wabash City Schools sees Record enrollment and Student Success
51	Wabash CO Hits a Sustainable Stride
52	1st city w/ no crime!
53	New housing development in N. Manchester, Indiana
54	Area welcomes Latinx community w/ new Bilingual classes!
55	Keith Gillenwater becomes Principal owner of Washington Nationals and…moves the team to Wabash, Indiana!
56	Wabash. Awesome!
57	County population tops 50,000! We are running out of room!
58	Small town: Big dreams
59	For 25 years, Wabash Co. Indiana has shown growth in population
60	Everyone wants to move to Wabash County!
61	Wabash county growth leads state.
62	The place to live in Indiana
63	Wabash County Leads the State
64	A city in decline resurrects itself.
65	Wabash wins again! Enrollment in County Schools highest in the State!
66	WABASH GETS BACK TO POPULATION LEVEL OF 1975! 7 elementary schools providing Pre-K to 6th education.
67	Love, Hope, Success! Building Wabash County!
68	Wabash has reached even higher heights!
69	Wabash Co. continues to be example for communities looking to grow!
70	Wabash is voted outstanding small town destination for the arts.
71	Wabash County, IN. The Hidden Gem!
72	Wabash, IN ~ Premium Smalltown Living
73	Small Town hits the big time! Increases population
74	Better than ever.
75	North Manchester continues growth trends of last 25 years.
76	Wabash County, IN's Home of Excellence
77	ILEARN banned! Children Liberated!

> **Topics Key**
> 1 - Great Places
> 2 - Prosperity
> 3 - Neighborhoods and Community
> 4 - Foundations

What action can we take to make our communities magnets for people and investment?

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
1	Open land for building home		1			
2	Build more senior housing close to extended services.	Villa 2 bedroom with garage are in short supply and with an aging population this is needed. Contact Bob Lundquist + Tom Grizzle	3			
3	Build a permanent Farmers Market that could be open mid-week as well as on Saturday.		2			
4	Build a trail to a healthier environment by protecting our children + families from the dangers of secondhand smoke. Being smoke free is a step towards better health	Need policy change. Leadership in Wabash County need to lead. People need to not only be aware of the danger that comes from secondhand smoke but also recognize their responsibility to do something about	2	1		
5	A consolidated school system that will offer a greater opportunity to expand and broaden curriculum		2			
6	Increase minimum wages					
7	Upgrade requirements for landlords!		3			
8	Increased access to college/university classes and degrees which means huge amounts of financial aid. Wabash is a leader in this.		2			
9	Lots of green spaces!		1			
10	Consolidate the 3 schools in Wabash		2			
11	Build new spec homes		3			
12	Great ONE school system - Improve Education		2			
13	Bring in more manufacturing JOBS.		2			
14	Improve the historic home neighborhoods in Wabash	Create small grant programs for homeowners. Volunteer groups to help maintain/teach how to maintain. We need more desirable neighborhoods within walking distance to downtown/other amenities	1	3		

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
15	"Homesteading" cities empty lots in center of towns	Encourage homebuilders to build new homes on empty lots using *architecturally appropriate* plans. Offer lots for free if builders/owners agree to reside in for 5 years. Lots would have water & sewage in place. *plans oked by historical commission for exterior, but fully modern interiors	3			
16	Work with locals/farmers/ state legislature to consolidate MSD + Wabash County Schools (the foundation) before industry can be attracted		2			
17	City/Co. leaders work to recruit farm related industries to build in Wabash Co.		2			
18	Next, provide upscale housing for single families moving in.		3			
19	Offer power washing to all of the delapidated houses around town and demolish more condemned		3			
20	We need a viable newspaper		3			
21	Cleaning up existing residential properties	Tighten and enforce building codes, building spec housing	3			
22	We need a viable newspaper that covers local news thoroughly					
23	Improve education to the best we can	Consolidate or more cooperation expand Ivy Tech. Career Center expand skills programs. International Baccalaureate	2			
24	Attract small businesses	Build an industrial spec building	2			
25	Using own great green spaces	Help Amy Ford with expanding the trail system. Support the Dam to Dam	1			
26	Using the Wabash & Eel Rivers	Organize … clubs to explore natural spaces. Keep the River Defenders - their clean up and their wonderful education events	1			
27	Encourage refugees to come to Wabash. Hopefully they will open new restaurants!	Help diversity in the county. Increase new jobs	1	2		
28	Create an artist relocation program so there are places for artists to live and work in one area that can be a distination	Brings in new people and helps encourage the arts	3			
29	Better arts program … Neighbors	Our Public Schools should have great well-rounded programming	3			
30	What's here--	I want to create a video to let the students know about what is here. I have already spoke to Julie C… about this.	1	2	3	4
31	Big events that are festivals - like Roam Festival	The Roam Festival has brought in more than 15,000 people to one event in a night	2			
32	Build a Splash Park	At Morrett Sports Complex that kids can utilize during events				
33	Business - Manufacturing	Bring more manufacturing here	2			
34	Higher end of jobs available	Create jobs through more manufacturing of long term businesses - not pop up or just a boutique	2			

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
35	Destination location	Events to bring people here on a continuous basis - not just for an hour	1			
36	Encourage revitalization of homes in our city limits.	Many homes have been turned into apartments and have lost their historical beauty. I don't know how but if these could be restrained to original states, they could be used to attract folks to our community	1	3		
37	Focus on community growth	Continue to grow trail system; develop/update walking area (fix sidewalks), create community health activities	1	3		
38	Create a collaborative working space where people could pay monthly/ yearly to use as an office spae and share resources. This could be good for those who don't need an office building but don't want to work at home.	I visited one of these in Lafayette, IN and it had conference rooms, small offices, and open table and desk spaces where people could come in on their own time to work.	2			
39	Build more housing options that would appeal to a younger population.	There aren't many modern options that many college grads might be looking for when searching for jobs in the area. Nice apartments or townhouses could be a good route.	3			
40	Highlight natural amenities (rivers, reservoirs) with development, trails, etc.	People want to live close to natural spaces with multiple activity options	1			
41	Partner with developers to build housing additions/new communities to live.	Personally new to county and there is a LARGE gap in homes and also land (additions) to build. If there is a place to live, they will come.	3			
42	Rebuild city walkways (sidewalks). This will continue the quailty of life by making sidewalks safe to walk.	Crumbling infrastructure of sidewalks make it difficult for some residents to travel.	4			
43	Employer incentives to correct and new employees to live within the county. Will increase population and also increase tax revenue with the new residents	Obtain grants/funds to support county employers to intice employees to live within county	4			
44	Acquire land on outskirts of town for future housing	Work with landowners to acquire properties conductive to future housing additions	3			
45	Combine efforts of local schools to expand educational opportunities for students	Have schools work together to come up with joint effort to improve educational options that are attractive to incoming families.	2			
46	Community cross promotion	We have some great examples in town already. But I believe Wabash WILL be a one stop shop fo ranything you could need!	4			
47	Nightlife	Strength Wabash bars? Late movie nights?	2			
48	Promote outdoor lakes and sporting events	We have access to the lakes, but where are the lake shops?	1			
49	Develop a state-wide/national marketing campaign to "sell" Wabash	Devote "serves" money	2			
50	Develop a cleaning house for volunteers to work for Wabash	Many would help, but no never asked. We seem to recycle the same volunteers over and over again.	3			
51	Make government more efficient.	Combine city and county and townships into one unit.				

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
52	More restaurant choices - family friendly, Italian, open for lunch and dinner	Downtown needs more lunch spots that are open 7 days per week for both workers and visitors. And open late like after the Honeywell shows	2			
53	Generate county-wide awareness of exactly what is offered in Wabash, downtown Wabash, and all other communities of Wabash County	-city leaders, - main streets orgs, -Downtown businesses, - thought leaders. So many people don't know what's in downtown Wabash because of th negative population and history associated	2			
54	Create a safe sapce for obvious minorities who have never visited because of that lack of safe space	City leaders, the whole community (w/ changed mindsets of total acceptance), This is so important + relevant.	3			
55	Communicate to younger populations (aka, fresh out of college/high school) about moving beyond their hometowns to Wabash (W,W,W,W,W, +H)	Young professionals, Downtown orgs (b/c being downtown is actually attractive to people in college), starts conversations early for people just beiginning their live(s) on their own. Make a career here	1	2	3	
56	Improve transportation through public transit.	Aoffer a better transportation system so parents can send their kids to pool, parks, or any recreation location	4			
57	Build, incentives for families to move to Wabash	-Scholarships for college bound students. - Offer free transportaton for students going to north Manchester University. -offer dual language classes in all schools	3			
58	Develop partnerships (like internships) w/ Biz's	Give kids the opportunity to follow their dreams as they pursue college, what do they want to do? Lawyers,video, technology, teachers, business ownership	2			
59	Business's and activities that are open late.	This will drive a younger crowd downtown and also make living in Wabash more inticing	1			
60	Create the environment for young people to enjoy - entertainment, environment, housing, education	Build smart homes, Bike Trails, Better internet, Night life	2	1		
61	Build flexible housing centers	Colorful, unique, beautiful housing area with duplexes, townhouse, and/or historic-syled housing that contains a variety of large family homes, low cost/subsidized homes, and all in-between but colorful and beautiful	3			
62	Build small technical college	The old GDX site that connects to the city park would be a great place for a small college, which is a great way to bring a steady supply of new people and money to Wabash	2			
63	Build a trail that connects to Peru	The River Trail Is amazing so lets extend it the other direction	1			
64	Build a community space on Miami St. between Market and Canal	This could be a space for Farmers Market, small venue concerts, events, outdoor seating, and community gathering	2	3		
65	Build "safe" RR crossing	The train blows their horn 24/7. It's offputting, especially at night. I'm guessing it hurts property values too	3			

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
66	Skateboarding is growing and will continue	Our skate park has been great addition but recently has been a target for both safety and for harassment. Kids aren't safe and skaters are harassed	3			
67	Create affordable, dependable childcare	Before school, after school, weekends, nights	2			
68	Tenille Zartman for Mayor	obvious reasons…	2			
69	Reduce local income tax					
70	Downtown Parking		4			
71	Reservoir housing!	uge draw, make it happen	1	2	3	
72	Build childcare facility		2			
73	Use the Salamonie & Missisinwa areas to connect & establish a state park	We don't realize what a commodity we have in our county. I think we take it for granted, but sooo many outside of our county come to us for its enjoyment.	1			
74	Develop more around the river banks		1			
75	Expand green space/trails	Quality of life	1			
76	Build and clean the rivers for recreation or activities.		1			
77	Build better access to the river.		1			
78	Invest in our schools.	The first thing a young family will look at in a community will be the school system	2			
79	Downtown parking	With more apts. Being converted, parking for shoppers or visiting businesses is hard to come by	1			
80	Wabash specific: Housing in "brownfields" such as old hospital, old automotive/factory site. Maybe demolish maybe two "marginal" houses and build one new one on that property	I have been visiting Wabash for 5-6 years and have seen remarkable house by house improvement bu there is only so much one can do with pooly constructed houses on small lots. Downtown accessible housing is my hot button	3			
81	Wabash specific: more "downtown" housing options. Really liked the idea of developing the east end of Market Street. Housing is the major problem. I am not familiar with most of the county, but I assume it's the same throughout the county.	Really against sprawl because of the need to extend infrastructure.	3			
82	Build a welcome center (very large) to impress new families with all the details of the services Wabash County offers.	Shows all means of organizations that provide for the community	2			
83	Regional HCL/Vocational Training		2			
84	Better support for new small businesses		2			
85	Tell us how to use philanthropy to bild houses, rennovate old buildings		1	3		
86	Expose the Eel River Create access	Attracts those who want outdoor recreation in their communities	1			
87	Promote more - lots of places to be that are too unknown.		2			

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
88	Promote the county - remove financial barriers to earn mention in visit wabash county		2			
89	Build out (more) HWY 24 as a commercial corridor, siilar to the HWY 30 corridor in Kosciosko County	Incentivize politicians to court and attract new business as ambassadors. Incentivize administrators to facilitate new business additions.	4	2		
90	Promote and support small business		2			
91	Reduce county income tax rate	Having the highest tax rate in the state is a "disincentive" to prospective new citizens. We don't need to be the lowest, but we sure don't want to be the highest!	4			
92	Build a biking/walking trail along abandon railways betwee vities (Lagro to Wabash or Lagro to Andrews (Huntington Co)) maybe between the reserviors	Recently biked an abandon railway in Idaho. It was an interesting and beautiful ride	1			
93	Expand tourism along the canal - trails, boat rides, hiking	Expand the historical area	1			
94	Build a food destination	We have a lot of good local farms. Farm to table is huge right now. We need to promote what we have and increase what we have	1	2		
95	Brewery!		2			
96	Encourage craft brewing	The craft brewing market is exploding. There is no brewery in the county. Chapman's has a taphouse but they don't brew	1	2		
97	Build a distillery	We drink.	2			
98	Bring a brewery with great food atmosphere to downtown North Manchester	bring people into town to discover North Manchester	2			
99	Legalize cannabis	People from Wabash County drive to Michigan and Illinois to buy it. People are using it. Let's profit from it.	1	2		
100	Investment in country living	to build/buy land	3			
101	Develop a tiny house community	for housing	3			
102	Invest in stopping points around co.	Landmarks, mural, state parks, parks, trails	1			
103	Build a trail	We need to connect the towns with a trail network, using railtrails	1			
104	More green space in all towns		1			
105	Get rid of Silver Maple trees that lie in sidewalks	Tree commission needs more $ for removing old trees/bad trees and helping homeowners choose new trees	3			
106	New residents receive free tree	N. Man tree commission delivers and plants a tree for any house purchase or build	1	3		
107	Plant more trees	Every new homeowner gets a new tree	3			
108	Better bike/walk path- not roads		1			
109	Turn N. Manchester businesses to the River	Improve River access thru North Manchester - businesses in downtown are faced away from River	1	2		

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
110	Forgive student loans	Provide a loan forgiveness program for each year you live and work in the county. We need to attract young adult professionals				
111	Improve section 8 housing options in all communities					
112	Build railroad under/over passes	I get stuck by trains all too much.				
113	Build public transit	Our county is segregated. There's still talk aobout North of 16 and south of 16. Even at this event speakers slipped up and said Wabash, not Wabash County	3			
114	New & Renewed housing	There are great houses sitting empty because owners are lethanized about selling. (town) public & private partnership to get homes from empty to filled				
115	Low interset loans & forgiveabledown payment $ to first time homebuyers	Prices going up; rates low but 1st time young buyers may need $ to get persons in houses sooner & long term				
116	Figure out our public school system situtation	What schools stay, who consolidates				
117	Wabash gets highway 24, but rest of county doesn't pulls businesses, ppl to Wabash City	HW 13, 14, 15, wtc wait epand like HW 24				
118	Lighting! Street	safety				
119	Alternative energy for school	Create a bond that will solarize cell school buildings as an investment & utility savings as an educational point				
120	Adult education w/ MU - affordable childcare					
121	Create high speed internet	Low cost, municipal run high speed internet available throughout the county. S WFH becomes normal, people can't live here without internet	4			
122	Salamonie State Park with Lodge	Build al odge on Salamonie or Missosinawa to attract visitors				
123	Create a S.P. out of a reservior	Local gov't lobby state agencies to move forward	1			
124	Welcome center in N. Manchester w/ translations in Spanish	The welcome center would contain information for new families w/info about -affordable housing - doctors/healthcare - schools, in both English and Spanish	3			
125	Fund more outdoor dining					
126	Creating a welcome environment for the Latinx Community	If Wabash County was able to create a welcoming environment for the Latinx community they could grow significantly and rapidly. Part of creating a welcoming environment involves bilinqual education, and affordable quality housing.	3			
127	Affordable housing		3			
128	Bilingual education (K-12)		3			

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
129	Fiber optic internet - deployed at large scale	This is a utility - made ever more important since COVID. It ensures access to benefits of resources, educational, social, etc.				
130	Create synergy b/w NM university, daycares, and Timbercrest around farm to table food, stewarded by students	Bringing one really unique, healthy investment - farm to table food for our daycares and our seniors, and for our students - has multiple beneficiaries and long-term net benefits. Just one thing we do really well will attract families				
131	Multigenerational housing	Multi gen housing - wave of the future- see book, "Brave new Home"				
132	Build more rails to trails (easier, less expensive, healthier commute)	Create a county-wide event for a river raft race. South Whitley hosts a bed-race event- Wabash could do something simila for a showdown w/ Whitley Co. (or a river race showdown)				
133	Develop strong internship network to educate HS and university students about professional type opportunities that exist in Wabash County	Kids & students mostly assume those are only job prospects in cities				
134	Provide free Pre-K to all families	Strengthens kids' ability to learn. Enables parents to be at work	3	4		
135	Make river a gathering place in N. Manchester	Main St. is becoming a good place to be, river is so close by but not taken advantage of.	1			
136	Build public transportation					
137	Build more housing areas (new builds)					
138	Build retail (food, shopping, grocery)					
139	Make the parks and street dept more accoutnable for bridges and pavillions	I live by a bridge that goes over the city park and it has been neglected in terms of weeds.	3			
140	Golf Carts in Wabash	Quality of life				
141	Build new schools	Attract families from outside and retain young families				
142	Affiliate all of the different school systems to leverage finances and educational opportunities	Continue discussion with those that would benefit with this change. County Commissioners, City of Wabash	1			
143	Build an outdoor entertainment revenue	Would bring people to Wabash County for entertainment	2			
144	Affordable rental housing		3			
145	Have more residential housing developments for middle income people to choose to build in.		3			
146	Attract a competing cell phone network to have towers in Wabash County		4			
147	Walking and biking trails	Getting more people outdoors & moving, places for families to bring children and not worry about traffic	1			
148	Expand educational + training opportunities	Day care. Master's Degree availability at Manchester University in N. Manchester. Adult education and training for stem skills. Help adults get training for skills need to obtain good employment.	2			

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
149	Advertise the benefits of living in the county	Advertise the benefits of living in our county. Centrally located to larger cities. Great place to raise children.	2			
150	Purposely embrace diverse populations	Creating a reputation as a safe and welcoming community for diverse population will provide a workforce that will counteract the current reality of an aging population and will attract new jobs and the expansion of current businesses	2			
151	Technology center for an emerging technology!	It seems, as I view life, most towns/cities stated with a product meeting a need. Look how Warsaw has grown with the joint business. We need to hook into an emerging technology, invest in it as a community and run with it.	2			
152	Insect farming		2			
153	Hypophonic food production		2			
154	Tenderloin Festival (everybody does chili) local restaurants compete for Best Indiana Tenderloin		2			
155	Abatements for home buyers to rehab our older homes	Our homes often need so much renovation to be attractive to buyers. If purchased & not renovated, they continue to decline	3	4		
156	Identify and protect areas for livestock production		1			
157	Create business grants for young entrepeneurs	Purdue has a startup/entrepenuership program. It is filled with thousands of educated young people looking to get their start. These grants could be the push necessary to choose Wabash				
158	Provide subsidies to expand infrastructure (preferably fiber) for internet access outside of immediate cities	It is not profitable to service rural houses between our communities, but there is plenty of room to expand outward for housing developments. Internet access is critical for new residents	4			
159	A credit union that makes banking easier for undocumented immigrants	Community members without SSNs can't get bank accounts at most banks. Some credit unions will provide accounts to people using ITIN numbers which would make banking easier, which makes buying a home or car easier	2	3		
160	County ID pgoram for community members who can't get a state driver's license.	Residents without an SSN can't get a state DL or ID. A county ID wouldn't be a driver's license, but it could diffuse tension in a traffic stop and make life easier in schools, hospitals, banks	2	3		
161	Bring tourists to kayak the Eel	The addition of easy-to-use put-ins of takeouts and accessible outfitters that rent kayaks and provide transportation could bring in a lot of visitors	1			

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
162	Maintain great school systems	Elect school boards that attract good administrators and good educators	2			
163	Build a race course a place to really burn some rubber	A magnet for high end ac to enleashing the inner mojo! They must sign a waiver				
164	Create cool places to build a house	I can commute to work but I want a wonderful place to live. Esthetics, recreation, education, the housing possible comes before the Industry. Get those farmers to support this.	3			
165	Build Manchester an outdoor pool - water slide (hope) etc well just maybe the water slide dropping into a pool we already have. Disney style					
166	Build a white water rafting course on the Eel River and a Zip line down to the water	DXIR must buy in. soo cool!				
167	We build a zoo! Wait - no - an aquarium	Especially - green				
168	Build that bike trail along the river	It is self evident	1			
169	Invest in innovations for manufacturing	With pop decline, local factorie will hunt for workers. Investing in technology will require more skill to work while not losing production/income	2			
170	Healthy Child Program	Children that see a Dr 20 times before age 3 are more likely to find long term health concerns. Healthier people are happier and earn more! Also, nurses will be needed - market stimulation for high income and skill jobs. Partner with parkview?	2	3		
171	Full County Fiber	If people can work from home, Wabash would be a great home for remote workers, if internet is good	4			
172	Local schools need more educational variety. Schools need robotics, shop class, business courses and internships	IN is a no tuition state, families will take their kids to the best schools	3			
173	Education diversity		3			
174	Income based housing	Housing options based on income not HUD, but a variety of homes for all levels of income	3			
175	Entertain Wabash	Invest in Hangout places that young people like. Axe throwing, fowling, arcades	2			
176	Fund events that unite different segments of the population, intentionally	Community sources of income (foundation, towns, etc). Helps keep people engaged in the community and with each other				
177	Build shaded walking areas or trails	Town involvement, citizen input, provides more exercise/community opportunities	1			
178	Build fountains in community parks	They're kid/family magnets	1			
179	Become a leader in recycling and taking acre of our natural resources	Minimize and shrink our dump foorpint and something other communities want to replicate. Build jobs on new recycling programs. Educate and create incentive programs. Showcase how we've turned trash into community art	1			

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
180	Housing developments, be it specs homes, or custom homes, we desperately need housing in our communities	It is challenging for those who get jobs in Wabash to live here and become a part of our community, to become invested as one can only become by living here.	3			
181	More tasing rooms & breweries that allow families	Places for young families (under 5 year olds) to connect	1			
182	Splash Pad	Attract young families	1	3		
183	Tiny homes - Big Heart	Put tiny homes on available lots and in place of those homes that have deteroriated beyond repair	3			
184	Cheap homes - great community!	Like Italy - Housing for $1 for homes that need rehabbed for young people under 40, must live here for 10 years!	3			
185	Grocery, Retail, Sit-down restaurants		2			
186	Winter Recreation	Skating Rink, more things to do between Jan - April	1	3		
187	Build a state of the art sports complex	Turf w/ public access, multi basketball courts, weights facility -> maybe invest in a semi-pro athletics team	2			
188	More parks in small town	The state give more money to small town	1			
189	More house	More land for sell	3			
190	Affordable, safe, childcare, flexible for working, especially single parents.		2			
191	School consolidation + reorganization	Teachers can provide insight into how better to organize	2			
192	Consolidate the schools	We can attract more educated families with higher ranking sports and academics. We have good teachers/coaches but missed opportunities	4			
193	Invest in a wider variety of restaurants	Family/locally owned. Italian (Mike's is missed), Thai, People are adventuous eaters..cater to it	1	2		
194	Invest in green energy	Show that we care about our environment by increasing energy independence of our businesses, housing, schools. Makes housing more attractive	4			
195	Help potential buyers access grants to update historic homes	So many of the historic homes along the railroad are falling into disrepair. Establish a historic district! Or silk stocking neighborhood	3			
196	Renovate housing	Having home that a family friendly	3			
197	Have more teen friendly activities	We need to ground the teens and make this place that they love and want to come back to after Higher Education	1			
198	Build parks and playgrounds	We need places for younger children to draw more familiar	1			

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
199	Create incentives to move into the future by supporting movement to green energy initiatives	Local business - tax breaks for moving to alternatives. Homeowners - property tax breaks. Schools - budgets to move to green energy. Renters + newcomers to the area - grants to buy into houses w/ green energy. Job creation: new business for creation + support the improvements	4			
200	Free early education for every child under 5 - we are a community that cares and it becomes our competitive advantage	Community foundation, grow Wabash County, local government, churches, FMB fundation corporate sponsors	2			
201	A true adult education center - workforce dev., Honeywell Arts ID, Manchester U, Ivy Tech, Learn More center, and Early ED		2			
202	Start afterschool program(s)	Include schools, churches, businesses to provide safe, educational, fun, affordable afterschool care for area employees. Perhaps industrial/churches can contribute to help fund	2			
203	Remodel the City Park	We have the all inclusive park, now lets remodel & expand the city park as well!	1			
204	River Development + Recreation		1			
205	Expand Wabash River Wild + Eel River Wild	Raft, canoe & kayak adventures on the Wabash River. Educational trips/team building opportunities	1			
206	Eel + Wabash River Development- Activate the trail + development along it. Grow Lagro to Wabash + through Downtown North Manchester	Wabash Marketplace, Manchester Alive, own of Lagro, Town of NM, City of Wabash, Wabash County, Foundations	1			
207	Invest in new housing areas/revitalizing current home curbside appeal	Curbside appeal is HUGE for younger generations. Invest in that.	3			
208	We need spec homes in a new development or ten. Larger rural lots and the new Parkview Legacy side. New urban development, GDX site, E Market St. et al.	Grow Wabash County, local governments, Mayor Scott Long	3			
209	Housing solutions	Develop lower cost housing (quality) that allows more disposable funds available for families to invest in quality of life activities	2	3		
210	Build homes!	Encourage home renovation, new home construction	3			
211	Increase artistic opportunities	Involve local artists in beautifying community spaces through sculpture, murals, etc. Bring back art festivals. Create a community band shell along the river for band concerts, live music, live theatre	2			
212	Bring back a county arts fest!	Create more opportunity for the artists so they can stay/move here!	2			
213	Fill store fronts that are empty	Get a panera bead in one of the empty storefronts	2			
214	Build a spec building @ Wabash Business Complex	Grow Wabash County; Wabash County Commissioners; City of Wabash; City Redevelopment Commission	2			

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
215	Collaborate!	Find ways to draw the separate communities within the county together to share resources				
216	Internship opportunities	Develop more relationships between youth + businesses				
217	Supply jobs!	Bring in more employers. Support those already here.				
218	Invest in curbside recycling	Partner with the Wabash solid waste district. Call Jen Rankin and break down the numbers & statistics. Make Wabash Green!	1			
219	Build up community safety nets	Support struggling families (food, shelter, education) to help them be productive members of the community. Build a "Pay It back" community service program to help with area maintenance - lawn mowing, house painting, etc.	2			
220	Improve school test scores	Business owners want their children in the best schools that produce good test scores and great children programs				
221	Build a nice retail area w/ retail, clothes, restaurant	Because I travel to Fort Wayne to Jefferson Pointe	2			
222	Build a family area - Splash Park @ Honeywell Pool. Update & Renovate Parks	Would like one in Lafontaine (Splash Pad)	1			
223	Promote recreational areas	They exist - sort of - but where are the parks, river access sites, bike paths, etc.?	1			
224	Integrate K-12 more fully with 2-yr, 4-yr and trades credentials	Easier, more affordable, and cleaner paths to access means of talent development will meet - at least approach - the employment needs of local + regional industries	2	4		
225	Find building locations & start subdivisions	I am a contractor and have customers wanting to build but they cannot find a building site.				
226	Develop county wide public school district	I envision 2 high schools: 1 north and 1 south & middle schools + elementaries to go along with. More ed choices! Economies of scale!				
227	Bring in a high-tech enterprise (start up??)	1. Require High Speed Internet 2. Local "techies" involved 3. Need more housing prior	4			
228	Create better internet access	REMC has been starting - people need/want to be connected	4			
229	Combining school services to improve all for the all students and staff	Share not compete	2			
230	Expand Heartland Career Center - offer more certifcated options	Do a great P.R. program for certifcated options for H.S. kids. Encourage tracks other than college. Heartland is growing- should continue	2			
231	Start a program to transition those coming out of incarceration successfully into the community	Stops recidivsim/reduces taxes and man power needed to stop/fight crime/rebuild stable, health families. Involves: prison/jail system; churches; social & community programs	2			
232	Promote & grow a tourist attraction that highlights our historical and natural resources	Will grow community strength; highlight already existing resources. Increase visitor traffic & the potential for move-ins. Involves: N. Man., Wabash, Legro, LeFontaine, Roann and surrounding counties	2	1		

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
233	Clean up our river so if people fish they can feel free to eat the catch	Reduce pollution dumped in river. Continue trash clean up projects	1			
234	Build homeless shelters 1. with training associated for tenants to become productive citizens 2. employees associated - shelter to guarantee jobs for tenants	Most lower class Wabash citizens are one pay check from homeless. It can happen to anyone and Wabash should be more compassionate to this population	3			
235	Develop public Transportation to all parts of the county. Having a car is a luxury. Hard to schedule a ride.	People need to get to work, appointments, and to businesses to be productive citizens. Would involve all branches of leadership as well as public	4			
236	Host a realtor/builder symposium	Realtor to tell us what we need, builders tell us what they can do!	3			
237	Host a job fair here at Honeywell with tables hosted by Local industries, business	I know of at least 1 large industry in need or at least 25 new employees	2			
238	Develop the banks of the River	Biuld mixed use housing, retail, office, and restaurants to take advantage of natural resources	1			
239	Build houses of all styles and tastes	Reuse existing lands of dilapidated houses, factories, or former building sites	2			
240	Renovate existing buildings for retail space + housing	Take vacant buildings in our smaller communities and renovate/redevelop them	3			
241	Build a trusting educational system	Get our citizens to buy in to combining our school districts in some fashion	4			
242	Build trails between Wabash County Communities	Connect all communities via trails	3			
243	Build a multi-use entertainment space	Purchase + renovate old industrial building to be used for restaurant, bar, + entertainment space (axe throwing, fowling, etc.) by the river	2			
244	Invest resources (time, energy, money) from both public + private stakeholders throughout Wabash Co. in local HS + College graduates to encourage innovative, sustainable businesses	Heartland, Area HS, MU, Ivy Tech. Focusing efforts on retaining young talent and allowing opportunity to start businesses that attract more people to the county. This can only happen w/ buy-in from community partners + stakeholdres (public +private)	2			
245	Renovate historical "downtown" buildings	Repurpose them for sustainable and innovative businesses	1			
246	developing ahousing creation program	Assistance to build, renovation assistance, farming - development partnership	3			
247	Transform Gencorp Property	Housing	3			
248	prosleytize people from areas where people want to move from	California seems to be an area where people are dissatisfied. Advertise housing, tax breaks for folks to relocate here. Emphasize - lower housing cost, lower taxes, lower cost of living	3			
249	Emphasize the Arts that are offered here. Continue to grow over arts emphasis	Expand Honeywell Arts Academy	2			
250	Bring together the three public school corporations	Not only will consolidate drive down costs, but by creatively combining resources, we will become more attractive to families looking for specific learning experience	2			

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
251	Bring together the three school corporations		2			
252	Residential housing developments for middle income people		3			
253	Offer bonus or housing incentive for higher demand occupations (teachers, nurses, manufacturer)		3			
254	Create a "community" for veterans or new college grads to live together. There's a similar program in Louisville. Lower cost + age limit		3			
255	Host fishing competitions at reservoirs (more events + programming @ reservoirs)		1			
256	Host job fairs for high demand and do all of the onboarding steps		2			
257	Have more job panels of local industry and opportunities like Columbus, Indiana; job shadows -> kids don't know local opportunities and career		2			
258	Come back home scholarship. Program to entice young people to return to Wabash					
259	Explore a State Park designation within the county		1			
260	gathering places - i.e. coffee shop open on Sundays		2			
261	Develop a housing creation		3			
262	Highlight natural amenities with development, trails, etc.		1			
263	Build a collaborative workspace for individuals to rent office spaces and be able to work with others		1			
264	Build splash park at Morrett Sports Park for those visiting for sporting events		1			
265	Build indoor field sports complex		1			
266	Develop employer incentives to current & new employees to live within the county		2			
267	Continue promoting lifestyles with athletic events/clubs/groups		2			
268	MSD Board read the data!		2			
269	Combine efforts of local schools to expand educational opportunities for students		2			
270	Build a multi-use community anchored by apartments/condos that could include a specialy grocery store, coffee shop, pharmacy, green space, etc.		2			
271	Bring in more manufacturing to create multiple levels of employment		2			
272	More festivals to attract people from out of town		2			

ID	BIG Idea Name	Description	Topic(s)			
273	Market Honeywell Events with local businesses		2			
274	Promote local industry to youth via a video and by visiting & touring		2			
275	Partner with developers to create housing additions/new communities		3			
276	Encourage revitilization and renovation of existing houses in the country		3			
277	Incentives for landlords to help with renovation costs		3			
278	Acquire land on outskirts of town to help develop housing		3			
279	Build nice apartments & townhouses to attract younger populations		3			
280	Rebuild city walkways/sidewalks to make more areas safe to walk		4			
281	Improve cell phone coverage and wifi outside of town		4			
282	Tenderloin Festival					
283	Walking and biking trails					
284	Advertise the benefits of living in Wabash County		1			
285	Identify and protect areas for livestock production - better zoning		1			
286	Expand educational and training opportunities		2			
287	Technology center for an emerging technology		2			
288	Attract a competing cell phone network to have towers in Wabash County		2			
289	Insect farming		2			
290	Hypophonic farming		2			
291	Purposely embrace diverse populations		2			

To regain our population and continue to grow as communities, we'll need to add 85 households each year. What action can we take to make our communities magnets for people and investment?

ID	Our MIGHTY Idea:	Will lead to a future with:
1	Full, total, downtown collaboration	A whole destination town in Wabash
2	Improve existing housing with high speed internet, grants to renovate historic homes, green energy	Attractive homes for new residents and improve neighborhoods and communities
3	Invest in our schools (non-traditional included)	Invested families moving to our communities
4	Riverfront development: retail, restaurants, and housing	Big City feel in a small community
5	Shut down Miami Street indefinitely (with seating, much like the landing in Fort Wayne)	Destination downtown and entertainment and group gatherings and nightlife
6	Countywide reliable internet	Allow online business growth, enhance educational opportunities, allow community connectedness
7	Build out rivers as easy-to-find destinations!	More outdoor recreation and healthy, adventurous citizens
8	Improve schools, test scores, integrate K-12 more fully	Attracting families with talent and bring in new industry and growth
9	School consolidation and reorganization	High schools with competitive academics and sports programs that attract professional families looking for more opportunities for our kids
10	State Park	Visitors, environmental friendly ideas, nature appreciation, jobs, out of county revenue, visit places like Honeywell
11	Children friendly areas such as neighborhood parks, teen activities, affordable safe child-care (nights too)	Kids who return to live here as adults
12	Solarize every school building	An energy-wise student body and attract community-minded families while significantly reducing utility cost
13	Countywide school system: HS North and HS South	More educational choices for kids, economies of scale - more clout with vendors
14	Host programming and events at parks / reservoirs	Increase quality of life activities to attract younger generation
15	Talent attraction thru affordable (low-interest loans; forgivable down payments) housing and childcare; Housing Authority Council	Sustainable job environment and a consistent child presence to keep school attendance consistent
16a	Purposely embrace diverse populations	Growth
16b	Better cell phone system / internet system	A basic need in life is met
17	Offer bonus/housing incentives for employees or high demand positions	More young professionals or families
18	Build out Highway 24 (more) as a commercial corridor, similar to the Highway 30 corridor in Kosciusko County	More jobs and more opportunities for current and new citizens
19	Promote and support small business	
20	Add more trails (between communities) and improve river access / face the rivers with businesses	Safer outdoor activities, attract more citizen scientists, increase business attractability, increase hospitality

ID	Our MIGHTY Idea:	Will lead to a future with:
21	Invest in entrepreneurship and internship programs	More educated young people who know they have a future in Wabash County
22	Explore use of rivers and reservoirs for housing development and/or state park	More houses plus more people equals more for everyone
23	Host a realtor/builder expo	Realtors to tell us what the need is and where to locate these areas, builders to tell us what they can build
24	Free early education for all children under 5	Educated students and adults who invest in their communities
25	Promote recreational areas. Make Wabash City Park a new subdivision and build a park at Paradise Springs. Add camping sites (who wants to stay in the current sites by the city sewage)	
26	Improve the historic home neighborhoods by encouraging "homestead" infill lots to encourage homebuilders to build "historically appropriate" exterior / modern interiors. Lots be offered at no cost to builders with agreement to live in for five years.	More vibrant city core center with increased tax base
27	Continue to grow in Arts by expanding the Honeywell Arts Academy and create an artist relocation program	Build on what we have to further Arts in Wabash
28	Build public transportation, build more housing areas, build retail (food, shopping, grocery)	
29	Provide more opportunities for students to learn about and connect with local employers (panels, job shadows, internships, project based learning)	
30	Become a food and drink destination	Visitors who become residents and more hospitality jobs
31a	Open gathering places (coffee shop on Sundays)	Community
31b	Develop housing program	Expanding growth
32	Explore school consolidation or better collaboration with well-rounded education for all Wabash County students	A better workforce in the end. A draw for families now
33	Come back home scholarship to entice young people to return to Wabash	More young people coming to Wabash after college
34	Support of local artisans	
35	Expand use of natural resources to create a destination that leads to people choosing to locate here	Active residents
36	Improve local sidewalks	A more walkable city with attractive streets
37	Promote local industry to youth	Keeping high school and college graduates in the community
38	Develop new apartments/condos/townhouses	More young people drawn to the county and possibly for increasing population
39	Indoor sports complex	Healthy community, bring in people from out of town
40	Multi-use community (apartments, grocery, coffee, greenspace, etc.)	Attracting young population and bringing amenities to town

Imagine One85 Growth Summit

Exit Questionnaire - Summary Statistics

1	1. How did you hear about Imagine One 85 Focus on the Future Workshops?	Total Responses	Percent
	Word of Mouth	13	19%
	Newspaper Article	7	10%
	Ad	3	4%
	Poster/ /Flyer	6	9%
	Radio / TV	0	0%
	City / County website	4	6%
	Imagine One 85 website	4	6%
	Facebook / Instagram / Twitter	7	10%
	Nextdoor	0	0%
	Community Event	2	3%
	Online News	0	0%
	Email	9	13%
	Organization	12	18%
	Other	1	1%
	Total	68	100%

2	2. Have you participated in the Imagine One85 planning process before today?	Total Responses	Percent
	Yes	27	71%
	No	11	29%
	Total	38	100%

3	3. Were you comfortable completing today's meeting activities? If not, explain why.	Total Responses	Percent
	Yes	35	95%
	No	2	5%
	Total	37	100%

See detailed responses in Expository Answers section.

4	4. Did you feel your input was heard and recorded accurately? If not, explain why.	Total Responses	Percent
	Yes	34	97%
	No	1	3%
	Total	35	100%

See detailed responses in Expository Answers section.

5	5. Will you continue to participate in the planning process? If not, explain why.	Total Responses	Percent
	Yes	36	95%
	No	2	5%
	Total	38	100%

See detailed responses in Expository Answers section.

6	6. Are there any specific topics you hope this process addresses? If yes, please explain.	Total Responses	Percent
	Yes	20	74%
	No	7	26%
	Total	27	100%

See detailed responses in Expository Answers section.

7	7. Gender	Total Responses	Percent	2019 ACS %
	Female	18	56%	51.1%
	Male	13	41%	48.9%
	Prefer not to say	1	3%	
	Total	32	100%	100.0%

8	8. Which racial group do you most closely identify with?	Total Responses	Percent	2019 ACS %
	Asian	0	0%	0.4%
	Black/ African- American	0	0%	1.1%
	Native American	0	0%	0.8%
	White / Caucasian	31	97%	95.6%
	Two or more races	0	0%	1.0%
	Other	1	3%	1.1%
	Total	32	100%	100.0%

9	9. Are you Hispanic or Latino?	Total Responses	Percent	2019 ACS %
	Yes	0	0%	2.6%
	No	32	100%	97.4%
	Total	32	100%	100%

10	10. What is your age?	Total Responses	Percent	2019 ACS %*
	Under 15	0	0%	16.6%
	15-24	1	3%	14.5%
	25-34	3	9%	10.6%
	35-44	6	19%	11.1%
	45-54	3	9%	12.6%
	55-64	11	34%	14.3%
	65 or over	8	25%	20.3%
	Total	32	100%	100.0%

* percentages represent the population over 15

11	11. What is your highest level of education?	Total Responses	Percent	2019 ACS %*
	Less than a high school diploma	0	0%	11.3%
	High school diploma	1	3%	42.6%
	Some college	1	3%	19.4%
	Associate's degree	2	6%	8.6%
	Bachelor's Degree	10	32%	11%
	Masters Degree / Ph.D.	17	55%	7.5%
	Total	31	100%	100.0%

* percentages represent the population over 25

12	12. What is your occupation?
	See detailed responses in Expository Answers section.

13	13. If you live in Wabash County, how long have you lived here?	Total Responses	Percent
	0-4 years	3	10%
	5-9 years	3	10%
	10-19 years	2	6%
	20-29 years	4	13%
	30-39 years	3	10%
	40-49 years	3	10%
	50+ years	9	29%
	Live outside the County	4	13%
	Total	31	100%

14	**14. What is your zip code? (Where do you live?)**	**Total Responses**	**Percent**
	Wabash	15	48%
	North Manchester	10	32%
	Other	3	10%
	Lagro	1	3%
	Roann	1	3%
	LaFontaine	1	3%
	Total	31	100%

15	**15. Please tell us about your annual household income:**	**Total Responses**	**Percent**	**2019 ACS %**
	Less than $35,000	0	0%	30.3%
	$35,000-$49,999	3	11%	15.7%
	$50,000-$74,999	5	18%	23.3%
	$75,000-$99,999	8	29%	15.1%
	$100,000-$199,999	11	39%	13.2%
	$200,000 or more	1	4%	2.3%
	Total	28	100%	100%

16	**16. Additional comments, thoughts, or ideas:**
	See responses in Expository Answers section.

Imagine One 85 Growth Summit

Exit Questionnaire - Expository Answers

3. Were you comfortable completing today's meeting activities?

Id	Source	Comment
8	In Person	Somewhat! I understood that we were to have done a phone survey
23	In Person	It's really out of my comfort zone.
25	In Person	Yes, our table had great discussion
32	In Person	Yes, but it felt less like a recap of previous gatherings/workshops and more like the same thing we've done before

4. Did you feel your input was heard and recorded accurately? If not, explain why.

Id	Source	Comment
6	In Person	We will see
25	In Person	Plemty of space to write out ideas
31	In Person	Unsure, I feel we continue to state ideas at each event, but not sure where they go
36	In Person	My group was not much interested in manufacturing

5. Will you continue to participate in the planning process? If not, explain why.

Id	Source	Comment
22	In Person	Yes because I want to be involved in the change
23	In Person	New to county and it's a real push outside of my comfort zone. I am breaking out of my box.
26	In Person	Want to help move forward
29	In Person	Live out of state but hope to move here
32	In Person	Yes, but the advertising for this event was a bit misleading - it wasn't very celebratory

6. Are there any specific topics you hope this process addresses? If yes, please explain.

Id	Source	Comment
4	In Person	Housing
5	In Person	Gas taxes, land taxes, homeless
6	In Person	Increase in property taxes, salaries of city officials, ability to get more than one pension - these are draining our community financially.
7	In Person	Control taxes School consolidation Public transportation Internet for the whole County Address incarceration and recidivism
8	In Person	Continue to feel we are dodging a huge issue by not going forward with a push toward county0wide school district. It could take many forms. Perhaps it will simply happen over time organically and slowly but it needs to happen.
9	In Person	Housing and talent attraction
11	In Person	There are some pretty rough homes and buildings in Wabash. Some renovation would help attract people.

Id	Source	Comment
12	In Person	Realtor/builder Expo, to work together to help determine the need, location and priority. Then have builders address these issuesm, how much can they build locally and how fast.
15	In Person	Current ideas already presented
17	In Person	Education!!! Housing
18	In Person	Specific ideas suggested: arts, education, river development
20	In Person	School consolidation Respecting historical aspects during expansion and improvement of residential and commercial areas
22	In Person	Consolidate schools Offer more housing options
23	In Person	Homes, lack of quality housing
24	In Person	Housing in our city/county
26	In Person	Information to the students in the county
29	In Person	Desirable housing close to downtown Wabash
31	In Person	Hoping to see what moves in action.
35	In Person	Good ideas came from my table - broadband / cell are essential
36	In Person	Industrial enhancement by traning and attitude of Wabash County workforce candidates
37	In Person	Let the ideas flow

16. Additional comments, thoughts, or ideas

Id	Source	Comment
16	In Person	Wabash is a beautiful county. We need a united force to invest in education and develop competitive workers. Our location is great with lots of opportunity.
33	In Person	I wonder who will delegate particulars and what authority they will have. Can we set reachable goals in the first 2-4 years as larger/harder ideas are developed.
34	In Person	We're ready for action. Move to implementation of great ideas.

VOLUME 1: PROSPERITY

Technical Analysis Memo | Wabash County Comprehensive Plan

June 2021
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PROSPERITY

Technical Analysis Memo | Wabash County Comprehensive Plan

June 2021

The following outlines the key findings, maps and tables for the various topics related to community and individual prosperity. Topics in this report include economic development, housing and fiscal conditions. This report and its accompanying summary presentations are a summary of the baseline conditions and trends in support of the Wabash County Comprehensive Plan. For questions on this report please contact the project manager for Imagine One 85, Kyle May, senior planner with planning NEXT, at kyle@planning-next.com*.*

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1. Economic Development

The purpose of the Economic Development Technical Analysis is to provide a common set of facts regarding the performance of the County economy, and the status of its workforce. These facts in addition to interviews, and other targeted analysis are to support the creation of the economic development element for the County Comprehensive Plan.

KEY FINDINGS

- The economic activity in Wabash County is worth $1.2 billion and has grown by three percent from 2015.
- There are just over 700 businesses, down from a high point before the 2008 national recession.
- Annual average wages have increased in real terms since 2010 by 10% but lags the state average by $10,000
- Local labor needs (workforce) are met by the region – and the County's employment needs (jobs for residents) are also met by the region.
- 22% of county residents commute more than 50 miles for employment
- Workforce in several industries is older than the state of Indiana

A. Size and Performance of the Wabash County Economy

GROSS COUNTY PRODUCT

Gross County Product is a way to measure the economic value of the local economy. It is similar in concept to Gross Domestic Product which measures the national economy. Wabash County in 2018 (latest year available) had a gross county product of approximately $1.2 billion. In terms of county economies in Indiana it ranks 50th approximately the same size as Whitley County.

Since 2015 the economy has grown on an inflation adjusted basis by $35m or 3%. By comparison Indiana's economy grew by 14% during that time same period.

Wabash County GDP
(2012 inflation adjusted dollars)
(000)

Year	GDP
2015	1,145,348
2016	1,155,647
2017	1,139,965
2018	1,180,811
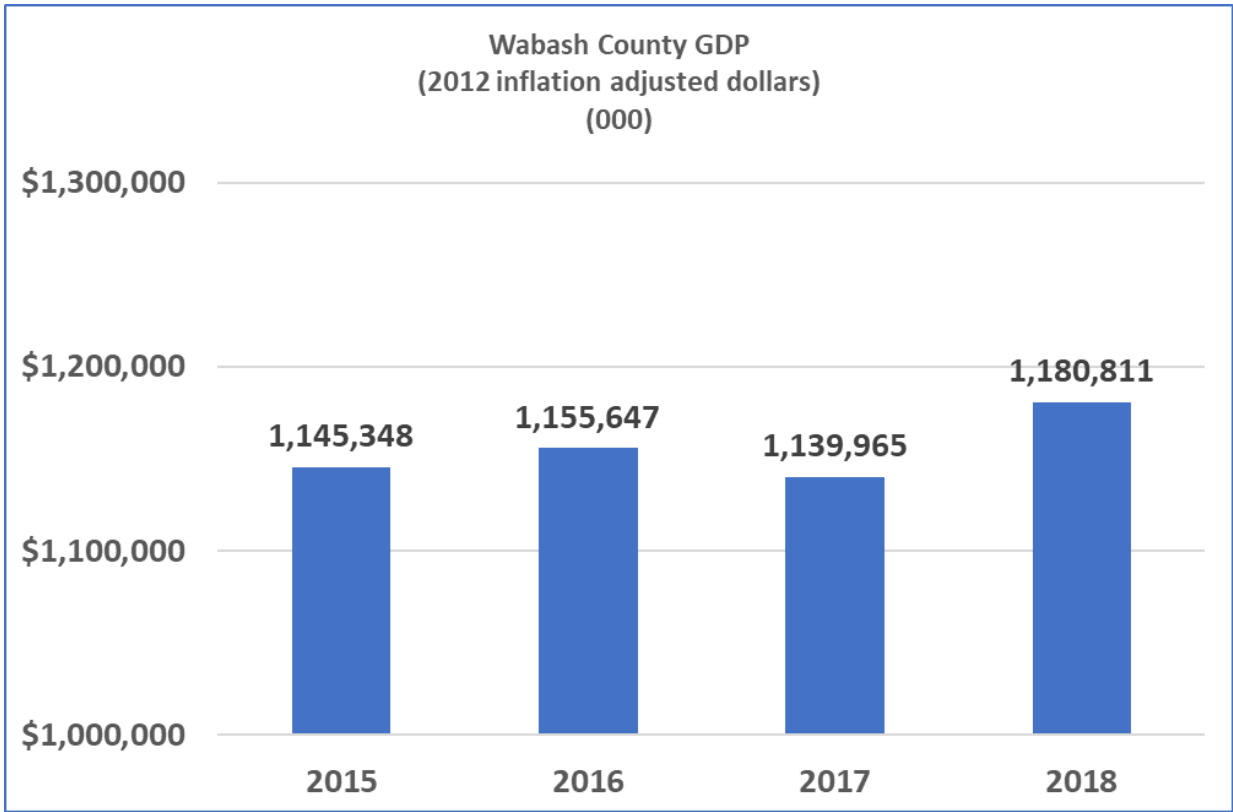
TOTAL WAGES

Total payroll wages in the county totaled $464 million in 2019. Wages in the county have continued to grow over the last decade. On an inflation adjusted total wages in real terms are up by approximately $46 million over the decade.

Total Wages Payroll Jobs (000)
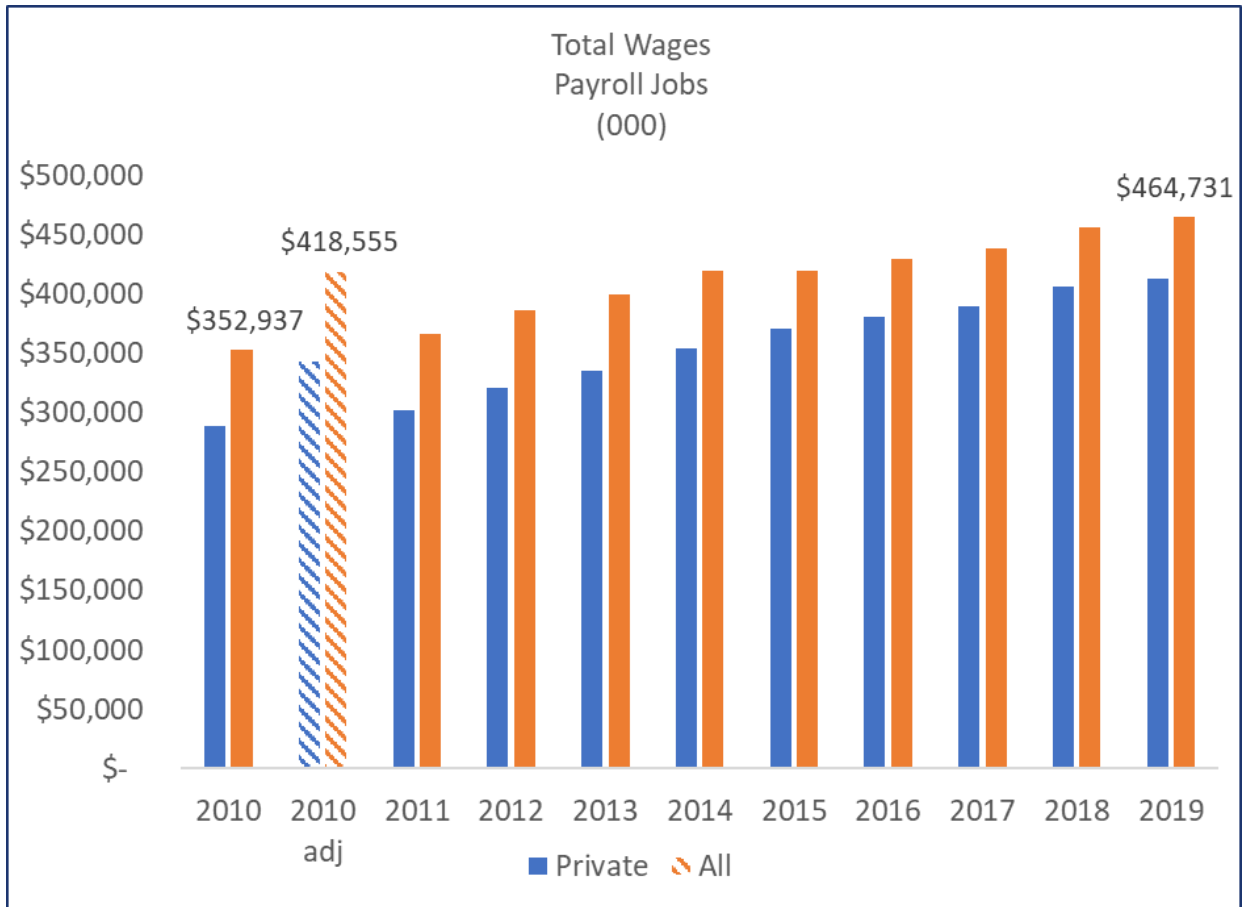
Source: BLS QCEW Wages; BLS CPI Inflation Calculator

AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES

Average annual wage in the county for 2019 equaled $38,604. Wages in the county have continued to grow over the last decade. On an inflation adjusted basis the $29,494 in 2010 is equivalent to approximately $35,000 today. Wages in real terms are up by approximately $3,000 or approximately 10% over the decade. Wages, however, are about $10k lower than the statewide average.

Average Annual Wage

											$38,452	$38,604

Bar values:
- 2010: $29,494
- 2010 inf adj: $35,378
- 2011: $30,228
- 2012: $31,099
- 2013: $32,036
- 2014: $33,336
- 2015: $34,303
- 2016: $34,849
- 2017: $36,260
- 2018: $38,452
- 2019: $38,604
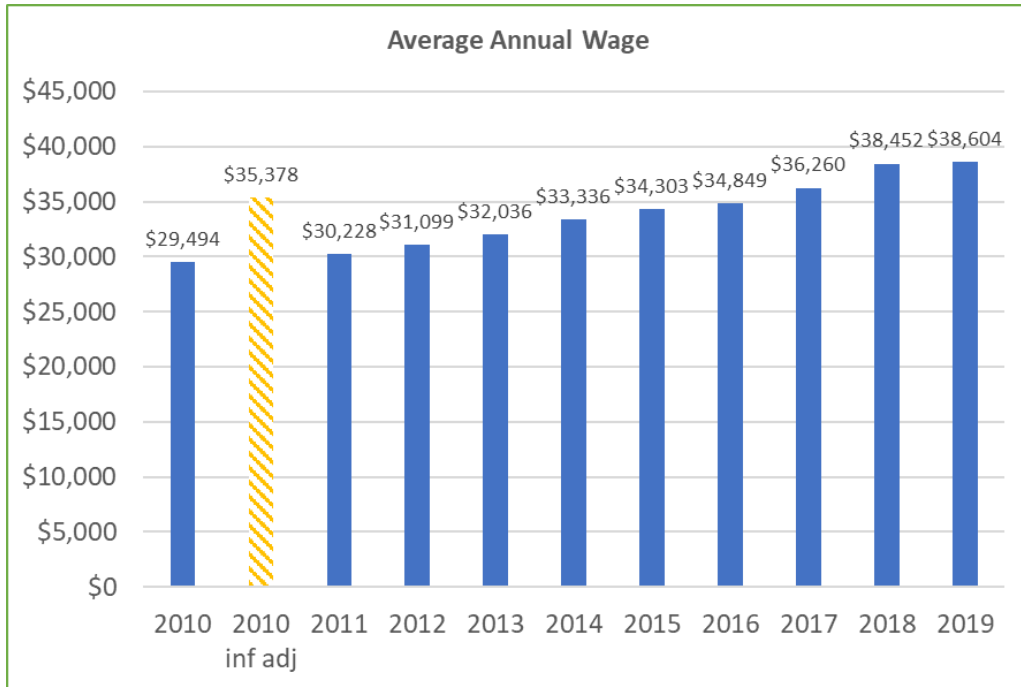
Source: BLS QCEW Wages; BLS CPI Inflation Calculator

PERSONAL INCOME PER CAPITA

Personal income, as measured on a per capita basis, has grown steadily after the 2008 national recession. The county trails state averages but grew faster between 2018 and 2019.

CAINC1 Personal Income Summary: Personal Income, Population, Per Capita Personal Income

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Indiana   Wabash IN
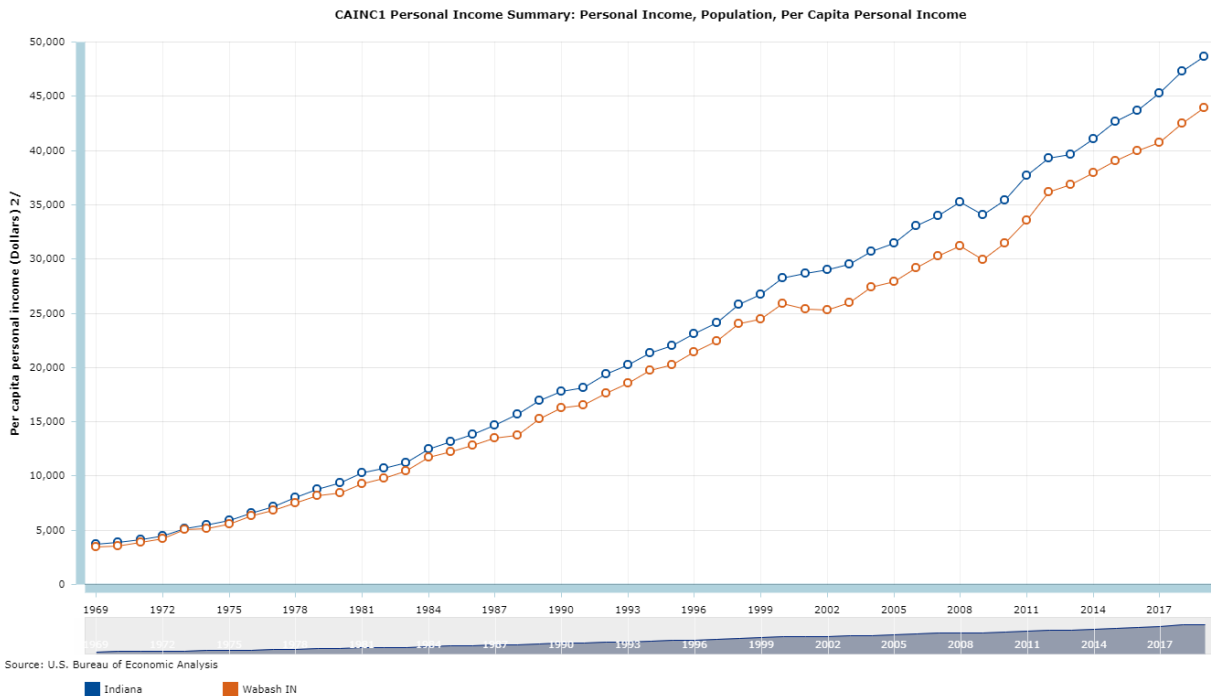
ESTABLISHMENTS

Business establishments are used as a proxy for businesses. Establishments are locations that are recorded for purposes of unemployment insurance and payroll taxes. Establishment counts provides a method to track over time business formation and losses. Based on this data Wabash County has fewer establishments than after the Great Recession. The large gain in 2013 reflects a spike in retail and professional services businesses. For context, the peak number of establishments for Wabash County in the 21st century was 2003 with 771 establishments.

**Wabash County
Total Establishments
With Payroll**
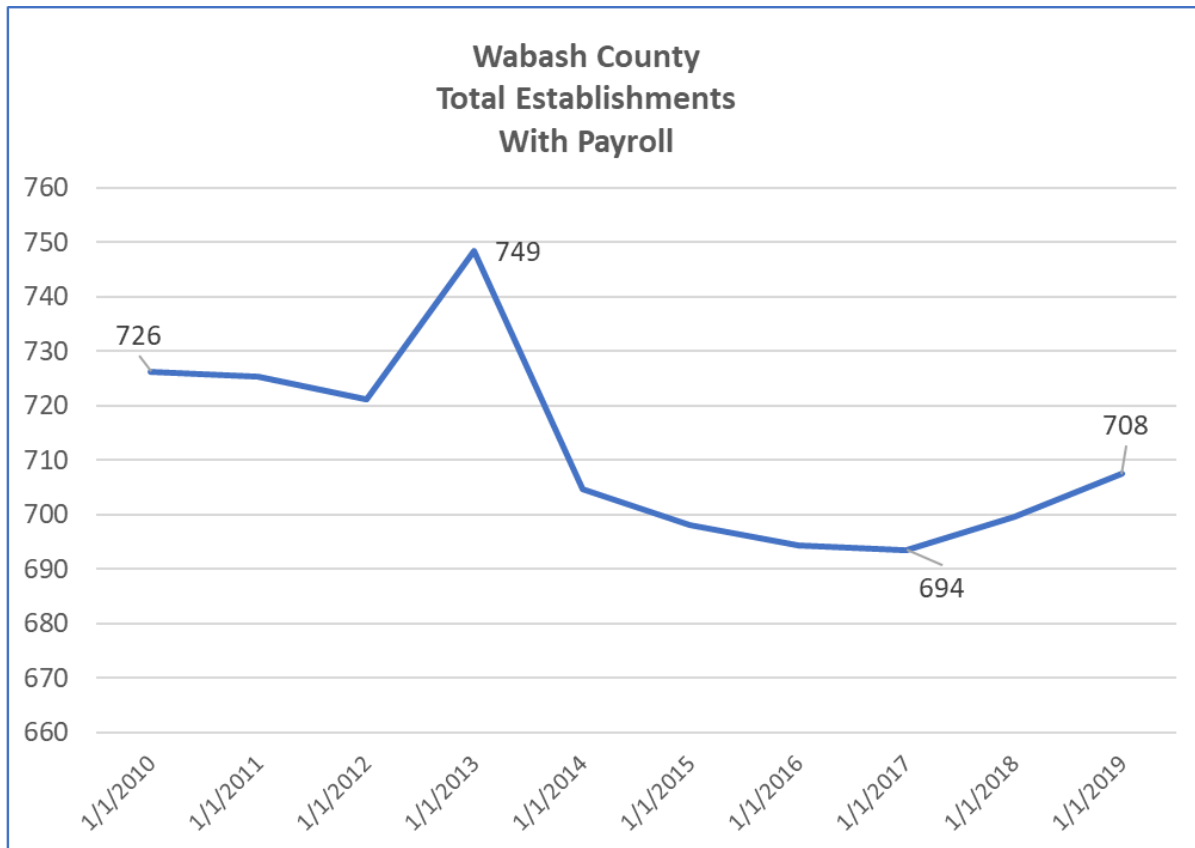
Source: St Louis Fed FRED statistics series

In terms of establishments retail trade in 2019 was by far the largest sector, 66% larger than the next group - construction.

Tracking establishment change by sector can be useful to understand what changes are taking place. Chart – compares 2015 to 2019. For most industries there has been very little change. No industry sector has seen double digit growth in establishments. Transportation and Warehousing (Trans & Ware on the graph), Wholesale Trade, and Real estate have shown some establishment growth. Business headquarters and operations (ManageHQ) emerged as an area in 2019. However, this may be the result of a reclassification from another industry sector.
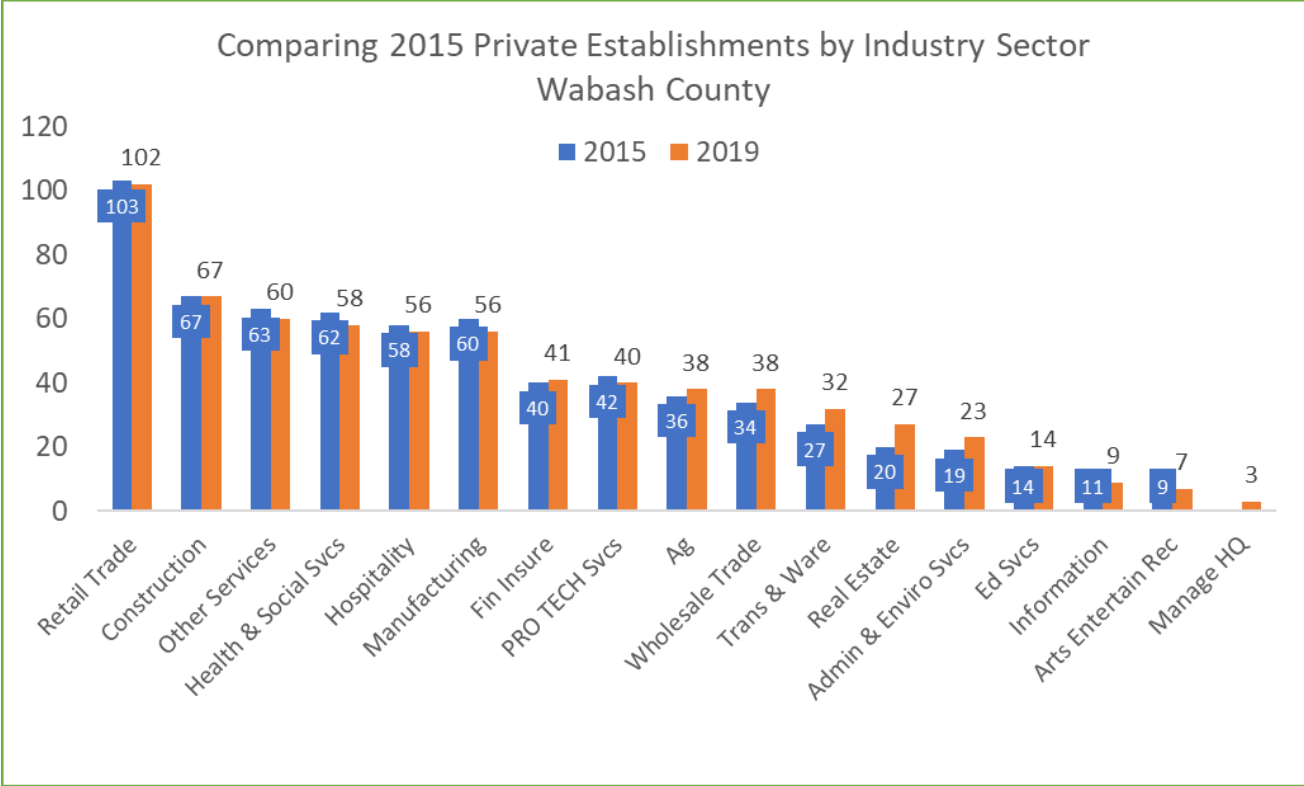
Comparing 2015 Private Establishments by Industry Sector
Wabash County

Legend: ■ 2015 ■ 2019

Industry Sector	2015	2019
Retail Trade	103	102
Construction	67	67
Other Services	63	60
Health & Social Svcs	62	58
Hospitality	58	56
Manufacturing	60	56
Fin Insure	40	41
PRO TECH Svcs	42	40
Ag	36	38
Wholesale Trade	34	38
Trans & Ware	27	32
Real Estate	20	27
Admin & Enviro Svcs	19	23
Ed Svcs	14	14
Information	11	9
Arts Entertain Rec	9	7
Manage HQ		3

Source: STATS Indiana, using Indiana Department of Workforce Development data aggregated by the Indiana Business Research Center

Employment

There are two considerations for measuring employment. The primary source is known as payroll employment which are jobs tied to the unemployment insurance. The other source of employment is self-employment. Wabash County is home to over 12,000 payroll jobs. Private employment represents 89% of all employment in the county, up from 83% in 2010. Employment is down from its peak in 2014. Government employment during this period declined by over 400 jobs.

Payroll Employment
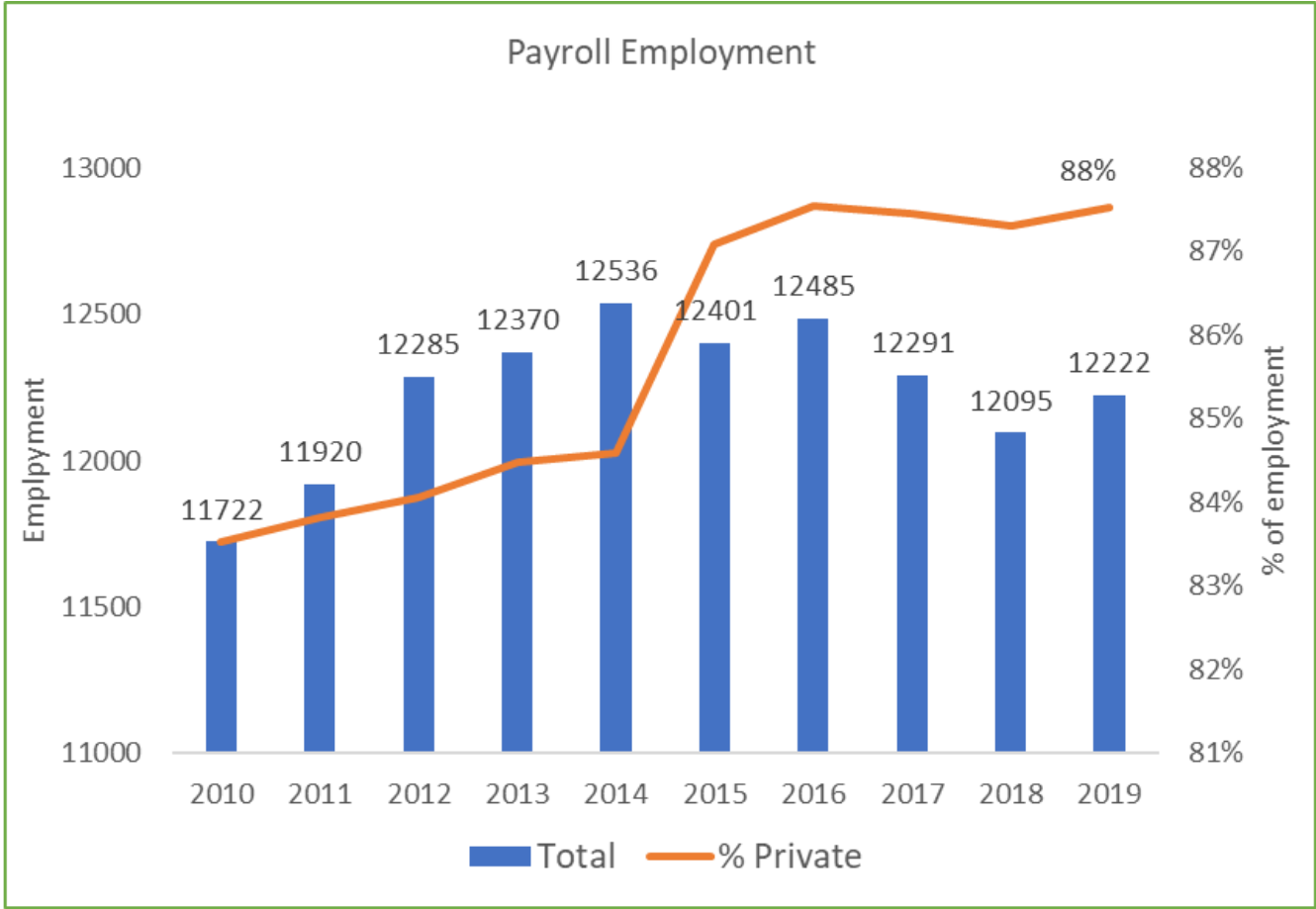
Source: BLS.gov

Manufacturing and "Eds and Meds" represent over 50% of private employment in the county. Manufacturing represents 23% of private employment. While no single sector of professional-type services (highlighted in orange) represents a large percentage of employment, collectively they represent over 860 jobs in the county.

Largest Private Employment Sectors
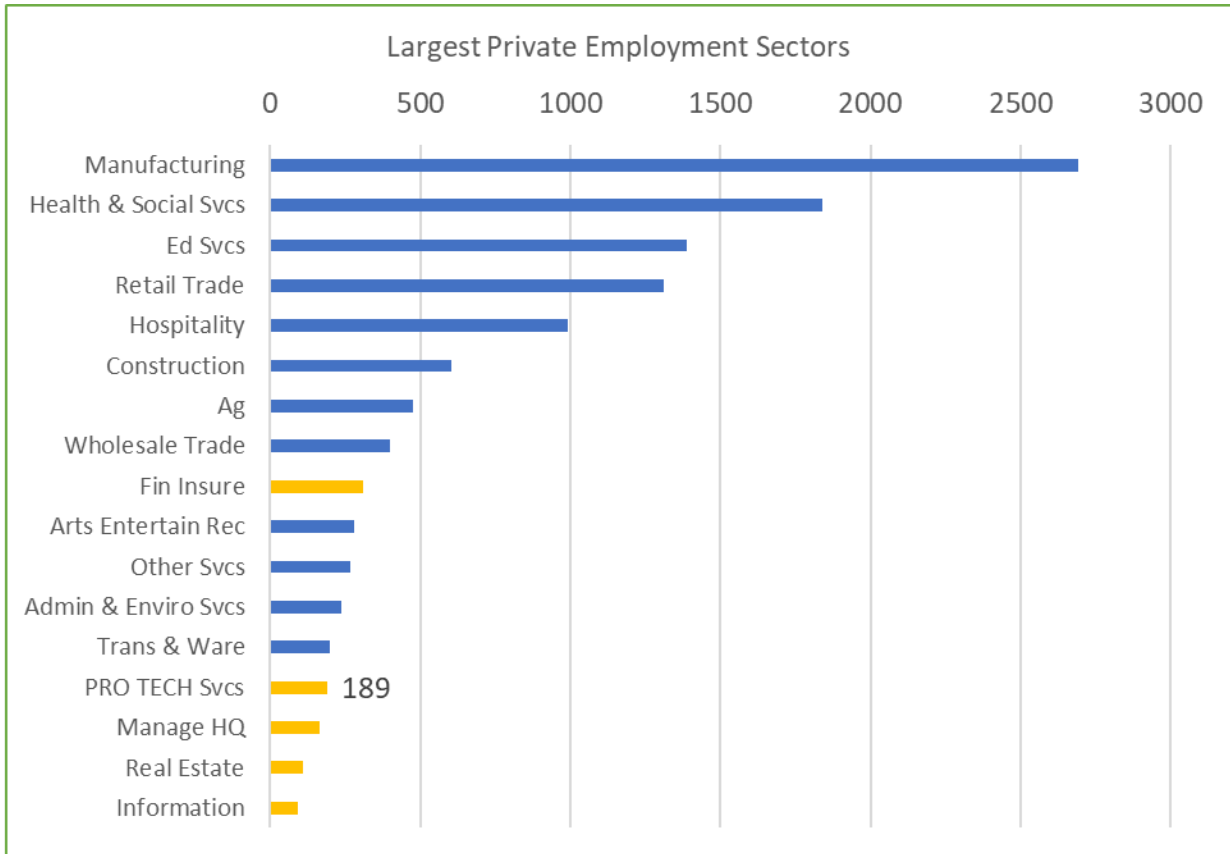
Source:BLS.gov QCEW Series

Since 2015 manufacturing employment is down by almost 11% (316 jobs). Some of the loss in manufacturing employment may be related to a reclassification of companies from manufacturing to Management of Companies and Enterprises (ManageHQ) which became a data point for Wabash County in 2017.

Private Employment Change 2015 - 2019

Industry	Change
Manufacturing	-316
Health & Social Svcs	-30
Ed Svcs	4
Retail Trade	34
Hospitality	-73
Construction	89
Ag	-68
Wholesale Trade	21
Fin Insure	4
Arts Entertain Rec	22
Other Svcs	7
Admin & Enviro Svcs	34
Trans & Ware	67
PRO TECH Svcs	-3
Manage HQ	164
Real Estate	16
Information	-12
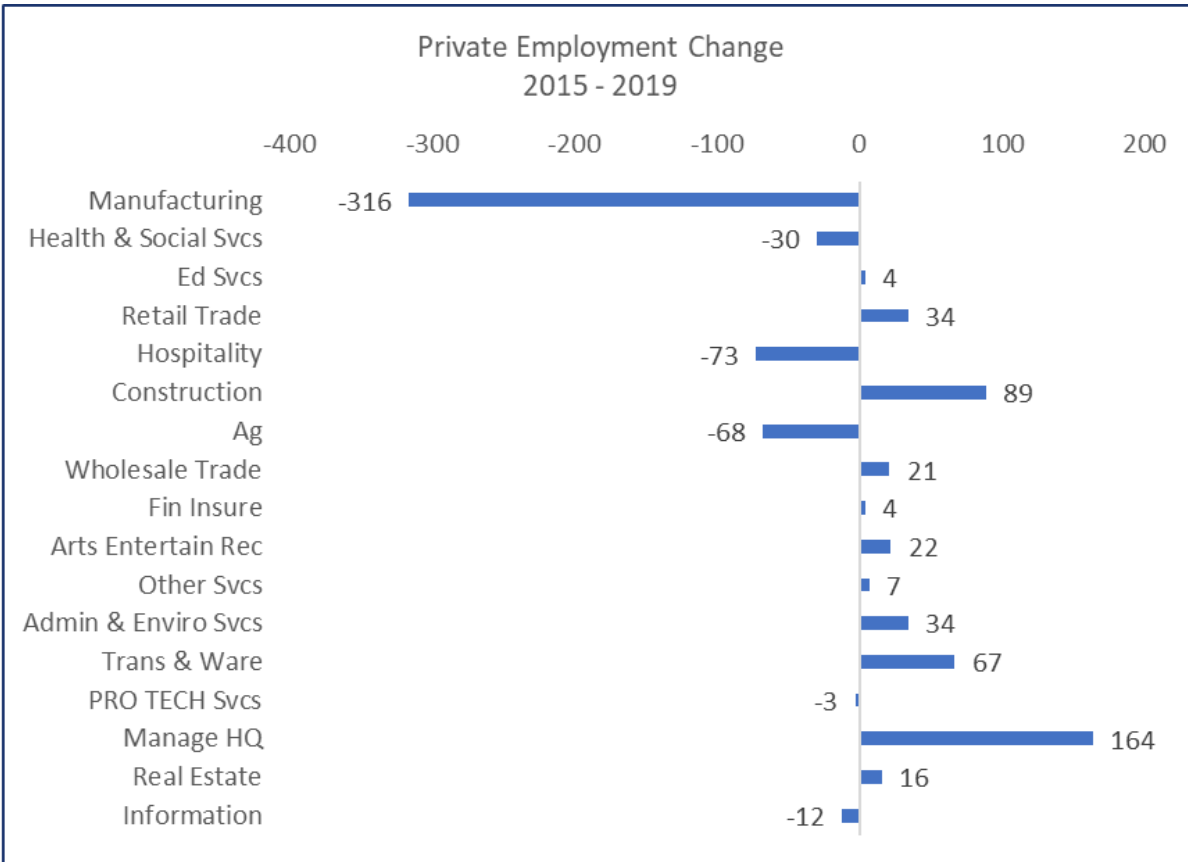
Source:BLS.gov QCEW Series

Self-employment is a critical component of the Wabash County economy. Including self-employment means Wabash County contains over 16,000 jobs. Self-employment is 22% of the total job base and 25% of the total wage base. Self-employment is a critical element of several key industries

- Agriculture / Farming represents about 16% of the self-employment and 33% of the self-employment income.
- Adding professional technical self-employment more than doubles the 189 payroll-based professional technical employment.

Self Employment Levels
Wabash County

Source: Estimated from Bureau of Economic Analysis and YourEconomy.org

Sources of Employment growth

YourEconomy.org is a research organization based at the University of Wisconsin. It utilizes data sources such as Dun and Bradstreet to track business starts, closures and expansions. Based on its analysis 59% of job creation has been based on new business starts. Thirty nine percent has been based on expansions of existing businesses. One percent of new job creation has been from businesses moving into the County.

It is important to note that this does not represent net job growth but sources of new job creation.

YourEconomy.Org
New Job Creation by Status

- Move-In 1%
- Expansion 39%
- Starts 59%

Legend: ■ Starts ■ Expansion ■ Move In
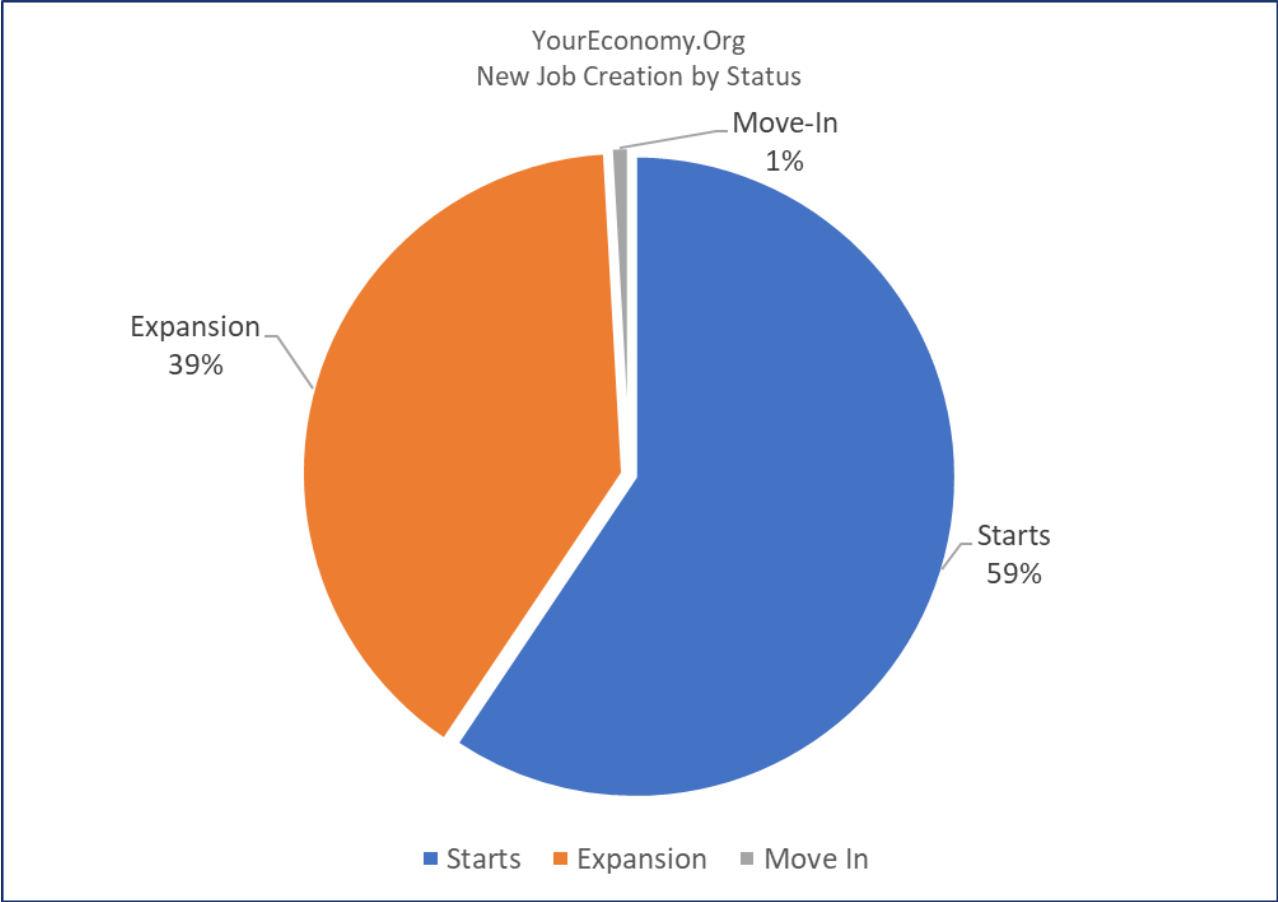
B. County Workforce

LABOR FORCE

The Wabash County labor force is approximately 15,000. Since 2015 the labor force has been steadily shrinking down approximately 2%.
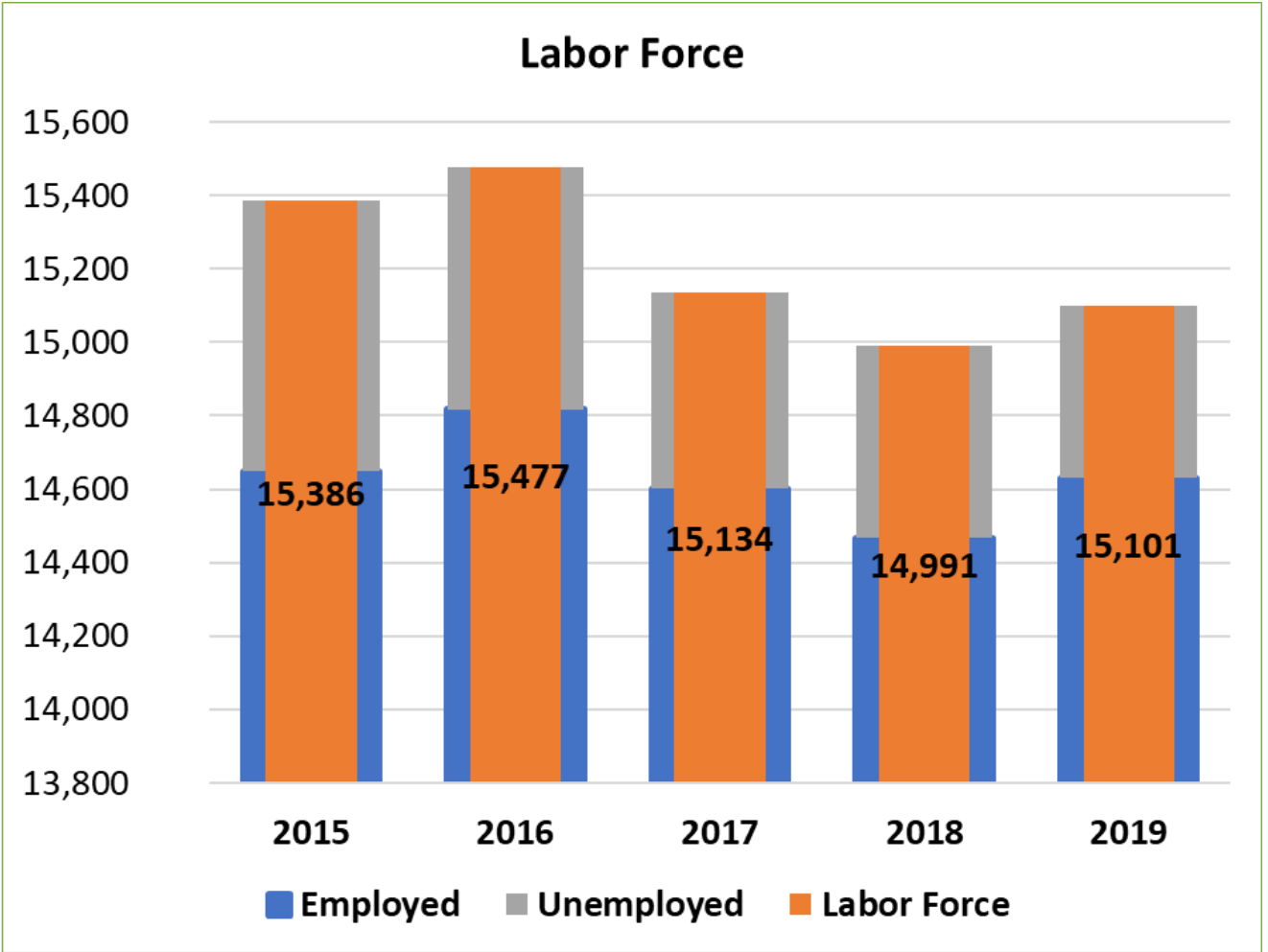
Labor Force

Source: STATS Indiana, using Indiana Department of Workforce Development data aggregated by the Indiana Business Research Center

Prior to COVID the County's unemployment rate from September 2015 to February 2020 averaged 3.6%. The COVID shutdowns drove unemployment up to 16.5%. The unemployment rate has since fallen from this peak to the levels of 2015.

Wabash County Unemployment Rate
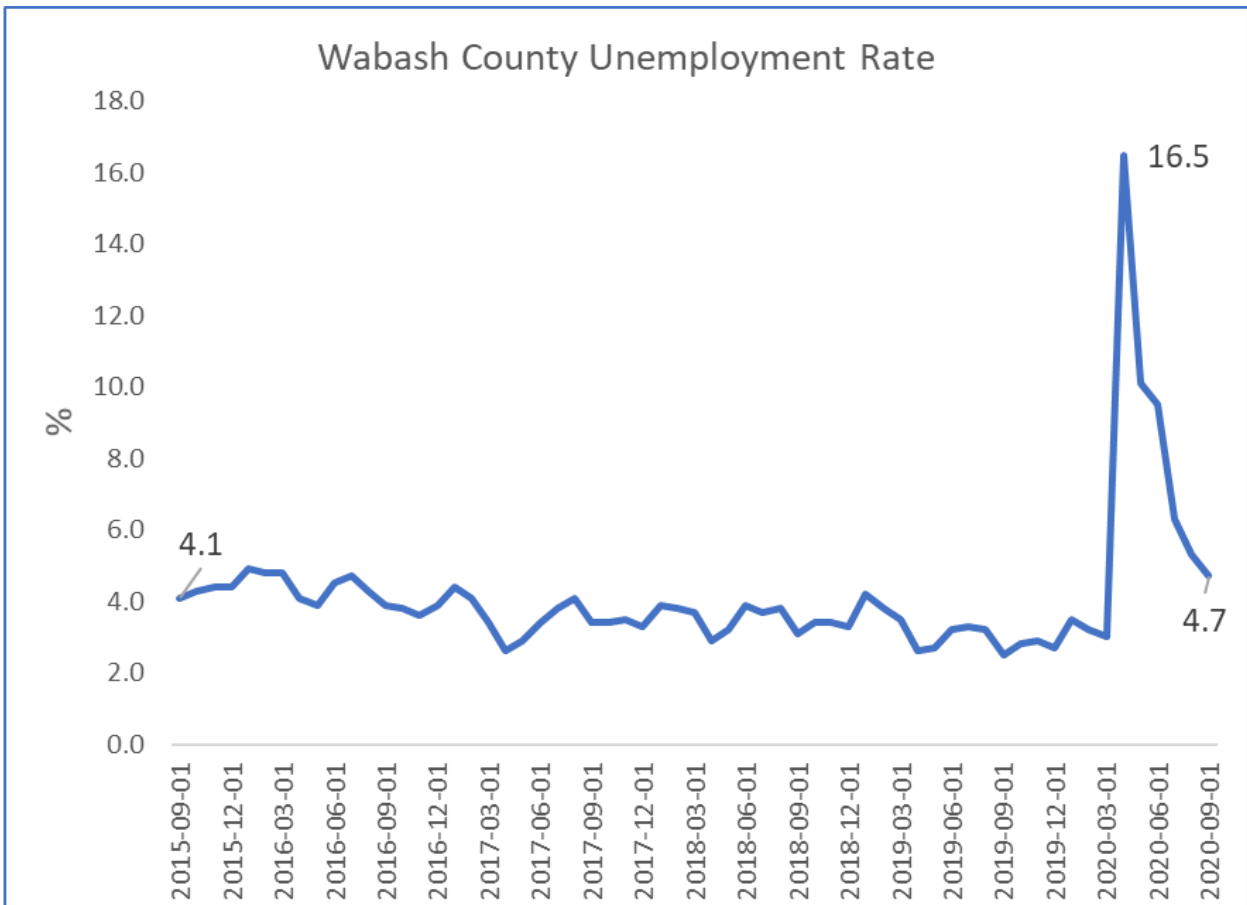
Source: BLS unemployment

WORKFORCE AGE

Several key industries have rapidly aging workforces. Overall, 26% of the County's jobs are held by people over the age of 55. For industries such as manufacturing or agriculture over 55 represents more than 30% of the workforce. Statewide 25% of the manufacturing workforce is over the age of 55

The aging of the manufacturing workforce is a critical issue for the County. Manufacturing represents 36% of the private sector wage base and 23% of private sector employment. Some of these jobs may be replaced automation. However, not all jobs will be and the inability to replace those employees may be a challenge for the county's manufacturing sector in the future.

Labor Force Age by Key Industry
Over 500 Employees

Industry	18% / 7% values shown
Total	18% ... 7%
Manufacturing	25% ... 6%
Healthcare Social Svcs	17% ... 7%
Retail Trade	18% ... 11%
Accom / Food Services	9% ... 5%
Construction	15% ... 6%
Ag	17% ... 15%
Ed Services	13% ... 5%

Legend: ■ 14-18 ■ 19-21 ■ 22-24 ■ 25-34 ■ 35-44 ■ 45-54 ■ 55-64 ■ 65+
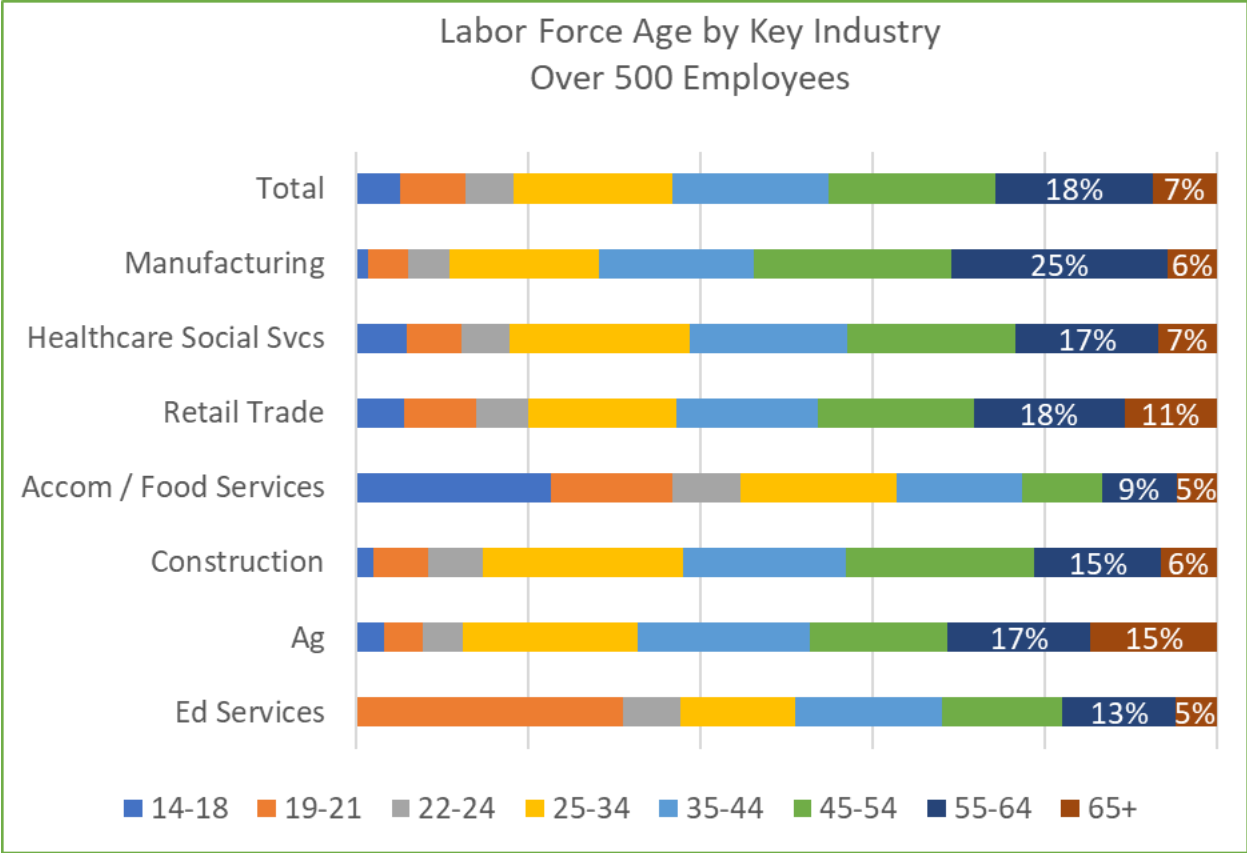
Source: NP analysis of LEHD data

The manufacturing sector has the highest compensation of all major employment sectors in the county. Total wages recovered from a sharp decline around the 2008 national recession and have outpaced every other major sector since. These collective sub-sectors, however, are the most elastic of the major sectors as indicated by the precipitous, 40% decline between 2007 and 2009.

CAINC6N Compensation of Employees by NAICS Industry
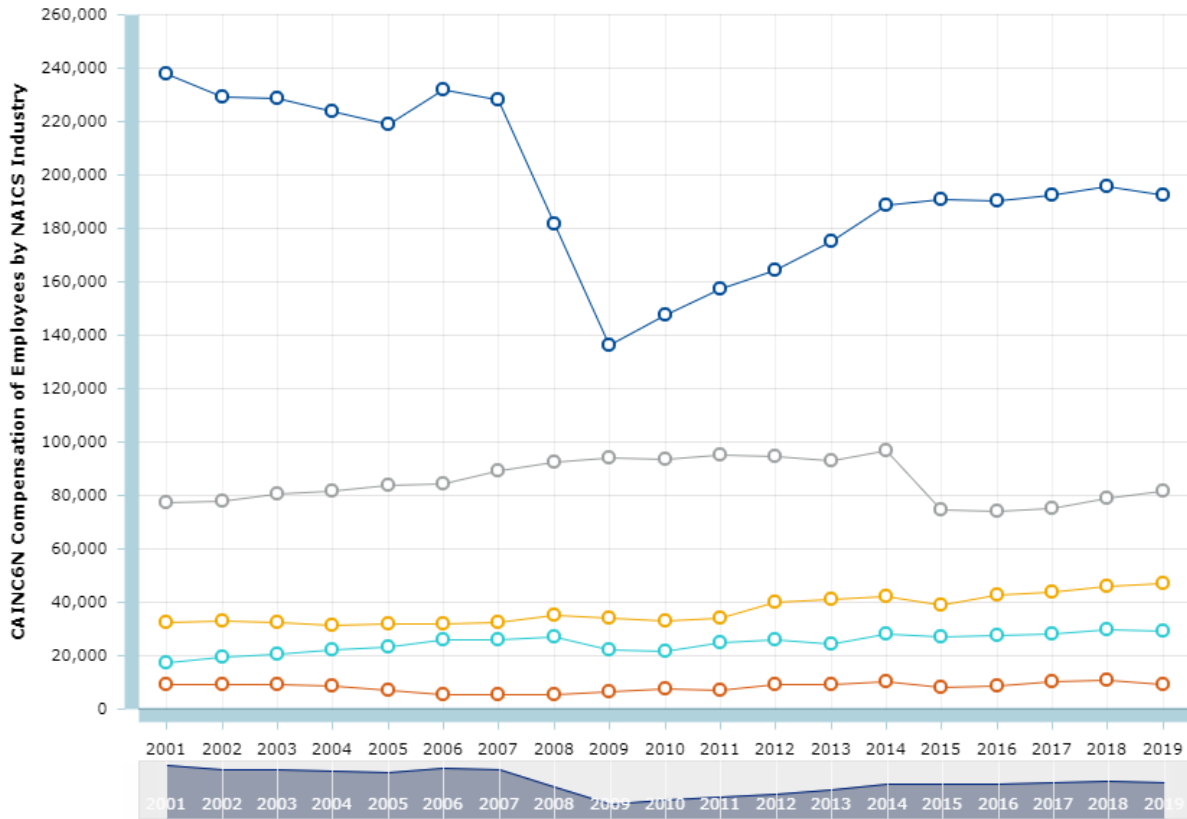
Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

- Manufacturing [Wabash IN]
- Farm compensation [Wabash IN]
- Wholesale trade [Wabash IN]
- Retail trade [Wabash IN]
- Government and government enterprises [Wabash IN]

WORKFORCE & COMMUTING

Of the County's approximately 12,000 jobs, more than half are held by residents of the county with the remainder of the jobs filled by people outside the county. 54% of the County's employed labor force leaves the county for employment

6169 work in Wabash County; Live Outside

6369 Live and Work in Wabash County

7440 Live in Wabash; Work outside the County

Source: U.S.Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, https://onthemap.ces.census.gov
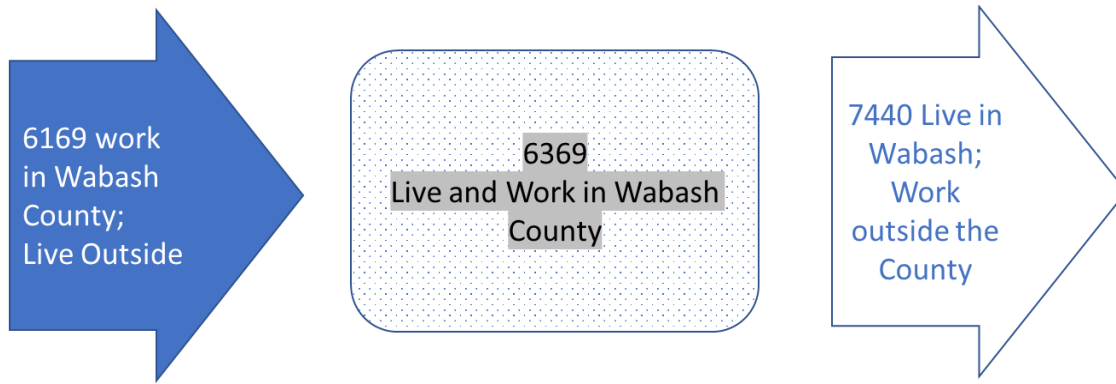
For private primary jobs more than 37% of county residents commute more than 25 miles for work, and nearly 22% commute over 50 miles. For those who have the longest commutes – most of those commuters find employment south of the county.

Job Counts by Distance/Direction in 2017
All Workers

View as Radar Chart ▼
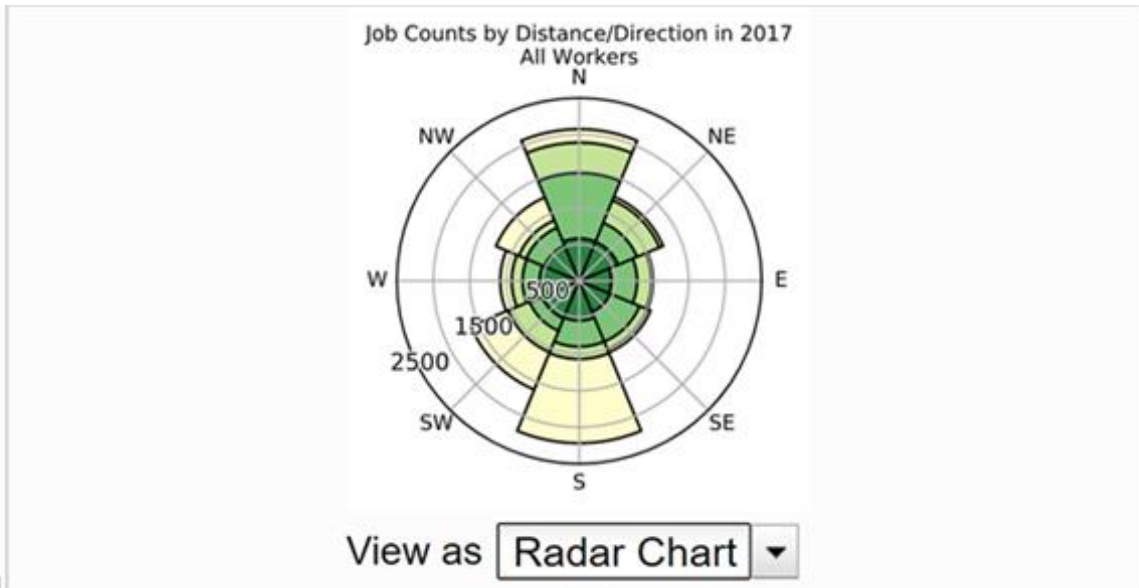
Jobs by Distance - Home Census Block to Work Census Block

	2017	
	Count	Share
Total Private Primary Jobs	11,530	100.0%
Less than 10 miles	4,224	36.6%
10 to 24 miles	3,008	26.1%
25 to 50 miles	1,794	15.6%
Greater than 50 miles	2,504	21.7%

Source: U.S.Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, https://onthemap.ces.census.gov

2. FISCAL CAPACITY

Understanding the fiscal environment is critical to realistic, actionable, long-range planning. This chapter provides an overview of the current tax and revenue structure of Wabash County and its municipalities to understand the tools available to support the planning process.

KEY FINDINGS

- Major sources of local revenue are property taxes and income taxes.
- Wabash County has experienced little recent growth in its property tax base, which puts pressure on property tax rates and the ability to fund public services.
- Circuit breaker impacts are relatively low in most of the county but are an emerging issue for the Wabash Civil City.
- Wabash County has prioritized the local income tax in its fiscal policy. The county has seen significant recent income tax revenue growth.
- The current income tax rate is near the statutory maximum for budgetary revenues, leaving little capacity for rate growth.
- Untapped revenue streams such as the Food and Beverage Tax and Wheel Tax/Surtax could generate revenue for future capital projects.

A. Property Tax

The local property tax is an important source of funding for counties, cities, and schools in Indiana

PROPERTY TAX OVERVIEW

Local property taxes are a primary source of revenue for Indiana counties and municipalities. Property taxes are authorized and administered by IC 6-1.1. Counties, townships, schools, municipalities, and libraries are among the governmental units authorized to levy a property tax. Property taxes can be allocated to fund general (operational) and capital needs and can be used to pay the debt service on bonds.

Property tax rates are determined by dividing the requested levy (subject to statutory controls) by the tax base. Indiana has instituted a unique property tax rate control scheme by enacting a series of property tax rate caps:

- 1% of assessed value for owner-occupied residential properties
- 2% of assessed value for non-owner occupied residential, long term care, and agricultural land.
- 3% of assessed value for non-residential property.

These rate caps provide more predictability for taxpayers but increase revenue uncertainty for taxing units, underscoring the need for careful analysis in fiscal planning.

PROPERTY TAX BASE HISTORY

The tax base is the total value of taxable property within a given taxing jurisdiction. In Indiana, the tax base is comprised of two property classes:

- **Real Property**: The market value in use of land and lots, buildings, dwellings, and other improvements.
- **Personal Property:** The depreciated value of eligible plant, equipment, and fixtures, primarily within commercial and industrial operations.

Change in the tax base determines the level of increase in property tax revenues without incurring an increase in the property tax rate. The tax base is an integral component of the property tax revenue capacity of a given taxing jurisdiction.

The Wabash County tax base increased at a rate of 2.6% annually between 2009 and 2015. However, tax base growth has slowed substantially since 2015. Between 2015 and 2021, the rate of growth was only 0.2% annually. The slow rate of change of the tax base presents a challenge for local fiscal leaders to overcome.

Wabash County Certified Net AV History
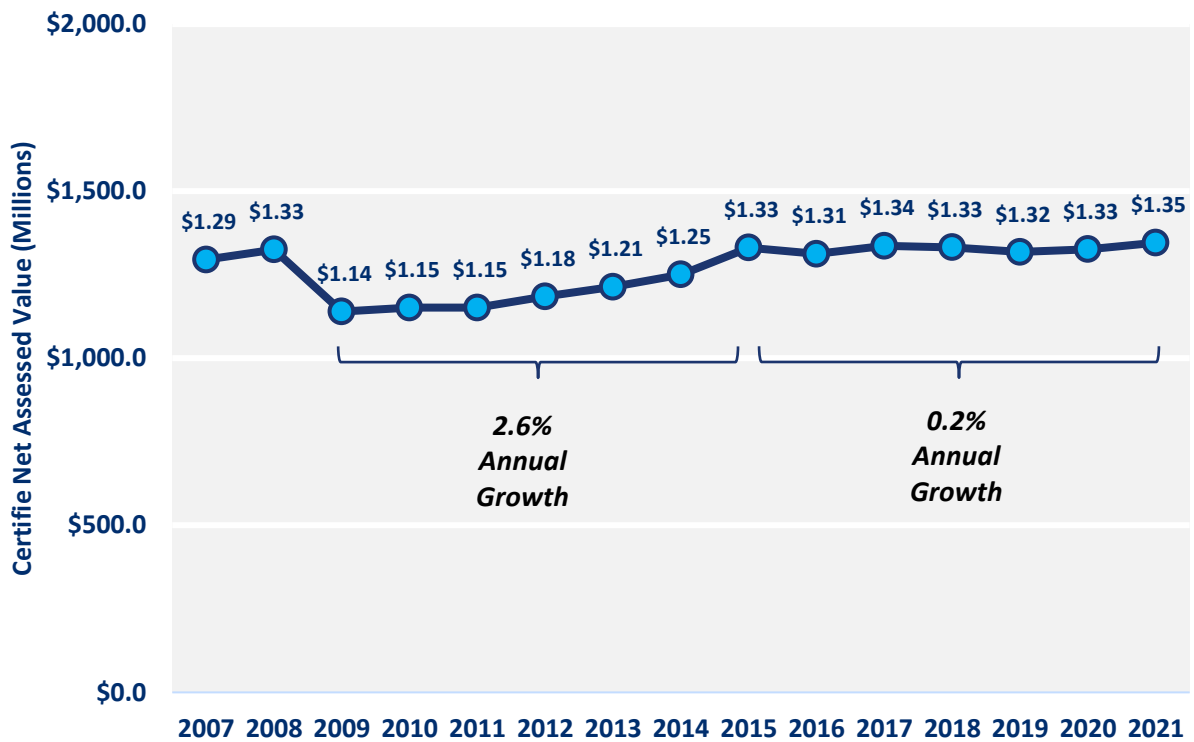
ASSESSED VALUE BY PROPERTY CLASS

Analyzing the tax base change by property class provides insight into the dynamics of the changing economic conditions within Wabash County. Figure X shows the difference in assessed value by property classification, indexed to 2012. These trends are summarized as follows.

- **Residential**: Residential assessed value decreased between 2012 and 2013 in the wake of the 2008 national recession before recovering slowly over the next few years. Growth was minimal until 2018. Between 2018 and 2020, residential assessed values increased by nearly 10%.
- **Commercial/Industrial:** Non-residential property was also affected by the 2008 recession, decreasing by nearly 10% between 2012 and 2014. The commercial tax base recovered slowly after that, almost reaching 2012 levels by 2020.
- **Personal Property:** Depreciable personal property has experienced the fastest growth rate, increasing by nearly 40% over eight years. While this is the fastest growing segment of the tax base, it is also the smallest in overall assessed value.
- **Agricultural:** Agricultural land is assessed using as prescribed in Indiana law. The methodology to assess agricultural land was changed in 2015, resulting in a reduction of farmland valuation throughout the State. Wabash County has been significantly impacted by this change, as agricultural assessed value has been reduced between 2015 and 2020.

Wabash County Gross Assessed Value by Property Class; Indexed to
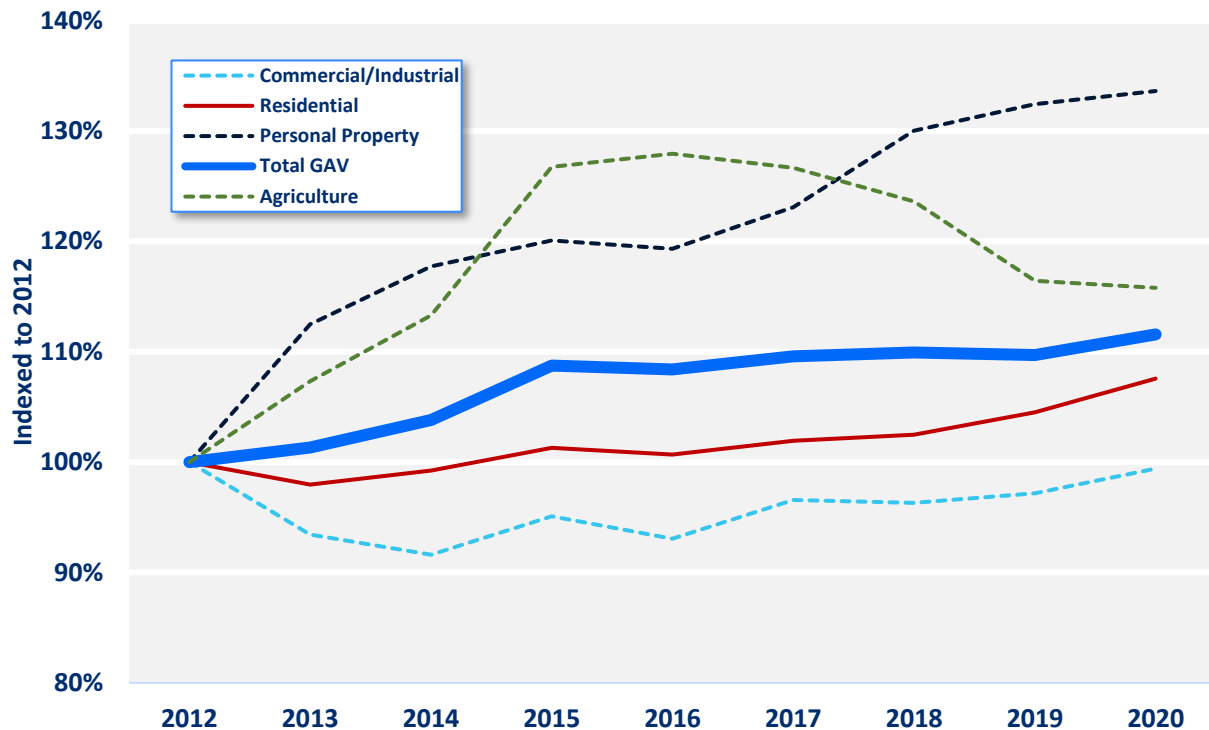
ASSESSED VALUE BY CORPORATION

A review of assessed value change by geography shows that most of the past decade's tax base growth occurred within unincorporated areas. Assessed values within the three largest municipalities, Wabash City, North Manchester, and Lafontaine, increased only marginally between 2009 and 2020. In Wabash City, the 2020 tax base remained 5% below the 2009 level.

The lack of tax base growth within municipalities is likely caused by the decreasing valuations of commercial and industrial property after the 2008 recession. This tax base component is often concentrated in municipalities and showed a significant downward trend in 2020.

Unincorporated Wabash County showed the greatest tax base growth over the period of analysis. However, the entirety of the tax base increase occurred between 2009 and 2015 and is strongly correlated with increased agricultural assessed values. The change in the methodology for calculating the agricultural base rate arrested the growth of the tax base after 2016.

Wabash County Certified Net Assessed Value by Civil Corporation; Indexed to 2009
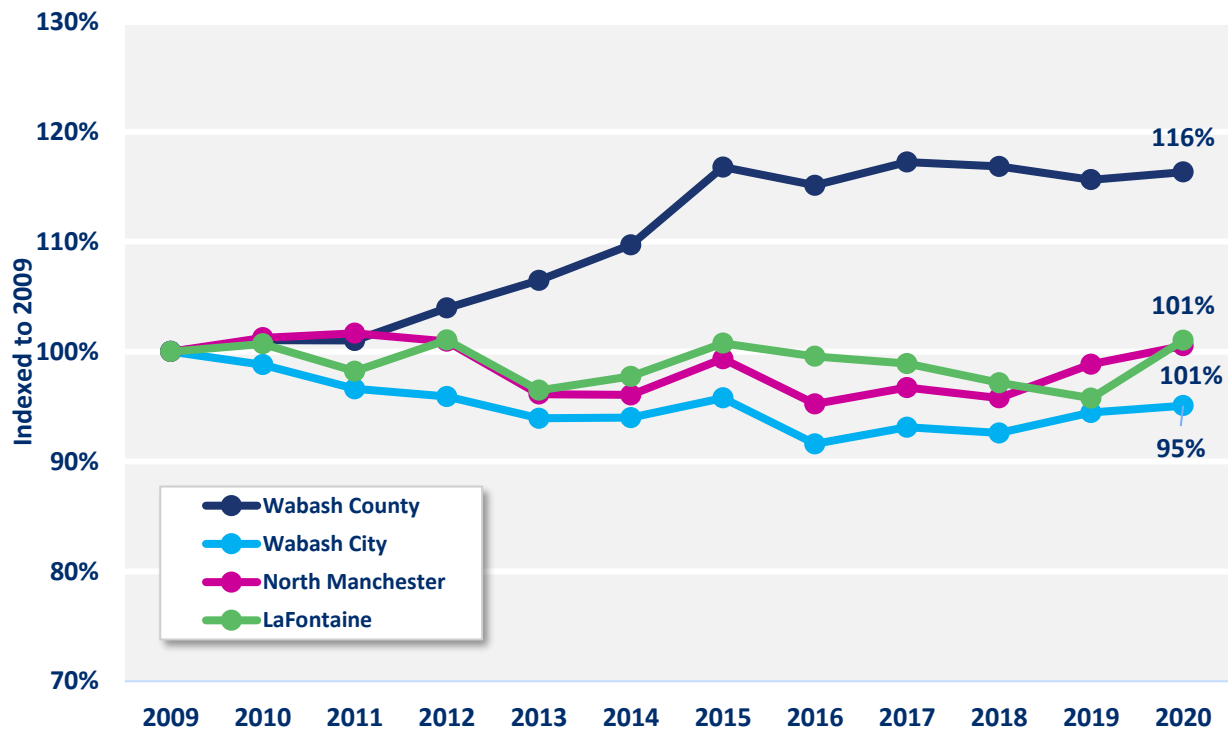
PARCEL LEVEL ASSESSED VALUE CHANGE

A parcel-level analysis of assessed value trends reinforces the broader conclusion of the time series review. Figure below shows parcel-level assessed value changes between 2012 and 2020 for the largest Wabash County municipalities. The analysis demonstrates that most small lot residential properties exhibited very modest (1%-3%) growth throughout the analysis.

Many large-sized commercial and industrial properties experienced decreases in assessed valuation over the time period. Very few properties experienced valuation growth over 3% annually.

Limited assessed value growth can provide consistency and predictability in tax liability for taxpayers, but it limits the ability of governmental units to provide services without increasing rates. Further, if assessed value is correctly calibrated with market value, a lack of property valuation increase indicates little capital appreciation for property owners.

Parcel Level Assessed Value Change for Municipal Units
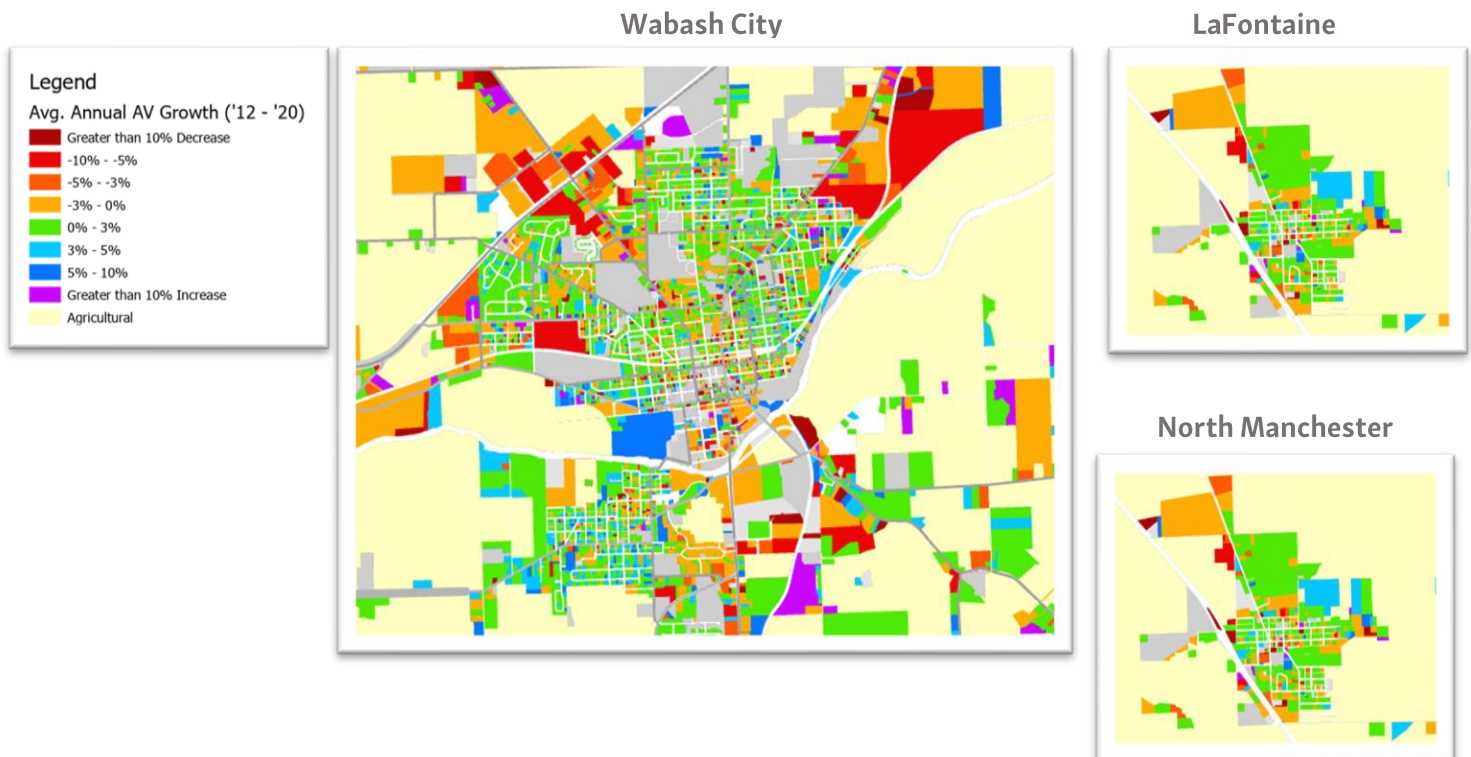
PROPERTY TAX RATES

The property tax rates for incorporated areas within Wabash County range from $2.5519 in Lafontaine Town to $3.7877 in the portion of Wabash City served by Wabash City Schools. The municipal rates and the school rates make up the largest portion of the total tax rates.

Property tax rates that exceed $3.00 per $100 in assessed value, like those found in Wabash and North Manchester, would typically lead to high levels of circuit breaker loss. However, Wabash County has enacted a substantial income tax-based property tax relief program. This program discounts gross property tax rates by approximately 27% for homesteads, 17% for non-homestead residential properties, and 5% for commercial properties.

The property tax relief income tax provides additional capacity for municipal areas with higher property tax rates.

Property Tax Rates for Incorporated Areas (Tax Year 2020)
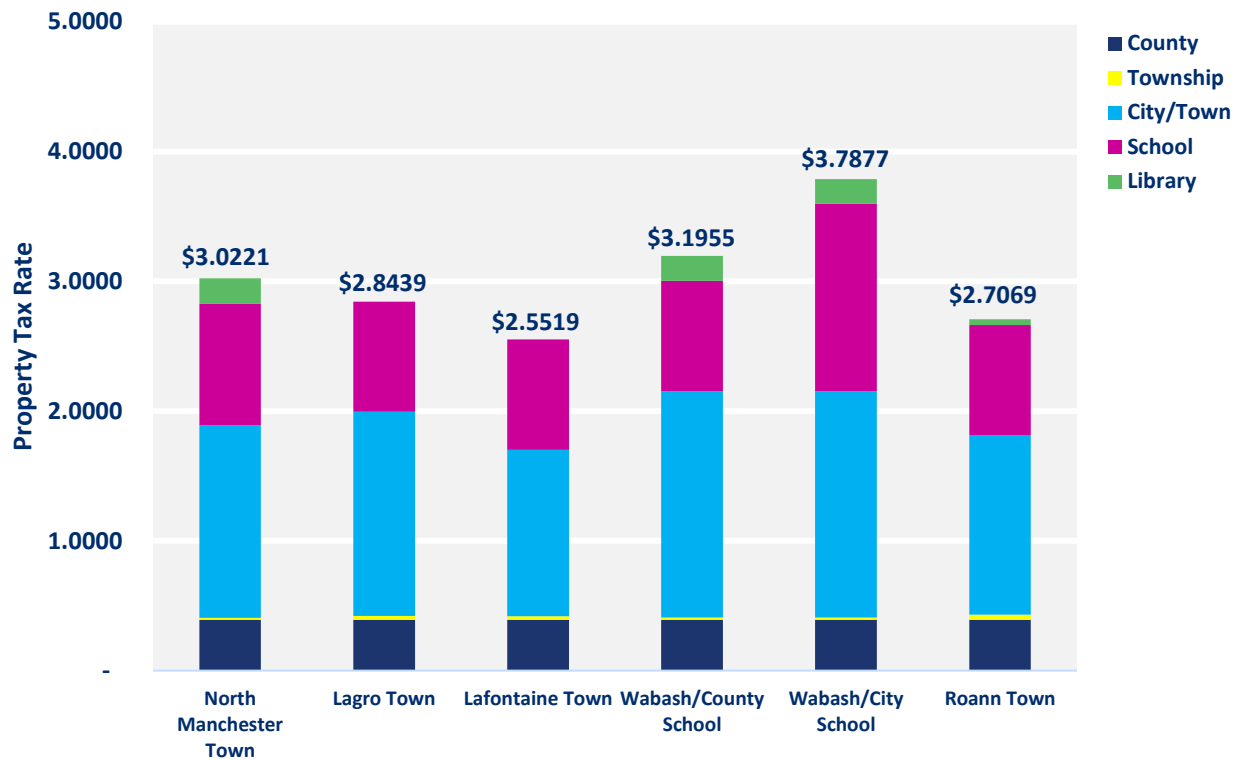
CIRCUIT BREAKER LOSS

In Indiana, property tax rate caps limit property tax liability to a certain percentage of a property's gross assessed value. If the gross liability charged exceeds the allowable amount under the rate cap, the excess is credited to the taxpayer. A circuit breaker credit is an "unfunded" credit., meaning that a credit (tax bill reduction) to taxpayers equates to a revenue loss for taxing units.

Circuit breaker losses for the County and largest municipalities range from very low (2.8% of certified levy) in Lafontaine to high (12% of certified levy) in the City of Wabash. Historically, circuit breaker losses were very low across the board but have increased consistently since 2016. This increase is attributable to two main factors. First, circuit breaker losses increase if certified levies increase at a faster rate than the tax base. An implication of the slow rate of growth in the Wabash County tax base is increasing circuit breaker losses. Secondly, over time, Wabash County has reduced the allocation of resources to the local property tax relief credit funded by the income tax. While this decision allocates more revenue to other income tax components, it raises the effective property tax rate, leading to increased circuit breaker losses.

Circuit Breaker Loss as a Percentage of Total Levy (2020)
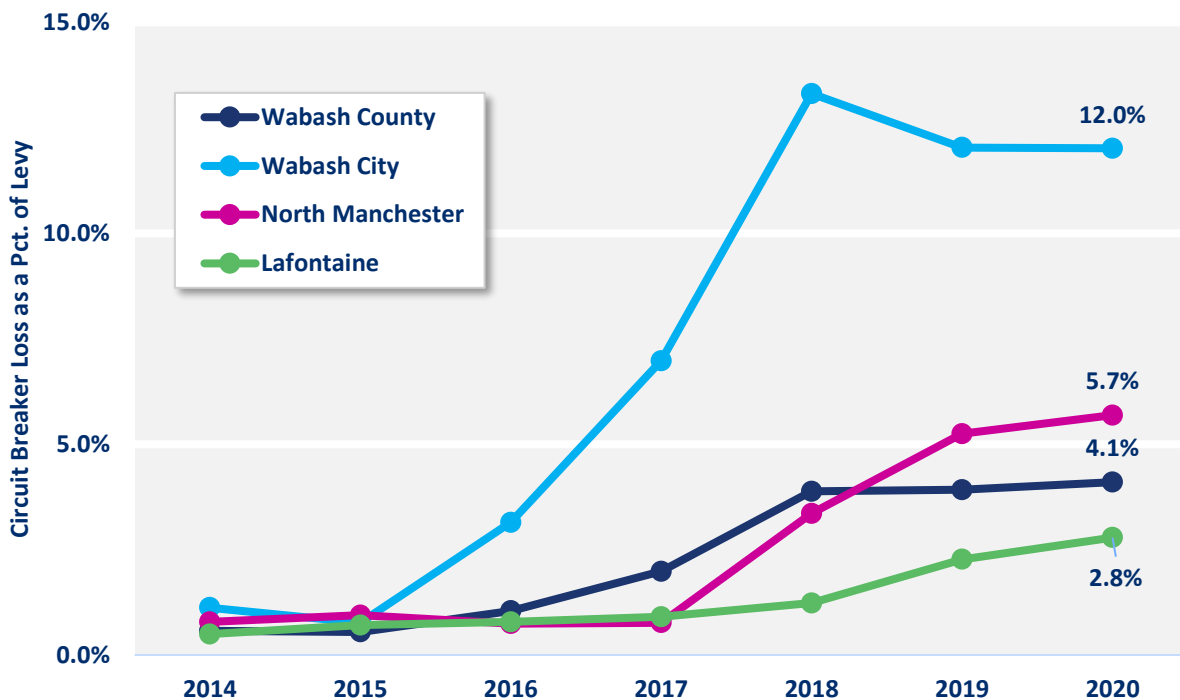
The dual dynamics of slow tax base growth and increasing circuit break losses have resulted in limited growth in property tax revenue over the period of analysis. Property tax revenues for Wabash County and the four largest municipalities totaled $10.9 million in 2014. By 2021, net property tax revenues had increased to 11.9M, an average growth rate of less than 1% annually.

Net Property Tax Revenue
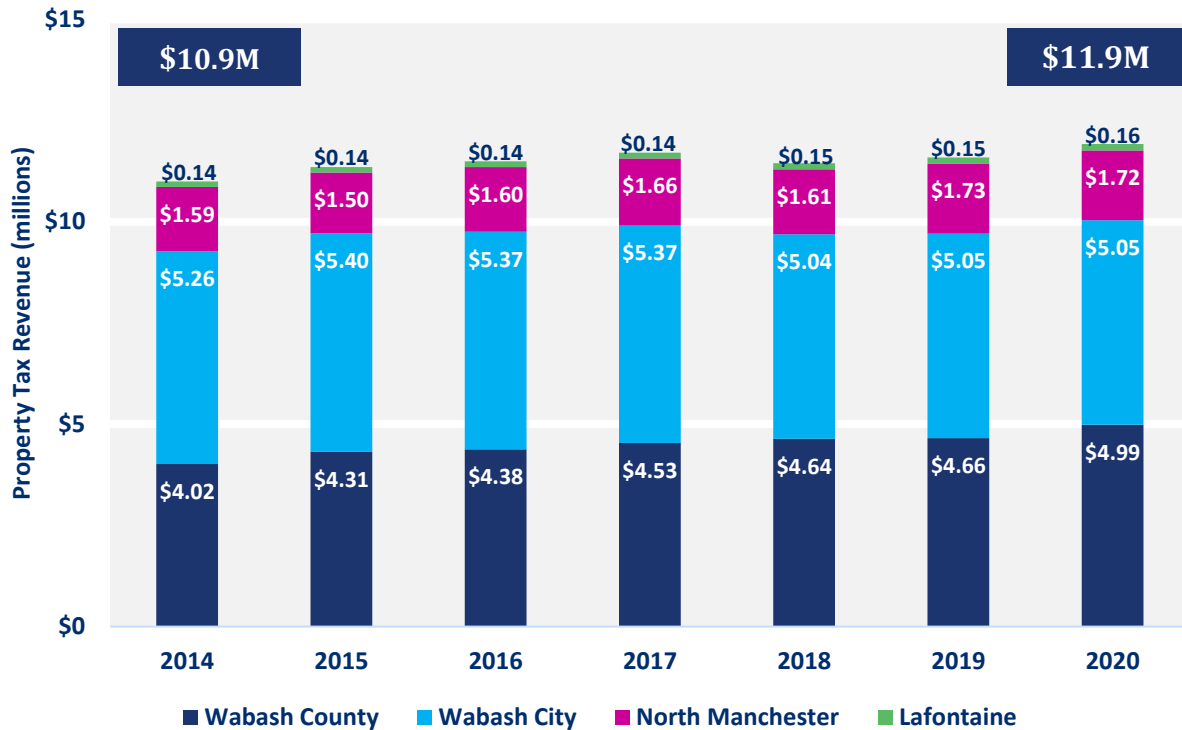
B. Local Income Tax

Wabash County has prioritized the local income tax in its fiscal policy, making it a key policy variable for future planning.

LOCAL INCOME TAX OVERVIEW

The local income tax is the second of the two major sources of revenue for local taxing units in Indiana. In Wabash County, local income tax policy, including rates and rate allocations, is set by the County Council, the county government's fiscal body. In Indiana, local income taxes are pain to the county of residence, not the county of employment. This means that residents pay income taxes to Wabash County, regardless of whether they work within the county or outside the county.

The local income tax rate can be divided into three major components, the Expenditure Rate, the Property Tax Relief Rate, and sometimes a Special Purpose Rate:

- The **Expenditure rate** raises spendable budgetary revenue for local units of government. The expenditure rate has three subcategories: certified shares, public safety, and economic development. The Expenditure Rate is intended to produce additional revenues above that available from the property tax.

- The **Property Tax Relief** rate does not provide new revenue to taxing units. Instead, it replaces property tax revenue with income tax revenue. The property tax relief rate is used to reduce property tax liability for taxpayers.

- Some counties enact **Special Purpose** rates, which allocate income taxes to a designated use, such as a jail, or a public transit operation.

LOCAL INCOME TAX RATES

Wabash County has implemented a fiscal policy that prioritizes the local income tax. Wabash County's local income tax rate is the highest among its regional peers at 2.90%. Local income tax rates in other counties range from 2.68% in Fulton County to 1.00% in Kosciusko County.

The Wabash County expenditure rate is set at 2.4%. This is greater than any other regional county's total rate. Fulton County has the next highest expenditure rate at 2.20%

The property tax replacement rate in Wabash County is currently set at 0.50%, which at about the midpoint of other regional counties. Miami County has the highest regional property tax relief rate at 1.06%. Several counties, including Huntington, Marshall, and Kosciusko, have not instituted a property tax relief rate.

Local income taxes are primarily distributed to municipalities and the County governmental unit, with a few exceptions. Local income taxes are not a substantive funding source for schools in Indiana.

Income Tax Rate Comparison

Legend: ■ Expenditure Rate   ■ Property Tax Relief
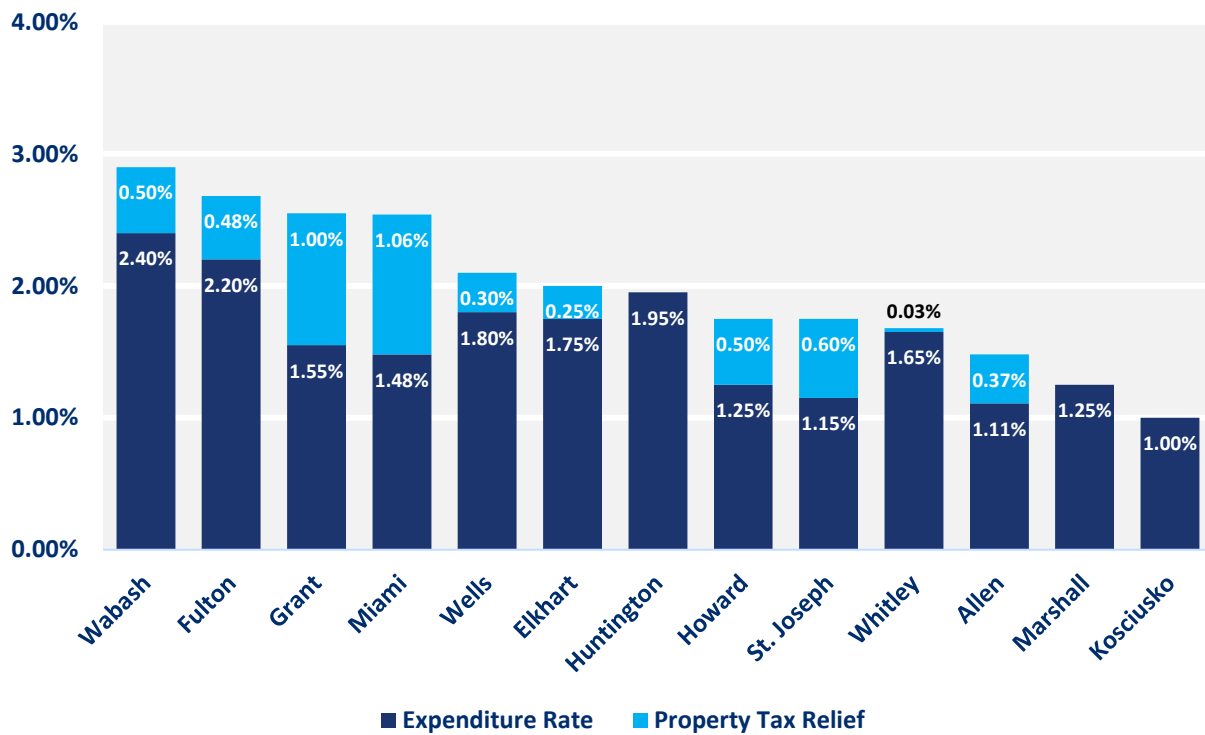
INCOME TAX RATE CAPACITY

With its relatively high-income tax rate, Wabash County has little remaining capacity to raise revenues through the local income tax. The maximum income tax allowable by statute is 2.5% for the expenditure rate and 1.25% for the property tax relief rate for a total rate of 3.75%.

With an expenditure rate of 2.4%, Wabash County currently uses 96% of its rate capacity for the certified shares portion of the income tax. Considerable capacity remains in the property tax relief category. However, increasing the property tax relief rate will replace property tax revenue with income tax revenue, not provide net new funding to Wabash County taxing units.

Current vs. Maximum Local Income Tax Rate (2020)

LOCAL INCOME TAX REVENUE HISTORY

In contrast to property taxes, Wabash County has seen substantial gains in local income tax revenue since 2015. Between 2015 and 2018, income tax revenue (the certified distribution) increased at 4.4% annually. After a reduction in 2019, revenues began increasing at a faster rate, 8% for distributions in 2020 and 2021.

The methodology the State uses to calculate local income tax calculation is somewhat complex. Income taxes are distributed in arrears, meaning the distributions in a given year are based on taxes collected in the prior year. In addition, in certain situations, the State will issue a "supplemental" distribution, further increasing income tax revenues.

Wabash County's relatively strong income tax growth provides a helpful supplement to the slow growing property tax revenue stream for Wabash County civil units.

Wabash County Local Income Tax Revenue History (Certified Distribution)
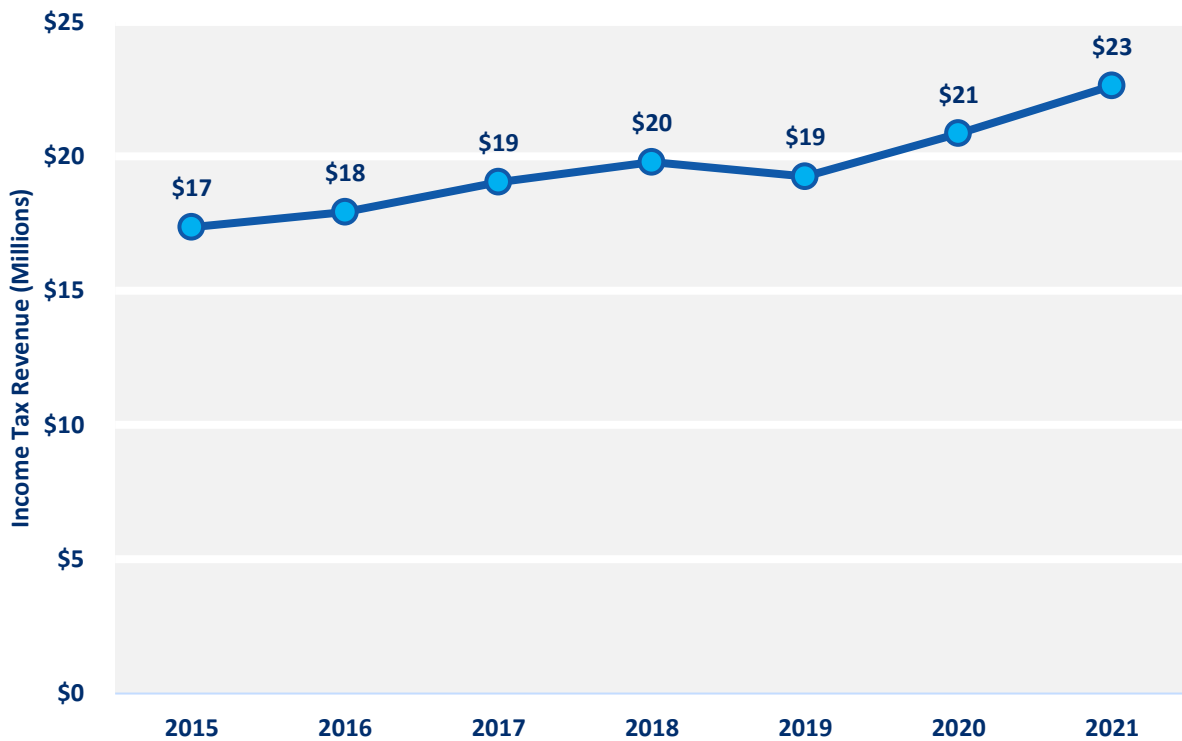
LOCAL INCOME TAX DISTRIBUTIONS

Due to a fiscal policy that prioritizes the local income tax, income tax revenues comprise a large proportion of Wabash County's municipal and county resources. For the 2021 distribution, Wabash County will receive $5.2 million in income tax revenue, while Wabash Civil City receives $4.2 million, and North Manchester receives $1.2 million.

In Wabash County, certified shares (spendable general revenues) comprise 70% of the total distribution; the public safety distribution comprises 15% of the total, and the economic development distribution comprises the remaining 15%.

Local Income Tax Revenue by Taxing Unit (2021)

Millions

	$0	$1	$2	$3	$4	$5	$6

Wabash County — Certified Shares $3.7, Public Safety $0.8, Economic Development $0.8

Wabash City — Certified Shares $3.0, Public Safety $0.6, Economic Development $0.6

North Manchester — Certified Shares $0.8

Lafontaine

■ Certified Shares ■ Public Safety ■ Economic Development
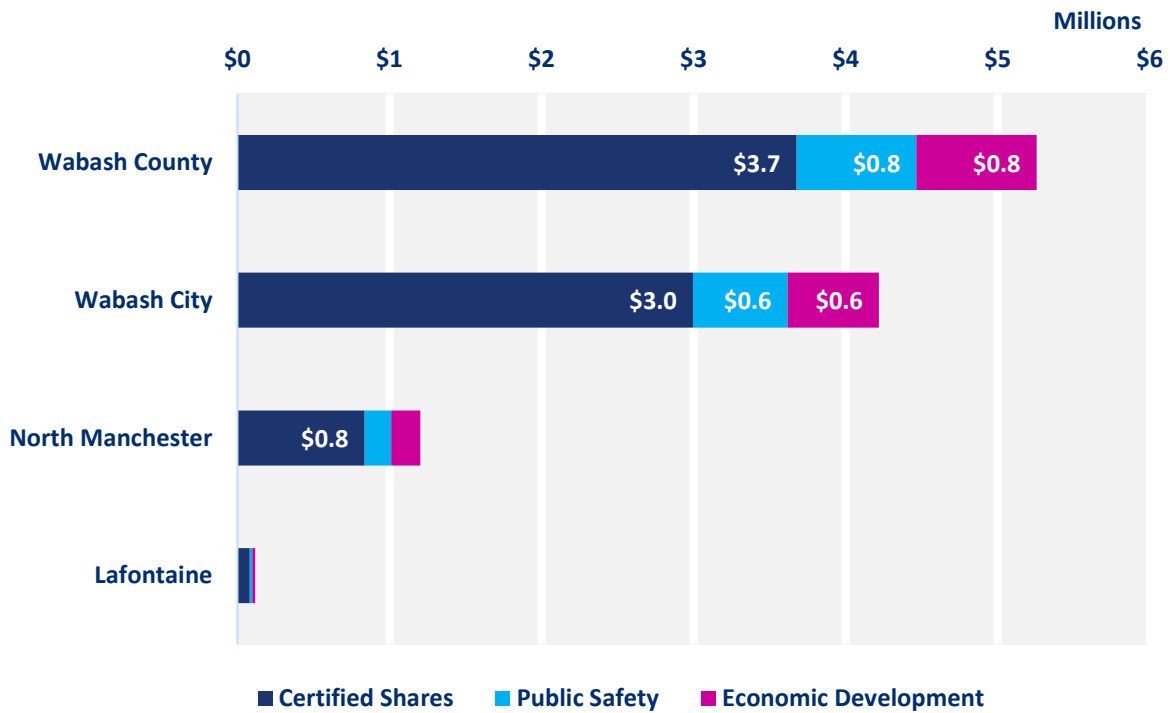
C. Supplemental Revenue Sources

Supplemental revenue streams provide options for targeted deployment of resources where new funding is needed.

MISCELLANEOUS TAXES

In addition to property and income taxes, there are several additional options for raising revenues for county or municipal purposes. Three widely used revenue options are the Food and Beverage Tas, Innkeepers Tax and Wheel Tax.

- **Food and Beverage Tax:** The Food and Beverage Tax is applied at the point of sale and has a maximum rate of 1%. The Food and Beverage tax cannot be enacted unilaterally by the County but requires special legislation. This tax is enacted in 22 counties in Indiana, and is in use in Allen and LaGrange Counties, regionally. The Food and Beverage Tax is not currently in effect in Wabash County.
- **Innkeepers Tax:** The Innkeepers tax is applied at the point of sale from lodging operations. The maximum rate is 5% and the tax can be enacted at the discretion of the County Council. Revenues from this tax are used for tourism purposes. Currently, 77 counties in Indiana impose an Innkeepers tax. Wabash County has enacted this tax at its full rate.
- **County and Municipal Wheel Tax/Surtax:** This tax is applied to motor vehicles. The Wheel Tax applies to commercial trucks, and the auto surtax applies to passenger vehicles. The tax can be applied on both the County and Municipal level with a maximum rate of $25 for autos and $40 for trucks (the allowable rates may be higher if a transportation management plan is in effect). This tax is in effect for 55 counties and 12 municipalities throughout the state. It is not in effect in Wabash County.

Revenue Source	Enabling Statute	Current Rate	Maximum Rate	Tax Base	Details
Food and Beverage Tax	IC 6-9	N/A	1%	Gross retail sales on food or beverage at the point of sale	Requires special legislation for enactment.
Innkeepers Tax	IC 6-9	5%	5%	Gross income derived from lodging.	Revenues are used for tourism and visitor promotion.
County and Municipal Wheel Tax/Surtax	IC 6-3.5	N/A	$25 Auto $40 Truck	Motor vehicles	Tax is available on the County and/or Municipal level.

FISCAL RESILIENCY CONCEPTS

The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the need for resilient fiscal planning. By understanding historical trends, and the interaction between economic changes and major revenue streams, local units of governments can build durable planning processes.

KEY FINDINGS

- Wabash County has been significantly affected by past economic downturns. Currently, Wabash County employment stands at 80% of year 2000 levels.
- In the midst of slow employment growth, personal income has surged in Wabash County, increasing by 15% since 2009.
- The Northeast Indiana region lost 12% of its workforce in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic but recovered more than 80% of lost jobs by the end of 2020.
- Wabash County relies nearly evenly on local income tax revenue and local property tax revenue. Property tax revenues are generally less susceptible to economic changes. Local income taxes have the potential for faster growth but more volatility.

1. Historical Framework

Understanding how previous business cycles have impacted Wabash County provides insight into potential opportunities and challenges.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

A review of historical employment demonstrates the impact of recessionary cycles on the Wabash County economy. Countywide employment reached a high point in 2000, with 20,500 resident workers. The 2001 recession resulted in a 7% employment reduction over one year. Employment continued to decrease to a level of 18,000 jobs by 2007.

The 2008 "Great Recession" also had a major impact on county employment. By 2009, employment had dropped to 16,000, a 12% reduction over 2007 levels. Employment levels stabilized by that point. By 2018, Wabash County had gained back approximately 25% of the jobs lost in the 2008 recession.

The 2008 job losses are attributable to a number of factors, including a heavy employment concentration in susceptible industries and declining population levels.

Wabash County Resident Employment History

Personal income has fared better than employment in Wabash County through economic cycles. The personal income time roughly correlates with employment through the 2000 and 2008 recessions. However, the 2008 recession impacted personal income less severely than employment. Furthermore, by 2018, personal income had recovered to 10% *greater* than pre-recession levels (constant dollars), while employment was still 10% *less than* pre-recession levels.

The comparatively stronger performance of Wabash County's personal income could be attributable to several root causes. Employment is a place-of-work based measure, while personal income is a place-of-residence based measure. At the same time that jobs within Wabash County were disappearing, it is likely that residents were commuting outside the county to find work, thereby increasing personal income levels. The implications of commute to work trends and the upside potential for personal income growth in Wabash County are important factors when considering fiscal resiliency.

Wabash County Personal Income History
Constant 2012 dollars

PANDEMIC RELATED IMPACTS

The COVID-19 pandemic caused widespread disruptions throughout the economy. Employment levels within Wabash County (which is adjacent to Fort Wayne MSA) were stable to increasing for the 36 months leading up to 2020. Then, in March 2020, the community spread of COVID-19 caused a rapid retraction in economic activity due to business shut-downs, social distancing guidelines, and discontinued services in healthcare and education. The Wabash County region lost 1,558 jobs, more than 13% of its workforce between February and April of 2020.

The economy recovered approximately 73% of the employment lost due to the pandemic but September 2020 employment was down 5.7% from prior-year levels. The COVID-19 recovery was mitigated to some extent by federal intervention and a shift in purchases from services to goods.

Wabash County Monthly Employment
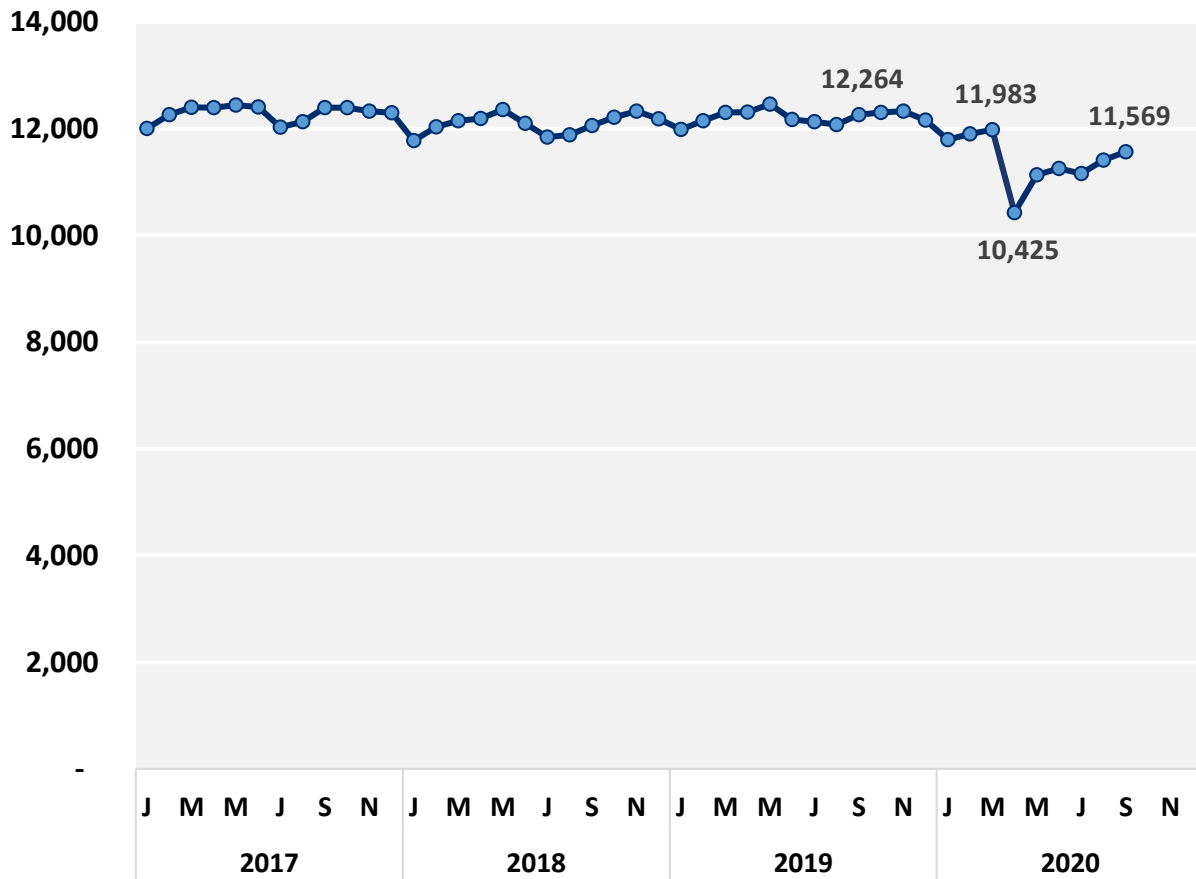
Source: BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

2. Implications for Local Government

Understanding the implications of economic variation on local government finance will inform fiscal policy decision-making.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING MIX

In Indiana, local government is funded by a set of local tax revenues that respond to economic variation in different ways. It is helpful to understand this funding structure in order to gain insight on the potential impacts of an economic recession. The two largest local revenue streams are the local property tax and local income tax. In Wabash County, these revenue streams are evenly balanced for the County governmental unit, municipalities, and Townships.

Schools receive funding primarily from State appropriated tuition support and local property tax sources. Schools generally do not receive local income tax dollars as part of their funding mix.

Major Components of Local Revenue: Wabash County

Property Tax Revenue 52%

Income Tax 48%
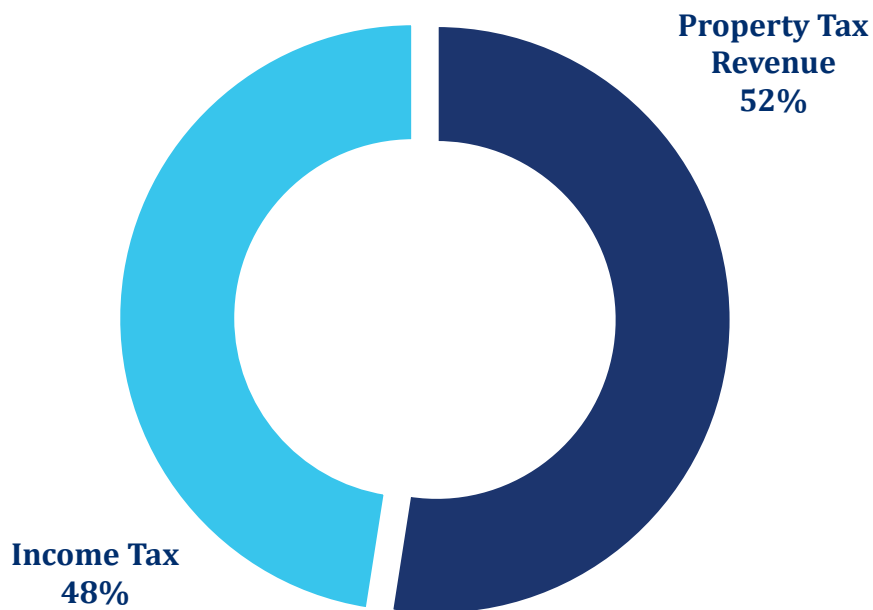
PROPERTY TAX IMPLICATIONS

The Wabash County property tax base increased at a rate of 2.6% annually between 2009 and 2015 and slowed to a rate of 0.2% annually between 2016 and 2021. The slowed rate of growth after 2015 is primarily due to changes in the way agricultural property is assessed in Indiana.

While these trends show that the property tax base is not exceptionally sensitive to mild to moderate changes in economic conditions. However, a prolonged economic downturn could potentially slow tax base growth. A slow or declining tax base can accelerate circuit breaker losses and limit debt service capacity. Furthermore, property tax rates will increase, causing increasing tax impacts to taxpayers. Finally, impacts to statewide personal income can affect the rate of change in the property tax levy over time.

Wabash County Property Tax Base History
Dollars in Millions
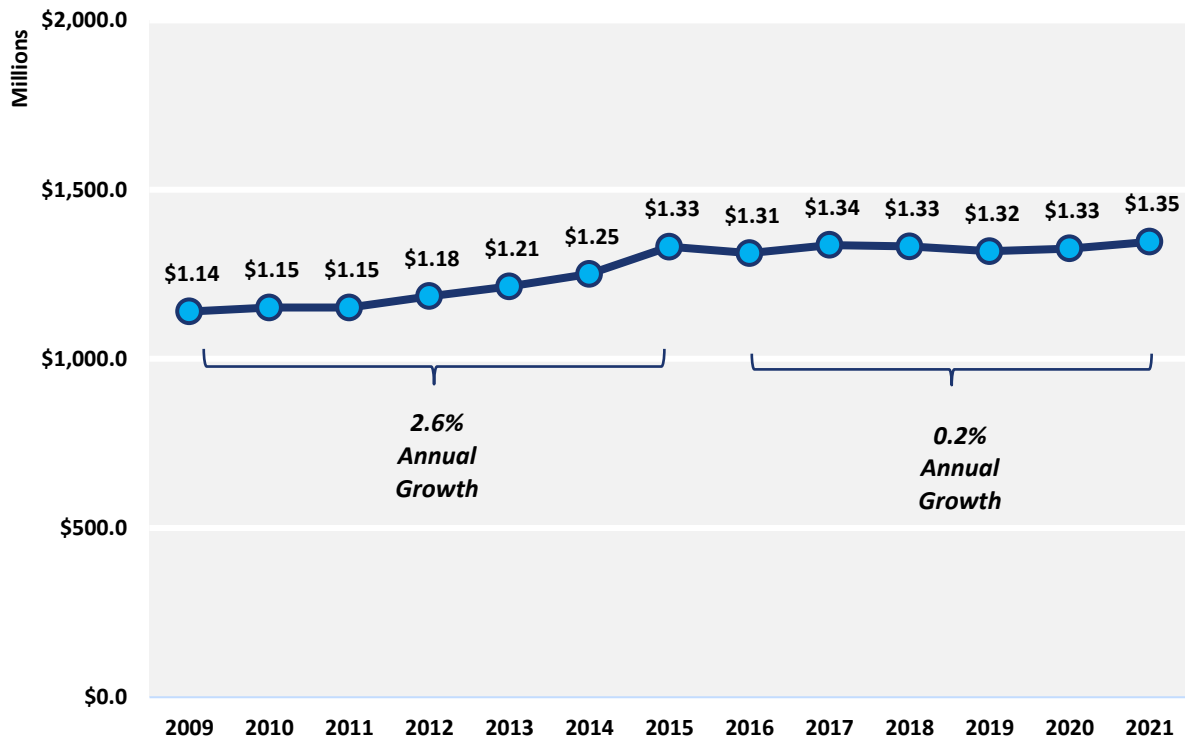
INCOME TAX IMPLICATIONS

Wabash County's income tax base is much more variable than its property tax base. The income tax base decreased by 14% in the wake of the 2008 recession and then began a period of prolonged recovery. In Indiana, the local income tax is based on the county of residence. This means that Wabash County taxing units receive income tax revenue from individuals who reside within the county regardless of their place of work.

There is a potential for a high rate of growth in local income tax revenues in strong economic times. However, fiscal decision-makers should be prepared for volatility in economic downturns. Guardrails are embedded in the local income tax administration statutes to cushion local units from abrupt variation. Still, an understanding of economic fundamentals is an essential aspect of long-range planning.

Further, because of the residence-based nature of the local income tax, migration trends can be important indicators of future fiscal performance.

Wabash County Income Tax Base History
Dollars in Millions
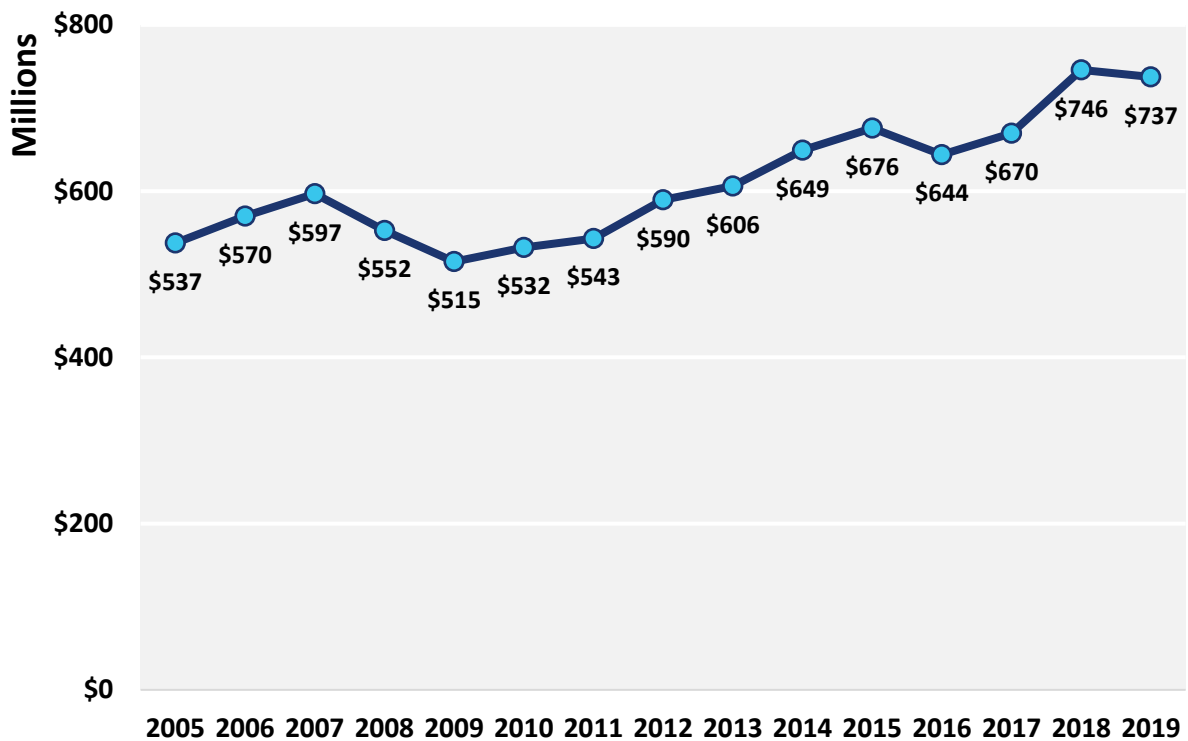
3. Planning for Resiliency

Policymakers should expect uncertainty and develop long-term planning frameworks that are resilient.

The factors that negatively affect a civil entity or school's ability to implement its fiscal plan often come from external, uncontrollable sources. Global economic trends, weather events, or demographic shifts cannot be controlled. However, resilient fiscal plans will hold in times of volatility or provide advance time for reactionary policy decisions to be processed, vetted, and implemented. Strategies for resilient planning include:

- **Commit to long-range cash flow planning:** Create and maintain long-range operational and capital cash-flow plans. These plans should include contingencies for revenue volatility.

- **Understand the tax base:** Tax rate management and circuit breaker mitigation are essential concepts to maximize property tax revenues, especially in the midst of economic uncertainty. Understanding the drivers of tax base growth will provide insight on future risks to revenues.

- **Know the cadence of local revenues:** For both local income taxes and local property taxes, there is a lag two-year lag between changes to the economy, and changes to tax distributions. This means that if local leaders are aware and attentive, there will be a two-year window to prepare for fluctuations in local revenues.

- **Maximize local income tax dollars:** Indiana counties have myriad options when allocating local income tax rates. Not all allocations will result in optimal revenue performance. It may be desirable to adjust income tax allocations in some situations in light of changing economic conditions.

- **Leverage one-time dollars wisely**: Grant and supplemental dollars may provide essential resources in the event of an economic downturn. It is important to deploy these resources in effective ways but do not incur long-term obligations that must be later filled from other sources.

HOUSING:

The purpose of the Housing Technical Analysis is to provide a common set of facts regarding the state of housing in Wabash County. These facts are to support the creation of the housing and land use elements for the County Comprehensive Plan.
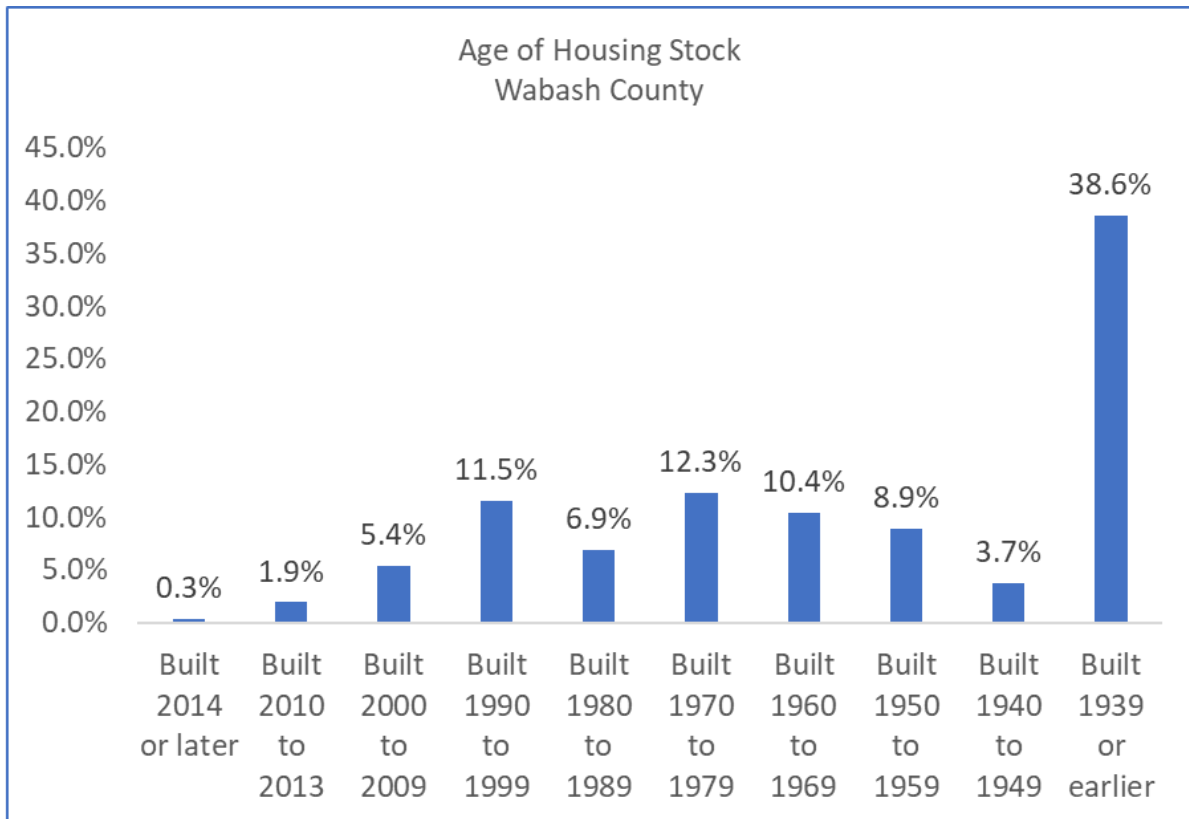
KEY FINDINGS

Wabash County Housing …

- Consists of 14,000 housing units
- Of which, 39% was built before 1939
- The vast majority, 80%of the housing units, are single family
- Limited new construction since 2009
- 19% of the county residents are "housing cost burdened"
- Has been rising in value faster than the state
- Housing values have grown almost 3x of wages

A. Housing Stock

AGE OF HOUSING

Wabash County's housing stock is old. The median age year for the housing being built is 1959. Less than 10% of the county's housing has been built in the last 20 years. Nearly 40% of the housing stock was built before 1939. By comparison statewide only 17% of the housing stock is older than 1939, and 18% has been built since 2000.

Age of Housing Stock
Wabash County

Category	Percentage
Built 2014 or later	0.3%
Built 2010 to 2013	1.9%
Built 2000 to 2009	5.4%
Built 1990 to 1999	11.5%
Built 1980 to 1989	6.9%
Built 1970 to 1979	12.3%
Built 1960 to 1969	10.4%
Built 1950 to 1959	8.9%
Built 1940 to 1949	3.7%
Built 1939 or earlier	38.6%

Source: NP analysis of American Community Survey Housing Report

TYPE OF HOUSING

The County's housing stock like the state's is highly concentrated as single-family units. Eighty one percent of housing in Wabash County is in some form of single family compared to 77% statewide. The one notable area of difference between the County and the state is larger multifamily housing units where 8% of the state's housing stock has density of greater than 10 units versus only 3% in the county.

Type of Housing Stock Comparison 2019
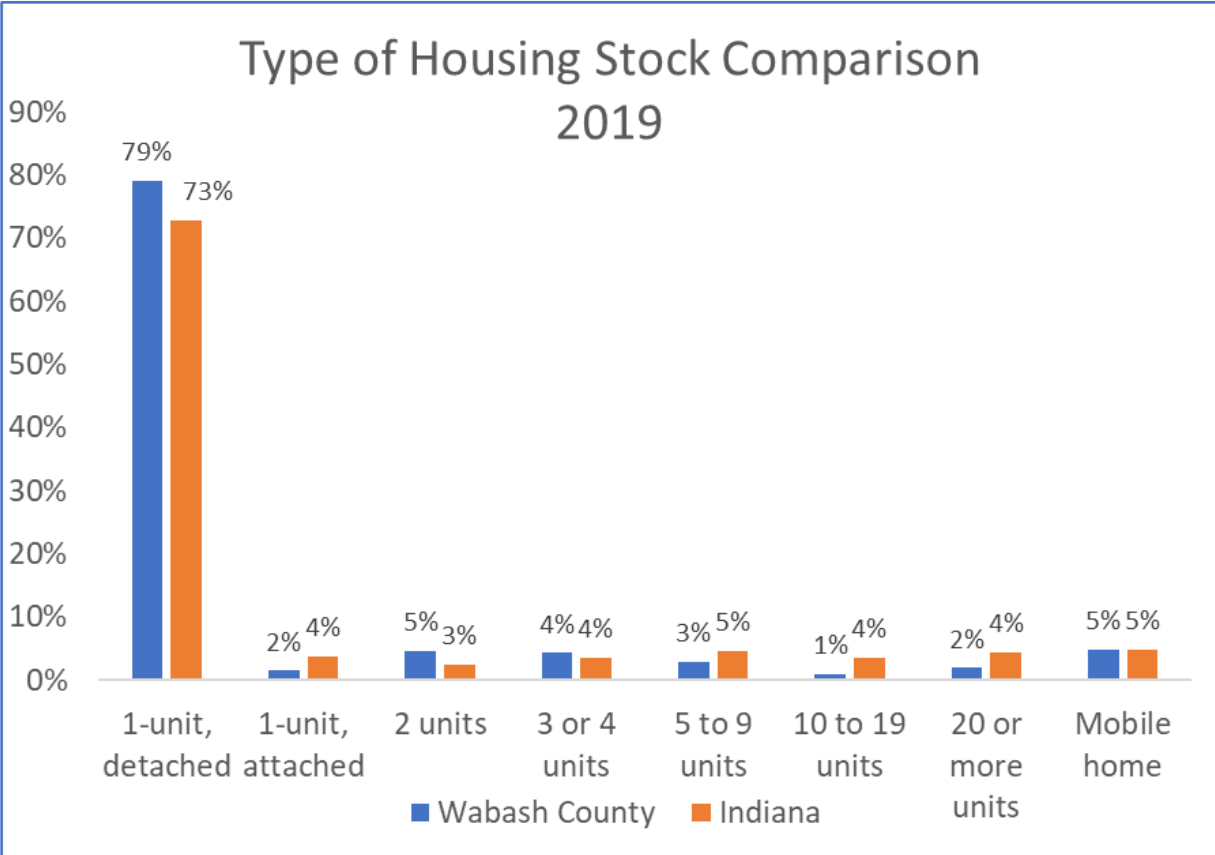
Source: NP analysis of American Community Survey Housing Report

VACANCY AND AVAILABILITY

The American Community Survey Housing analysis estimates that there is a vacancy rate of 1.9% of for sale housing, 4.2% of rental units. A spot check of available listings shows 130 homes have been purchased up to October 2020 with a median sales price of $122,000 or $78/sqft. 101 homes are presently listed.   Public listings of rentals show very few units available.

B. Housing Costs

HOUSING PRICES AND VALUES

The median listing price for a home in Wabash County in October of 2020 was $127,000, up 23% over the prior year (source: Realtor.com). The median listing price is below the statewide average of $147,400. Statewide housing prices during that same period only increased by 4.5% (source: NeighborhoodScout.com). Wabash County has enjoyed steadily increasing home values since the Great Recession. More recently County home prices have been rising faster than the state. Since 2017 housing prices in Wabash County have on a year over year basis been increasing substantially faster than the state.

It is important to note that assessing housing markets are looking at a snapshot in time. It is important to examine trends to fully understand what is happening in a housing market.

The Zillow House Price Index tracks housing prices over time based on median sales prices. Beginning in 2015 Wabash County housing values recovered to their 2008 levels. Since 2015 housing prices have increased 26%.

Zillow Home Values
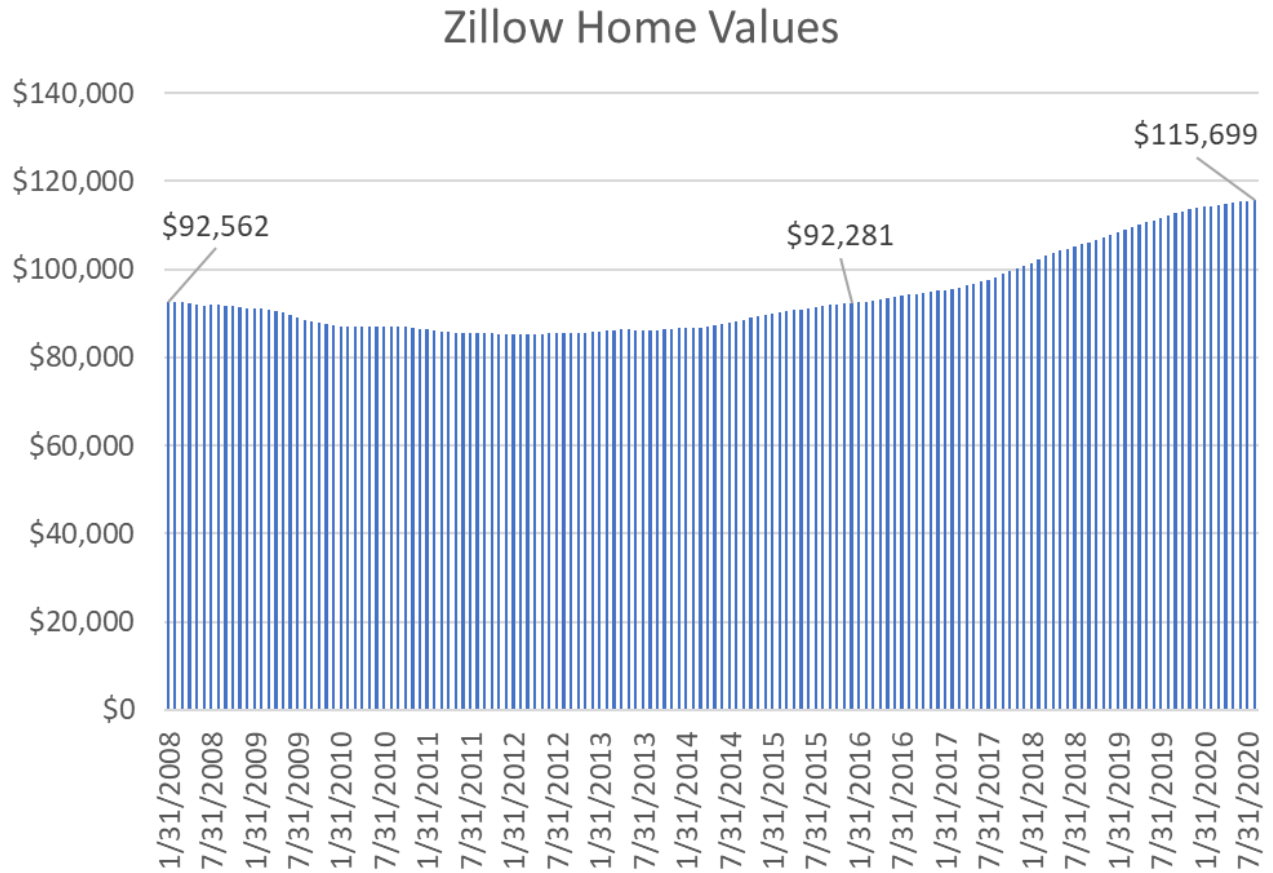
Other valuation methods confirm this acceleration in home values. The All Transaction House Price Index assesses home values across all transactions including same house sales and refinancing's to track changing home values. This analysis shows steadily rising home values since 2011.

All Transaction House Price Index
Base Year 2000 = 100

131.50

107.70

150.00

100.00

50.00

2009-01-01 2010-01-01 2011-01-01 2012-01-01 2013-01-01 2014-01-01 2015-01-01 2016-01-01 2017-01-01 2018-01-01 2019-01-01
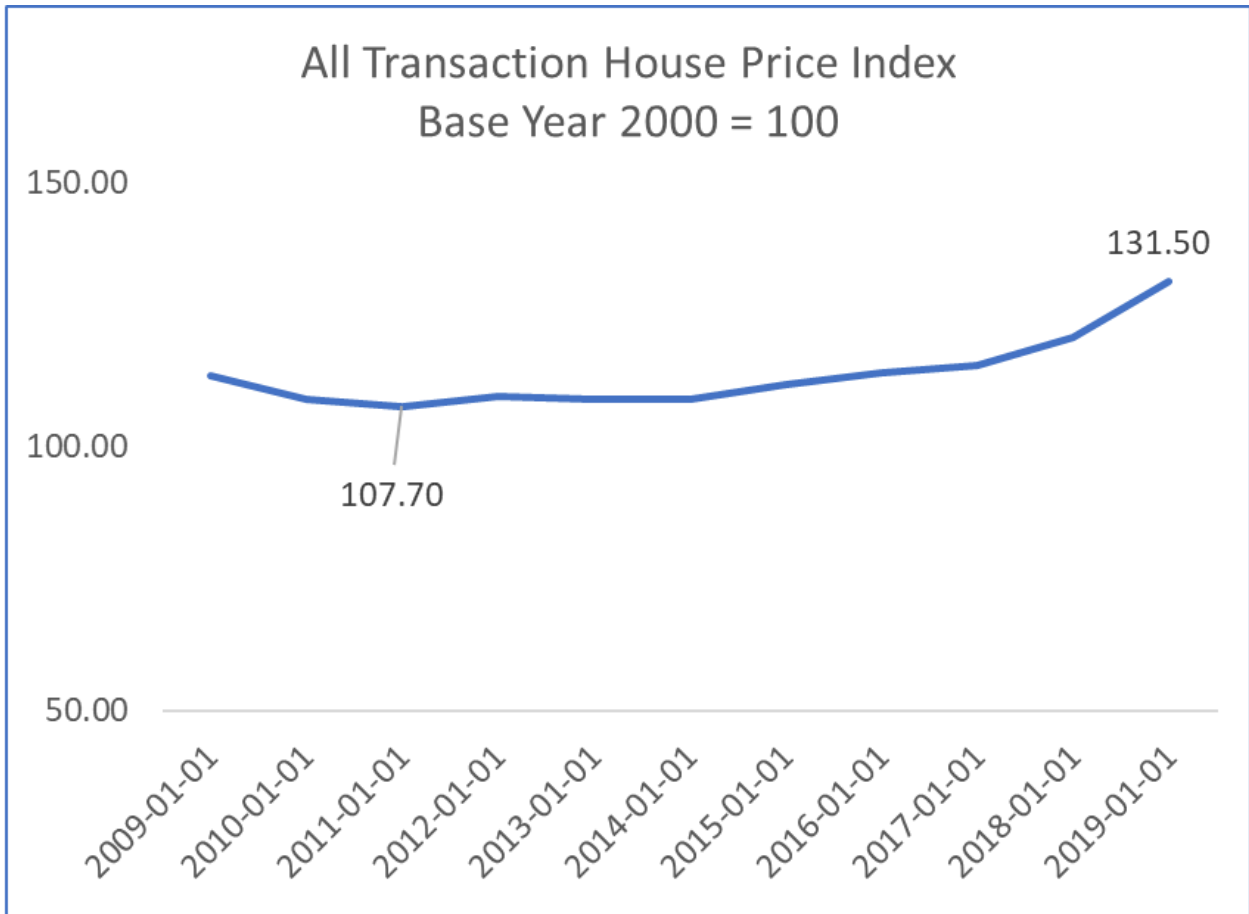
Source: St Louis FED FRED Series

Housing values have grown almost 3x faster than wages.

AFFORDABILITY

An estimated 19% of the County's households are housing cost burdened meaning more than 30% of their income going to housing payments and utilities. This is lower than the statewide figure which is 26% of households.

Comparing Housing Affordability 2019
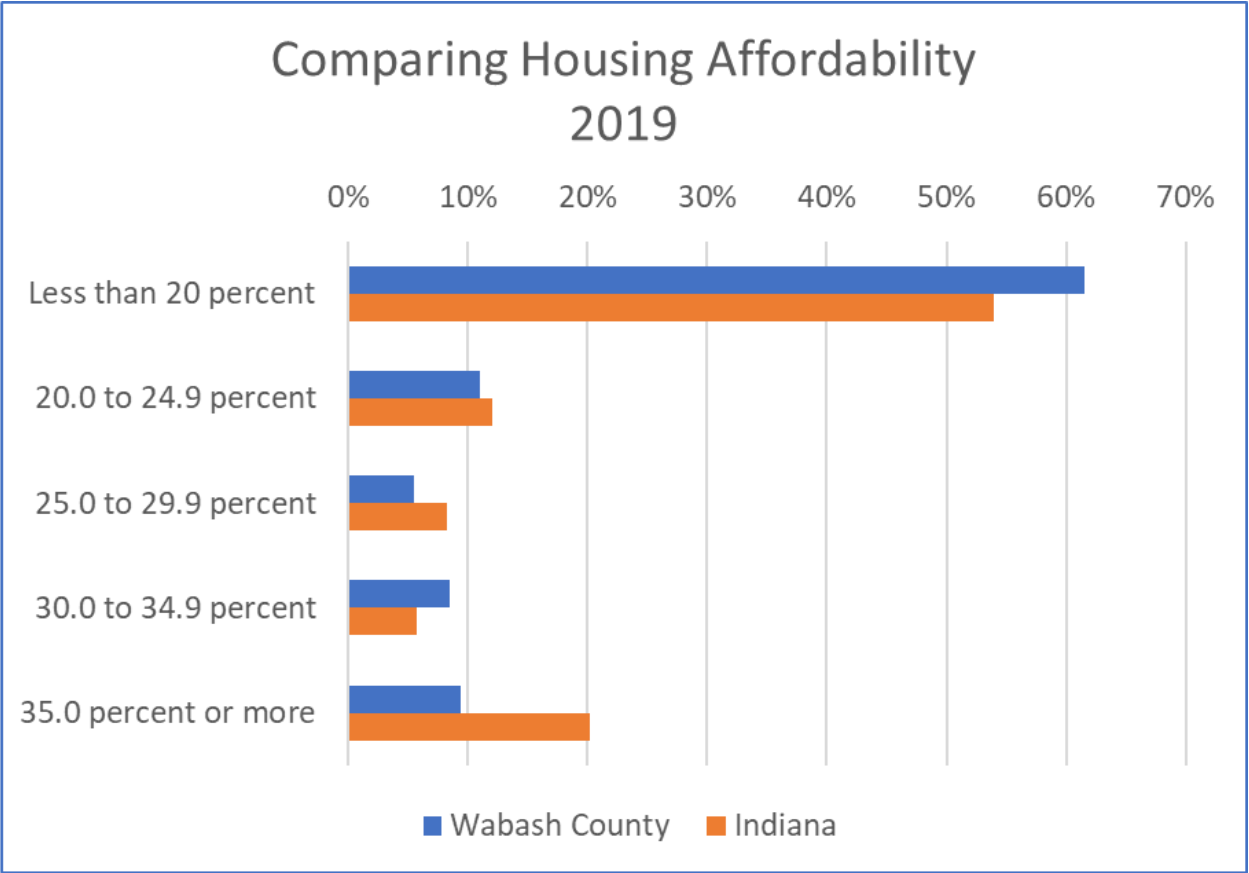
Source: NP analysis of American Community Survey Housing Report

However, a more detailed analysis reveals that the relatively low housing cost burden countywide depends on status. Wabash County has a higher level of owner occupancy that the state – 73% compared to 69%. The County also has a higher percentage of its housing without a mortgage – 30% compared to 24%. In general homeowners in Wabash County have less cost-burden than homeowners in other parts of the state.

However, Wabash County 46% renters have housing cost burden levels like the rest of Indiana.

Housing Cost Burden Status by Type of Unit - 2019
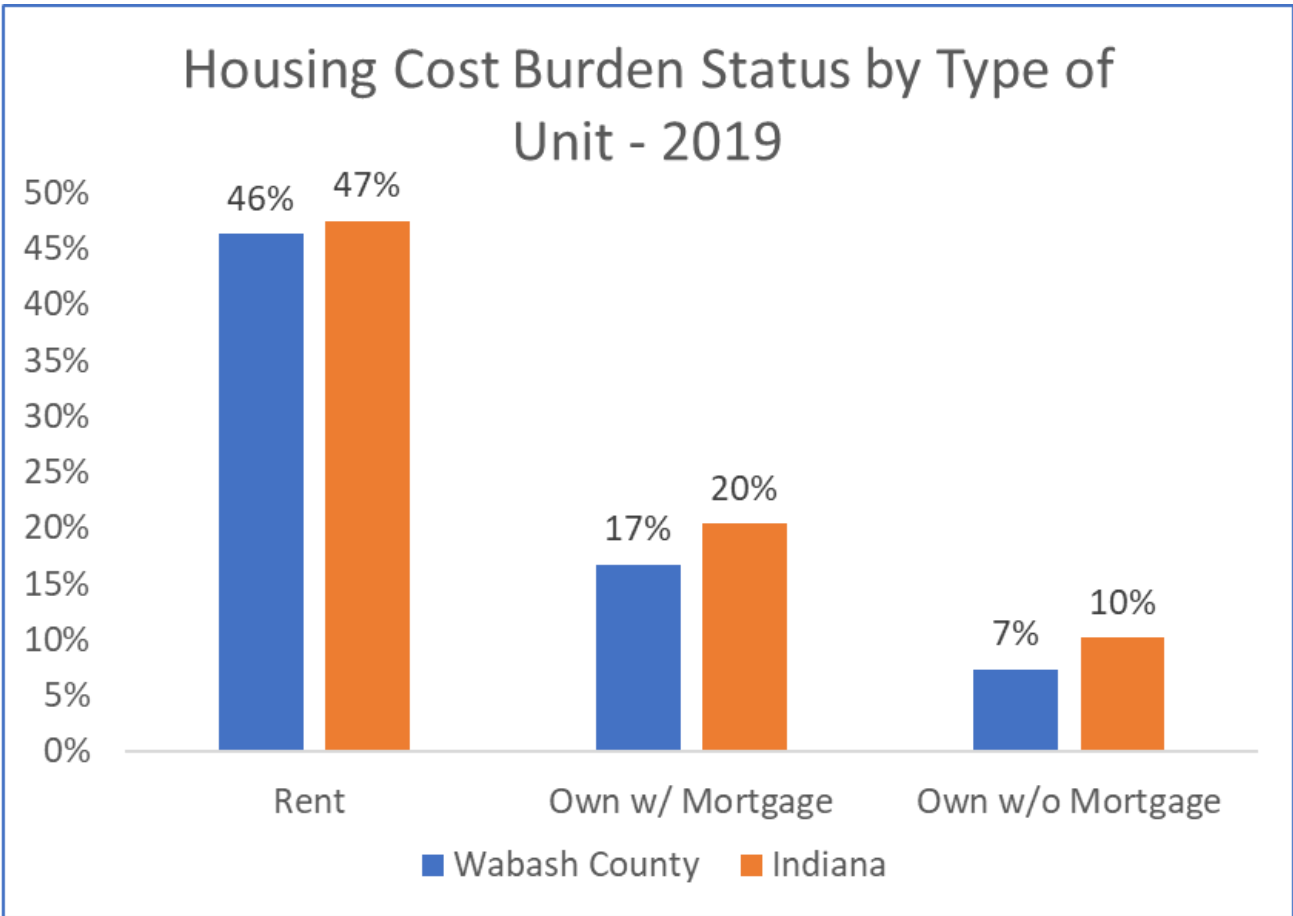
Source: NP analysis of American Community Survey Housing Report

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

Building permits are a measure of housing construction. Building permits in the County are down by over 100 from its peak in 1997. In 1997 more permits were issued than from 2015 to 2019 combined. Relatively few residential building permits may be associated with the accelerating cost of housing in the county.

Relationship between Housing Value & Building Permits
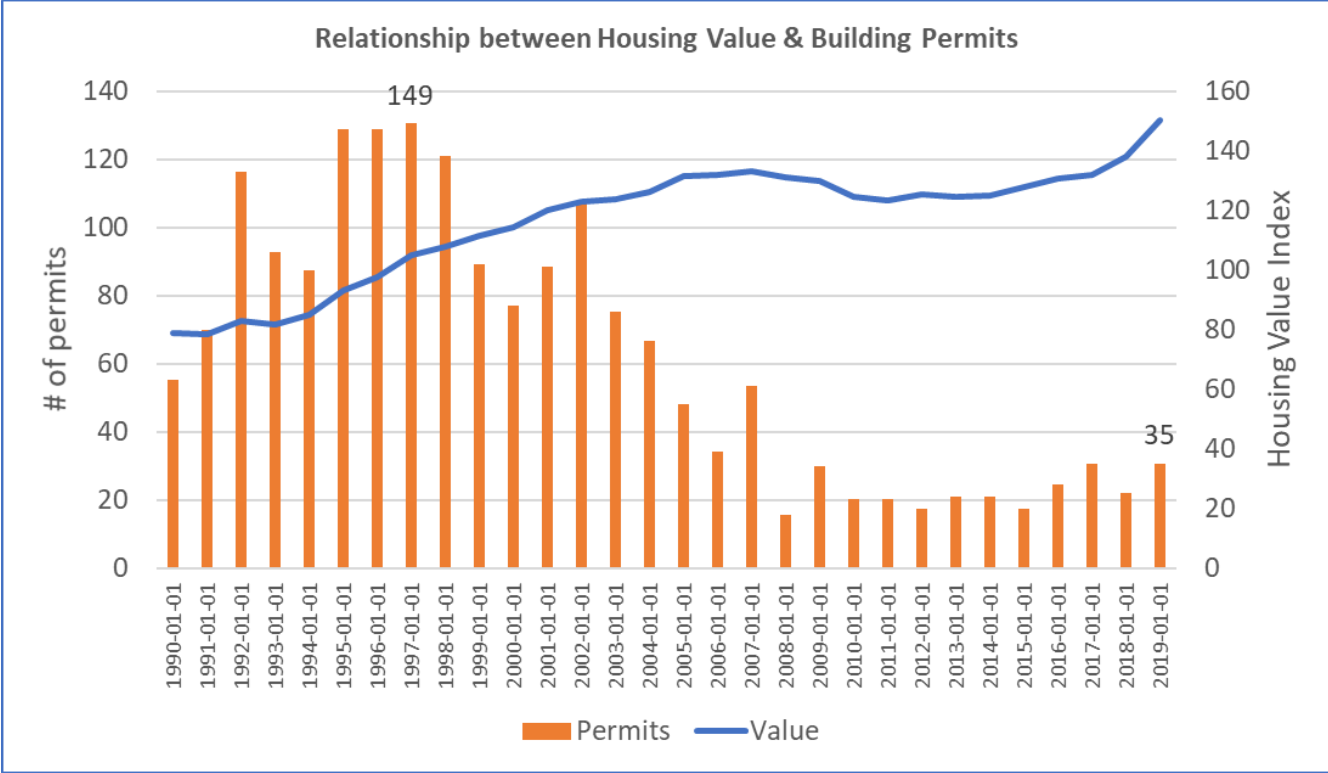
Given the age of housing in the county this may also portend an increasing amount of housing requiring substantial rehabilitation and maintenance to meet contemporary buyers' needs.

IMAGINE
ONE
85

VOLUME 2: PLACE

Technical Analysis Memo | Wabash County Comprehensive Plan

December 2020
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PLACE

DECEMBER 2020

The following report provides an analysis across four topics: land use, agriculture, natural resources and parks and recreation and historic and archeological resources. This report and its accompanying summary presentations are a summary of the baseline conditions and trends in support of the Wabash County Comprehensive Plan. For questions on this report please contact the project manager for Imagine One 85, Kyle May, senior planner with planning NEXT, at kyle@planning-next.com*.*

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1. LAND USE

Land use reviews the existing conditions of the built and natural places across the communities of Wabash County. Through this analysis, a comprehensive inventory was established of the various types of land uses and how much is present today to establish a baseline for future development growth. This section details the existing community character – another method for assessing the county's land use profile – found throughout the county, evaluates the zoning framework that regulates land development, assesses current growth potential for specific land uses, and identifies assets to incentivize and leverage community investment. The final section of the topic provides an analysis of the county's land cover patterns and changes over time.

KEY FINDINGS

- **A diverse collection of places from urban to rural to natural.** There are ten unique place types in Wabash County ranging from natural parkland to historic/urban downtowns.
- **Very little land consumption from 2000.** Just over 600 acres of agricultural land was lost to development from 2000. During this same period, the county lost 3,000 residents.
- **Agricultural land dominates in terms of overall land use.** More than 82% of the county is used for farming operations. These uses include cultivation, livestock, along with other processes.
- **The current zoning maps identify significant growth areas.** Almost every land use (commercial, residential, industrial, etc.) has at least 40% undeveloped land capacity available for future growth based on the current zoning.
- **Industrial development capacity is substantial.** An estimated 71% or just over 4,080 acres of industrial zoned land is available for future development.

1.1 Planning Area

The planning area is the geographical boundary establishing the focus of the comprehensive plan. Indiana State Law outlines the ability for local government entities or jurisdictions to develop comprehensive plan or master plan boundaries based on participation of those entities involved.

Imagine One 85's boundary is defined by the Wabash County line and is inclusive of the Cities of Wabash and North Manchester and the Towns of Roann, Lagro, and La Fontaine along with all unincorporated land. The county is approximately 412 square miles in size making it the 32nd largest county in Indiana out of all 92 counties. Wabash County is part of the Northeast Indiana Region, an 11-county area expanding from the Fort Wayne Metropolitan Area, with the third largest land size in the region, behind Allen and Kosciusko Counties. A countywide context map is provided in the map gallery, **see Map 1.0 Planning Context.**

1.2 Community Character

Character is a description of the diverse environments - both natural and manmade places - that make-up the communities of Wabash County. These character types are defined by their shared features such as building density, street patterns or block size, connectivity, and the mix or non-mix of land uses. Understanding the existing development characteristics of the county and its communities will help to identify qualities that the community supports while also revealing potentially productive or appealing types that may not exist today but could be developed in the future.

CHARACTER TYPES IN WABASH COUNTY

There are 10 unique character types across the communities of Wabash County. These are organized into three categories covering the diversity of places: Natural / Rural, Residential, and Commercial / Industrial. Each character type was developed by analyzing the existing land use, mix of uses on a block, building form, street pattern and connectivity, relationship between the building and street, and integration of open space or natural areas. The combination of these variables defines unique places that exist at a variety of scales in all the communities of Wabash County. These character types are not meant to be reviewed at the parcel level but focus on the neighborhood-scale qualities experienced when travelling through a community. Provided below are brief descriptions of the 10-character types along with supporting images. A countywide character map is provided in the map gallery. see **Map 1.1 & 1.2 Existing Character**.

NATURAL / RURAL

Open Space / Conservation: These areas include parks, open spaces, or undeveloped natural areas that may serve recreational or conservation purposes and are protected from future development. These are represented at a variety of scales from neighborhood parks of less than an acre to large, regional conservation sites composed of hundreds of acres. In some instances, additional amenities are provided to enhance the area based on the community or region's desires.

Rural Service: Areas characterized by larger scale uses that are a critical part of the active agricultural industry. These areas are predominantly used for farming operations consisting of several large crop tracts with integrated supporting uses for agricultural production such as processing and warehousing. Homes or other buildings are typically set far back from the roadway and may not be served by municipal water and sewer utilities. This may include light industrial plants, pole barns, utility buildings, or other similar farming facilities that are essential to production.

Rural Living: These consist of primarily agricultural areas which include single-family residential, agricultural support buildings, small-scale commercial, and institutional uses in a mixed rural setting. Homes and other buildings are generally set back from the roadway but may be developed close enough to share common driveways. Properties are typically over an acre in size and may range up to several acres when adjacent to farm tracts. These areas may have municipal water and sewer service if located near a more developed portion of the city but are typically served by private water wells and septic systems.
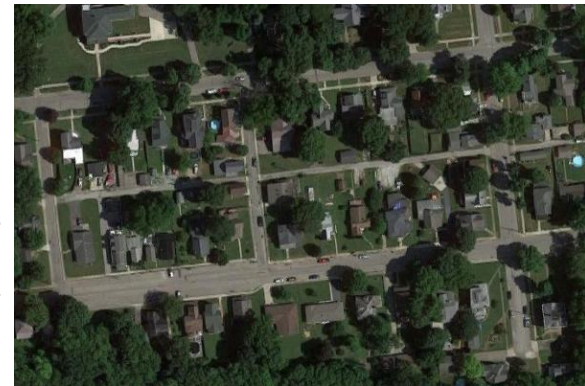
RESIDENTIAL

Mixed Rural Residential: Areas characterized by larger lot residential or standalone subdivisions near the outskirts of a community or adjacent to a rural setting. These areas represent the transition from rural to urban areas providing a mix of small businesses and institutional uses near subdivisions. Homes range in age from older, mid-century stock to modern housing options constructed in new subdivisions. Lots are generally an acre in size near agricultural areas or smaller near activity centers and Traditional Neighborhoods.

Traditional Neighborhood: These consist of primarily residential areas featuring a mix of housing types such as detached single-family, duplex, manufactured home parks, and townhomes. These areas are typically near activity centers and developed in a traditional, grid-like street pattern. Housing is generally older and can include historic neighborhoods or properties near the center of the community. New infill residential can occur throughout the neighborhood taking a variety of forms from detached single-family to townhomes. These neighborhoods can include appropriately scaled retail or office uses and complementary uses like parks or community facilities.

COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL

Town Center: Traditional activity centers with a mix of small-scale commercial, office, and residential uses. They may be in either incorporated communities or unincorporated areas but typically serve as the activity center for the community. These areas are generally walkable, being developed on small, grid-like blocks but may not have complete sidewalk connections. Buildings are constructed close to the roadway with small parking areas or some on-street parking adjacent to the main entrance.

Commercial Center: These are predominantly commercial and retail areas characterized by large footprint buildings or shopping centers along major corridors. Buildings are set far back from the roadway with surface parking lots between the building and roadway. Sites have minimal landscaping integrated along the edge of parking areas with hardscaping elements such as patios, pavilions, etc. Areas may have some pedestrian / sidewalk connections but are typically accessible by vehicle only due to site layout and corridor use.

Downtown Core: The historic, civic, and cultural centers of urbanized areas. These areas provide a variety of uses in a compact, walkable center such as commercial, office, and residential. Buildings are located very close to one another or are directly attached and are constructed close to the roadway. Streets are connected in a grid pattern with sidewalk and pedestrian connections throughout, encouraging walkability. Complementary uses such as park space or community facilities are closely integrated with other major destinations.

Industrial Center: These areas are characterized by large footprint manufacturing, assembly, warehousing, and other similar employment-oriented uses. Street connections are typically limited to provide direct site service to major corridors and highways. In some instances, businesses have outdoor operations that require additional screening or buffering from adjacent development. Most sites have multiple access drives to separate general employee and customer traffic from heavy truck or machine movement.

Institutional Campus: These areas include academic, government, hospital, religious centers, and church centers providing a range of building types to support their functional use. Some sites contain one primary structure while others require several buildings arranged in a campus to provide necessary operations. These areas are typically integrated into neighborhoods or Commercial Centers and are walkable to many community amenities. Private open space and sidewalk connections are common features that further integrate the site into the surrounding area.

1.3 Land Management & Regulation

Wabash County and its communities are governed through a combination of legal regulations and elected or nominated entities. The county and incorporated communities each contain unique ordinances that establish the tools for managing the development of land. This section includes a detailed description of the legal framework and governing bodies that are responsible for regulating development across the county. Wabash County and its communities are directly influenced by the established land controls outlined below.

ZONING REGULATIONS

Land use and development in Wabash County is regulated through three zoning ordinances; City of North Manchester, City of Wabash, and Wabash County (includes the Towns of Roann, Lagro, and La Fontaine). Both cities are responsible for governing additional property outside of their corporate limits, within defined areas established by the County. The remaining portion of land outside these boundaries is regulated by the County which includes the three towns and several rural communities. These planning area boundaries are defined in the map gallery, see **Map 1.3 Consolidated Zoning.**

There are many similarities between the three ordinances pertaining to zoning classifications and district intent with a few key differences. North Manchester is the only ordinance with an *Institutional/Professional District*, primarily due to the presence of Manchester University. Similarly, the City of Wabash has a *Historic District* classification focused on downtown to preserve and protect the unique character with complementary development or redevelopment. One common classification relates to Wabash County's natural features, a *Flood Plain District* is represented in each ordinance to regulate property within FEMA floodplain zones. All three ordinances have conducted periodic and recent updates to ensure regulations remain current and include appropriate standards.

WABASH COUNTY CODE

The Wabash County Code is responsible for governing the development of land in the Towns of Roann, Lagro, La Fontaine, and smaller unincorporated communities throughout the county. The code was originally adopted in 1965 to establish regulations for the use and development of land including the creation of an Advisory Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals to manage the review process for development. A total of 13 unique zoning districts were established which provided regulations for agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial land. The original code has been amended numerous times since its adoption with the most recent amendment occurring in early 2020. This amendment consisted of the comprehensive review and update to the regulations including the removal of several zoning districts, establishing several new

zoning districts such as residential with public utility access or private septic / well, and the removal of "advisory" from the Plan Commission. The Wabash County Code serves as the legislative companion to the Comprehensive Plan, allowing for the implementation of land use and preservation recommendations.

CITY OF WABASH CODE

The City of Wabash Code is responsible for governing the development of land for the City of Wabash and a specific portion of the county defined as the planning area. This area is generally defined by the following limits; W 50 N to the north, N/S 100 E to the east, W 500 S to the south, and S.R. 115 to the west. The planning area boundary is defined in the map gallery, see **Map 1.3 Consolidated Zoning**. The code was originally adopted in 1995 per Indiana State Law as part of a reconfirmation and reenactment of the 1975 Wabash City Code. This code established a total of 11 unique zoning districts with general and specific development regulations, a Board of Zoning Appeals to address zoning discrepancies, and a Plan Commission responsible for managing and reviewing the development process. The City of Wabash Code outlines special provisions for downtown through the Historic District which seeks to protect the historic community character. This is used to regulate the careful development or redevelopment of property in downtown and is used in conjunction with state and federal designations of historic districts/places. The code has undergone major and minor amendments over the past 25 years with the most recent amendment occurring in 2019.

CITY OF NORTH MANCHESTER CODE

The City of North Manchester is responsible for governing a specific area of the county similar to the City of Wabash which includes the incorporated area and a specific boundary known as the planning area. This area is generally defined by the following limits; E 1400 N to the north, N 300 E/Rittenhouse Road to the east, E 1100 N to the south, and N 100 W to the west. The planning area boundary is defined in the map gallery, see **Map 1.3 Consolidated Zoning**. The code was originally adopted in 1995 per Indiana State Law and included 14 unique zoning districts, establishment of a Plan Commission, and establishment of a Board of Zoning Appeals. The City of North Manchester is the only zoning ordinance in Wabash County with an institutional/professional zoning district which is primarily for Manchester University. This outlines unique regulations for the growth and development of collegiate campuses including the diversity of land uses from education to office to residential for student housing. The code was most recently amended in 2006.

CONSOLIDATED ZONING MAP

For the zoning analysis conducted in this volume, a consolidated zoning map was prepared using the district regulations for each of the three ordinances. Countywide zoning classifications were identified that incorporated and related each unique zoning district to one another to assist in guiding analysis and future recommendations. This was established by reviewing the zoning regulations and intent for each of the unique zoning districts across the three ordinances including permitted & conditional uses, lot size requirements, building location requirements, building height limitations, and others. Once a baseline was established, each zoning district was compared to the other ordinances to identify similar zoning districts which were then given a unique consolidated zoning classification. The matrix below provides an overview of how each unique zoning district relates to the consolidated zoning map and among the three zoning ordinances. A consolidated zoning map for the entire county is provided in the map gallery, see **Map 1.3 Consolidated Zoning**.

Table 1: Consolidated Zoning Matrix.

Consolidated Zoning	Wabash County	Wabash City	North Manchester City
Agriculture	Agriculture District (A)	Agricultural District (AG)	Agricultural District (A)

Consolidated Zoning	Wabash County	Wabash City	North Manchester City
Conservation	Flood Plain District (FP)	Flood Plan Area (FP)	Flood Plain Area (FP)
	Forest Recreation District (FR)		
Estate Residential	Residence 1 District (R1)	Residence 1 District (R1)	Residence Estate District (RE)
	Lake Residence District (LR)	Suburban District (S1)	Residence Single Family District (RSF)
Traditional Residential	Residence 2 District (R2)	Residence 2 District (R2)	Residence Two Family District (RTF)
Neighborhood Multi-Family	Residence 3 District (R3)	Residence 3 District (R3)	Residence Multi Family Low Density District (RMF-L)
Community Multi-Family	-	Residence 4 District (R4)	Residence Multi Family High Density District (RMF-H)
General Commercial	General Business District (GB)	General Business District (GB)	Business General District (BG)
	Shopping Center District (SC)		
	Accommodation Business District (AB)		
Community Commercial	Local Business District (LB)	-	Business Local District (BL)
Mixed-Use	-	Historic District (HD)	Central Business District (CBD)
			Residence Urban District (RU)
Office / Institutional	-	-	Professional Office District (P)
Limited Industrial	-	Light Industry District (LI)	Limited Industrial District (LI)
Industrial	Industrial District (I)	Heavy Industry District (HI)	Industrial District (I)
	Industrial Reserve District (IR)		

ELECTED & NOMINATED ENTITIES

Application and review of zoning regulations is managed through public elected and nominated governing bodies. Each entity has specific powers and duties through the community's zoning code to review and apply the regulations for land management and development. These are supported by city or county staff who manage the day-to-day application, processing, and enforcement of the zoning code. Provided in this section is an overview of the types of reviewing bodies for the three zoning ordinances which have an identical zoning management structure. This structure is composed of two primary reviewing bodies that manage zoning related matters for the community.

PLAN COMMISSION

The first reviewing body is the Plan Commission which is responsible for the review of land use changes and zoning applications for property development. The commission ensures that proposals align with the requirements of the zoning code and other adopted regulations of the city or county. Members are nominated from the public to serve on the commission and guide land management practices. Amendments and updates to zoning regulations require review by the Plan Commission before going for final approval and adoption by the community council. The commission also promotes the implementation of the county or city's comprehensive plan recommendations, specifically those pertaining to land use and community character. Their review and application of the zoning code seeks to position new development with the future vision of the county and its communities.
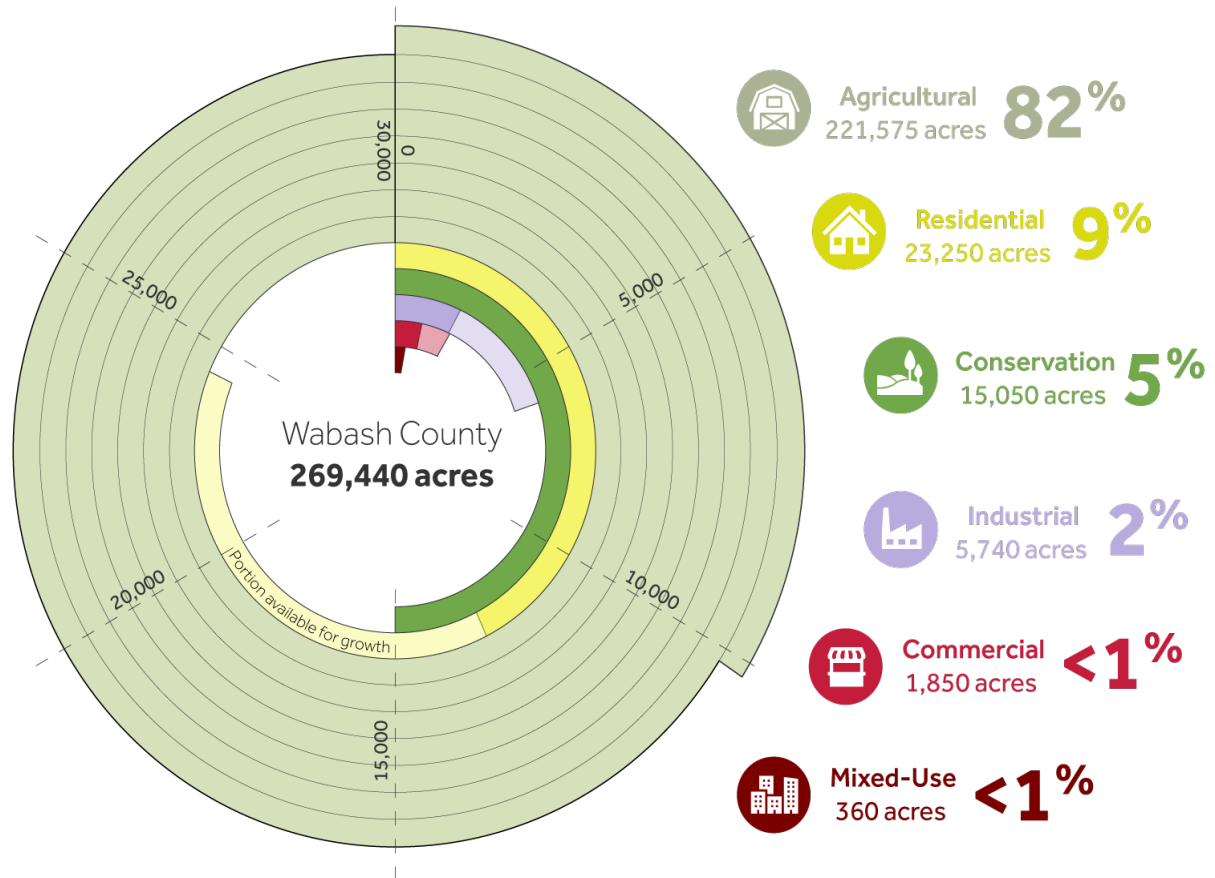
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

The second is a specialized review board for unique zoning applications known as the Board of Zoning Appeals. The board is responsible for reviewing applications that pertain to appeals of previous development reviews or variations from the zoning code due to unique circumstances. Administrative appeals from staff decisions, determination of special exemptions, and variances to the zoning code regulations are a few of the development applications that go before the board. The members are nominated by the city or county council to serve. The Board of Zoning Appeals complements the Plan Commission in the enforcement of zoning regulations, ensuring that regulations are applied appropriately to new development.

1.4 Land Use & Growth Capacity

Land use and growth capacity analyzes the specific land uses found across the communities of Wabash County including industrial, residential, agricultural, and commercial among others. An inventory of existing land zoned, undeveloped land or growth potential, and other factors were collected to understand land planning. These will serve as the foundation for developing principles that future development should follow. Unique assets were identified that position Wabash County and its communities to align with future investment opportunities.

Graphic 1: Countywide Zoning Distribution.

Wabash County
269,440 acres

Portion available for growth

Agricultural
221,575 acres **82%**

Residential
23,250 acres **9%**

Conservation
15,050 acres **5%**

Industrial
5,740 acres **2%**

Commercial
1,850 acres **<1%**

Mixed-Use
360 acres **<1%**

NOTE: REMAINING ACREAGE INCLUDES AREAS WITH SPECIALIZED ZONING SUCH AS INSTITUTIONAL OR HAS NO APPLICABLE ZONING SUCH AS RIGHT-OF-WAY.

AGRICULTURAL LAND

The largest zoning classification and most prominent to the county is Agriculture. Over 82% of Wabash County or 221,575 acres is zoned for agricultural use. This includes farm tracts of various sizes, rural residential homes, and agricultural support in the forms of warehousing, agribusiness, and light industrial. Agricultural zoning is distributed throughout the county with every community, regardless of size, having direct access and influence on the spectrum of uses. This calculation is based on only the portions of the county specifically zoned for agricultural use. Several reserved development areas for commercial, residential and industrial are currently operating as agricultural use but would transition over time as the communities grow.

More information on land usage, economic influence, historical presence, and existing conditions is provided in the *Agriculture* section.

RESIDENTIAL LAND

Composing 23,250 acres, residential land is the second largest zoning district for Wabash County. The majority, 21,200 acres, is considered Estate Residential which is low-density residential integrated into a rural or agricultural context. The remaining 2,050 acres is Traditional Neighborhoods which are more compact developments near the center of communities. These might have a wider variety of housing types such as duplexes or townhomes while Estate Residential is predominantly detached single-family homes.

The existing housing stock in Wabash County is fairly limited leaving potential gaps in alternative options. The most prominent housing type in Wabash County today is detached single-family homes which accounts for over 11,000 units or 79% of all housing stock. Other housing options like duplexes and manufactured homes account for an additional 600 units or 5% each. This distribution of housing stock relates to the historical growth of residential neighborhoods in the communities of Wabash County. During the early to mid-1900's, housing was constructed adjacent to downtown in walkable neighborhoods, typically more dense to provide accessibility to retail, commercial, and employment-related uses. As the car became more accessible to communities, residential development shifted to expanding outward from a community in auto-oriented subdivisions. These new neighborhoods had limited street connectivity between adjacent areas and were no longer walkable to essential areas for shopping or employment. The available residential capacity offers the opportunity to establish neighborhood transitions that address the saturation of a singular housing type and the connectivity to community activity centers for work, commerce, and recreation.

9,500 acres
Planned Residential Growth
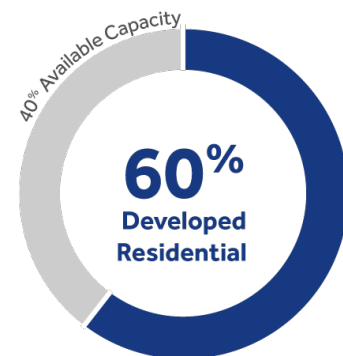*Nearly 40% of residential land is available for future development.*

Approximately 40% or 9,500 acres of this zoning is planned for future residential and is currently agricultural or undeveloped. This acreage allows for significant growth throughout the county without impacting or reducing more vulnerable land such as farmland. For instance, using a density of one new unit per acre and assuming a conservative estimate that 30% of land would go towards infrastructure, over 6,650 new residential units could be constructed in existing residential zoning. Using the median household size of 2.3 people per household, this amount of residential growth would bring +/- 15,000 new residents or 50% of the existing population of Wabash County.

40% Available Capacity

60%
Developed
Residential

However, this type of residential growth does not account for the variety of missing housing types and would limit growth to a specific, more impactful development pattern. Many of the central neighborhoods in the Cities of Wabash and North Manchester are designed with smaller residential lots of one unit per quarter acre. Additionally, these areas are constructed in grid-like patterns which increase connectivity between blocks and reduce infrastructure needs for development. Assuming only 20% of available land going towards infrastructure and a lot size of a quarter of an acre, approximately 30,400 new residential units could be constructed in existing residential zoning. This would lead to an increase in population of nearly 70,000 residents or more than double the existing population of Wabash County.

CONSERVED OR PROTECTED

Conservation areas are unique places that are protected from development to preserve natural features. In Wabash County these places are typically owned by the State or Federal government focused around Lake Mississinewa and Lake Salamonie. Land around the reservoirs are designated as state forests ensuring the protection of wildlife and the operation of the lakes for stormwater management and flood prevention. While under the management of the state, the forest designation does permit harvesting which has the potential to disrupt the natural tree canopy. Local efforts have sought to reclassify the area for conservation to protect the historic tree canopy indefinitely and prevent additional growth of invasive species. Aside from recreational amenities, these areas are not available for development from private organizations due to their importance to flood control and benefit as a regional amenity. This classification includes approximately 15,050 acres of land, composing 5% of the county.

Additional land is protected along river, stream, and creek corridors through federal regulations. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) outlines regulations for the management of water corridors across the country. FEMA analyzes and designates floodways and floodplains for water corridors which serve as the primary flood controls for natural site drainage. Floodways are water channels and surrounding land reserved for the base flood control. Floodplain is low-lying land surrounding the floodway that is prone to flooding during heavy rain events. The designation of these areas further limits the development of surrounding property as it can impact the corridors natural flood management causing adverse property damage. FEMA regulations are federal regulations requiring specific procedures for development in designated areas to ensure these corridors remain functioning for flood mitigation. Wabash County has major river corridors with the Eel and Wabash Rivers which have varying floodplain areas protecting additional land. Several creeks and streams feed into the river network creating a vast network of protected corridors. Exact acreage is not available but includes a substantial portion of the county given the reservoirs, rivers, and creeks found across the communities of Wabash County. A floodplain map for the entire county is provided in the map gallery, see **Map 1.4 Floodplain Areas**.
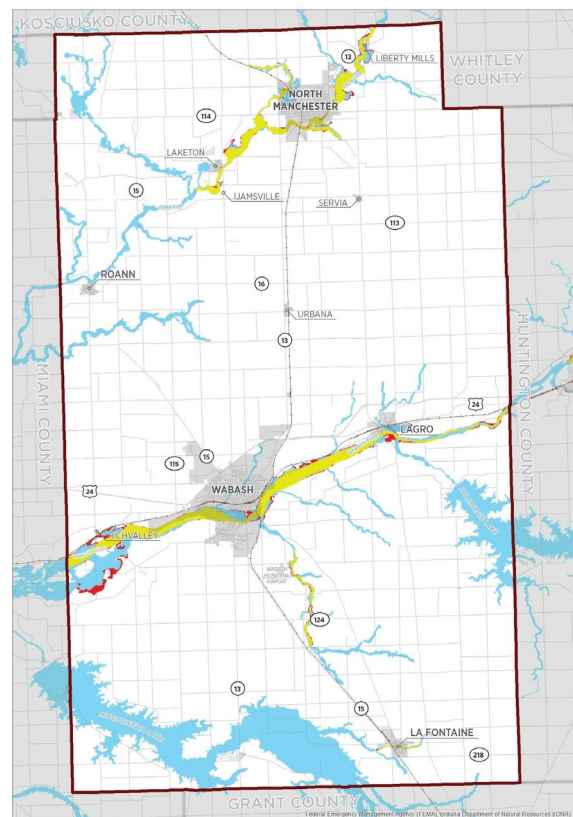

Map 1.4 Floodplain Areas

INDUSTRIAL

Wabash County has approximately 5,740 acres of industrial zoned land which includes both Limited Industrial and Industrial districts. These zoning districts permit a wide variety of industries from internal manufacturing or assembly operations to heavy, external operations such as mining or refineries. The "industrial use" classification is broad and includes a wide range of uses but can typically be categorized as either Light or Heavy Industrial. Light Industrial refers to uses that have primarily interior operations, minimal site obstructions, modern building design, and are able to integrate into commercial or in some instance's residential areas. These operations typically focus on warehousing, manufacture wholesaling, or

similar operations that are contained within an enclosed environment. Heavy Industrial refers to uses that have a mix of interior and exterior operations, require substantial land for storage or development, and have production performance requiring buffering or separation from surrounding land uses. These operations include more visible operations such as refining, mining, or manufacturing with large outdoor storage areas. Accessibility to major highways, interstates, and rail is essential to allow for transportation and distribution of materials used or produced by the business operations.

29% Developed Industrial

71% Available Capacity
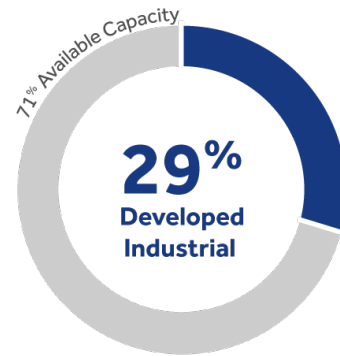
Industrial zoning represents only 2% of the county for both existing industries and planned growth across the communities. An estimated 4,080 acres or 71% of this land is not currently developed for industrial use, being available for future growth. This includes land contained in one of the industrial parks and industrially zoned land throughout the communities of Wabash County.

Wabash County is uniquely positioned to expand its industrial portfolio through three industrial parks. One located on the southern edge of the City of North Manchester and two located on the north east and west boundaries of the City of Wabash. These three parks account for approximately 575 acres for modern industrial uses having access to full utilities and high-speed fiber connectivity. The North Manchester park also offers the ability for Norfolk Southern rail service providing further opportunities for rail-oriented industry. All three parks are Indiana State Site Certified as "shovel-ready" sites meeting their unique standards for economic development including proximity to interstate and/or rail, utility accessibility, applicable zoning, and other similar factors.

Industrial Use Spectrum
The graphic below displays the variety of industrial uses represented in Wabash County.

Light Industrial (low intensity, interior operations)   **Heavy Industrial** (high intensity, mix of interior & exterior)
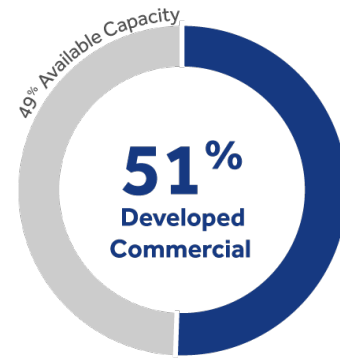
COMMERCIAL

Commercial areas include nodes of retail or restaurant uses that provide a diversity of goods and services for the community and region. The communities of Wabash County have several types of commercial properties ranging from small, neighborhood scale businesses to large, regional shopping centers anchored by "big box" stores. The majority of the neighborhood commercial is found along major roads near the center of the community. These blend into the surrounding residential with smaller building footprints, building height of two stories or less, and site buffering or landscaping along the edge of the property. This type of commercial is common in cities such as Wabash and North Manchester and smaller communities like Roann and Lagro. Regional commercial areas consist of large footprint buildings or attached centers surrounded by shared parking with smaller commercial sites integrated into the surrounding area. These are typically located at the

intersection of two major thoroughfares and have a regional market draw in addition to the local community. This type is typically found along the edge of the community, specifically urban areas such as Wabash and North Manchester.

Approximately 1,850 acres of the county is zoned for commercial use including both Community Commercial and General Commercial zoning districts. These districts account for approximately 1% of the county including both existing properties and planned potential growth. Of the total acreage, an estimated 900 acres or 49% is reserved for commercial growth across the county. This is inclusive of those properties which are currently zoned for commercial and does not include any outlying commercial properties that may exist in other zoning districts.

49% Available Capacity

51%
Developed
Commercial

MIXED-USE

Mixed-Use zoning refers to unique zoning districts that permit multiple types of uses from residential to commercial to office. For Wabash County, these areas are most prominent in downtowns, specifically the Cities of North Manchester and Wabash. This zoning district is the smallest portion of the county, representing 360 acres or less than 1%. However, these downtowns have concentrated recent capital investments from both public, private and philanthropic sectors, and they serve as the core of their larger communities.

Investments from the Stellar Communities Grant supported several projects and programs in downtown Wabash. The Eagles Theatre Community Center, Friendship Hill Inclusive Playground, Wabash Riverwalk Trail, downtown facade improvements, downtown dog park, and streetscape beautification and connectivity improvements are a few of the major projects funded by the grant. These have had a significant impact on downtown by enhancing the amenities available within the district while also further connecting these amenities to the surrounding community. Similarly, the City of North Manchester in the recent comprehensive planning process identified specific development opportunities that enhanced the core of the community. Two major development focuses were on a potential riverside park just south of downtown connecting to the bicycle trail network. Another promotes redevelopment on Market Street to encourage the extension of the downtown character and provide a wider array of housing, employment, and activity centers. Additional information regarding these investments will be covered in a future volume under *Placemaking*.

1.5 Land Cover

Land cover analysis uses satellite imagery to construct summary pixels of land cover at a defined scale and interval. These are then used to summarize the dominant land cover over a defined area. Unlike land use analysis, land cover does not create a summary at a parcel level, but rather at this pixel scale. Because of this, there will always be a discrepancy between totals from a land cover and land use summary. As an example, a 200-acre parcel may be classified as an agricultural use, even if more than half of that land is out of production or open space. Land cover analysis will break the parcel into its parts and create a more accurate total.

Land Cover Categories

(by decreasing acreage)

AGRICULTURE*

- Soybeans
- Corn
- Grass/Pasture
- Fallow/Idle Cropland
- Alfalfa
- Winter Wheat
- Other Hay/Non Alfalfa
- Dbl Crop WinWht/Soybeans
- Rye

- Tomatoes
- Pop or Orn Corn
- Clover/Wildflowers
- Sod/Grass Seed
- Apples
- Triticale
- Mint

NON-AGRICULTURE**

- Deciduous Forest
- Developed/Open Space
- Open Water
- Developed/Low Intensity
- Developed/Medium Intensity
- Woody Wetlands

The land cover map left converts satellite photography into detailed land cover information through color and reflectivity. The green hues on the map indicate areas without impervious surfaces or built elements / development. Greys on the map indicate these built areas. As the map indicates, most of the land in the county is covered with rotating crops, primarily corn and soybeans. Other major categories include deciduous forests and developed areas.

CHANGES FROM 2000

One of the most valuable uses of land cover imagery is the ability track changes in land use over a period. The map on the left shows a static image from 2019, but the data supporting the tool is gathered annually back to 2000. A comparison of these two images reveals changes in key trends like urban growth and development.

Just over 600 acres of farmland was developed (converted to low to high intensity urban use) between 2000 and 2019. Comparatively speaking, very little agricultural land was developed over the 20-year time horizon indicated in the land cover data. The image below shows the extent of this growth as compared to central Wabash. Allen County, as a comparison, lost 2,400 acres over this same period but also grew by 48,000 people. Wabash County lost 3,000 people of the same period.
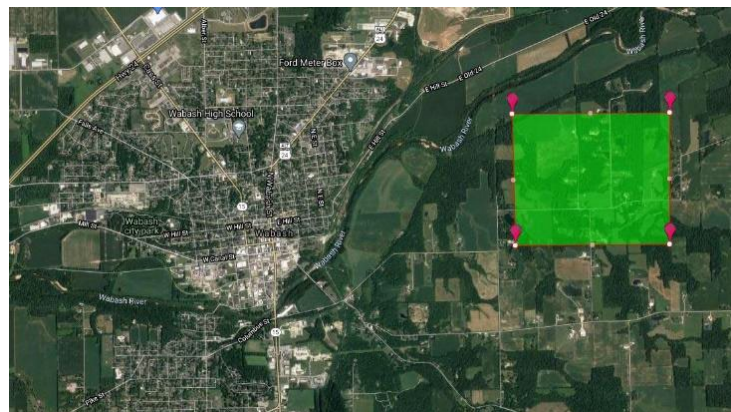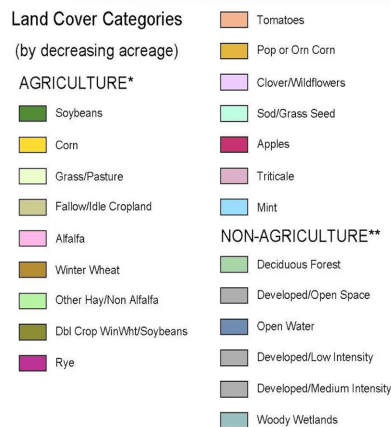
2. AGRICULTURE

Agriculture takes a closer look into the primary type of crops and livestock that are produced throughout Wabash County. This is achieved through evaluating the current enabling infrastructure and identifying some of the emerging trends in farming that can be leveraged.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Farms in the County continue to decrease in number but increase in average size.** An average farm today is nearly 154% larger than the average Wabash farm in the 1940s.
- **The market value of agricultural products sold has experienced a drop off in recent years.** The County's average market value of products sold per farm fell 27% between 2012 to 2017.
- **Local farmers are on the forefront of the Farm-to-Fork movement.** While distributing products directly to restaurants is viewed as an emerging trend, a number of Wabash farms have already been doing this for decades.
- **Relatively little farmland was lost to development over the past 20 years.** Based on a land cover analysis, just over 600 acres moved from an agricultural use to developed from 2000, roughly equivalent to the size of downtown Wabash.

2.1 Agricultural Land Use and Production

Agricultural land use and production focuses on how the land is utilized and the specific farm products that are grown in Wabash County. Wabash's information was then compared to adjacent counties in the region. This analysis helped to determine the types of crop and livestock products Wabash farmers specialize in.

AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

It is important to understand how the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Census of Agriculture calculates the land in farm acreage totals. Land in farms consists of agricultural land used for crops, pasture or grazing. It also includes woodland and wasteland that is not currently being utilized for farm operations. Land in farms is an operating unit concept and includes land owned and operated as well as land that is rented from others.

A decrease in overall land in farm acreage does not necessarily imply that land is lost to development. Instead, it may mean that land is dormant and not currently being used for agricultural production. Likewise, an increase in land in farms could be attributed to existing farmland being put back into operation, rather than the introduction of brand new cropland or pastures.

According to the most recent USDA Census from 2017, Wabash County has 211,239 acres of land in farms. About 90% of this is categorized as cropland. This is 38,495 less acres from its peak in 1950. More recently, the County saw a 7% increase in land in farms from 2012 to 2017, reversing a 10-year trend of acreage loss that began in 2002.

Table 1: Land in Farms Wabash County Comparison

Year	Wabash County	Fulton County	Grant County	Huntington County	Kosciusko County	Miami County	Whitley County	Indiana
1945	240,542	214,396	242,457	229,707	326,680	212,003	207,500	20,027,015
1950	249,734	221,556	240,487	231,978	316,344	224,340	206,361	19,658,677
1959	246,582	223,161	223,487	220,036	302,391	213,876	195,272	18,613,046
1964	237,513	214,396	217,360	220,912	297,793	208,256	196,441	17,933,226
1969	240,955	210,618	210,522	206,411	294,654	213,022	194,114	17,572,865
1974	234,090	203,704	207,214	193,344	291,383	202,189	192,691	16,785,208
1978	221,504	194,212	210,517	198,173	288,279	204,194	186,395	17,037,075
1982	207,924	185,495	208,967	195,604	274,364	198,468	178,239	16,294,268
1987	202,566	201,724	196,132	194,605	268,334	196,019	165,339	16,170,895
1992	197,947	194,312	196,537	187,955	251,603	188,843	162,244	15,618,831
1997	194,640	175,783	236,232	186,367	256,706	201,428	170,386	15,525,154
2002	214,703	192,861	210,989	199,773	262,001	191,369	172,094	15,058,670
2007	200,689	184,847	202,138	199,070	251,340	178,030	137,082	14,773,184
2012	197,588	188,411	183,380	188,848	154,847	175,276	140,099	14,720,396
2017	211,239	214,452	190,076	197,236	261,674	193,548	176,255	14,969,996

Number of Farms - Wabash County (1945 - 2017)
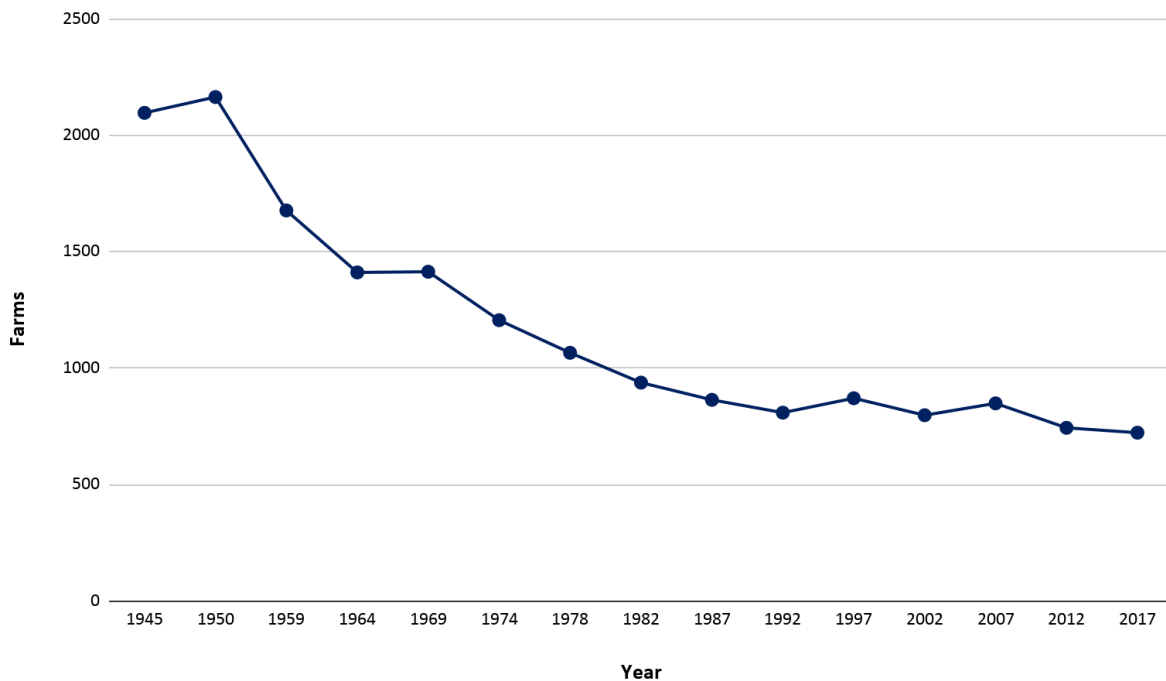
The number of farms in Wabash County in 2017 was 724, a 3% decrease since 2012. This continues a decades long trend of steady decline from when the County was home to 2,165 farms in 1950. As the number of farms shrink further, the average size of farms continue to increase. The average size of a farm in Wabash for 2017 was 292 acres, an increase of 10% from 2012. An average farm today is nearly 154% larger than the

average Wabash farm in the 1940s. These trends suggest that land that once belonged to smaller, family-owned farms is being consolidated by larger farms. However, over 50% of farms are between 10 and 179 acres. Large, more-industrial farms that are over 1,000 acres only make up 8% of total farms in the County.

Table 2: Number of Farms County Comparison

Year	Wabash County	Fulton County	Grant County	Huntington County	Kosciusko County	Miami County	Whitley County	Indiana
1945	2,097	1,680	2,396	2,158	3,034	1,851	2,088	175,970
1950	2,165	1,838	2,291	2,171	2,783	1,879	1,927	166,627
1959	1,678	1,567	1,568	1,591	2,272	1,447	1,530	128,160
1964	1,412	1,283	1,290	1,459	2,052	1,193	1,385	108,082
1969	1,415	1,235	1,262	1,301	2,038	1,260	1,351	101,479
1974	1,207	1,048	1,102	1,115	1,686	1,065	1,219	87,915
1978	1,067	937	966	991	1,527	988	1,110	88,427
1982	939	817	876	927	1,442	924	1,014	77,180
1987	865	773	744	818	1,327	818	880	70,506
1992	810	690	630	704	1,123	771	759	62,778
1997	872	705	646	730	1,330	760	919	66,707
2002	799	616	557	675	1,203	685	840	60,296
2007	850	639	524	766	1,235	682	809	60,938
2012	745	653	500	695	1,247	666	710	58,695
2017	724	635	494	611	1,042	629	696	56,649

Table 3: Average Size of Farms Comparison

Year	Wabash County	Indiana
1945	115	114
1950	115	118
1959	147	145
1964	168	166
1969	170	173
1974	194	191
1978	208	204
1982	221	211
1987	234	229
1992	244	249
1997	247	261
2002	269	250
2007	236	242
2012	265	251
2017	292	264

Average Size of Farms - Wabash County (1945 - 2017)
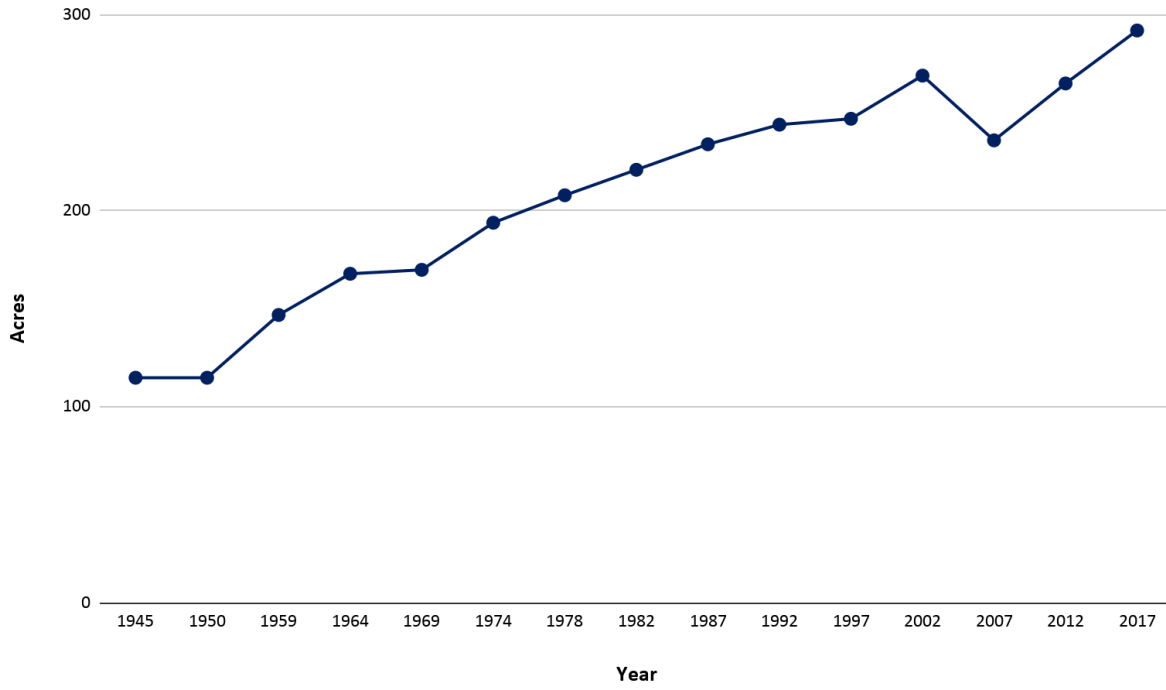
Land in Farms - Wabash County (1945 - 2017)
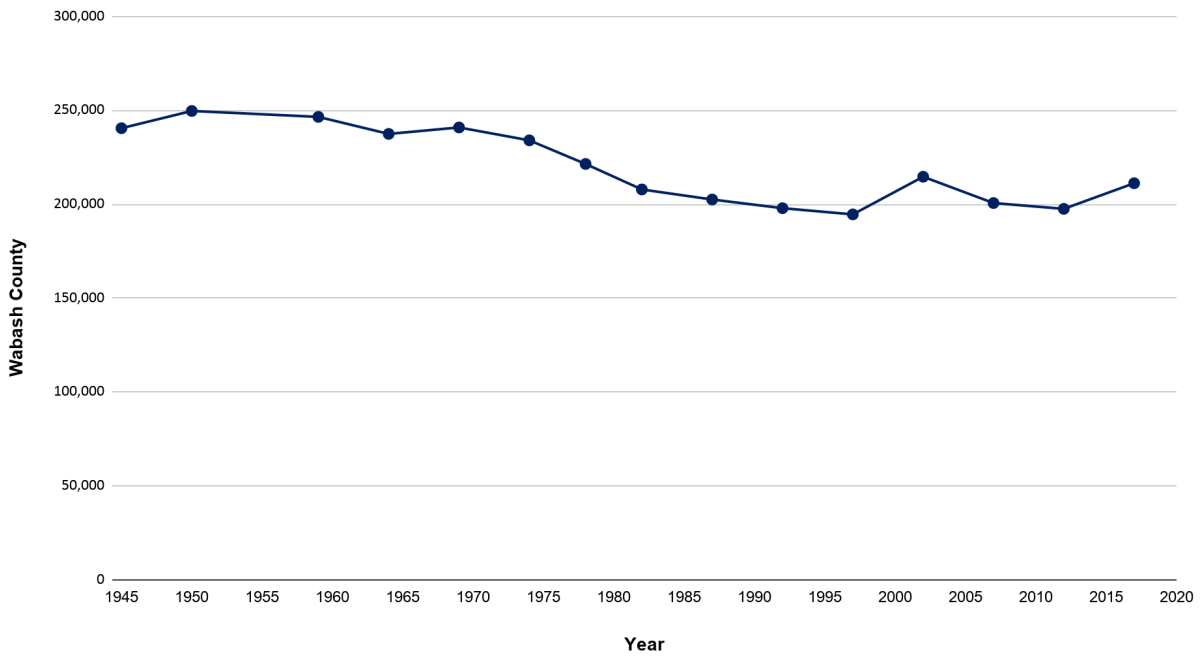
Wabash County's Share of Sales can be broken down into 59% crops (ranking 31st out of 92 counties) and 41% livestock poultry, and other products (ranking 21st). Nearly 80% of Wabash's farmland acreage is dedicated to the production of soybeans and corn. The County ranks 11th in the state for the sale of hogs and pigs and 6th for sheep and goats.

Market values of agricultural products from Wabash County have fallen 29% since 2012. The average market value of products sold per farm has dropped from $305,033 in 2012 to $222,664 in 2017, a 27% decrease. Farm-related income per farm has fallen 38% during this same time period. There is a broad spectrum of outcomes, as 32% of farms in Wabash earn less than $2,500 in sales and 28% of farms earn $100,000 or more. Overall, Wabash County farms contribute 1% of agriculture sales in Indiana.

2.2 Farmland Preservation

One of the primary concerns for rural communities is the ability to facilitate growth and development without sacrificing their key natural assets. Because of this, farmland preservation is a growing focus at both the state and local levels.

EXISTING POLICIES & REGULATIONS

State of Indiana provides tax advantages for agricultural land. Indiana assesses farmland at its agricultural value instead of the market value of the land. This is meant to conserve agricultural land from being developed for other uses.

Zoning regulations and land use planning is another tool to preserve farmland. Communities such as Wabash and North Manchester have specific Agricultural Districts that prioritize land uses related to farming. The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) provides a model agricultural zoning document for county governments that are interested in maintaining their agricultural lands while balancing other uses and growth demands. The guide presents three main models that other county officials can look to when revising their own zoning code.

Right to Farm legislation is designed to protect farmers from nuisance suits that result from urban encroachment. Passed in 1981, Indiana's Right to Farm Act states that if a farm is not deemed a nuisance when it begins its operations, it cannot be deemed a nuisance later. An amendment in 2005, maintained those protections if a farm underwent significant changes to its size, technology, or hours of operation. In 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear a case that challenged the constitutionality of Indiana's Right to Farm Act.

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) is a program operated by the USDA's National Resources Conservation Service to conserve agricultural lands. ACEP provides financial and technical assistance to eligible partners for purchasing Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) that protect existing farmland. These ALE s are an important tool for ensuring that productive working lands are not developed for non-agricultural uses. Under the Agricultural Land component, NRCS may contribute up to 50% of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement.

At the state level, the Indiana House of Representatives Interim Study Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources have been directing their attention to Agricultural Easements. Legislation proposed in HB 1165,

would direct ISDA to create an Agricultural Conservation Easement Fund that would let farmers preserve their agricultural land and keep it from being developed into a subdivision or for industrial use. Once established, these easements would remain for perpetuity and survive even if the property is sold or transferred. This would also result in a property tax reduction for the landowner since the tax assessment would reflect the easement rather than the market rate. While the Committee unanimously passed the legislation, the financial incentive language was ultimately stripped from the bill as it advanced further in the legislative process.

2.3 Infrastructure

Similar to other major businesses and industries, agriculture requires sufficient access to infrastructure and utilities in order to be successful. Water management is a primary consideration for local farmers, especially those who produce crops like soybeans and corn.

TILING

Tiling is a water management practice that involves a system of subsurface drains and pipes to help improve drainage performance for farmland. It is an especially common strategy for land devoted to corn and soybean production. Tiling has been known to help improve crop production and reduce soil erosion for prime farmland. According to Purdue University, at least 50% of Indiana's cropland has drainage improvements, enhancing crop production on more than 8 million acres.

While the presence of water bodies such as the Wabash and Eel Rivers help contribute to the county's rich, fertile soils, it can also be detrimental to crop yield during high flood events. Tiling systems are ineffective tools against flooding once rainfall exceeds the infiltration rate of the soil. New tiling practices recently introduced near La Fontaine have revealed potential concerns with increased flooding downstream due to the increased water volume. Tiled farmland may help expedite the removal of excess water after the storm event has ended compared to land that has not been tiled.

Tiled farmland is an effective strategy to prevent significant damage to crops, but it also carries a number of tradeoffs from an environmental perspective. Systems may carry nutrients such as nitrate to adjacent streams and rivers. Decisions related to tile spacing and the utilization of cover crops can help mitigate high concentrations of nitrate and leaks in the system.

CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Water management across the county relies on comprehensive drainage system. This system leverages the natural rivers and streams to distribute water runoff from surrounding land to help mitigate flooding. Local efforts have recently pursued efforts to encourage conservation practices as part of the county drainage system. All low head dams on the Eel River have been removed and the Middle Eel River Watershed Alliance has encouraged the use of swails, cover cropping, and no-till farming to further prevent flooding. These practices have shown improved drainage as water is capable of moving through the stream channels faster during rain events, mitigating the possibility of flooding.

2.4 Agricultural Innovation

The agricultural industry is constantly adapting to new trends and technological advancements. It is vitally important for farmers to stay current on best practices and monitor any potential disruptions so they can continue to meet consumer demand, increase crop yields, and reduce costs.

CURRENT INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

FARM-TO-FORK

Farm-to-Fork is one of the most prevalent shifts in farming trends. This change is being spurred by consumers motivated by health benefits or environmental sustainability, who are trying to be more cognizant of where their meal originates from. Fortunately, some Wabash farmers are well-accustomed to selling their products directly to local restaurants and other institutional buyers. According to the 2017 USDA Census, 6% of Wabash farms sell directly to the consumer. This matches with Indiana's overall trend. Four farms in Wabash County are listed in the Indiana Grown for Schools Directory. The County should find ways to encourage these types of transactions since they help support the local economy, while also helping to foster a greater sense of community.

FACILITY UPGRADES

Farms will need to update their facilities to ensure that they can deliver high quality products. A farm in North Manchester recently constructed a state of the art hog building that features an enhanced ventilation system. The energy efficient system provides a healthier environment for the pigs which results in a better return on investment for the farmers raising the pigs. Elsewhere, the Wabash Heartland Innovation Network, composed of other central Indiana counties, is exploring the application of Internet of Things (IoT) technology to make agriculture practices more efficient. Wabash County should continue to support local farmers who are interested in upgrading their facilities and equipment.

LIVING LABORATORY

The Wabash County Soil and Water Conservation District has utilized the Wabash County Farm as a living laboratory to test out the latest agricultural trends. The farm features a drainage water management system that was donated by Agri Drain Corporation. These types of tiling systems have several benefits for agricultural producers including improved crop yield and reduced soil erosion. The farm has also installed Water and Sediment Control Basins (WASCOB) that directs the flow of water runoff away from farmland and water bodies. WASCOBs are able to improve water quality by settling out harmful sediment before it reaches nearby rivers or streams. While each improvement benefits the performance of the farm, it is also useful for demonstrations for others interested in adopting new technology.

COMING DISRUPTIONS

TRADE POLICY SHIFTS

Global trade policy has a profound impact on Indiana farmers and their ability to be profitable. The recent trade war between the United States and China has resulted in retaliatory tariffs being placed on key domestic products such as corn and soybeans. Soybeans acts as Indiana's number one agricultural export and China has been the largest consumer of U.S. soybeans. This has resulted in the U.S. government having to prop up the agriculture industry through subsidies. The use of subsidies with no clear end in sight creates uncertainty for local farmers as they make important decisions regarding their crop production.

COVID-19

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has created significant disruptions to Indiana in the form of restrictions, closings, and other policy changes. Prices for various products have fallen as restaurants and other major purchasers buy less. All of these factors have an impact on how local farmers produce, sell, and distribute their crops. Some farmers must change their crop schedules, while

others who focus on livestock are unable to delay. Equally important is the impact on farmers and workers' health. A sick workforce risks decreases in production and other significant logistic delays.

3. NATURAL RESOURCES / PARKS AND RECREATION

This section reviews the natural resources and other unique places that have naturally defined the character of Wabash County and its communities. Along with this are the parks and recreation assets the county has developed to connect and expand the greenway and blueway network. Through this analysis, a baseline of the existing conditions is established to understand how the communities leverage these assets. This section details the natural resources available, examines existing programming, reviews the relationship between the natural and manmade, and identifies efforts to enhance natural assets.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Community parks are provided at all levels.** From the local to the regional, parks and open spaces are provided throughout the communities of Wabash County.
- **Rivers are a major community asset.** Several communities from Wabash to Roann have direct riverfront access to one or more of the county's river corridors.
- **Substantial parkland is protected from development.** Approximately six percent of the County's land is protected by local, state, and federal parks.
- **Agricultural production has a strong relationship with the environment.** Farming practices directly impact the health and quality of environmental resources like soil and water.

3.1 Environmental Resources

Environmental resources focuses on the specific, natural features that are found in Wabash County and its communities. These resources were identified throughout the county as unique destinations or assets that set the county apart from others in the region. Ensuring these resources are protected, preserved, and enhanced is important to Wabash County's community character.

RIVER CORRIDORS AND BLUEWAY NETWORK

Wabash County has a diverse network of river and waterway networks, also known as blueway corridors, waterways connecting throughout the region. These resources led early settlers to establish communities along the blueways with the majority of communities still retaining direct water access today. The Eel and Wabash Rivers represent the two most prominent features hosting the largest communities of North Manchester and the City of Wabash respectively. A waterway network map for the entire county is provided in the map gallery, see **Map 1.5 Waterway Network**.

The Eel River flows 110 miles from north of Fort Wayne to the southwest connecting numerous communities until feeding into the Wabash River at Logansport. Several smaller communities including Laketon, Roann, and Liberty Mills reside on the bank of the river providing opportunities for water access. The river varies in width from a 20 foot stream along certain portions to 100 feet near its merge with the Wabash River. Most of its bank is lined with trees and vegetation providing a scenic route for
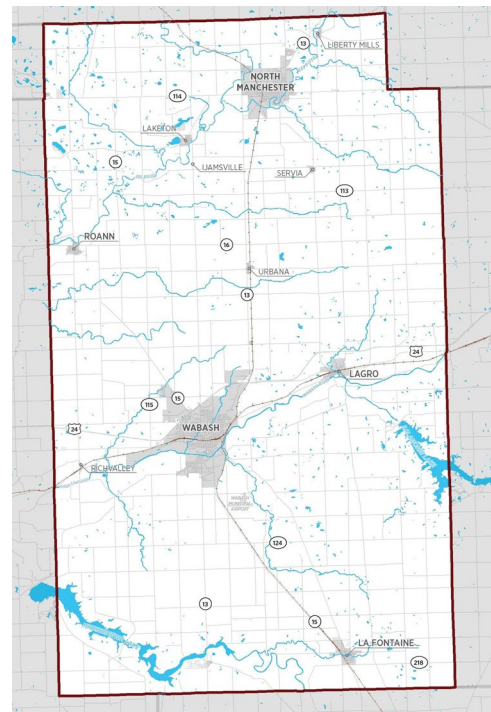

Map 1.5 Blueway Network

water activities which can be accessed by any number of community banks. Wabash County further supplies the river with over half a dozen creeks crossing the northern portion of the county. These creeks include:

- Silver Creek
- Squirrel Creek
- Clear Creek
- Pony Creek
- Treaty Creek

- Swank Creek
- Charley Creek
- Bear Grass Creek
- Otter Creek
- Wheeler Creek

The Wabash River is Indiana's most significant river corridor extending from Huntington in the northeast down to the Ohio River in southwest Indiana. Covering over 475 miles, the river drains over 33,000 square miles of the state and is the primary drainage route for Indiana's farmland. Almost all river corridors feed into the Wabash River along its route which remains free flowing for nearly 400 miles. In Wabash County, several communities reside directly on the river corridor including the City of Wabash, Lagro, and Richvalley. The Salamonie River joins the Wabash near Lagro while the Mississinewa and Eel Rivers connect to the west, outside of the county. The Lagro Creek, Mill Creek, Kentner Creek, Charley Creek, and Treaty Creek also serve the river with most connections occurring near the City of Wabash. The river corridor is primarily natural vegetation in rural parts of the state supplemented with parks and open space in developed areas such as downtowns or town centers. The extent of this corridor makes it a unique amenity to the region providing a service for agricultural drainage and water connectivity to communities across the state. A natural resources map for the entire county is provided in the map gallery, see **Map 1.6 Natural Resources**.
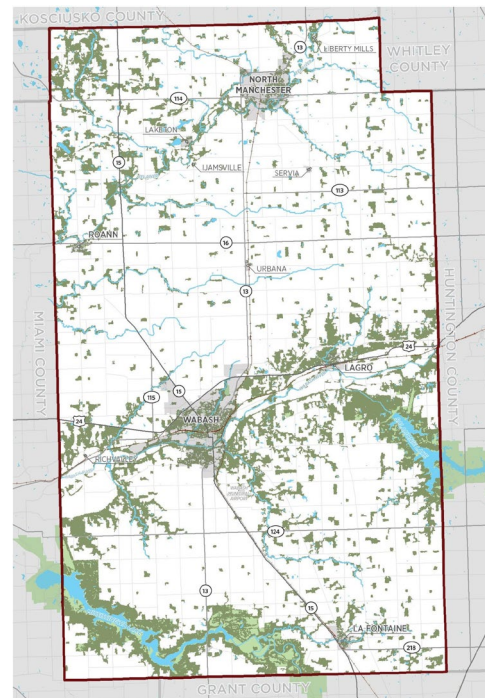
Map 1.6 Natural Resources

COUNTY RESERVOIRS

While rivers serve as unique natural assets, their proximity to each community and erosion over time has revealed concerns with potential flooding. To assist with flood management, a set of reservoirs was constructed under the Flood Control Act of 1958 in the northeast region of Indiana. The Salamonie, Mississinewa, and Huntington lakes were constructed to reduce potential flooding during rainfall events for the Wabash River Basin. This river serves as the primary drainage corridor for the majority of Indiana, connecting the northeast near Fort Wayne down to the southwestern border of the state. Built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, these lakes adjust water levels and reduce flow rates for the rivers to prevent flooding events.

The Salamonie Lake protects an estimated 31,500 acres of agricultural land in addition to the 13,000 acres of preservation surrounding the reservoir. The lake and its rockfill dam were constructed in 1966 with the dam having a height of 133 feet and length of 6,100 feet along its crest. Fed by the Salamonie River from Jay County, the reservoir connects directly to the Wabash River northwest of the dam near the Town of Lagro. Monument City, originally platted in 1876, and two small towns were removed to open land for the construction of the reservoir. The town's namesake was a Civil War monument engraved with the names of men from Polk Township who served in the war. This monument and the town's cemetery were relocated as part of this project now residing a mile north of the lake. Over 40 ponds, marshes, and wetlands contribute to

the unique natural area surrounding the lake which offers a variety of recreational opportunities and wildlife preservations. Trails, campgrounds, mountain biking, sports courts, and a variety of water sports are all available during the summer months. During winter, snowmobile trails are designated to offer additional, year-round recreational activities.

The Mississinewa Lake preserves over 14,000 acres of land with a 3,200 acre lake at its center. Construction began in 1962 with the lake becoming operational in 1967 to assist with flood management for the region. The construction of the dam, finalized in 1967, resulted in the relocation of the unincorporated community of Somerset, now located on State Route 13. The reservoir is fed by the Mississinewa River from the southeast and connects to the Wabash River northwest of the lake near the City of Peru. The conservation area surrounding the lake offers a diverse landscape of forests, prairies, and farmland. Water sports, trails, campgrounds, cabins, and bicycle paths are just a few of the amenities offered by the state park. Ice fishing and snowmobiling provide winter activities that attract additional visitors to the region. Since its construction, the reservoir is estimated to have prevented hundreds of millions in flood damage for Wabash County and the surrounding region.

3.2 Recreational Amenities

This section analyzes the parks and recreation amenities that the communities of Wabash County have developed. Existing parks were analyzed to understand acreage preserved or protected, the types of parkland available, locations and service reach of parks, and other recreational amenities in the county. These serve an important community benefit that enhances the quality of place alongside the natural features unique to Wabash County.

PARKS SYSTEM

Park spaces serve a variety of purposes for the communities of Wabash County from recreation to preservation. Conservation efforts in the county are focused around natural places, primarily the Salamonie and Mississinewa Lakes. The Federal and State government own land to ensure the continuous preservation of natural assets in the region. Additional preserves such as the Kokiwanee Nature Preserve, privately managed by the Acres Land Trust, further expand protected environments in Wabash County for recreational, educational, and environmental use.

At the local level, parks systems have steadily been integrated into neighborhoods for use by the community. North Manchester maintains six parks totaling approximately 20 acres for use by its residents ranging from 1/10 of an acre to several acres in size. The City of Wabash maintains nine parks totaling roughly 70 acres with the largest park being 35 acres near the center of the City. Smaller communities have sought to connect with regional, county parks while also leveraging the natural areas present in almost every community. A comprehensive table of parks in the county is provided below.

Table 2: Wabash County Parks.

Name	Community Location	Acreage
Wabash City Park	Wabash	35
Honeywell Park	Wabash	8
Paradise Springs Historical Park	Wabash	15

Name	Community Location	Acreage
South Side park	Wabash	1
Hanna Park	Wabash	3
Broadmoor Park	Wabash	2
Charley Creek Park	Wabash	2
John Drook Memorial Bike and Skate Park	Wabash	3
Friendship Hill Inclusive Playground	Wabash	0.84
Master Trooper David Rich Memorial Park	Wabash	0.25
Warvel Park	North Manchester	12.3
Thomas Marshall Town Life Center	North Manchester	4.5
Frantz Park	North Manchester	1.8
Halderman Park	North Manchester	1.2
Ogan's Landing	North Manchester	2
Cook-Crumley Park	La Fontaine	2.5
Servia Park	Servia	0.4
Salamonie Lake Reservoir	Wabash County	12,554
Salamonie River State Forest	Wabash County	950
Kokiwanee Nature Preserve (private)	Wabash County	140
Mississinewa Lake Reservoir	Wabash County	15,072
Frances Slocum State Forest	Wabash County	550

There is also capacity to further expand the parks system as identified in previous planning efforts. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the City of Wabash identified that compared to benchmark communities in the region, Wabash had a below average parks system. It was determined at the time, 2014, that an additional 9 acres of parkland should be acquired to expand accessibility. One common enhancement area identified by the communities is along the waterfront with access to the Eel and Wabash Rivers. Both North Manchester and the City of Wabash have defined strategies to develop trail networks and amenities along the rivers, especially in flood prone areas. These trails provide direct connections to the county network with opportunities to further enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity throughout the region.

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN TRAILS

Trail development is a recreational focus in Wabash County providing a comprehensive connection to major destinations. For over a decade, the county has hosted the Dam to Dam Annual Bike Ride which includes several routes visiting all the communities of Wabash County. This event has identified key corridors that connect the communities and amenities throughout the county together with the longest route being 150 miles in length. At the local level, the City of Wabash has the Paradise Springs Trail, the Charley Creek Gardens trail, and the Wabash Riverwalk Trail which extends along the Wabash River and connects to the historic downtown. This trail was identified in the Stellar Communities Grant in 2014 and represents an important economic investment in the community.

The Wabash River Trails, inclusive of all trail networks, received $1 million in funding from the Northeast Indiana Regional Development Authority in 2017. An additional $2 million from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to develop a trail and blueway that will connect Paradise Springs and the Town of Lagro, six miles to the east. The City has pursued additional opportunities to extend and enhance trail features, with 2.5 miles of trail in use today. Many redevelopment projects have been identified along the trail, promoting economic investment in the county.

North Manchester has also identified the importance of trail development outlining this in their recent 2015 Comprehensive Plan. Like the City of Wabash, North Manchester has defined several local trail connections that connect downtown to adjacent neighborhoods and expand off the Wabash County regional bike trail. The City also seeks to develop an enhanced riverfront park as one of three community development opportunities. Additional trail features are included in the State and Federal parks system located around the Salamonie and Mississinewa Lakes.

3.3 Environmental Quality

This section focuses on the existing conditions of the county's natural resources and their relationship with the built environment. Environmental resources including air, soil, and water quality are reviewed to understand the potential risks or threats to the long-term quality and overall health. Human and development influence on the environment establishes an understanding of how all land use sectors interact with the natural features and the challenges impacting this relationship.

AIR

The quality of air, water, and soil (reviewed in the *Agricultural* section) is especially important to public health and agricultural production. Overall, Wabash County has maintained compliance with air quality standards set by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). The highest risk to the communities relates to Ground Level Ozone or Smog which is the result of industrial facilities, fossil fuel combustion, motor vehicle exhaust, and vapors from gasoline or chemical solvents. High levels of ground-level ozone can result in health effects for sensitive groups like young children and the elderly. Long-term exposure such as congestion, chest pain, decreased lung function can become more common, providing a public health concern for the county.

Ozone monitoring occurs in select places across the state with Wabash County's being located near the Salamonie Reservoir. Annual measurements are taken by monitoring air quality during 8-hour windows between the months of March and October. The highest maximum concentration during the time slot is averaged over the three previous years to ensure the total value does not exceed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and IDEM requirements. The concentration limit is set at 0.070 parts per million (ppm)

and is used to determine if an area is in exceedance, a high level of ozone resulting in potential health impacts. Wabash County has historically remained under the concentration level with the 2020 value being 0.068 ppm. Two recent years resulted in a higher level which were in 2016 & 2018, however the following year showed a decrease in the parts per million. As IDEM standards are updated, Wabash County has maintained lower levels of smog preventing public health risks for people living in the county.

WATER

Water quality has been a primary focus for environmental protection given the natural waterways in Wabash County. The county is part of four distinct watersheds that expand the region; Upper Wabash River Watershed, Middle Eel River Watershed, Mississinewa Watershed, and the Lower Salamonie Watershed. Within these watersheds, erosion is a uniform concern as historically the county has lost a significant portion of its waterways. A historical erosion map for the entire county is provided in the map gallery, see **Map 1.7 Historical Erosion**. This is attributed to some of the adjacent land use practices, specifically farming, and water management infrastructure along banks. Water quality stressors are another primary concern with the Middle Eel River Watershed having higher Total Suspended Solids (TSS) in the water. This is attributed to several factors including cropland erosion, fertilizer runoff, and septic system deterioration. The county is at the forefront of managing water quality in the region with several surrounding counties having more risk for contaminants and stressors.
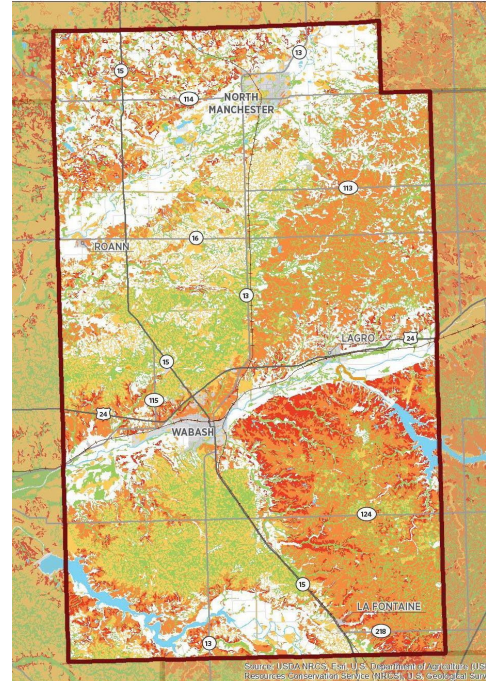
Map 1.7 Historical Erosion

As part of the Lower Salamonie Watershed Management Plan, priority stream areas were identified based on a critical evaluation of the region. Streams in Wabash County ranked in the lower tiers being determined as areas of least concerns for addressing water quality. The Middle Eel River Watershed was identified as a priority area for improvement after reviewing several parameters like TSS, phosphorus, and ammonia levels. A major contributor to these high parameters is the use of conventional tillage practices for cropland as opposed to alternative methods.
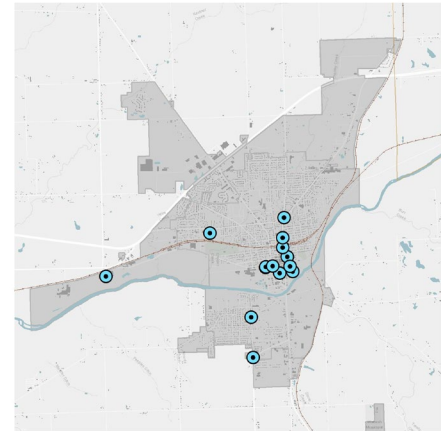
Many local organizations and programs have been established to assist in water quality management. The Wabash River Defenders are a non-profit organization who host various events directed towards cleaning and improving the Wabash River. They participate in the annual river clean-up and have developed a strategic plan for enhancing the river network throughout the county. Other local efforts encourage implementing conservation practices to reduce runoff and additional riverbank cleaning events to remove debris and other contaminants.
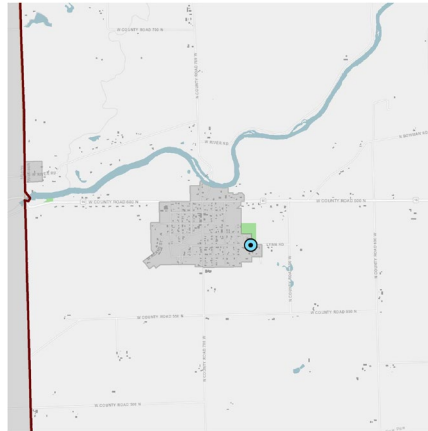
INDUSTRIAL BROWNFIELD SITES

Brownfields are properties that are either contaminated by hazardous substances or thought to be contaminated. Over the years, industrial sites have ceased operations leaving behind their vacant facilities and potential environmental impacts. Several have been identified as having environmental contaminants on site that impact potential redevelopment of the property. The Indiana Brownfield Program has identified 18 sites in Wabash County that have applied through their grant program for remediation funding. This list includes property in the Town of Roann, City of North Manchester, and City of Wabash. In some instances, these properties are integrated in the community, near downtown or destinations making them important to the general health and safety of the public. Many local governments have been working diligently to remediate sites as funding becomes available such as the City of Wabash redeveloping a brownfield site for the Friendship Hill Inclusive Playground.

Wabash Brownfield Sites

The following list and maps, right, identify the 18 properties who have sought remediation funding from the state. The table includes details pertaining to the individual properties including the property address and land restrictions due to prior contaminants.

Roann Brownfield Sites

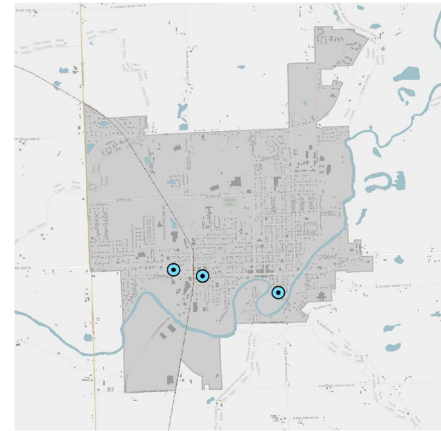**North Manchester Brownfield Sites**

This is not a comprehensive list of all the potential brownfield sites but only those where property owners or private corporations have sought to address environmental concerns.

Table 2: Brownfield Sites & Restrictions.

ID	Site Name	Address	City	Acreage	Land Restrictions	Remediation Efforts
1	Mafcote Property	410 S Carroll St	Wabash	1.5	No residential, agricultural, water wells, soil cap restriction, excavation below 12 inches (metals, SVOCs in soil and groundwater)	
2	Denton (former junkyard)	129 E Fulton St	Wabash	0.8	No residential, agricultural, water wells (metals in soil)	

ID	Site Name	Address	City	Acreage	Land Restrictions	Remediation Efforts
3	Swinger Shell	211 N Wabash`	Wabash	0.28	No residential, agricultural or wells. Prohibit activity that may interfere with response activities, long-term monitoring.	
4	Kozy Korner	1408 Vernon St	Wabash	0.2		
5	GDX Automotive SEP	1 General St	Wabash	31		Under contract to negotiate clean-up and redevelopment by the City of Wabash.
6	Quality Quick Lube & Specialties LLC	701 W Main St	North Manchester	1		
7	United Service Station 6069	904 W SR 114	North Manchester	0.25		
8	Hoefer Fred Amoco	6 W Hill St	Wabash	0.23		
9	J&M Enterprise	403 S Cass St	Wabash	0.5		
10	Vernon Manor Children's Home	1955 S Vernon St	Wabash	3.5		
11	Fairplay Family Fun Center	92 E Market St	Wabash	0.36		Demolished and redeveloped as shared parking lot for Rock City Lofts and the Wabash County History Museum.
12	Rivers Edge MHC	303 S Mill St	North Manchester	2.25		
13	Harvey Industries LLC	3837 W Mill St	Wabash	20		
14	Abe Sposeep & Sons Inc	55 Water St	Wabash	3.5		Remediation completed and now being monitored.
15	Sposeep II	472 Miami St	Wabash	0.6		Under negotiation for remediation.
16	Old Roann School	E Pike St & S Grant St	Roann	2		Building has been demolished.
17	Bront Company Warehouse Bldg	401 S Carroll St	Wabash	0.5	No residential, agriculture, water wells (VOCs, PAHs and metals in soil)	
18	Pizza Station	503 Wabash St	Wabash	0.13	No groundwater use (TPH in groundwater)	

4. Historical and Archaeological Resources

Historical and Archaeological Resources examines the County's many cultural assets that contribute to the overall sense of place. This section assesses preservation efforts that have taken place within the county and highlights some of the organizations that are spearheading this important work.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Wabash communities are active advocates for their history and their landmarks of historical significance.** The first landmark in the County to make it on the National Register was listed in 1979.
- **The County has a unique network of active preservation partners.** Not all counties of similar size and composition have multiple historical societies and an institution like the Honeywell Foundation.
- **Historic assets play an important role in reinforcing community identity.** Unique events such as the four-day Roann Covered Bridge Festival demonstrate how landmarks add vibrancy to the communities of Wabash.

4.1 Historic Sites

The communities of Wabash County have a rich history that is worth sharing. These important assets cannot be replaced and need to be protected for future generations.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Wabash County is a place that has a unique and storied past. This is evident in the amount of state historical markers and properties and districts that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Wabash has 21 properties and 8 historic districts listed on the National Register. Four of these districts are located within Downtown Wabash. North Manchester features two districts, one in the downtown and another by Manchester University. Historic Districts can also be found in the towns of La Fontaine and Roann. The earliest property on the Register was listed in 1979. This demonstrates that the communities of Wabash County have prioritized the preservation of their historical landmarks and assets for decades.

STATE HISTORICAL MARKERS

The County also has 8 state historical markers that designate important landmarks associated with key events or historical figures from Indiana's storied past. The state historical marker program is operated by the Indiana Historical Bureau.

WABASH
The City of Wabash has four separate historic districts located within the downtown area: the Downtown Wabash Historic District, the North Wabash Historic District, the East Wabash Historic District, and the West Wabash Historic District. The Downtown Wabash Historic District was the first one to be designated in 1986, with the latest one being the East Wabash Historic District in 2011. Other primary historic places from the Register include several assets connected to the Honeywell Foundation including the Honeywell Memorial Community Center and Honeywell Studio (originally the Wabash Country Club) for their architectural significance and connection to founder and prominent industrialist Mark C. Honeywell and the Lincoln Statue at the Courthouse.

Wabash also features three state historical markers from the Indiana Historical Bureau. The Paradise Spring Treaty Ground marker is located within the Paradise Spring Historical Park. It marks the site where the Potawatomi and Miami Tribes signed treaties that ceded the lands north of the Wabash River to the United States government in 1826. Located on the grounds of the Wabash County Courthouse, a marker celebrates Wabash as the "First Electrically Lighted City". In 1880, Wabash city officials utilized Charles F. Brush's carbon-arc lights for the courthouse, which illuminated the building until 1888. On the southern bank of the river, a marker denotes the site of Camp Wabash, the 11th Congressional military camp that was active during the Civil War.

NORTH MANCHESTER

North Manchester features a historic district for its downtown and another for Manchester College. The North Manchester Historic District has three buildings that individually were placed on the National Register including the Lantz House, Noftzger-Adams House, and the original North Manchester Public Library. The other district notes the architectural significance of the campus and educational impact Manchester College (now University) had on Wabash County and the City of North Manchester. The North Manchester Covered Bridge is one of the two remaining covered bridges in the County.

North Manchester's state historical markers include the location where the Church of the Brethren held their annual meetings in 1878, 1888, and 1900 and the birthplace of Thomas Riley Marshall, the former Governor of Indiana (1909-1913) and two-term Vice President to Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921). Other primary historic features include the grave of Andrew Cordier, a Manchester College professor and former undersecretary to the General Secretary of the United Nations, and former resident Lloyd Douglas, author of the religious novel *The Robe* (1942).

ROANN

Roann's Historic District covers most of the downtown area and includes other historical assets listed on the National Register including the Thomas J. Lewis House and the Roann-Paw Paw Township Public Library, a Carnegie Library. The town is also home to the second covered bridge in Wabash County, as well as the Halderman-Van Buskirk Farmstead, noted for its Gothic Revival Architecture. The annual Roann Covered Bridge Festival celebrates an important symbol of community pride in the town. Located just one mile west of Roann is the Stockdale Mill. The old water powered flour mill and dam was placed on the National Register in 2004.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Other key assets of note include churches such as the St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Lagro and the Hopewell Methodist Epsicopal Church and Cemetery in Urbana. St. Patrick's is listed on both the National Register and has its own state historical marker for its impressive architecture and stained glass. Lagro was also the birthplace of Mrs. Gene Stratton-Porter, early 20th century author known for her novel *A Girl of the Limberlost* (1909).

Another significant cemetery in the County is the Slocum Cemetery, the resting place of Frances Slocum, who assimilated into the Miami Tribe after she was captured as a child by members of the Delaware. The state historical marker is located just outside the Frances Slocum State Recreational Area. Located in close proximity to Richvalley, the Miami Indian Mills is a state marker that denotes the remnants of an old grist and sawmill that was built for the Miami Tribe as a part of the 1818 Treaty of St. Mary's. It is possible that it was the first industrial site in Wabash County.

4.2 Programming

Wabash has several entities that are leading the preservation efforts in the County. It is important to have a sense of what institutions are doing so that efforts are not being duplicated, but to also identify any limitations that might exist.

ORGANIZATIONS

WABASH COUNTY MUSEUM

The Wabash County Museum is a not for profit institution that welcomes 20,000 visitors annually. In addition to its exhibits, the museum houses the Richard E. Ford Archives and Research Center. It also offers a walking tour through a mobile app that guides people to various points of interest in Downtown Wabash.

NORTH MANCHESTER CENTER FOR HISTORY

The North Manchester Center for History is a museum that partners with the North Manchester Historical Society. The museum's goal is to collect, preserve, and interpret the history of North Manchester and the Northern Indiana Eel River Basin. The society maintains an expansive online article and research studies archive. More recently, the Center was one of six Indiana locations selected to host Crossroads - Change in Rural America, a traveling Smithsonian exhibit.

HONEYWELL FOUNDATION

In addition to its numerous programs related to the advancement of arts and education, the Honeywell Foundation is also an active player in community historical preservation. The Foundation maintains a number of historical venues including the Dr. James Ford Historic Home and the Eagles Theatre. The Eagles Theatre has been a fixture in Downtown Wabash since its construction in 1906. The Honeywell Foundation acquired the landmark venue in 2010 and launched an ambitious, two-year restoration in 2017. The rehabilitation efforts of the historic architectural features and addition of modern amenities totaled $10 million for the 30,000 square foot structure.

4.3 Future Considerations

While the communities of Wabash have a proven track record of preservation and appreciation for their historical assets, the work is never truly completed. Organizations must continue to monitor aging buildings and look for other opportunities to fund preservation efforts.
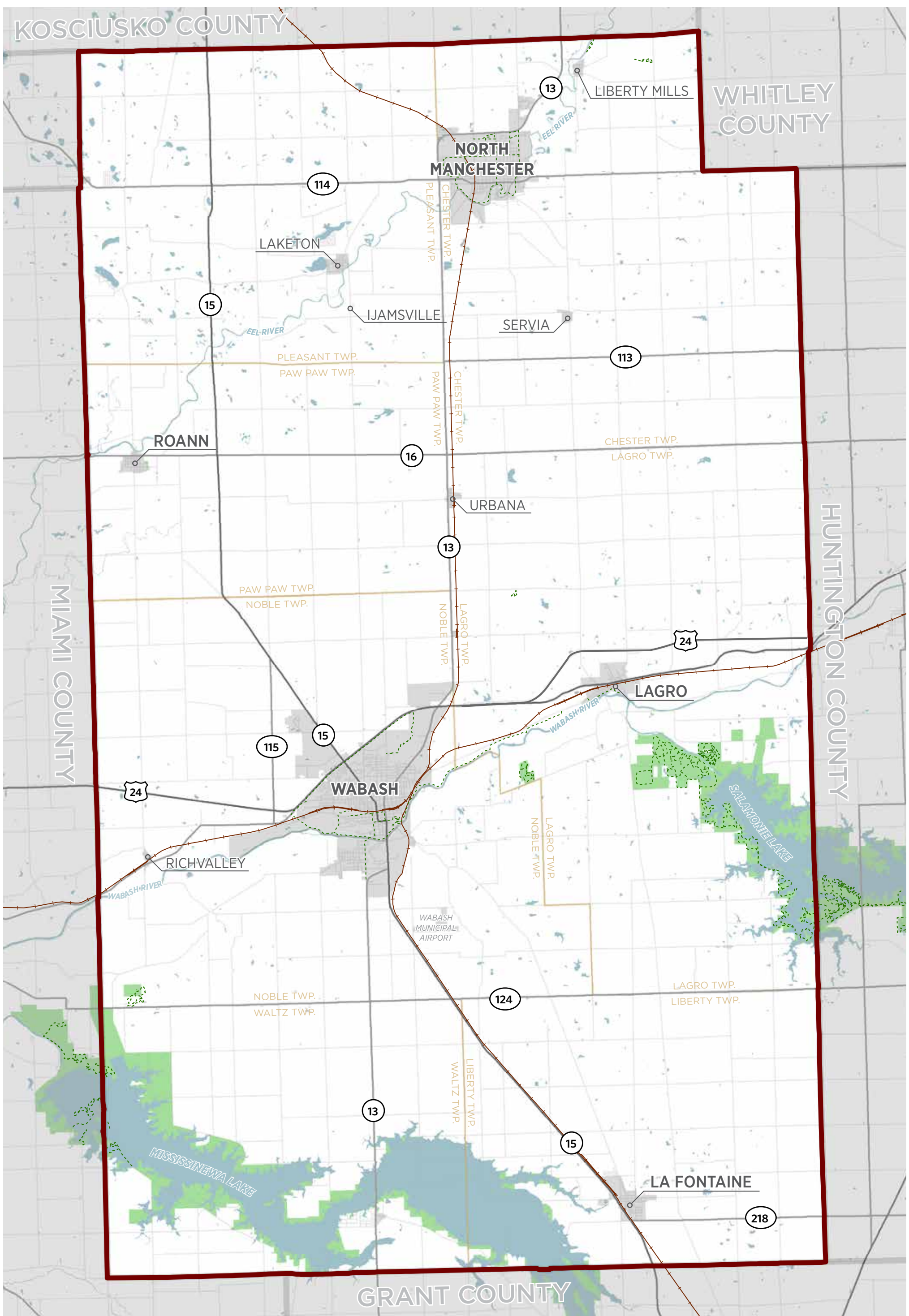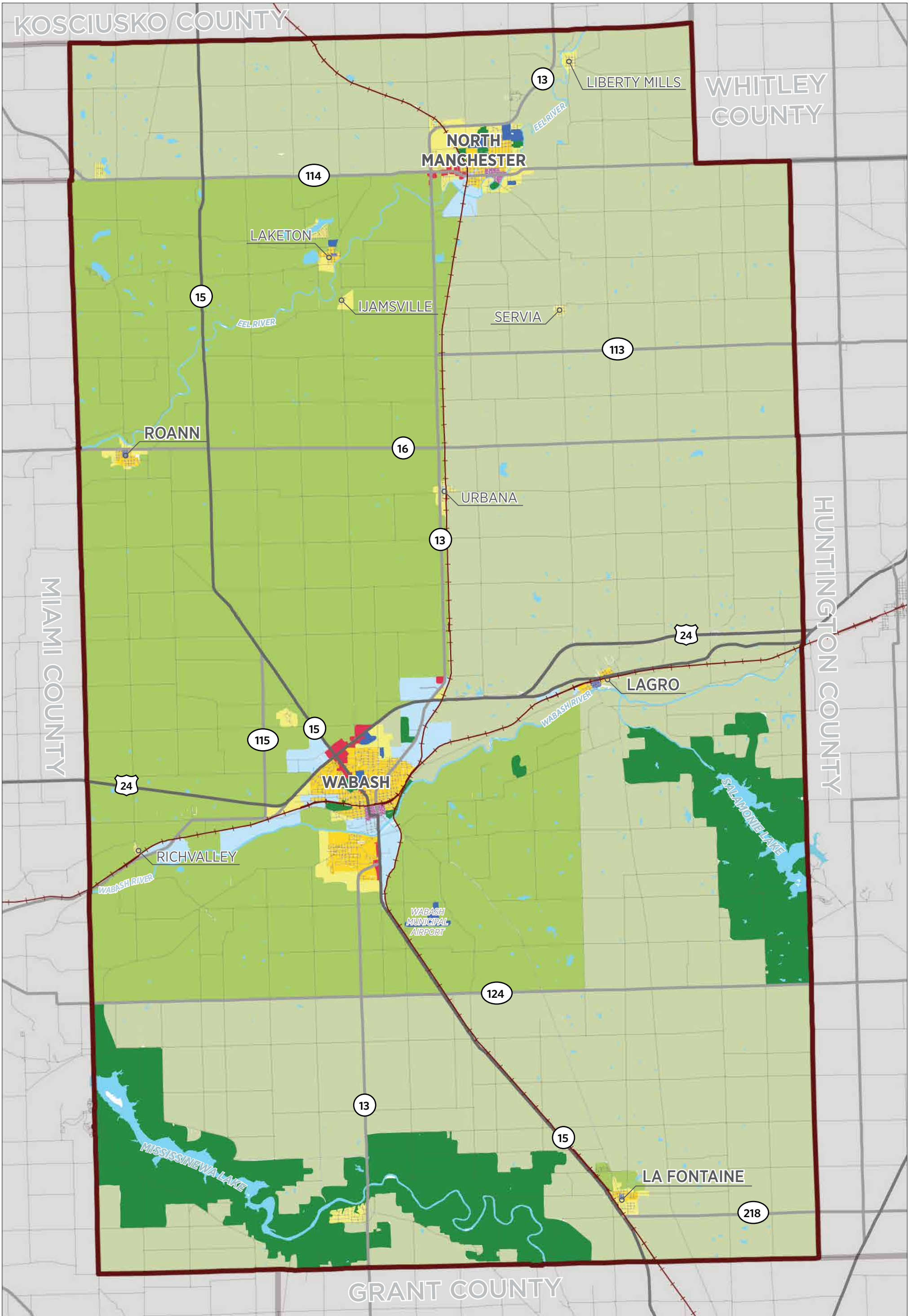
ONGOING PRESERVATION EFFORTS

Indiana Landmarks has recently purchased six historic homes within the East Wabash Historic District with the goal of rehabbing the properties and placing them back on the market. Wabash County should continue to support these preservation efforts as they have significant economic and cultural benefits for the communities. Smaller towns such as Roann have also been making strides by earning a Main Street designation through Main Street Indiana. This allows Roann to qualify for grants and other benefits that will help supplement their preservation strategy for the historic downtown.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The County should also identify programming that aids the local museums that have played such a crucial role in cataloging history. This is especially needed since many of these institutions rely on a combination of
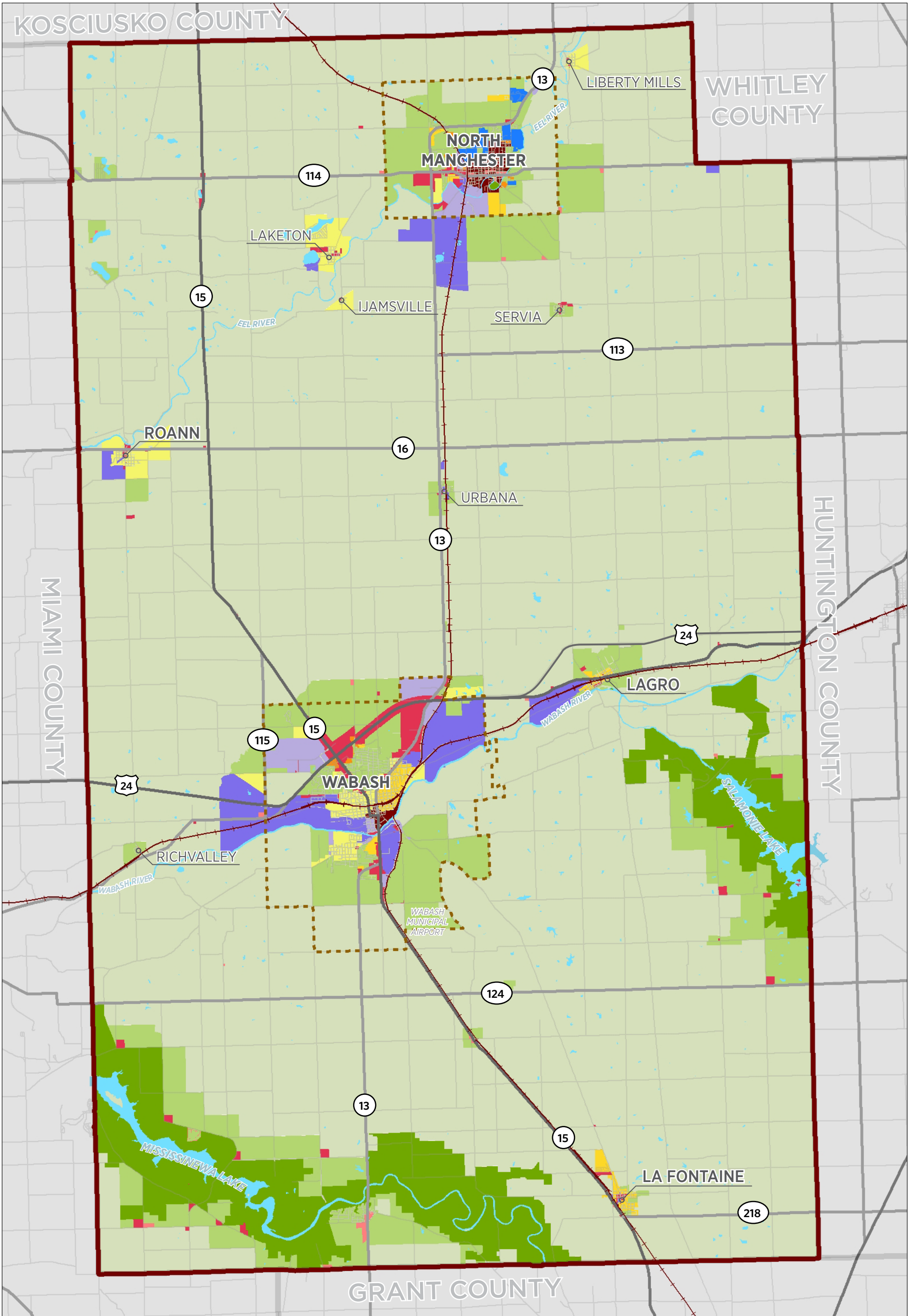
admissions fees and donations to stay in operation. A drop in visitor attendance related to the ongoing pandemic is expected to have an impact on museum finances.
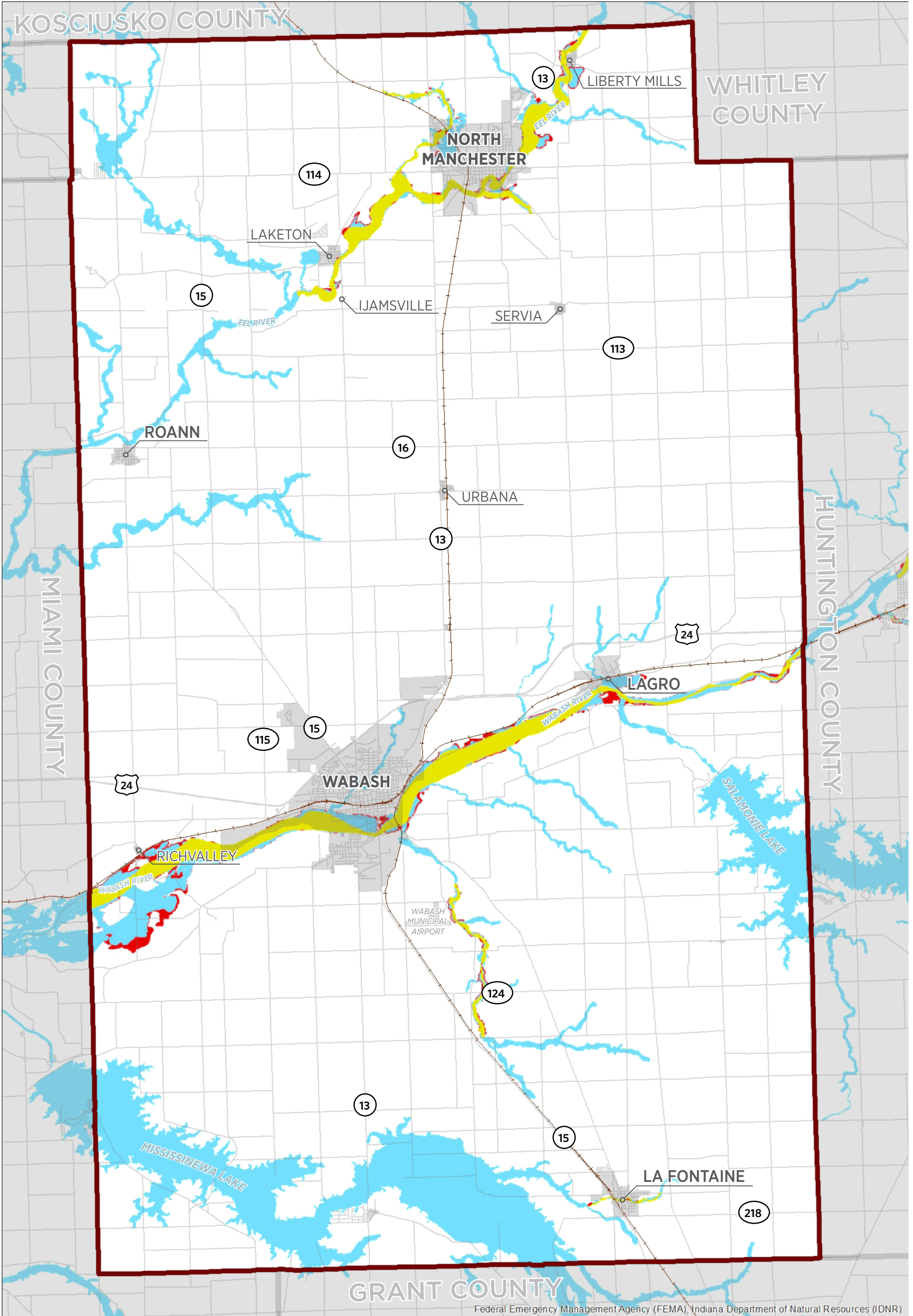
KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

WHITLEY COUNTY

LIBERTY MILLS

(13)

NORTH MANCHESTER

(114)

LAKETON

(15)

IJAMSVILLE

SERVIA

(113)

PLEASANT TWP.
PAW PAW TWP.

CHESTER TWP.
LAGRO TWP.

ROANN

(16)

URBANA

(13)

PAW PAW TWP.
NOBLE TWP.

(24)

LAGRO

MIAMI COUNTY

HUNTINGTON COUNTY

(115) (15)

WABASH

SALAMONIE LAKE

(24)

RICHVALLEY

WABASH RIVER

WABASH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

NOBLE TWP.
WALTZ TWP.

(124)

LAGRO TWP.
LIBERTY TWP.

(13)

(15)

LA FONTAINE

MISSISSINEWA LAKE

(218)

GRANT COUNTY

IMAGINE ONE 85

MAP 1.0 PLANNING CONTEXT
COUNTYWIDE VIEW

(24) US Highway

(13) State Highway

⬜ Wabash County

⬜ Townships

⬜ Counties

⬛ Communities

╂ Railroad

--- Trails

🟦 Water

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

WHITLEY COUNTY

LIBERTY MILLS

13

NORTH MANCHESTER

114

LAKETON

15

EEL RIVER

IJAMSVILLE

SERVIA

113

ROANN

16

URBANA

13

24

LAGRO

WABASH RIVER

115

15

WABASH

RICHVALLEY

WABASH RIVER

SALAMONIE LAKE

HUNTINGTON COUNTY

MIAMI COUNTY

24

WABASH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

124

13

MISSISSINEWA LAKE

15

LA FONTAINE

218

GRANT COUNTY

IMAGINE ONE 85

MAP 1.1 EXISTING CHARACTER
COUNTYWIDE VIEW

■ Open Space	■ Traditional Neighborhood	■ Industrial Center	▢ Wabash County
■ Rural Service		■ Institutional Campus	▢ Counties
■ Rural Living	■ Town Center	24 US Highway	+—+ Railroad
■ Mixed Rural Residential	■ Commercial Center	13 State Highway	■ Water
	■ Downtown Core		

NORTH MANCHESTER

ROANN

WABASH

LAGRO

IMAGINE ONE 85

MAP 1.2 EXISTING CHARACTER
COMMUNITY VIEW

■ Open Space	■ Town Center	(24) US Highway
■ Rural Service	■ Commercial Center	(13) State Highway
■ Rural Living	■ Downtown Core	▭ Wabash County
■ Mixed Rural Residential	■ Industrial Center	▭ Counties
■ Traditional Neighborhood	■ Institutional Campus	+—+ Railroad
	■ Water	

LA FONTAINE

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

WHITLEY COUNTY

LIBERTY MILLS

NORTH MANCHESTER

LAKETON

IJAMSVILLE

SERVIA

ROANN

URBANA

MIAMI COUNTY

HUNTINGTON COUNTY

LAGRO

WABASH RIVER

SALAMONIE LAKE

WABASH

RICHVALLEY

WABASH RIVER

WABASH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

MISSISSINEWA LAKE

LA FONTAINE

GRANT COUNTY

IMAGINE ONE 85

MAP 1.3 CONSOLIDATED ZONING
COUNTYWIDE VIEW

■	Agricultural	■	Community Multi-family	■	Limited Industrial	▢ Wabash County
■	Conservation	■	General Commercial	■	Industrial	▢ Counties
■	Estate Residential	■	Community Commercial	⬚	Zoning Boundary	┼ Railroad
■	Traditional Residential	■	Mixed-Use	㉔	US Highway	■ Water
■	Neighborhood Multi-family	■	Office / Institutional	⑬	State Highway	

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY
WHITLEY COUNTY
MIAMI COUNTY
HUNTINGTON COUNTY
GRANT COUNTY

LIBERTY MILLS
13
NORTH MANCHESTER
114
LAKETON
15
IJAMSVILLE
SERVIA
113
ROANN
16
URBANA
13
24
LAGRO
115
15
24
WABASH
RICHVALLEY
SALAMONIE LAKE
WABASH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT
124
13
15
MISSISSINEWA LAKE
LA FONTAINE
218

EEL RIVER
WABASH RIVER
WABASH RIVER

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

IMAGINE ONE 85

MAP 1.4 FLOODPLAIN AREAS
COUNTYWIDE VIEW

- Floodway
- 1% Annual Flood Chance
- 0.2% Annual Flood Chance

- 24 US Highway
- 13 State Highway
- Wabash County
- Counties
- +--+ Railroad

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

WHITLEY COUNTY

13 LIBERTY MILLS

NORTH MANCHESTER

114

LAKETON

15

IJAMSVILLE

SERVIA

113

EEL RIVER

ROANN

16

URBANA

13

24

LAGRO

WABASH RIVER

SALAMONIE LAKE

HUNTINGTON COUNTY

MIAMI COUNTY

115 15

WABASH

24

RICH VALLEY

WABASH RIVER

WABASH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

124

13

15

MISSISSINEWA LAKE

LA FONTAINE

218
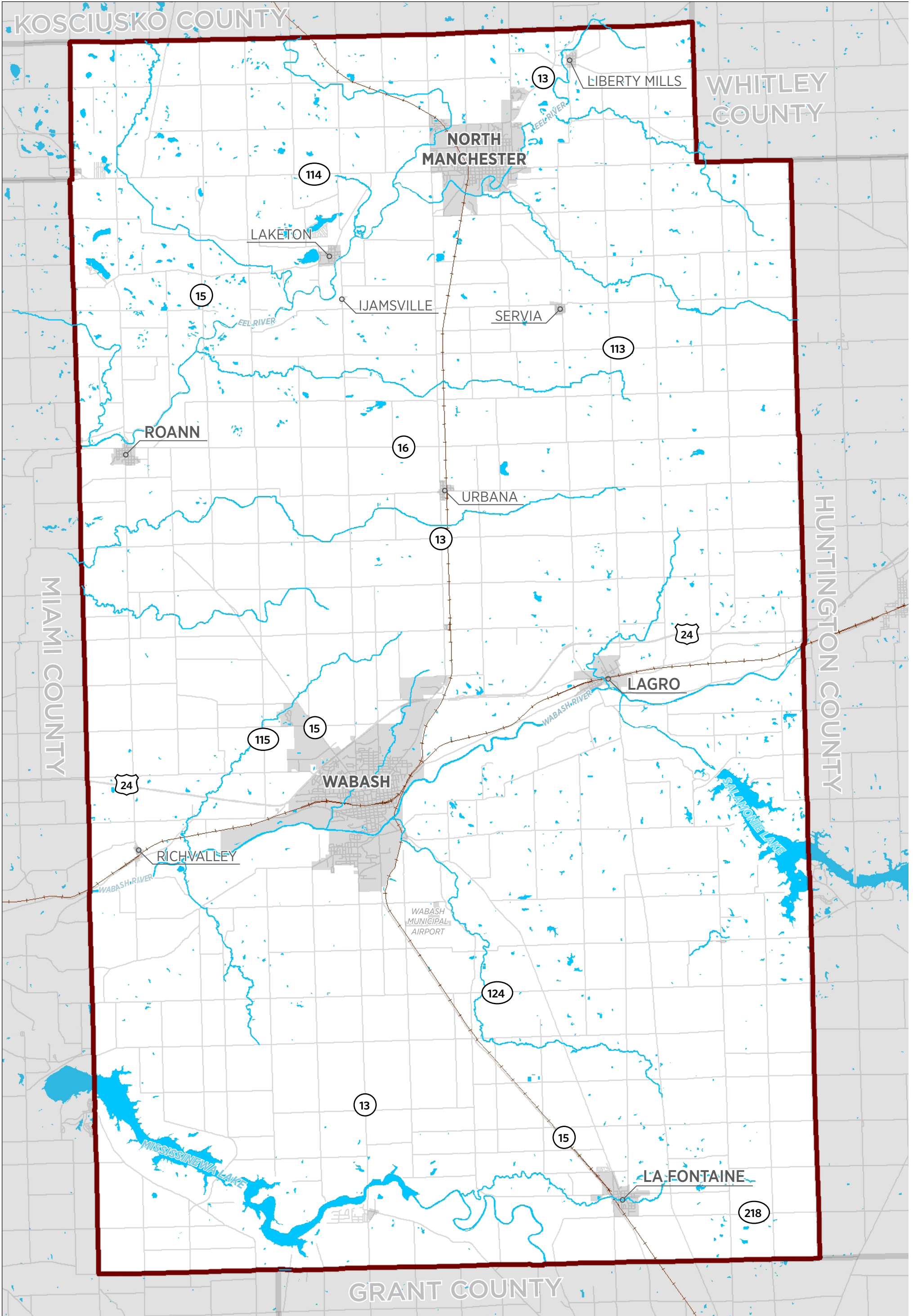
GRANT COUNTY

IMAGINE ONE 85

MAP 1.5 BLUEWAY NETWORK
COUNTYWIDE VIEW

24 US Highway
13 State Highway
Wabash County
Counties

Railroad
Water

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

WHITLEY COUNTY

LIBERTY MILLS

13

NORTH MANCHESTER

114

LAKETON

15

IJAMSVILLE

SERVIA

113

ROANN

16

URBANA

13

MIAMI COUNTY

HUNTINGTON COUNTY

24

LAGRO

WABASH

15

115

SALAMONIE LAKE

24

RICHVALLEY

WABASH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

124

13

15

MISSISSINEWA LAKE

LA FONTAINE

218

GRANT COUNTY
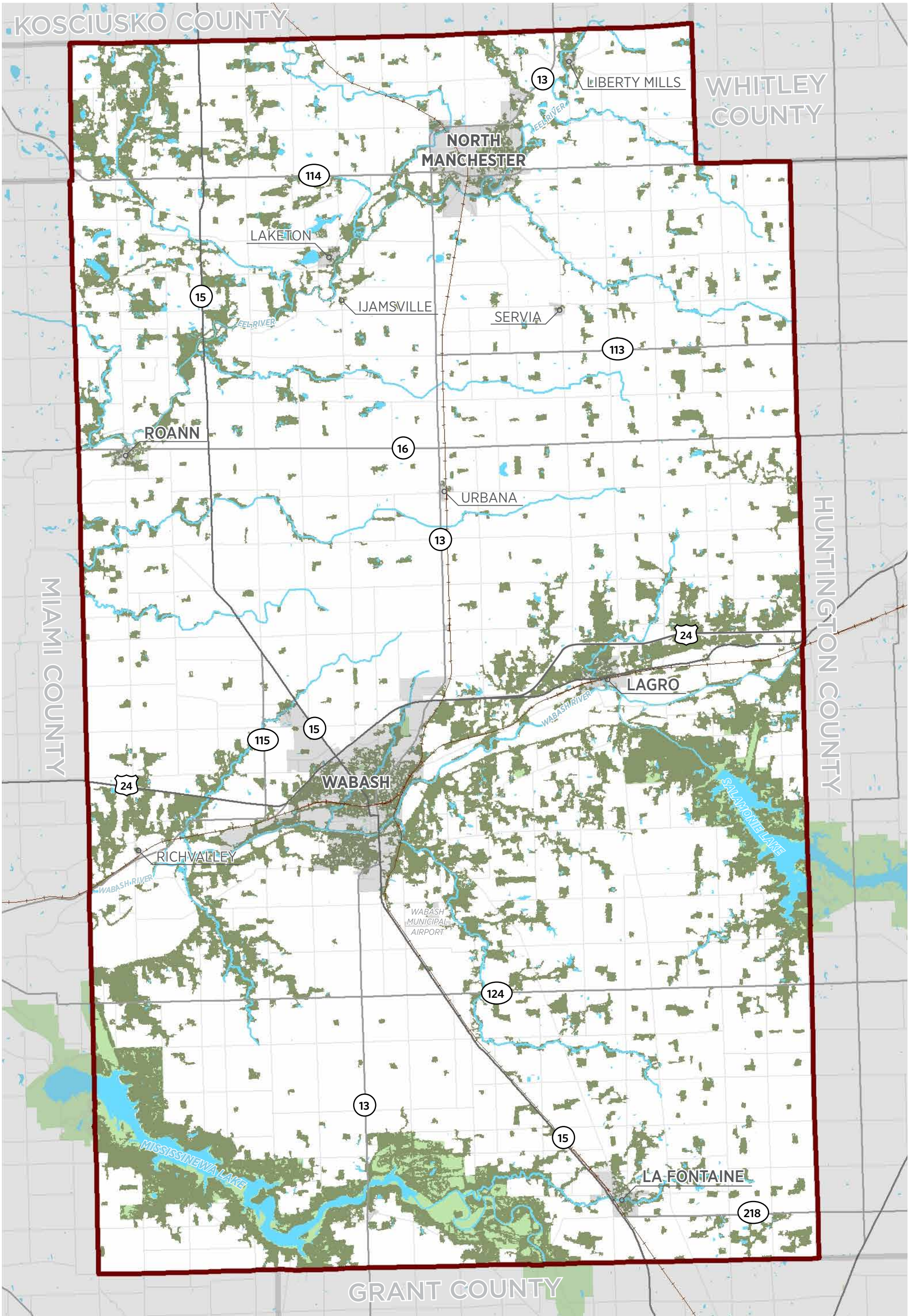
IMAGINE ONE 85

MAP 1.6 NATURAL RESOURCES
COUNTYWIDE VIEW

Tree Canopy Cover
Community Parks
Water
24 US Highway

13 State Highway
Wabash County
Counties
+++ Railroad
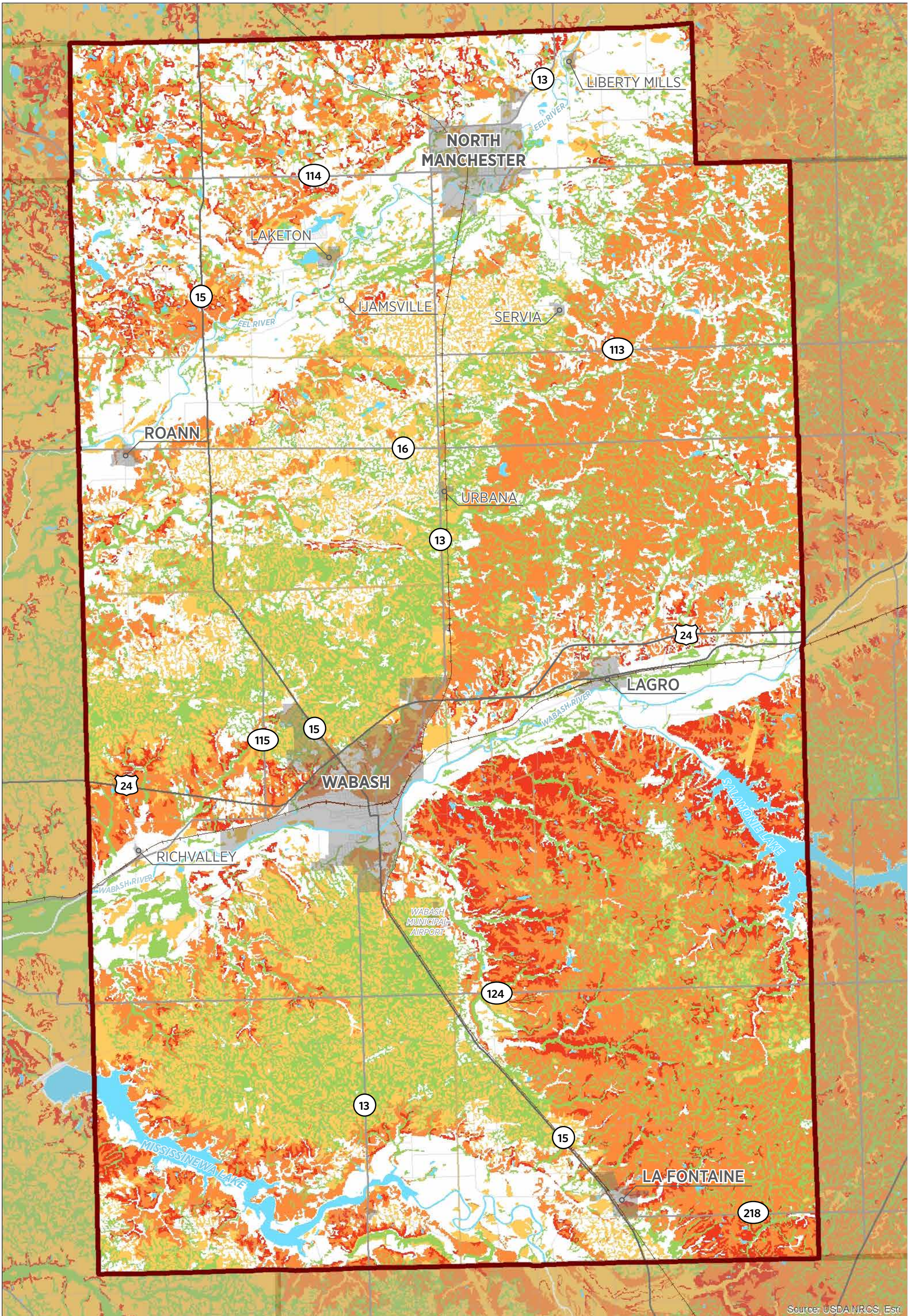
IMAGINE ONE 85

MAP 1.7 HISTORICAL EROSION
COUNTYWIDE VIEW

Note: Historical loss measured since 1982.

Legend:
- None
- Class 1 *(up to 25% historical topsoil loss)*
- Class 2 *(between 25% and 75% topsoil loss)*
- Class 3 *(between 75% and 99% topsoil loss)*
- Class 4 *(all historical topsoil lost to erosion)*
- US Highway (24)
- State Highway (13)
- Wabash County
- Counties
- Railroad
- Water

Source: USDA NRCS, Esri

VOLUME 3: PEOPLE

Technical Analysis Memo | Wabash County Comprehensive Plan

March 2021
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Volume 3:

PEOPLE

Technical Analysis Memo | Wabash County Comprehensive Plan

MARCH 2021

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The following report provides an analysis across three topics. People includes public health, placemaking, and education. This report and its accompanying presentations are a summary of the baseline conditions and trends in support of the Wabash County Comprehensive Plan. For questions on this report please contact the project manager for Imagine One 85, Kyle May, senior planner with planning NEXT, at kyle@planning-next.com*.*

CONTENTS

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1. PUBLIC HEALTH

The Public Health chapter reviews the state of public health in Wabash County and its connection to economic resiliency. First, health factors and outcomes are measured against the state and comparable counties. Then, an inventory and map of the health care facilities across the County are presented to understand their distribution and to identify potential for growth. This section also details environmental impacts on public health, recognizing several key components particularly relevant to Wabash. The final section presents existing public health programs in the County alongside model programs as examples for further exploration.

KEY FINDINGS

- *Health Factors* **in Wabash are better than nearly two-thirds of other counties in Indiana.** Areas of strength include Income Equality, Social Associations, Insurance Coverage, Mental Health Providers, and Vaccinations. Opportunity areas include Adult Smoking and Obesity, Post-Secondary Education, and Air Pollution.
- **County** *Health Outcomes* **are relatively low with respect to the state and comparable counties.** Premature death rates are increasing. Cancer, heart disease, accidents, chronic lower respiratory diseases, and diabetes mellitus contribute to this finding.
- **Residents have access to opportunities for active and healthy lifestyles.** Investments made in trails and blueways, particularly on the Wabash River Trail, promote an active lifestyle and provide recreation opportunities for residents. Healthy food access is provided through several Farmer's Markets and a variety of grocery stores that offer fresh produce.
- **6.7% of County residents do not have health insurance, and 20% of residents are age 65 and older.** By these measures, more than 25% of residents are especially vulnerable to significant health issues.
- **Health care facilities are clustered in the cities of Wabash and North Manchester, and they offer most services.** The county is home to a Critical Access Hospital, Primary Care Physicians, a mental health clinic, and a variety of specialists. The nearest Level II Trauma Center is located in Fort Wayne.

1.1 Public Health

An important but easy to overlook connection exists between many aspects of place and the health of community members. Factors ranging from natural resources to the built environment each contribute to individual and community health. Land use decisions, such as if and where to provide recreational amenities, or zoning regulations pertaining to pollution standards, establish key policies and programs that either enhance or inhibit residents' potential for healthy lifestyle choices. In turn, the health of the residents influences factors like employment and productivity within a community. Therefore, creating communities where people are more likely to be healthy also promotes communities that are more likely to be productive and resilient.

The relationship between health and place has become increasingly critical in light of the COVID-19 global pandemic. This plan is being constructed amid the most significant health crisis of the century, the full effects of which are yet to be realized. Early in the pandemic, Wabash County saw very few COVID-19 cases, reporting 0-3 new cases most days from March through September. A steep increase began in October, peaking on November 22, 2020 with 67 new cases, and generally declining since.[1] As of February 1, 2021, Wabash County reported 3,126 confirmed cases of COVID-19 (10% of the population) and 51 deaths.[2] The county fatality rate is 1.63%, just slightly higher than the state rate of 1.59%.[3] More than 2,100 of Wabash residents between the ages of 19 and 64 have no health insurance, and nearly 20% of Wabash residents are age 65 and older[4], suggesting that a

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[1] https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/covid-cases-deaths-tracker.html

[2] https://bao.arcgis.com/covid-19/jhu/county/18169.html

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

significant portion of the population is considered high-risk for the virus. The county has 18 staffed and licensed hospital beds, with three ICU beds.[5]

Beyond the health effects, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant challenges to the economy and other systems in the county. In late March 2020, Wabash was included in a statewide "Stay at Home" order in which residents were asked to leave home only for "essential activities" and restaurants and bars were subjected to a carry-out only policy. Many small businesses were effectively forced to close during this time. In early April, school buildings were closed, and students transitioned to online learning. As the Stay-at-Home order was extended, the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs awarded the City of Wabash and the Town of North Manchester $250,000 each in grant funds for local business that support a majority of low to middle income (LMI) jobs.[6] With warmer weather, the state's five-stage "Back on Track" Indiana plan began to allow for reopening of businesses, increased public gatherings, and loosening of restrictions. Additional grant funding continued to become available, but as the year went on and positivity rates began to rise again, restrictions – including a mask mandate – were added or reinstated.

While the COVID-19 pandemic posed new challenges in many areas, it also brought to light a variety of issues that already existed. National conversations about racial equity, gender disparities, education and broadband internet access are all relevant to Wabash County as well. The overall disruption caused by the pandemic has brought with it an opportunity to take stock and reevaluate some of the key systems and attitudes that underly these challenges.

DEFINITION

The CDC defines public health as "the science of protecting and improving the health of people and their communities" and "is achieved by promoting healthy lifestyles, researching disease and injury prevention, and detecting, preventing and responding to infectious diseases."[7]

RELEVANCE TO A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) County Health Rankings Model, Social and Economic Factors and the Physical Environment account for 50% of the total health factors that contribute to community health outcomes. While individuals bear significant personal responsibility, a variety of community aspects are also considered significant contributors to public health, such as

- **Housing** – Micro-environmental impacts to human health and development such as mold, lead, asbestos, and so on.
- **Land use** – Macro-environmental impacts like community walkability, separation of noxious / non-complementary uses, etc.
- **Transit** – Access to healthy lifestyles, food, health facilities, etc.
- **Active transportation** – Access to opportunities for walking, biking, etc.
- **Air & water quality** – Harmful pollutants in the air and drinking water.
- **Education** – Awareness of best health practices, opportunities, etc.
- **Employment –** Variety of health and safety risks associated with different jobs, including physical injury, mental health, etc.
- **Community safety –** The ability of children and other individuals to safely play, travel, gather, exercise, etc., in a community.

Each of these factors is influenced by policies and programs of the community, so as the County addresses each of these components in its plan, it will be imperative to consider their connection to overall public

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[5] Ibid.

[6] https://www.growwabashcounty.com/contact-us/covid-19-resources/

[7] https://www.cdcfoundation.org/what-public-health

health. Furthermore, the health of individuals corresponds to factors such as employment and productivity in the community; ensuring healthy citizens thereby enhances a myriad of other goals.

CONNECTION TO RESILIENCY

The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic disruption have underscored the connection between community health and many other aspects of a functioning society. Although resiliency is a subject in its own right, the live experiment of 2020 places the spotlight on resiliency in the context of public health. The threat of the coronavirus has had major impacts on the economy, education, healthcare, transportation, land use, housing, and a multitude of other topics, each of which is interconnected with the others.

First, the coronavirus pandemic has affected public health. With thousands of Wabash residents having been infected with the coronavirus and dozens having died from it, the effects of the coronavirus on the health of the community are evident.

The presence of the virus significantly affected businesses, the economy, and the education system. Stay-at-home orders shuttered some businesses and forced others to operate in unconventional ways, like restaurants that transitioned to take-out and delivery only. Capacity and social-distancing requirements limit the number of patrons in a business at a given time, reducing the sales potential. Teachers and students began a process of online teaching and learning that has been anecdotally difficult for all parties involved.

Furthermore, studies show that public transit demand decreased in many places across the United States as a result of the coronavirus and associated restrictions.[8] The pandemic has also exposed the need for more areas and opportunities for people to congregate, recreate, and dine in outdoor spaces, thereby affecting established land use patterns.

Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

TERTIARY

SECONDARY

Businesses   Economy

Transit

PRIMARY
Individual and Community Health

Housing

Schools   Healthcare

Land Use

A separate chapter will explore fiscal implications in greater depth.

1.2 Health Factors and Outcomes

Public health is an aggregate measure of individual health. To understand health at a community-wide level, both the factors that contribute to health and individual health outcomes are measured. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) provides a helpful model and nationwide data to understand these components of

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[8] https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0242476

public health and to compare those in Wabash County to the State of Indiana and comparison counties. This section explores both the strong points and the opportunities areas for public health in the County.

COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS MODEL

The RWJF County Health Rankings Model provides a framework for measuring the health of a county and comparing that against other counties across the country. The model assumes that individual health outcomes are the result of individual and community health factors that are influenced in part by government programs and policies. Overall public health is an average measure of individual health. See Figure 1 below.

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

The policies and programs of local government influence factors that contribute to the health of a community. If these policies and programs are targeted to improve the specific needs of a population, they can help make their communities healthier and better places to live.

HEALTH FACTORS

Health factors influence how well and how long people live. They can be modified at an individual and/or community level, and they serve as predictors of health.

HEALTH OUTCOMES

The outcomes measured represent the current health of a county. These outcomes include both physical and mental well-being, and they contain both objective measurements as well as self-reported subjective elements.

County Health Rankings Model

Adpated from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program

Health Outcomes
- Length of Life (50%)
- Quality of Life (50%)

Health Factors

Health Behaviors (30%)
- Tobacco Use
- Diet & Exercise
- Alcohol & Drug Use
- Sexual Activity

Clinical Care (20%)
- Access to Care
- Quality of Care

Social & Economic Factors (40%)
- Education
- Employment
- Income
- Family & Social Support
- Community Safety

Physical Environment (10%)
- Air & Water Quality
- Housing & Transit

Policies & Programs

Figure 1: County Health Rankings Model

Wabash is ranked 63 for Health Outcomes and 34 for Health Factors out of the 92 counties in Indiana.
The following summaries describe the key findings of the rankings report.

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Premature death rates are increasing and contribute significantly to the low rank in Health Outcomes.** Wabash reported 9,700 years of potential life lost before age 75 (per 100,000 population, age-adjusted). This figure is 16% greater than the state average and 76% greater than the top US performers. Leading causes of death under age 75 in Wabash include:

   - malignant neoplasms (cancer),
   - heart disease,
   - accidents,
   - chronic lower respiratory diseases, and
   - diabetes mellitus.

   Premature deaths not only reflect unfortunate health outcomes, but also correlate with losses in potential earnings.

2. **Areas of strength in Health Factors include Income Equality, Social Associations, Insurance Coverage, Mental Health Providers, and Vaccinations.** Wabash County is in the top ten percent of US counties with respect to Income Inequality and Social Association measures (3.7 and 18.4 respectively). These numbers suggest that there is relative economic equality across households, and that people are socially well-connected. Furthermore, the percentage of uninsured residents in Wabash has declined over the last ten years and is considered an area of strength. The county also offers a high ratio of mental health providers to residents (1:420), and half of residents receive the flu vaccination.

3. **Areas of opportunity in Health Factors include Adult Smoking and Obesity, Post-Secondary Education, and Air Pollution.** One in five adult residents of Wabash smokes cigarettes, and more than one in three is obese. Adult obesity has also been increasing in the county over the last decade. These two health behaviors present opportunities for attention and improvement at a countywide level. Additionally, 53% of residents have attended some college, whereas 63% in Indiana and 73% in top performing counties have some post-secondary education. Finally, air pollution as measured by the average daily density of fine particulate matter is 12.5 μg/m3, more than twice that of top performing counties.

2020 Health Outcomes - Indiana

Health Outcome Ranks

1 to 23	24 to 46
47 to 69	70 to 92
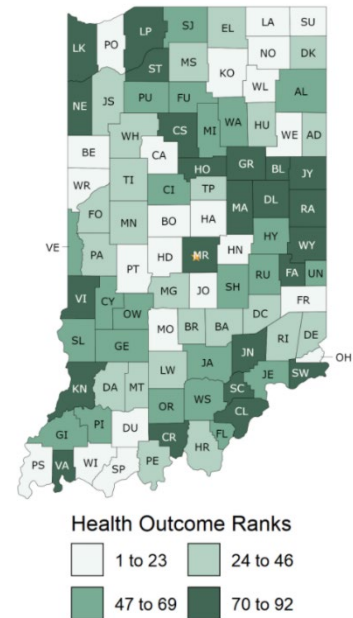
2020 Health Factors - Indiana

Health Factor Ranks

1 to 23	24 to 46
47 to 69	70 to 92
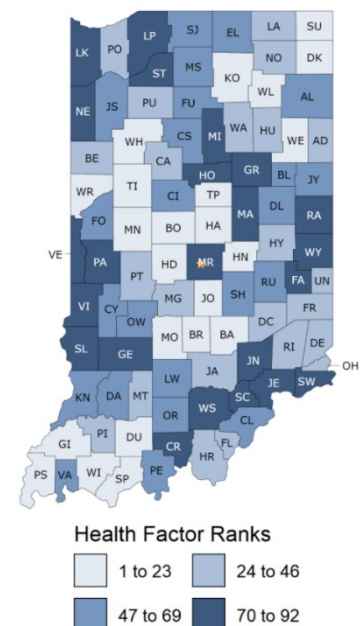
COMPARISON TO INDIANA AND THE US

Of the 30 measurements provided by the RWJF, Wabash County outperformed the state of Indiana in 19, trailed them in nine, and was equal in two. These comparisons suggests that residents of Wabash County are collectively healthier than Hoosiers overall. However, in a 2019 report by the United Health Foundation, Indiana ranks 40 out of 50 states for Health Outcomes. In two categories – Income Inequality and Social Associations – Wabash county performed within the top 10% of counties across the US.

COMPARISON TO SIMILAR COUNTIES

With respect to the comparison counties of Kosciusko, Allen, and Whitley, Wabash ranks lowest in Health Outcomes and third in Health Factors. Clinical Care is the county's greatest comparative asset, and Length of Life is its most significant comparative challenge.
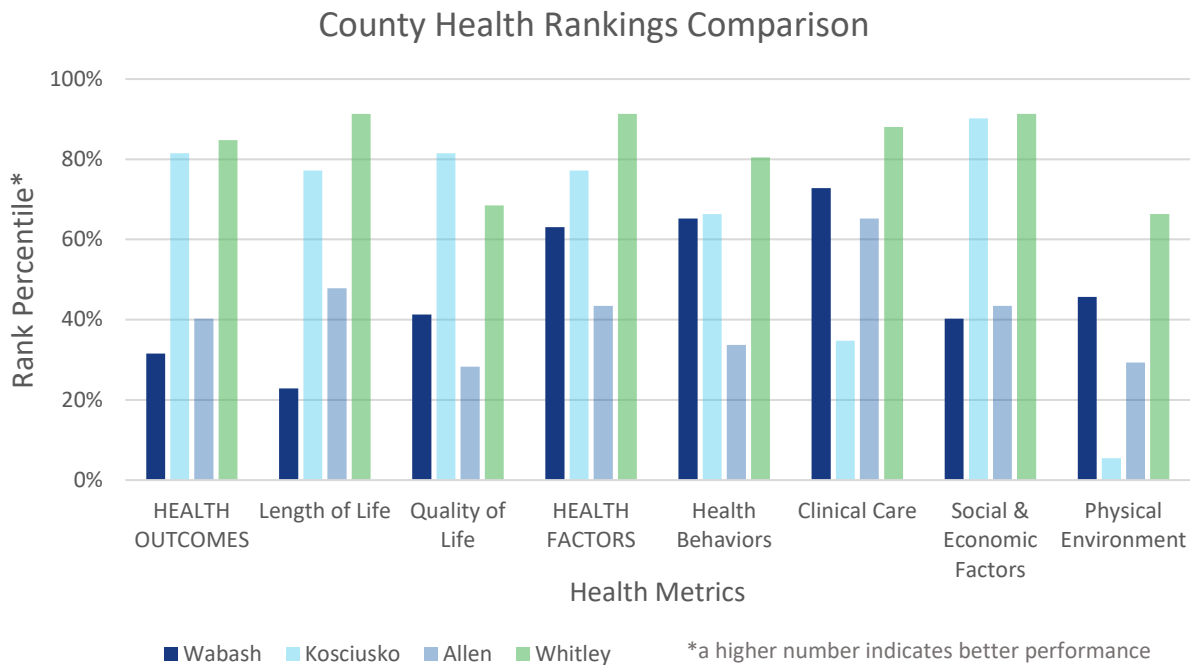
Figure 2: County Health Rankings

*Rank Percentile is a comparative measure against all counties in Indiana; **a higher number indicates better performance**. For example, Wabash is rated at 63% for Health Factors, meaning that it outperforms 63% of counties in the state for this metric.

HEALTH METRICS

The following table presents the measurements of Health Outcomes and Health Factors for Wabash County and the State of Indiana for 2020, adapted from the RWJF County Health Rankings*.

Note: some measures are stated positively while others are stated negatively. Thus, a downward-pointing red arrow (↓) indicates a measure for which Wabash performed worse than Indiana, and an upward-pointing green arrow (↑) represents an indicator for which Wabash performed better than Indiana.

			Wabash		Indiana
Health Outcomes	**Length of Life**	Years of Potential Life Lost Rate	9,727	↓	8,306
	Quality of Life	% Fair or Poor Health	19	↑	20
		Average Number of Physically Unhealthy Days	4.2	=	4.2
		Average Number of Mentally Unhealthy Days	4.5	↑	4.7
		% Low Birthweight	8	=	8
Health Factors	**Health Behaviors**	% Smokers	20	↑	22
		% Adults with Obesity	35	↓	33
		Food Environment Index	8.1	↑	7.1
		% Physically Inactive	26	↑	27
		% With Access to Exercise Opportunities	69	↓	75
		% Excessive Drinking	16	↑	18
		% Driving Deaths with Alcohol Involvement	25	↓	20
		Chlamydia Rate	235.3	↑	514.2
		Teen Birth Rate	24	↑	27
	Clinical Care	% Uninsured	9	↑	10
		Primary Care Physicians Ratio	2,246:1	↓	1,511:1
		Dentist Ratio	2,406:1	↓	1,777:1
		Mental Health Provider Ratio	417:1	↑	623:1
		Preventable Hospitalization Rate	4,504	↑	5,006
		% With Annual Mammogram	44	↑	42
		% Vaccinated	50	↑	49
	Social & Economic Factors	High School Graduation Rate	87	↑	84
		% Some College	53	↓	63
		% Unemployed	3.5	↓	3.4
		% Children in Poverty	17	↑	18
		Income Ratio	3.7	↑	4.4
		% Single-Parent Households	31	↑	34
		Social Association Rate	18.4	↑	12.3
		Violent Crime Rate	51	↑	385
		Injury Death Rate	84	↓	77
	Physical Environment	Average Daily Air Pollution (in PM$_{2.5}$)	12.3	↓	11.8
		Presence of Water Violation	No		
		% Severe Housing Problems	10	↑	13
		% Drive Alone to Work	86	↓	83
		% Long Commute - Drives Alone	23	↑	31

↑ represents a better measure than Indiana average
↓ represents a worse measure than Indiana average

1.3 Healthcare System

This section describes and maps the various types of healthcare facilities within the County.

HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL

Parkview Wabash Hospital is part of the regional Parkview Health Network that serves Northern Indiana and Northwestern Ohio, based out of Fort Wayne, IN. The system at large has over 300 locations with a comprehensive range of services. Parkview also operates two Samaritan helicopters, both of which provide trauma technology and crews trained in Advanced Life Support (ALS). All of Wabash county falls within the 100-mile service radius of these helicopters.   Parkview Wabash offers the following amenities and services:

- 24-hr Emergency Services
- 18 Staffed Beds
- Cancer Care
- Heart Health
- Orthopedics
- Neurosciences
- Women's Health
- HeartSmart CT Scan
- Outpatient Medication Infusion Services
- LifeBridge Senior Program

The Parkview Regional Medical Center in Fort Wayne is the only verified Level II Adult and Pediatric Trauma Center in its system, and it is the nearest verified trauma center to Wabash County. Furthermore, Parkview Wabash is part of Parkview's Community Hospital Trauma Program. The hospital and staff are equipped to provide quick diagnosis of trauma and transfer when needed. The hospitals are approximately 50 miles apart, or one hour by car.

PRIMARY CARE

A variety of primary care providers operate in the City of Wabash and the Town of North Manchester.

- **Parkview Wabash Health Clinic – Family Medicine** provides general primary care and offers walk-in or urgent care services. Offices are located in both Wabash and North Manchester.
- **Lutheran Health Network – Wabash Clinic** offers family medicine, OBGYN, Cardiology, Pulmonology, and Optimum Performance Therapy.
- **American Health Network** is a family medicine practice in Wabash.
- **Indiana Pediatric Associates LLC** provides general pediatric care in Wabash.
- **Walnut Street Family Healthcare** is a general family practice office in North Manchester.
- **85 Hope Free Medical Clinic** offers free primary care to qualifying residents in Wabash and North Manchester.

MENTAL HEALTH AND DISABILITY SERVICES

Mental health is a vital component of individual and community health. In Wabash County, the **Bowen Center** is the primary location for clinical mental health services and resources, including addiction recovery. The **Friends Counseling Center** also offers a variety of group and individual therapy and counseling services. In North Manchester, **Daniel's Place** provides respite care and support services for individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities.

WALK-IN CLINICS

For patients with non-emergency but relatively urgent health issues, walk-in clinics provide quick access to medical care without requiring an appointment. **Parkview First Care** operates as a walk-in clinic in Wabash. The **85 HOPE Free Medical Clinic** serves Wabash County residents between the ages of 18 and 64 who are low-income and either uninsured or under-insured. They operate one location in Wabash and another in North Manchester and offer a variety of free services, including physical therapy, vaccines, mammograms, and lab testing.

SPECIALISTS

A variety of specialists operate within Wabash and North Manchester, including a variety of dentists and optometrists.
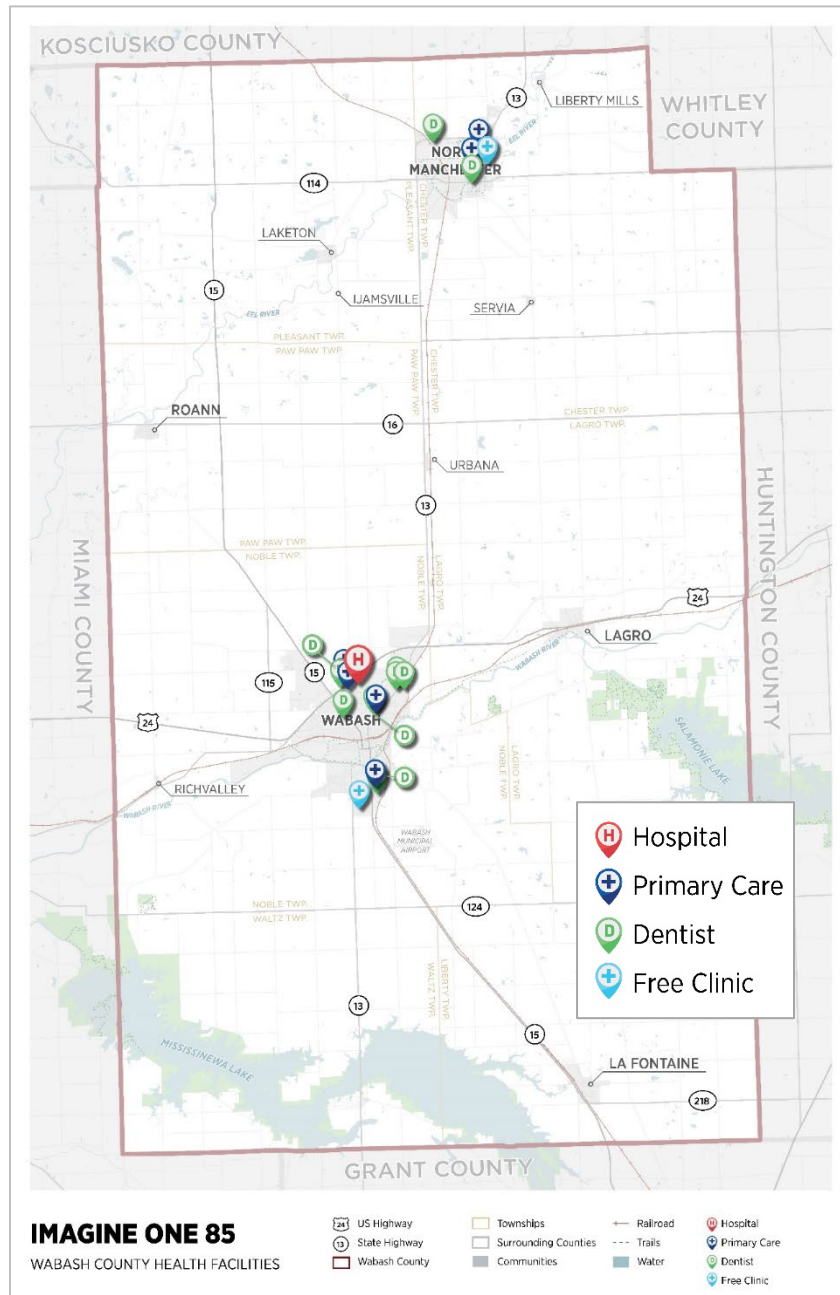
Map 1: Healthcare Facilities

1.4 Environmental Impacts to Public Health

This section aims to describe how a variety of environmental factors affect public health. These factors range from the micro – or household – level, to the macro – or natural environment – level. This section also identifies which environmental factors are most relevant in Wabash County.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies a range of environmental factors that impact health:
- Air pollution, including indoors and outdoors
- Inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene
- Chemicals and biological agents
- Radiation, ultraviolet and ionizing
- Community noise
- Occupational risks
- Agricultural practices, including pesticide use, waste-water reuse
- Built environments, including housing and roads
- Climate change[9]

Among these factors, some are targeted at a macro-level, while others are more relevant on a micro-level.

In order to mitigate environmental risks, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management have established laws and regulations concerning hazardous substances. The City of Wabash has incorporated federal and state regulations into its Code of Ordinances to establish a minimum standard for environmental safety.[10]

MACRO-LEVEL CONSIDERATIONS – COMMUNITY AND MUNICIPALITY CONCERNS

The following considerations reflect the aspects of the natural environment or the community at large that influence public health. These factors need to be addressed at a municipal and collective level, not on an individual or household scale.

- **Water** – The Clean Water Act (CWA) regulates the discharge of pollutants into US waters and implements pollution control programs for industry. These efforts are meant to protect the health of individuals as well the environment.
- **Air** – The Clean Air Act (CAA) restricts the amount of certain air pollutants allowed in the air anywhere in the US and limits the amount of pollutants that chemical plants, utilities, and steel mills can emit. Localities may enact stronger laws, but they may not be weaker than federal guidelines.
- **Chemicals and Pesticides** – Although the EPA regulates the use of chemicals and pesticides, large scale farming operations that use synthetic fertilizers made from nitrogen and phosphorous contribute to air, soil, and water pollution. The high levels of these nutrients can damage ecosystems, and chemical runoff can cause toxic algae blooms in bodies of water, creating "dead zones" where nothing can live.[11] Wabash County may be particularly vulnerable to the dangers of chemical runoff due to the breadth of agriculture in the county and the vast water resources found in several stream corridors and two reservoirs.
- **Septic** – Septic systems are common in the county and require ongoing and proactive maintenance to uphold environmental and soil safety standards. Continued upkeep is and may become a greater challenge throughout Wabash.

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[9] https://www.who.int/phe/infographics/environmental-impacts-on-health/en/
[10] https://library.municode.com/in/wabash/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CICO_CH11ENPR_S11-12VAINPR
[11] https://www.nationalgeographic.org/article/environmental-impacts-agricultural-modifications/

A wide range of harmful substances may be present in homes and buildings, and particularly among those built in or before the 1970s. A variety of programs exist to mitigate or remove the risks associated with these substances.

- **Radon** – Radon is a noxious gas that is harmless in low levels outdoors but is dangerous when concentrated indoors. Wabash County is identified by the EPA as a Radon Zone 1, meaning that the predicted average indoor radon screening level will be greater than 4 and will likely require mitigation.[12] The Lead and Healthy Homes Division (LHDD) of the Indiana Department of Health offers licensing for radon testers and mitigators across the state.[13]
- **Lead** – Exposure to lead, mostly in the form of lead-based paint and contaminated dust in deteriorating buildings, may cause significant health problems for children. Homes built before 1978, when the federal government banned consumer uses of lead-based paint, are more likely to have lead paint. The likelihood increases with the age of the home.[14] The LHHD of the Indiana Department of Health works to screen, treat, and provide case management for children, as well as to remediate the environmental causes of lead poisoning. The Lead-based Paint Program was created to provide professionals who specialize in completely removing lead paint from residences.[15]
- **Asbestos** – Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that was used regularly in fire-resistant insulation and drywall in older homes. Exposure can cause cancer and other diseases.[16] Asbestos was commonly used in construction from the early 1900s through the 1970s. Consumption peaked in the United States in 1973, and numerous forms of asbestos materials were banned later that decade. The LHHD also helps to educate on issues such as asbestos, and abatement measures can be taken to eliminate the presence of asbestos from homes.
- **Mold** – Molds occur naturally when spores land and grow on wet and damp spots inside a home or building. They may produce allergens and irritants, causing reactions and negative health effects in some individuals. Those with asthma are especially recommended to avoid contact with molds.[17]

Approximately 73% of homes in Wabash County were built in or before 1979. This figure suggests that many homes across the county could have constructed with materials containing asbestos and with lead-based paint. These factors are important considerations for renovation and remodeling of older homes and may affect a significant number of homeowners in the county.

1.5 Existing and Model Public Health Programs

This section explores the existing programs in Wabash County that encourage public health. It also provides some examples of model public health programs that may serve as inspiration for Wabash.

HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

Wabash County is part of the **Northeast Indiana Local Food Network** which works with all 11 counties in Northeast Indiana to promote local food culture and entrepreneurship. This network offers a Farm to School program, in which schools can receive fresh produce directly from local farms, to promote fresher and healthier eating. It does not seem that the school districts in Wabash participate in this program.

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[12] https://www.epa.gov/radon/find-information-about-local-radon-zones-and-state-contact-information
[13] https://www.in.gov/isdh/24346.htm
[14] https://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-sources-lead
[15] https://www.in.gov/isdh/26550.htm
[16] https://www.asbestos.com/asbestos/
[17] https://www.epa.gov/mold/mold-and-health

The **Downtown Wabash Farmer's Market** operates from May through September on Saturday mornings. Local growers and merchants can come and sell their produce and products, providing residents with access to fresh and local foods in a centralized and convenient location downtown. The **North Manchester Farmer's Market** offers similar opportunities to growers and residents in the area from May to October. Both Farmer's Markets accept payment from the federal government food assistance programs (SNAP, WIC, and FMNP).

The County is also home to a variety of grocery stores that provide access to fresh and healthy foods, and that accept the government food assistance programs. Walmart, Kroger, Bechtol Grocery Co, and INGUARD Foods all have significant fresh food and produce sections that allow shoppers to make healthy choices.

Downtown Wabash Farmer's Market

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

The **Wabash River Trail** is an effort to expand the trail system in Wabash and to provide opportunities for biking, jogging, walking, and access points for boating. The trail can be used for exclusively recreational purposes, but it may also encourage active transportation by connecting various locations within the County between which residents may travel by bike.

The **Safe Routes to School** program seeks to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. State governments receive federal funds that they pass on to local governments and schools to support initiatives that promote safe walking and biking. Wabash County and/or the school systems may wish to explore the Safe Routes to School as a program to promote health, especially for in-town schools.

Safe Routes to School

RADON TESTING AND MITIGATION

In 2019, the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) partnered with the American Lung Association to provide county health departments with **free radon test kits** to be used by individual homeowners. Other states have access to grant funding that allows them to provide financial assistance for radon mitigation efforts. For example, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment sponsors the **Low Income Radon Mitigation (LIRMA) Program**, in which individuals who meet income requirements are eligible for up to $1,500 in assistance for radon mitigation.[18]

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[18] https://cdphe.colorado.gov/low-income-radon-mitigation-assistance

HEALTH EDUCATION

The Hamilton County Public Health department in Ohio supports a Health Promotion and Education division to increase physical activity, improve opportunities for healthy eating, and address a variety of other health related issues. They offer education, assessment, policy development, and environmental action. The **WeTHRIVE! Program** is a collaborative and community effort to educate and improve health in the county in areas such as Chronic Disease, Environmental Health, Injury Prevention, and Substance Abuse. This program mobilizes individual community members or institutions to promote health initiatives and could serve as a model for Wabash.

2. PLACEMAKING

The Placemaking section describes the quality of place characteristics in Wabash County. Next, it explains the connections between placemaking and other topic areas. Finally, this section describes recent placemaking efforts, identifies key assets in the county that contribute to its quality of place, and explores opportunities for future placemaking.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Wabash County has taken significant steps in placemaking to accentuate its natural and manmade assets.** The Stellar Communities Grant has enabled a number of valuable projects that improve the County's quality of place. Visit Wabash County has also promoted the various communities through improved signage.
- **Placemaking efforts support other community priorities.** The Wabash River Trail, Downtown Wabash Farmers Market, and other examples promote values such as public health and economic development.
- **The COVID-19 Pandemic has highlighted the value of existing outdoor amenities and revealed a demand for more outdoor dining and gathering spaces.**

2.1 Definition

Placemaking is "a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value."[19] Placemaking highlights existing community assets and potential, and it encourages community members and stakeholders to take ownership of their communities. Placemaking is an inclusive term that incorporates physical projects (urban design, streetscape improvements, public art, etc.), as well as programs, activation, and education initiatives. By investing in the quality of place, communities are also contributing to positive economic outcomes;[20] the more desirable a place is to live, work, or visit, the more economic opportunities there will be for both internal and external investment.

[19] https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking
[20] https://www.planning.org/knowledgebase/creativeplacemaking/

QUALITY OF PLACE CHARACTERISTICS

Wabash County boasts a variety of characteristics that contribute to its quality of place, including both natural and manmade. To keep improving, the county has also identified characteristics to enhance and build up.

CURRENT QUALITY OF PLACE CHARACTERISTICS

- **Natural Assets and Outdoor Recreation** – Wabash County is home to two major reservoirs, rivers, waterfalls, and forests. The county is rich in natural beauty, a characteristic that makes it desirable even in the absence of improvements. By providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, such as hiking, biking, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, boating, etc., the county reveals the natural and accentuates its place characteristics.
- **Historical Assets** – Wabash County has embraced its heritage by emphasizing historical preservation. Museums, covered bridges, and other historical sites represent the historic charm for which Wabash is known.
- **Downtown / Main Street** – Both Wabash and North Manchester offer residents and visitors an engaging experience in their downtown and main street areas. Streetscaping efforts, public art, and a variety of vendors shape a lively community-oriented environment in centralized locations.
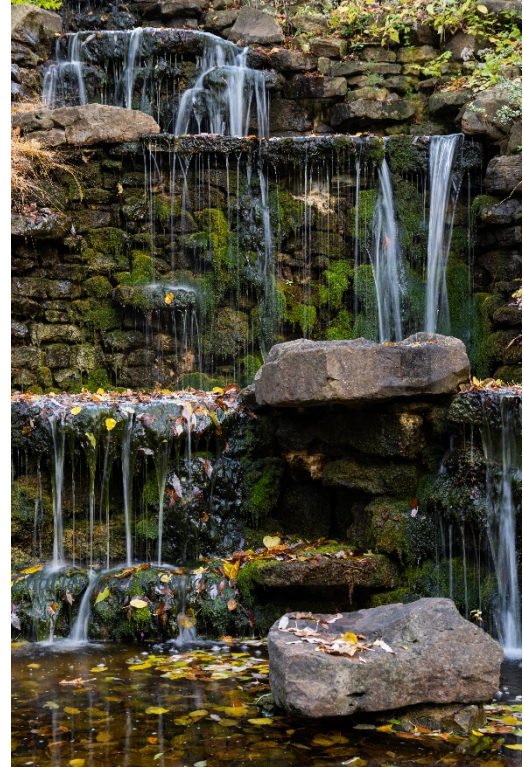
PLACEMAKING AND OTHER COMMUNITY VALUES

Efforts to improve the quality of a place and other community values are often mutually beneficial. The following examples suggest a number of areas that are impacted by placemaking, and that may influence placemaking as well.

- **Transportation** – Projects that improve transportation options may also impact the quality of place. Streetscape improvements like sidewalks, curb cuts, bike lanes, streetlights, and landscaping are not only functional improvements but also contribute to a sense of place. Amenities for pedestrians and cyclists, like bike racks, benches, and trash cans, encourage visitors to stay and enjoy public spaces and art.

- **Public Health** – Programs and activities aimed at getting people moving for the sake of their health, such as biking and running clubs, create a sense of community and place. Furthermore, projects that produce recreational amenities, like trails for walking, jogging, and biking, or other outdoor recreation facilities, create an environment in which people have more opportunities to exercise and thereby improve their health.

Dam to Dam Bike Ride

- **Economic Development** – Public events draw people to particular locations (such as a Downtown area) where they are introduced to local businesses and vendors. Visitors can be retained beyond the initial event that attracted them, bringing new business to the area. Amenities like trails are also meant to promote tourism. A study shared by the Wabash River Trail showed that 87% of trail vacationers have significant discretionary income and 81% stayed overnight in local accommodations.[21] Trail visitors may boost dining and retail businesses as well, and in the long-term are considered a key catalyst in attracting new talent and businesses.

2.2 Projects and Programs

This section reviews the primary placemaking assets in Wabash County, including places, programs, physical elements, and organizations that contribute to the sense of place.

STELLAR COMMUNITIES GRANT 2014

In 2014, the City of Wabash was awarded a Stellar Communities Grant by a collaborative effort among the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA), the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). The grant supported nine initiatives that totaled approximately $28 million. 55% of the cost was paid by the City, private investment, and other sources, and the grant award covered the rest. The following projects were undertaken to promote placemaking with the city.

Eagle's Theater

- **Improvements to Eagles Theater** – The theater was originally constructed in 1906 and features a theater for live entertainment, a move theater, recording studios, and a fully-restored grand ballroom.
- **Creation of an all-inclusive playground at John Drook Memorial Park** – The Friendship Hill Inclusive Playground is accessible to all ages and physical abilities, and it adds an engaging opportunity for kids in Downtown Wabash.

Friendship Hill Playground

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[21] https://wabashrivertrail.org/

- **Downtown façade improvements –** The City gained access to $1.3 million in matching funds that assisted with the restoration of 23 historic building facades, structures, and roofs in the Downtown area, promoting revitalization.[22]
- **Continuing Streetscape improvements** – These improvements included removing overgrown trees and replacing them with fountain grass, lighting, flowerpots, benches, and other enhancements to the downtown area.
- **Continuing Wabash Riverwalk –** The Wabash Riverwalk Trail is a ¾ mile trail that runs along the north side of the river and connects to Downtown.

Downtown Wabash – Improved Facades

- **Charley Creek and Cultural Trails –** These trails run through Downtown and connect various points of interest and historical assets.
- **State Road 13/15 corridor improvements –** Improvements were made between Canal Street and the Wabash River to guide visitors into Wabash by improving pedestrian elements and storm systems.
- **Owner-occupied rehabilitation program –** This program assisted low-income homeowners with repairs that enabled seniors to age in place, improved energy efficiency, and eliminated hazards.
- **Creation of Rock City Lofts –** The senior affordable housing project renovated four historic buildings in Downtown Wabash across from the Historical Museum.

PLACES

The following places represent additional locations that contribute to the sense of place within Wabash County.

WABASH
- **Riverfront Plaza** – The Riverfront Plaza connects the downtown area with the river and aims to attract visitors and promote future development in the area.
- **Mammoth Park –** The beautification of the old Mammoth Building and addition of the Explore Downtown Wabash Mural have revitalized this primary gateway into downtown.
- **Market-Canal Alley Art Walk** – A formerly blighted alley has become a place of interest and rest, with added lighting, benches, landscaping, and a cable system than can support various installations.
- **Veterans Plaza** – This highly visible location at the only city-owned parking lot downtown contains new landscaping, seating, and a one-of-a-kind pergola. It has become one of the most popular places on First Fridays.
- **Honeywell Center** – The Honeywell Center was built in 1952 to be a hub for recreation in the community. It is home to the Ford Theater, Eugenia's Restaurant, Clark Gallery, and banquet facilities.

Market-Canal Alley Art Walk

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[22] https://www.indianalandmarks.org/2018/09/wabash-becomes-model-of-revitalization/

- **Riverfront** – The Eel River borders the Town of North Manchester to the south.
- **Downtown** – The downtown and Main Street in North Manchester are home to historic sites, shops, entertainment, and community events.
- **Community Trail Network** – The Town applied for grant funding to create a river boardwalk that would link key locations within the community, including schools, parks, the library, and Manchester University. It would also create pedestrian bridges across the river and provide spectacular views.

Downtown North Manchester

ROANN

- **Covered Bridges** – Both Roann and North Manchester are home to historic covered bridges that have been restored to preserve a sense of history and rural character of the county.
- **Stockdale Mill** – More than 150 years old, the restored Stockdale Mill in Roann is once again operational and is now a museum.
- **Downtown** – Roann is home to a historic district and was recently designated an Indiana Main Street by Indiana Office of Community & Rural Affairs (OCRA).

Downtown Roann

LAGRO

- **Town Pavilion** – The new town pavilion in Lagro is situated near the Wabash River Trail and is a great place to hold local events.

PROGRAMS / EVENTS

The following programs promote community and create a sense of identity connected to place.

- **Trolley Tours** – Wabash Trolley Tours offer a unique perspective on the city and provide opportunities for people to interact with each other in new ways.

Town Pavilion, Lagro

- **Liking for Biking Weekly Bike Rides** – The local bicycling club organizes weekly rides to enjoy the natural amenities and recreation opportunities within the city and county.
- **First Fridays** –Wabash celebrates the First Friday of each month with a free themed event downtown, organized by Wabash Marketplace.
- **North Manchester Harvest Arts Festival** – Each October, North Manchester hosts a full day of Fall themed games, food, and activities.

- **Roann Covered Bridge Festival** – Roann celebrates its historic covered bridge with a three day festival each year.

Harvest Arts Festival

Performer on a First Friday

PUBLIC ART / PHYSICAL ELEMENTS

Public art and physical elements can contribute to a sense of place by adding points of interest, utility, and/or beauty.

- **Bike Wabash** – Locally designed and fabricated bike racks have been installed downtown to alleviate car parking congestion and encourage a healthy lifestyle.
- **Explore Downtown Wabash Mural** – Located in Mammoth Park, this mural is styled after a vintage postcard that depicts the intersection. It is a primary gateway to downtown.
- **Abraham Lincoln Statue –** "The Great Emancipator" statue is located outside the courthouse in Wabash and was commissioned by a Wabash native, Alexander New.
- **Parking Gabions** – These wirework structures serve as multi-functional sculpture-art and wayfinding markers, clearly signifying and beautifying one of two public parking lots in the downtown corridor.

Bike Wabash Custom Bike Rack

- **Welcome to Wabash Billboards** – The Wabash County Chamber of Commerce is the primary partner responsible for billboards that welcome visitors to Wabash and highlight Arts & Entertainment, Dining, and Boutiques & Antiques.
- **Caboose Outdoor Exhibit –** The Wabash County Historical Museum serves as a primary partner for the Caboose Outdoor Exhibit, providing access to and education about a historical artifact.
- **Market Street Mural** – In the fall of 2020, the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership and the Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne Inc launched the first Make It Your Own Mural Fest. Mexico City native and mural artist Claudio "Remix 1" Rico was commissioned to paint a mural located at 214 E. Main St., North Manchester.

- **Roann Community Center Mural –**Roann was recently awarded a Main Street Designation by the Indiana Office of Community & Rural Affairs (OCRA). A grant from this organization and the participation of the Roann Heritage Group led to a new mural on the side of the Roann Community Building.

Market Street Mural, North Manchester

Roann Community Center Mural

ORGANIZATIONS

Several Organizations within the county are major contributors to placemaking initiatives.

- **Grow Wabash County –** A combination economic-development organization and Chamber of Commerce, Grow Wabash County supports placemaking efforts across the County.
- **Wabash Marketplace –** Wabash Marketplace is a non-profit organization that promotes growth in Downtown Wabash. By seeking to save buildings and promote the downtown through events like First Fridays, Wabash Marketplace contributes to creating a sense of place in Wabash.
- **Manchester Alive: Main Street Chamber Alliance –** Manchester Alive seeks to enhance the quality of life in the community by supporting entrepreneurs, small business, and community events.

2.3 Opportunity Areas

As Wabash County looks ahead, a variety of areas within the region may present strategic opportunities to pursue new placemaking initiatives. These projects are important because they contribute to a virtuous cycle: as a place improves, individuals tend to visit more and businesses invest, which in turn results in further improvements to the area. Placemaking is also a way to lean into authenticity; it does not create something totally new, but instead it accentuates existing features in a new way.

DOWNTOWNS

Downtowns and Main Streets are common opportunity areas for placemaking initiatives. Physical projects, like creating small parks, public art installations, and amenities like bike racks, benches, and streetscaping, encourage people to visit and stay. Downtowns offer the opportunity to concentrate, in which spaces benefit from having a variety of uses that mutually enhance one another (like a library, park, and restaurants all within walking distance).[23] Activation activities, like festivals and concerts, create a sense of liveliness and

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[23] https://cdad-online.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/placemaking_guide.pdf

community, drawing people in to centralized locations and providing businesses with additional opportunities.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods can apply principles of placemaking to create a shared sense of identity and community. Small scale projects like community gardens or neighborhood parks contribute to sociability and interaction. Public art and signage may also help neighborhoods create a unifying and recognizable identity. Block parties and neighborhood gatherings offer opportunities for residents to come together and interact in their shared spaces.

GREEN CORRIDORS / TRAILS

Wabash County is rich in natural amenities and beauty. Investment in the Wabash River Trail is a great start to placemaking that capitalizes on the natural assets of the county. Additional opportunities exist to expand the trail and to enhance amenities along it, such as restroom facilities, benches, exercise stations, and bike repair stations. Initiatives to improve accessibility and visibility to the trails could contribute to expanded use and increased investment. Improvements to the trail also have the potential to connect Wabash to other amenities and to multiply the effects of placemaking by increasing access to points of interest.

Example Trail Signage

COMMUNITY GATEWAYS

The Wabash Public Art Plan, created by the Wabash Marketplace, identifies a number of community gateways that are considered strategic places for placemaking initiatives. These gateways are "entry points into the City of Wabash [that] give us a chance to make a lasting and positive first impression on visitors and to inspire pride in local residents."[24] The plan notes that large-scale art pieces are best for these locations because they will typically be viewed while driving. The potential gateways include:

- State Road 15 North and 24 Intersection
- State Road 13 North and 24 Intersection
- State Road 13 South past the "Cut" (Vernon Street)
- State Road 15 South past the "Cut" (Airport Road)
- Secondary entry points include Alber, Stitt, and Vernon Street

Possible gateways in/to other communities include

- **North Manchester**: the intersections of Wabash Rd and E Main St, E Main St and Sycamore St
- **Lagro**: along U.S. 24 and Blue Star Highway 524 (and/or at the intersection)
- **Roann**: along IN-15 and IN-16 (and/or at the intersection)
- **LaFontaine**: along In-15 (at Kendall St.) and IN-218 (at Main St)

In recent years, Visit Wabash County has collaborated with communities across the county to install gateway signage that encourages visitors to explore the different areas. By identifying and focusing on locations such as these, and others like them, the county has a variety of opportunities to continue to strengthen the sense and quality of place for both visitors and residents.

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[24] wabash-public-art-plan_compressed.pdf (wabashmarketplace.org)

LESSONS FROM COVID-19

The global COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted opportunities for communities around the world the improve their residents' experience of place. Shifting personal habits and new governmental guidelines regarding capacity and social distancing have altered the way that people interact with each other and with public spaces. In general, people are not gathering in large groups – particularly indoors – and are demonstrating preferences for outdoor activities. During 2020, there was a 50% increase in park visits at the two reservoirs in the county.

In view of these patterns, it has become clear that parks and outdoor amenities are particularly valuable assets when people are practicing social distancing and avoiding indoor gathering. Wabash County already has an abundance of natural assets; placemaking efforts that provide additional features for outdoor experiences would align with lessons learned through the pandemic.

Furthermore, outdoor dining has become a significant preference (or requirement) for many restaurants and their patrons. New York City notably provided opportunities for restaurants to expand dining onto sidewalks, curb lanes, and streets that are closed to traffic.[25] As Wabash moves forward during and after the pandemic, the County may wish to explore placemaking initiatives that allow for or create additional and expanded outdoor dining.

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[25] https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pedestrians/openstreets.shtml

3. EDUCATION

This section reviews the educational system within Wabash County. First, educational opportunities ranging from pre-K to post-secondary / vocational are identified and mapped. Further consideration is then given to understand trends in the County and to identify comparative measurements to use a benchmarks for the education system. Finally, this section provides a summary of the findings from the 2017 Studies for Advancement.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Wabash County is home to a complete continuum of learning opportunities.** Residents have options that range from pre-k and early childhood to post-secondary and alternative, technical, and vocational training. The presence of Manchester University in the County is a significant higher education opportunity for a county of its size.

- **Overall enrollment in schools has been declining and will continue as the County demographic changes**. The aging population and only a modest rate of in-migration of families with school-aged children contributes to this trend.

- **Current academic programs meet State requirements, but lower enrollment limits specialized or advanced learning opportunities and certain extracurricular activities.** Certain enrichment courses and extracurricular activities are unavailable in several schools.

- **Availability and affordability of childcare affects parents' participation in the workforce.** Limited access to childcare in Wabash presents significant economic challenges, including millions of dollars in lost wages and earnings.

3.1 Education System

The Education System section explores the wide range of educational offerings found within the County. Three public school systems serve the county: Manchester Community Schools, the Metropolitan School District (MSD) of Wabash County, and Wabash City Schools. Several private schools, a vocational school, post-secondary, and technical/vocational options are also present in the county. This section concludes with an analysis of how the workforce is affected by the availability – or lack thereof – of childcare in the county.

LIFELONG LEARNING

In addition to the foundational K-12 education system, lifelong learning opportunities are valuable to individuals and communities. Pre-kindergarten provides younger children with an early start to get acquainted with the school system. Higher education and alternative, technical, and vocational training centers are community assets and are key aspects of developing an effective workforce. Together, these segments of the education system provide a complete continuum of opportunities for residents of Wabash County. The graphic below illustrates the variety of specific educational opportunities and institutions within the County.
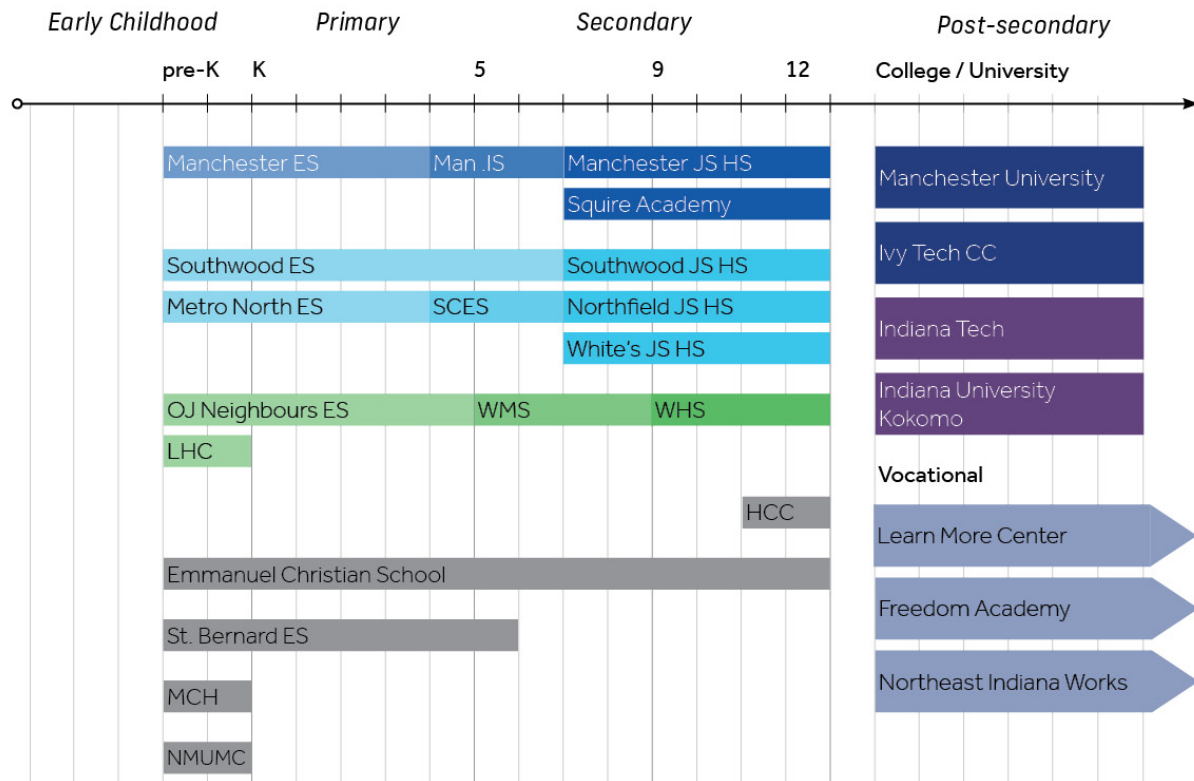
Lifelong Learning In Wabash County

Figure 3: Lifelong Learning

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Each of the three public school systems and the two private schools offer younger students the chance to enroll in pre-kindergarten at their elementary school locations, and Wabash City Schools offers additional enrollment at the L.H. Carpenter Early Learning Center.

At least two churches in the county offer private pre-k classes:

- Montessori Children's House at Wabash Presbyterian Church and the
- Sycamore Pre-school at North Manchester United Methodist Church.

K-12 SCHOOLS

The following schools comprise the public school options within Wabash County, arranged by district:

- **Manchester Community Schools (MCS)**
  - Manchester Elementary School (Pre-K – 3rd)
  - Manchester Intermediate School (4th – 6th)
  - Manchester Jr - Sr High School (7th – 12th)
  - Squire Academy (7th -12th, alternative online courses)

- **MSD Wabash County (MSDWC)**
  - o Metro North Elementary School (Pre-K – 3rd)
  - o Sharp Creek Elementary (4th – 6th)
  - o Southwood Elementary (Pre-K – 6th)
  - o Northfield Jr./Sr. High (7th – 12th)
  - o Southwood Jr./Sr. High (7th – 12th)
  - o White's Jr./Sr. High (7th – 12th, with residential facilities)
- **Wabash City Schools (WCS)**
  - o OJ Neighbours Elementary School (Pre-K – 4th)
  - o Wabash Middle School (5th – 8th)
  - o Wabash High School (9th – 12th)

Private school options in the county include:
- St. Bernard Elementary School (Pre-K – 5th)
- Emmanuel Christian School (Pre-K – 12th)

School Choice

K-12 students in Indiana have several options when choosing which schools to attend. These statewide policies are applicable in Wabash County and affect students and residents alike. One community member shared the following observation during a Focus on the Future Workshop: "Every morning we see four different school buses visit little Roann, taking students in four different directions."

Open Enrollment

Through Indiana's Open Enrollment policy, students are eligible to transfer between public school districts based on a variety of possible arrangements, even if they do not change residences. [26] In Wabash County, both Manchester City Schools and MSD Wabash County recorded a net gain in public transfer students, whereas the Wabash City Schools reported a net loss. Given the geographic nature of their relationship – the Wabash City School district is surrounded by the MSD Wabash County district – it is not surprising that a significant number of students would transfer between these districts. While this policy allows for convenience and opportunity for students, it can be detrimental to districts with a net loss in transfers. State funding follows the student, so districts that lose students lose their associated funding and, over time, can become less desirable districts. On the other hand, districts that receive many incoming transfer students receive corresponding state funding and continue to become more desirable. Refer to Figure 4 on the following page for a map of new public transfers between school districts.

Indiana School Choice Scholarship Program

The Indiana Choice Scholarship Program, also referred to as a voucher program, provides scholarships to low and middle-income students to offset the cost of enrollment at participating private schools. Students must meet both income and academic eligibility requirements to apply. In 2019, more than 36,000 students participated in the program.[27]

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[26] https://www.edchoice.org/engage/mapping-indianas-public-district-school-choice-transfers/

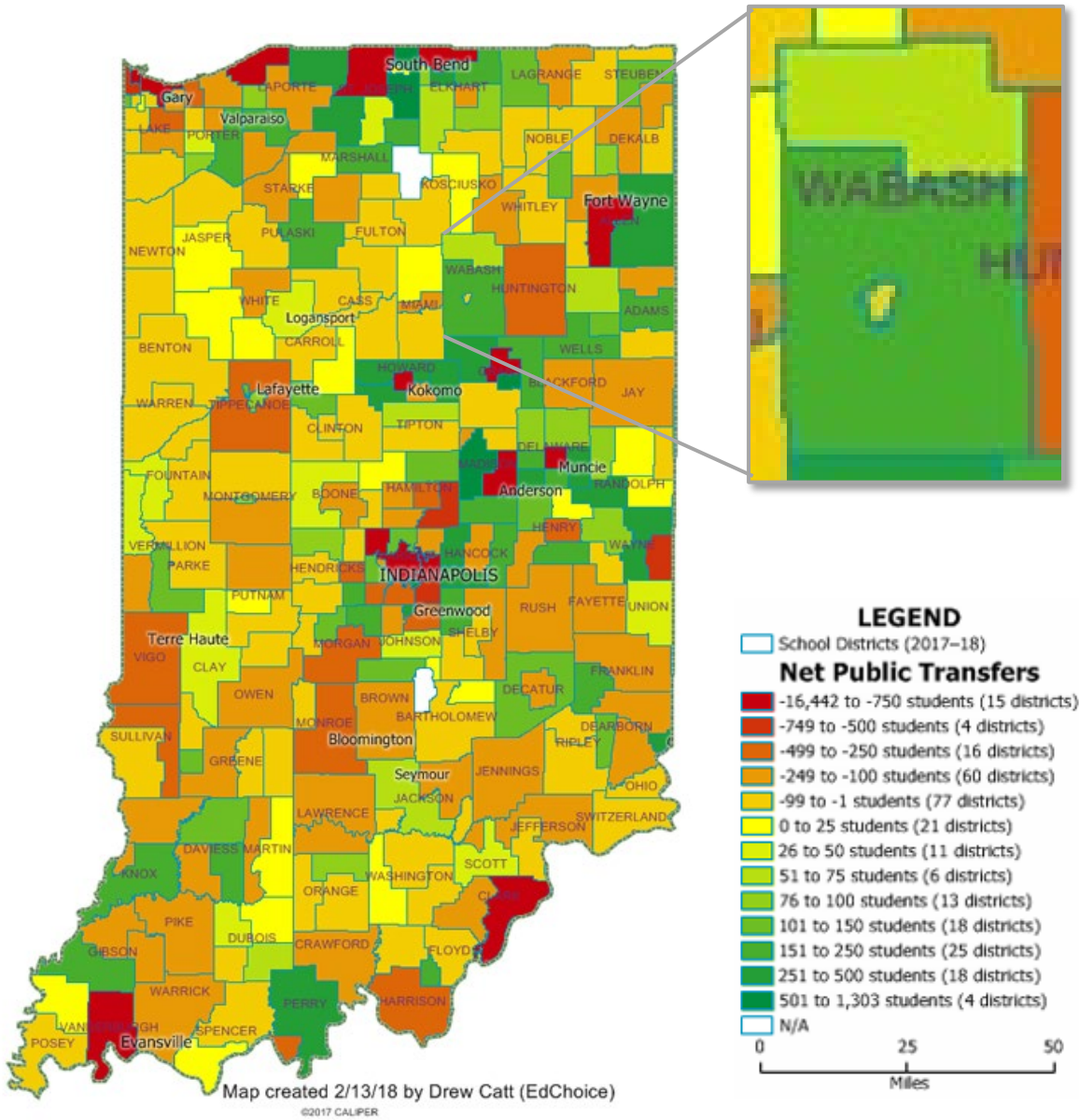[27] https://www.edchoice.org/school-choice/programs/indiana-choice-scholarship-program/

Figure 4: Indiana Public School Transfers

Wabash County is home to several higher education institutions.

- **Manchester University**
  Manchester University enrolls 1,400 students in more than 70 undergraduate programs and several advanced or professional degree programs. Students come from 26 states and 19 countries, and nearly ¾ of students live on campus in North Manchester. 96% of graduates are employed, enrolled in full-time education, or have joined voluntary service within six months of graduation. From the class of 2016, most graduates accepted jobs at more than 100 employers. Others enrolled in graduate or professional programs at schools like Johns Hopkins and Penn State, studying in 31 different disciplines.

  More than 80% of Enrolled Undergraduates come from Indiana, signifying the strong asset that Manchester University is to both the County and the State.
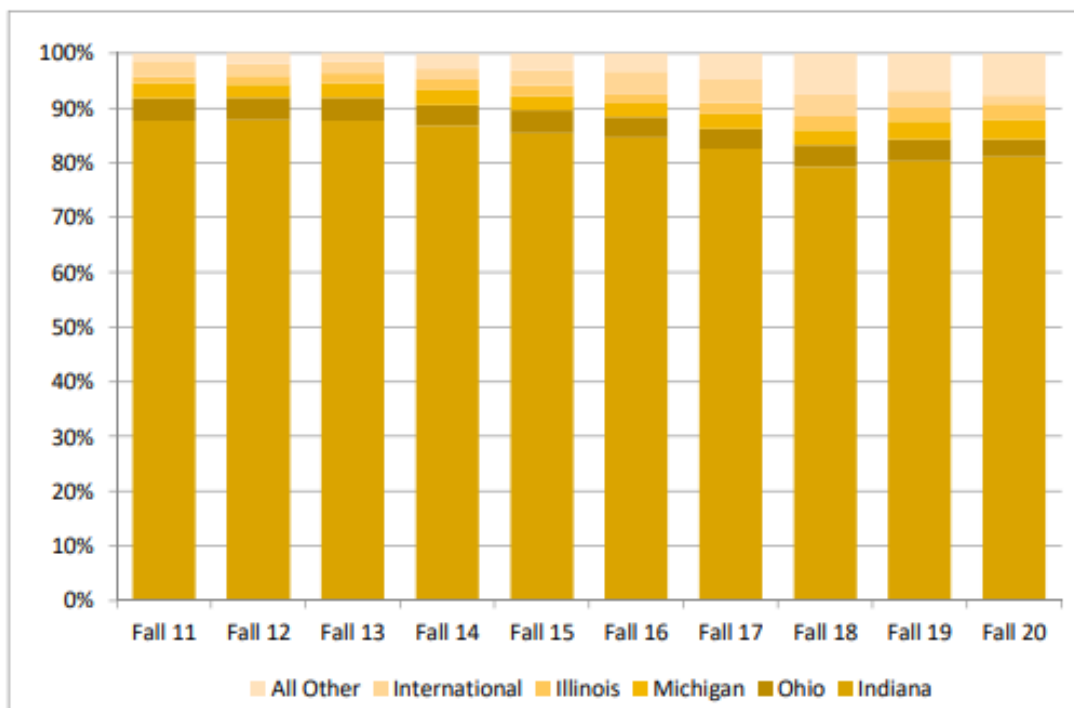
Figure 5: Undergraduate Enrollment by Geography

- **Ivy Tech Community College – Wabash**
  Ivy Tech Community College offers a selection of courses at its Wabash campus, located in the Wabash County Community Learning Center. Students may pursue a variety of certificates and/or an associate degree. The full-service campus is located in Fort Wayne.

Residents of Wabash County may also reasonably pursue higher education at a number of locations outside of the county. These options include:

- **Indiana Tech – Warsaw**
  Indiana Tech in Warsaw is home to a College of Professional Studies with undergraduate and graduate degrees and offers evening and weekend classes.[28]

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[28] https://www.campusexplorer.com/colleges/995BD16A/Indiana/Warsaw/Indiana-Tech-Warsaw/

- **Indiana University – Kokomo**
  IU Kokomo campus has 8 schools and divisions with 60+ degrees and programs, educating both undergraduate and graduate students.

- **Vincennes University**
  Vincennes University offers associates degrees in career fields and dual credit courses for Heartland Career Center students.

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING

In addition to the traditional educational pathways for primary and secondary school, Wabash County offers a variety of alternative learning opportunities, beginning in high school and continuing into adulthood.

- **Heartland Career Center** (HCC)
  Juniors and Seniors at participating area high schools can enroll at HCC in one of 17 different career programs. Students can earn dual credits (for high school and college) while gaining valuable workplace training and competencies, thanks to a partnership among the career center, Vincennes University and Ivy Tech Community College. Hands-on training programs include:
  - Automotive Services
  - Construction Trades
  - Cosmetology
  - Criminal Justice
  - Culinary Arts and Hospitality
  - Electronics
  - Health Science
  - Agriculture
  - Media, Marketing, and Communications
  - Early-Childhood Education

  Heartland students are eligible for all levels of high school diplomas, depending on their sending high school. The graduation rate for students concentrating in Career Technical Education (CTE) is 95%, higher than the national average and comparable to local high schools in Wabash County.

  The career center gives students in the cosmetology program real-world practice by offering a variety of services to community members. HCC also operates a preschool in which the students gain experience in Early Childhood Education by working directly with the children in a teaching role.

  Some students can also work toward certifications, such as Certified Nursing Assistant or Welder. By pursing these certifications, the students may begin a career right after high school or obtain an advantage in the job market.

- **Learn More Center**
  The Learn More Center provides Adult Basic Education, High School Equivalency Diploma, College Prep, Career Readiness, ESL, and Citizenship Courses. The programs there help students move on to college or career education. Two locations serve residents of Wabash County:
  - Town Life Center, North Manchester
  - Wabash County Community Learning Center, Wabash

- **Northeast Indiana Works**
  Northeast Indiana Works is a non-profit workforce development organization that provides adult education and workforce development services. They operate in various locations throughout the region, including in the Wabash County Community Learning Center.

- **Freedom Academy**
  The Freedom Academy focuses on adult education and workforce development. Although the

program is based in Fort Wayne, it occasionally offers classes at the Heartland Career Center.

- **Indiana Kentucky Ohio Regional Council of Carpenters (IKORCC) – Warsaw**
  Residents of Wabash County may receive carpenter, millwright, and welding training at the IKORCC training facility located in nearby Warsaw.
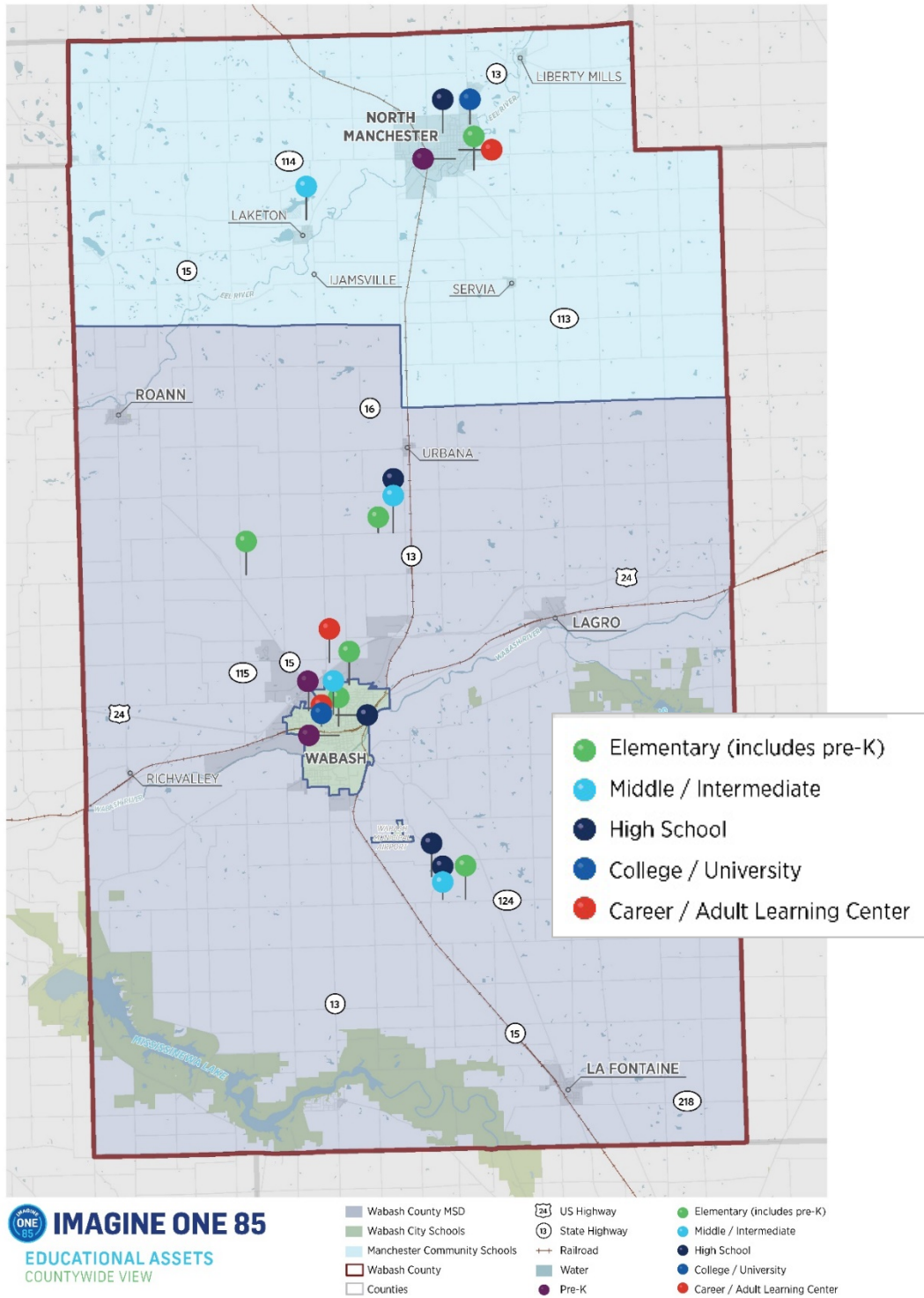
Map 2: Education Institutions and Facilities

The Workforce Development Study, completed in 2017, focused on the interaction between Early Childhood Education and the workforce. At the time of the study, the economy was considered strong and there was low unemployment. However, most members of the workforce have children under the age of six. Therefore, the availability and affordability of early childhood education affect recruitment and retention of workers.

The economic impact due to lack of access to childcare in Wabash is significant:
- $7.8 million in wages lost due to absent employees (for salaried workers); overtime (for other employees); temporary workers or reductions in productivity
- $4.9 million in earnings lost from turnovers and absences of hourly workers
- $800 thousand in tax revenue lost due to childcare issues
- 186 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees lost[29]

The study notes that the return on investment is highest in the first five years of a child's life (13:1). Combined with the realization that there is a low supply of high-quality early education in Wabash compared to the need, the study recommends several potential solutions:
- Employer – Child Care Partnerships
- Community Investment in the form of funding from employers, philanthropists, and grants.

Finding ways to provide quality, accessible, and affordable early childhood education and childcare will be integral to supporting the workforce in Wabash County.

3.2 Trends and Benchmarks

The Trends and Benchmarks section considers broader trends in the county that affect the educational system. It also explores and compares various measures of educational attainment across the three public school districts.

POPULATION AND ENROLLMENT

A demographic study across all three districts in Wabash County reveals that population is declining and will continue to do so into the immediate future. The projected fertility rate, the average number of children born to a woman over her lifetime, is below the replacement level needed for the population to remain static. Furthermore, current residents are migrating out of Wabash at a higher rate than new residents are moving in. The study suggests that enrollment will also continue to decrease across all three districts due to two main factors:
- an increase in empty nest households, and
- a modest rate of in-migration of young families with children.

The median age is also projected to increase by several percentage points, representing a shift toward fewer school aged children as well.[30]

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[29] Transform Consulting Group. "Investing in Today's and Tomorrow's Workforce." (Presentation). January 2019.
[30] McKibben Demographics. "2016-2017 Demographic Study for Manchester Community Schools, Wabash City Schools, and MSD of Wabash County." June 2017.
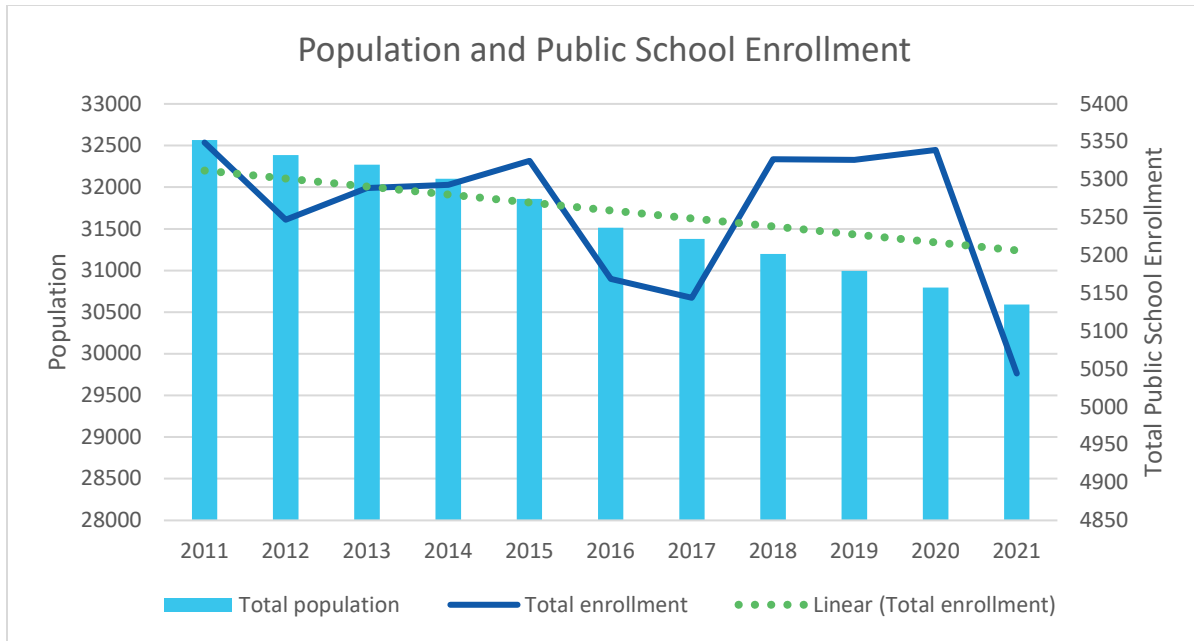
Figure 6: Population and School Enrollment

BENCHMARKS

A variety of qualitative and quantitative metrics are used to evaluate the strengths and opportunity areas of Wabash County's education system. These metrics are organized around three themes: Course and Extracurricular Offerings, Academic Performance, and Structural and Financial Factors.

COURSE AND EXTRACURRICULAR OFFERINGS

School systems often stand out because of unique and enriching courses or activities that go beyond the standard core curriculum. In addition to state minimum requirements, each of the school systems offers some additional programming and assets, including:

- **Special Education** is instruction tailored to the individual learning needs of a student with a disability.
- **Gifted Education** provides higher achieving students with enrichment or accelerated learning opportunities.
- **English as a New Language** is offered to students whose first language is not English.
- **Advanced Placement (AP) Courses** are entry-level college courses for high school students. Students may earn college credit depending on two factors: the scores they receive on the standardized AP Exams and the policies of the college or university where they enroll.
- **Dual-Credit Courses** are college courses that are cross-listed at both a high school and a college. A passing grade earns the student both high school and college credit.
- **1:1 Technology** gives every student computer (or tablet) and internet access to complete assignments and to grow in technological proficiency.

Below are some of the specific details and unique assets offered in each of the school districts. The list is not intended to be exhaustive but to provide some examples of ways in which Wabash County offers a competitive education system.

- **Manchester Community Schools**
  - ~12 AP Courses
  - 16 Dual-Credit Courses
  - **World Experiences** – domestic and international travel-learning experiences for junior and senior high students
- **MSD Wabash County**
  - 9 AP Classes
  - **Elementary Robotics Program** – The schools offer a number of opportunities to focus on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) learning. Two robotics teams competed in a World Competition against local and international teams.
  - Professional Internship Program
- **Wabash City Schools**
  - 27 AP or Dual Credit Courses
  - Japanese Language and Culture Program
  - **Entrepreneurship Program** – In partnership with InGuard (an insurance and risk-management firm) and Grow Wabash County, the school offers INCubatoredu, a full-year entrepreneurship curriculum that helps students develop their own product or service startup.
  - **Industrial Technology** – Beginning in middle school, students have hands-on opportunities to learn about design and construction, geared toward building employable skills and competencies.

Despite these assets, however, the relatively low enrollment numbers at the individual schools have presented a challenge to offering certain enrichment classes and extracurricular activities. One study notes that in 2017, the schools offered minimal course offerings in subjects like World Languages, Engineering, and Business. The study also found that some schools were no longer able to offer certain extracurricular activities, such as a marching band or soccer team.[31] The addition of the Japanese Language and Culture program at Wabash City Schools represents a positive change, but the overall challenge of offering diverse enrichment courses and extracurricular activities will remain relevant until enrollment levels increase.

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[31] *Studies for Advancement.* Academic Audit prepared by Carol Lindquist, Ed.D. August 1, 2017

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The State of Indiana Department of Education tracks a variety of academic performance measures through standardized tests and graduation rates. These objective measurements provide one angle at which to look at educational attainment and performance. Common measures for comparison include state testing that occurs in third and tenth graces. The data provided is an aggregate of all schools within each district and was compiled from the Indiana Department of Education unless otherwise noted.

In addition to state standardized tests, many high school juniors and seniors take the SAT and/or ACT to test their aptitude and readiness for college. Most colleges and universities use scores from these tests to determine a student's eligibility for enrollment or scholarships. The number of students who take the SAT or ACT can serve as a loose approximation of the number of students who pursue at least a four-year degree after high school, given that 95% of four-year colleges require either one of these standardized tests for enrollment.[32] Note that the data shown does not indicate how much, if any, overlap exists between students who took the SAT and those who took the ACT.

- **IREAD** (Indiana Reading Evaluation and Determination) – measures 3rd Grade reading foundations
- **ELA** (English and Language Arts) - includes reading, writing, speaking, and language
- **ISTEP** (Indiana Statewide Educational Testing for Progress) – measures students' mastery of basic topics, particularly English and Math
- **SAT** (Scholastic Aptitude Test) – tests Math and Reading/Writing as a measure of college readiness, with a greatest possible composite score of 1600
- **ACT** (American College Test) – covers Math, English, Reading, Writing and Science with a maximum score of 36

Acronym Definitions

Finally, graduation rates reflect what percentage of students in each cohort complete their studies and graduate.

	MCS	MSD WC	WCS	Indiana	US
IREAD Pass %	90.2	93.7	85.1	87.9	
3rd Grade ELA Proficient %	45.1	45.0	32.3	45.4	
10th Grade Passing both Math and ELA (ISTEP)	39.6	30.3	20.8	30.5	
% Graduates Taking SAT	52.9	47.5	96.9	56.9	
Average Composite SAT Score	1,079.7	1,037.5	994.4	987.9	1,060
% Graduates Taking ACT	8.4	10.4	4.2	22.1	52*
Average Composite ACT Score	19.6	21.4	26.5	21.8	20.8
Graduation Rate %	94.35	73.72	91.75	87.69	88**

*projected value https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=897

** estimated for 2018 https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/articles/see-high-school-graduation-rates-by-state

Table 1: Academic Performance Measures

NOTE: **MSD Wabash County** includes White's Junior and Senior High School, a children's residential facility. Although the facility is part of the school district and offers a standard and accredited public school curriculum, the environment is not that of a traditional public school. Disaggregated data reveals that

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[32] https://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/college-rankings-blog/2008/09/22/about-that-nacac-report-on-the-sat

performance measures are significantly lower at White's than at Northfield and Southwood. The graduation rate at White's, for example, was 55.76% in 2020; Northfield's was 94.55% and Southwood's was 98.63%, some of the highest rates in the state. Similar disparities exist within the disaggregated data for other statistics as well.
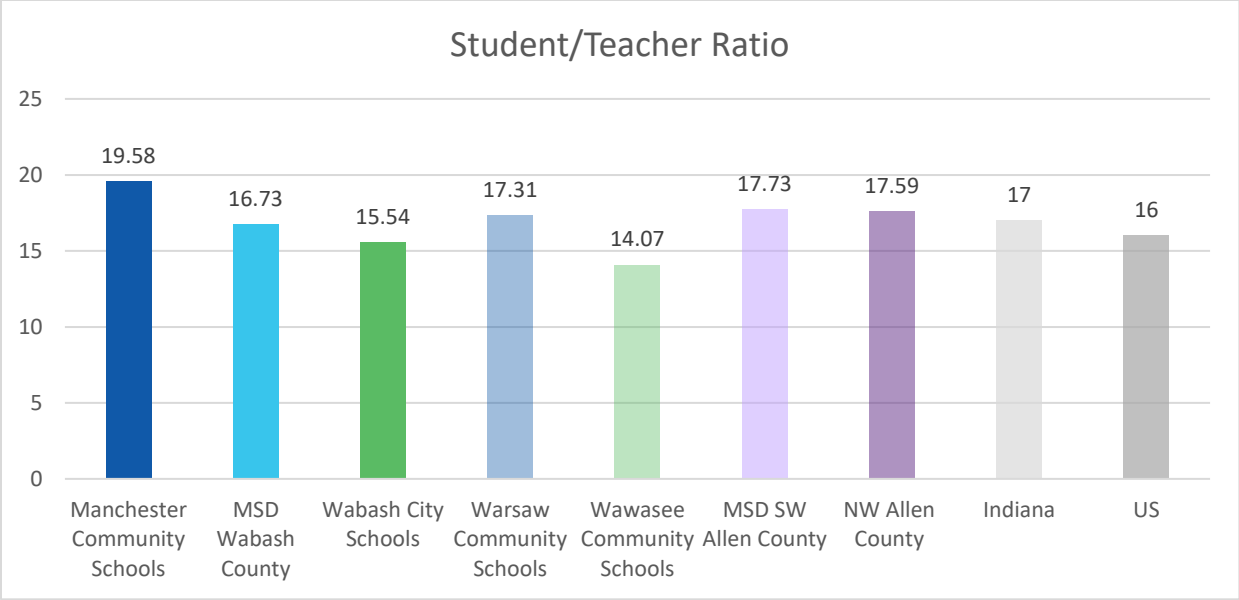
With respect to most academic performance metrics, students in **Manchester City Schools** performed very near or higher than the Indiana averages. Third grade reading and language arts proficiency were comparable to the state average levels, and the number of students who passed both Math and ELA in 10th grade was 9% higher than the state. SAT scores were higher than both the state and national averages, and the graduation rate of 94.35% is also significantly greater than state (87.69%) and national (88%) rates. More than half of students took the SAT and/or ACT, suggesting that a majority of students are at least interested in pursing a four-year degree.

MSD Wabash County students also performed well academically, with respect to their county, state, and national peers. 93.7% of third graders passed the statewide IREAD reading test, nearly 6% higher than Indiana's 87.9% average. The number of 10th grade students who passed both Math and ELA on their state standardized tests was just 0.2% points below the state average; 30.3% compared to 30.5%. Average SAT and ACT composite scores were comparable to state averages as well, with around half of graduating students taking one or both exams. As noted above, the graduation rate for the district as a whole is significantly lower than other districts, but the graduation rates for the traditional high schools in MSD Wabash County are excellent; the weighted average for Northfield and Southwood is 96.88%.

Wabash City Schools posted lower scores in most areas than their peers. The percentage of third graders who passed the IREAD test, 85.1%, is very near the Indiana average of 87.9%. However, overall third grade ELA proficiency (32.3%) is 13% lower than the Indiana average and that of the other county schools. Similarly, only 20.8% of 10th graders passed both Math and ELA portions of the ISTEP, compared to approximately 30% in MSD Wabash County and nearly 40% in Manchester. Students who took the SAT scored very close to the Indiana average, and ACT test-takers were nearly 5 points higher than state and national averages. Wabash is unique in the county for offering free SAT tests to all juniors and seniors during the school day, so their percentage of graduates who take the test is exceptionally high (nearly 97%). The graduation rate of 91.75% in Wabash City Schools is above average and narrowly trails their peers in the County.

STRUCTURAL AND FINANCIAL FACTORS

Metrics such as student to teacher ratio and expenditures per student offer some insight into how schools compare to one another and what kinds of opportunities they provide for their students. A lower student to teacher ratio is considered an asset, suggesting that students receive more individualized input from teachers. Higher expenditures per student is also considered a positive metric, representing greater investment in a variety of factors that influence the child's educational experience.
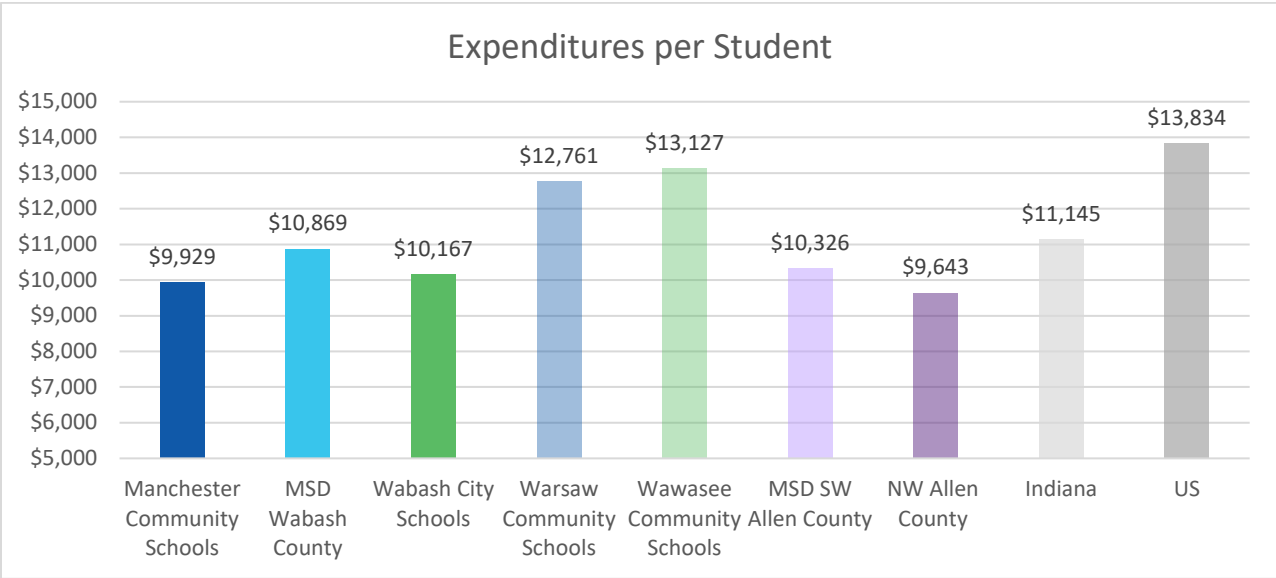
Student/Teacher Ratio

Manchester Community Schools	19.58
MSD Wabash County	16.73
Wabash City Schools	15.54
Warsaw Community Schools	17.31
Wawasee Community Schools	14.07
MSD SW Allen County	17.73
NW Allen County	17.59
Indiana	17
US	16

note: a lower ratio is better

Wabash City Schools has the lowest student to teacher ratio of the three districts in the County at 15.54. This number is below the Indiana average (17), the US average (16), and neighboring Warsaw Community Schools (17.31). The Wawasee Community School Corporation outperforms Wabash with the lowest and best student to teacher ratio in the sample: 14.07.

MSD Wabash County performs well in this metric also, with a student to teacher ratio of 16.73. Though slightly above the US average, it is below Indiana's average and that of Warsaw Community Schools.

Manchester Community Schools has the highest student to teacher ratio in this sample: 19.58.

Expenditures per Student

Manchester Community Schools	$9,929
MSD Wabash County	$10,869
Wabash City Schools	$10,167
Warsaw Community Schools	$12,761
Wawasee Community Schools	$13,127
MSD SW Allen County	$10,326
NW Allen County	$9,643
Indiana	$11,145
US	$13,834

Expenditures per student for the three districts in the county fall within less than a $1,000 range of each other. **MSD Wabash County** spends the most per student: $10,869. **Wabash City Schools** is next, spending

$10,167, followed by **Manchester Community Schools** at $9,929 per student. The County schools are not far behind the Indiana average of $11,145, but even the highest spending school in the County spends nearly $3,000 less per student than the US average of $13,834. Similarly, the schools in neighboring Kosciusko County spend nearly 20% more per student. On the other hand, per student expenditures in Wabash are comparable to expenditures in Allen County districts outside of Fort Wayne.

Although expenditures are lower than comparison districts, a 2017 Financial Report found that the schools are all run in fiscally responsible ways, so no blatantly obvious recommendations for cost savings through collaboration were found.[33]

Additional statistics are included for reference in the figure below.

District Comparisons

Category	Manchester Community Schools	MSD Wabash County	Wabash City Schools
Total Expenditures	$16,045,000	$23,608,000	$15,647,000
Total Revenue	$17,485,000	$28,897,000	$18,194,000
Total Staff	96.19	168.91	318.45
Other Staff (FTE)	13	42.4	216.71
Teachers (FTE)	83.19	126.51	101.74
Enrollment	1,629	2,116	1,581
Total Schools	3	7	3
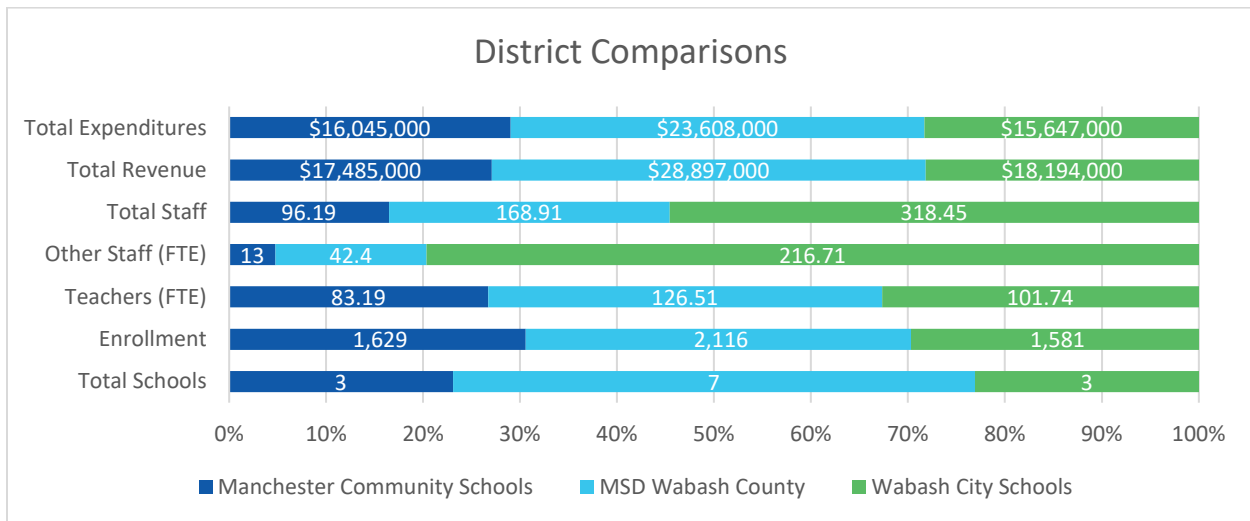
[33] Educational Services Company. "Financial Health Analysis for M.S.D Wabash County, Manchester Community Schoos, Wabash City Schools." July 2017. Indianapolis, IN.

3.3 Studies for Advancement

In 2017, the Community Foundation of Wabash County (CFWC) initiated and executed a study of the shared interests among the three school districts in the county. The Lindquist Feasibility Study Plan outlined five key topic areas for each of the school corporations:
- *Demographic Study,*
- *Facilities Study,*
- *Academic Audit,*
- *Wabash County Workforce Development Profile, and*
- *Analysis of Financial Strength.*

Phase Two then offered any interested corporations access to the following services:
- *Community Interest Survey,*
- *Facilitated Community Discussion of Facilities Study,*
- *Legal Analysis, and*
- *Consultant.*

A variety of results and findings from these studies have been shared throughout this chapter. The [Population and Enrollment](#) section contains the results of the Demographic study, and a summary of the Workforce Development Profile can be found under [Childcare and the Workforce](#); therefore, they are omitted here. A number of findings from the Academic Audit and Financial Analysis are incorporated into the [Benchmarks](#) section, but a complete summary of their findings is shared below.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The Community Foundation of Wabash County synthesized the key findings of these studies into the following statements:

1. "County population has and will continue to decline. As the median age continues to increase, fewer children who will attend school will be born."
2. "Currently, a majority of school transfers occur between county districts."
3. "State funding levels are not keeping pace with state and federal program expectations."
4. "Current academic programs in all three districts meet state requirements but offering specialized or advanced learning opportunities is increasingly difficult."
5. "Future workforce needs differ from those in the Region and State, with a high proportion of jobs in the county requiring low skill levels whose compensation can threaten economic self-sufficiency."
6. "School facilities are well-maintained but reflect the times they were built. Each district is challenged to find appropriate spaces for current and future educational needs."
7. "Junior high school students have unique developmental needs that are not distinguished fully from what is provided to high school students."[34]

FACILITIES

An independent study of the school facilities across Wabash found that the facilities are generally well maintained and in good condition, although they reflect the times in which they were originally constructed. Each district has distinct assets and challenges with respect to capacity and infrastructure. Several individualized projects and estimated construction costs were provided in the 2017 study, offering guidance to improve efficiencies, safety, and general upkeep/maintenance.

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[34] Community Foundation of Wabash County. "Studies for Advancement." 2017. Presentation.

ACADEMICS

The academic audits of 2017 examined each school district with respect to their *capacity* to provide an appropriate education, the *access* of opportunities to all students, and the *equity* of participation and/or success among disparate groups. Each audit provides a detailed analysis of the school systems within these categories. Common strengths and assets across the Wabash County school districts include:

- 1:1 technology access for students
- Adequate instructional materials at all levels
- Additional programming such as
    - Special Education
    - Gifted Education
    - English as a New Language
    - Extra-curricular activities
- A variety of Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual-Credit courses

The analysis offers additional observations that reflect areas of opportunity across the three districts.

- Low enrollment in high schools limits the ability to provide certain extra-curricular opportunities, like a soccer team, marching band, a business course, and others.
- The schools would benefit from more exploratory courses, like world languages and engineering, that go beyond the minimal education requirements.
- Policies and programs generally group Junior High and High School students, not recognizing the unique needs of Junior High students.
- As is common in most educational systems, the students from lower socio-economic backgrounds fail standardized tests at a higher rate than other wealthier students.

All three of the audits recommend that the schools consider how their next steps and future projects will improve the following areas:

- Teacher Quality
- Course and Program Availability
- Extra-Curricular Activities
- Technology
- Instructional Budget
- Personalized Services
- Community Engagement

FINANCES

Financial audits for each of the school corporations in Wabash provided various insights for the individual schools. The following summary statements and recommendations come out of themes that emerged across all districts:

- All corporations have relatively lower class sizes and including aides would maintain or increase student teacher ratios while reducing costs.
- Health Insurance Plans should be reviewed.
- Debt should be review and refinancing considered.
- Transportation costs may be reduced through evaluating walk radius, door-to-door, and grade level transportation.
- All three corporations are being run in fiscally responsible ways, so there are no blatantly obvious recommendations for cost savings through collaboration.

- Countywide transportation may be feasible, or at least between MSD Wabash and Wabash City Schools.

VOLUME 4: FOUNDATION

Technical Analysis Memo | Wabash County Comprehensive Plan

March 2021
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Foundation

The following report provides an analysis across three topics: transportation, hazard mitigation, and public facilities and services. This report and its accompanying summary presentations are a summary of the baseline conditions and trends in support of the Wabash County Comprehensive Plan. For questions on this report please contact the project manager for Imagine One 85, Kyle May, senior planner with planning NEXT, at kyle@planning-next.com*.*

CONTENTS

1. TRANSPORTATION

Considering transportation, our focus is two-fold. First, assess the community's current and future multimodal transportation needs and opportunities from a high level. Second, consider how these needs and opportunities may affect population growth and decline.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Streets and Highways**
  Traffic Congestion — Most streets are not congested and have plenty of capacity for growth. Some sections of SR-15 and SR-13 in the City of Wabash are nearing capacity and may experience peak hour congestion.
  Bridge and Pavement Maintenance Backlogs — Pavement and bridge deferred maintenance backlogs are sizable and is the primary focus of County and local street superintendents.
- **Transit**
  Inadequate operations funding is affecting staffing levels and, as a result the ability to accommodate all service requests at Wabash Transit. For some, the agency's services are their only means to live independently and without it, may need to move out of the area.
- **General Aviation**
  Wabash Municipal Airport's main runway is 600 feet short of the minimum needed to insure hangered jets at the airport. Extending the runway makes the airport and county more attractive to large business owners want to fly into town when visiting their places of operation.
- **Walking and Biking**
  While most neighborhood and downtown streets are walkable and bikeable, other busy thoroughfares are not and may discourage walking and biking. Shared-use paths in Wabash provide a recreational amenity for those who travel to them. These quality-of-life amenities are important to those considering whether to move to the area.
- **Placemaking**
  Both Wabash and North Manchester have attractive downtowns with a strong sense of place. Beyond these places, a number of corridors lack needed infrastructure and visual enhancements to be recognized as authentic, desirable places.

Streets and Highways

Generally speaking, most streets and highways in Wabash County are not congested and can easily accommodate business and population growth. The primary concern of street superintendents is addressing deferred maintenance for bridges and pavement.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Traffic congestion is generally not seen as an issue in the County and its communities. Population decline and a reduction in business activity are likely reasons, as well as a growing national trend for motorists to trip-chain—completing multiple errands in one trip, or on the way to or from work and other destinations. As such, most streets have lower volumes today than they did 20 years or more ago.

A planning-level, corridor quality level of service (QLOS) analysis was performed to evaluate traffic congestion. The most recently available traffic volume dataset from Indiana LTAP was compared against street characteristics using the QLOS methodology. This method assigns a Level of Service (LOS) letter

designation to represent degrees of congestion during a specific time period, typically the peak hour. QLOS designations range from "LOS C or Better"—free flow to stable flows at or near the speed limit, to "LOS F"—bumper to bumper very slow-moving traffic.

The analysis findings, illustrated in **Map 4.1 Corridor Traffic**, show three generalized sections of highways in and around the City of Wabash may experience congestion, particularly during peak hours. Sections of SR-15 between Market Street and Niccum Road, and SRs-13/15 between Southwood Drive and Canal Street may, at times, may operate at LOS E or F during peak hours. Sections of SR-13 between SR-124 and Southwood Drive, and between Canal Street and Pries Road may operate at LOS D at times.

BRIDGE AND PAVEMENT MAINTENANCE BACKLOGS

A common theme expressed by street superintendents was the challenge of keep local system[1] bridges and road pavements maintained. To look at this issue more closely, Indiana LTAP asset management data was obtained for local bridges—maintained by the County[2], as well as local roads by maintaining authority—Wabash County, the City of Wabash, and for the Towns of North Manchester and LaFontaine.

Bridges

Bridge condition ratings were reported by bridge, as well as a weighted average considering the size of a bridge's deck area. The findings, shown in Chart 3.1 show about a fifth of all bridges are *structurally deficient*[3] and about a quarter of bridges by deck area are *functionally obsolete*[4]. While passenger car traffic is usually allowed on structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges, large loads and oversized vehicles may not be, complicating efforts to truck crops and move large farm implements.

**Chart 4.1
Bridges by Condition Rating**

At present, the bridge maintenance backlog is estimated to be approximately $34M. This estimate is based on INDOT planning-level cost estimates to maintain and/or rehabilitate structures, applied to the County's portfolio of bridges, plus a 20 percent contingency to cover unforeseen additional costs. **Map 4.2 Bridge Conditions** shows the County's bridges, symbolized by their condition rating.

Pavement

Pavement condition summary data was also evaluated for area jurisdictions, including the , the City of Wabash , the Towns of North Manchester and LaFontaine, and Wabash County—which maintains county and town roads outside of those jurisdictions. LTAP pavement condition data is broken out by pavement surface type and condition. Estimated costs are based on INDOT's planning-level costs for recommended treatments

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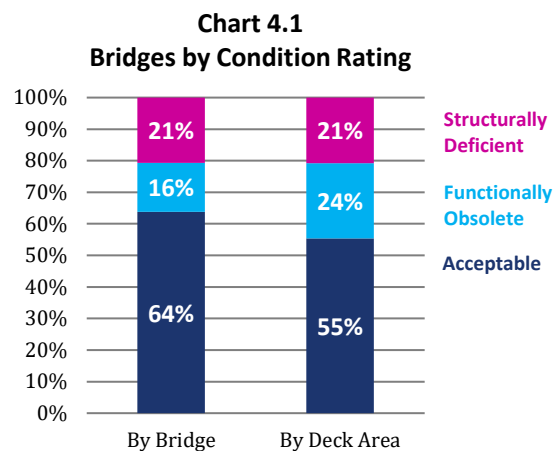
[1] INDOT owns and maintains all roads and bridges on state routes and US highways.
[2] All local bridges, including those within municipalities, are owned and maintained by the County.
[3] Per INDOT, structurally deficient bridges are those with a deck, superstructure, or substructure component with found during the last inspection to have a feature-specific FHWA sufficiency rating of 4 or less. Structurally deficient bridges may also have weight restrictions put in place.
[4] Per INDOT, Functionally obsolete bridges are those too small to accommodate vehicle size and speed standards, generally due to width or clearance height restrictions.

based on a roads condition rating, plus a 20 percent contingency. Charts 3.2 through 3.5 show the condition ratings for each jurisdiction by surface pavement type.

Pavement rehabilitation maintenance backlogs for these agencies include Wabash County at $146M, the City of Wabash at $4.5M, the Town of North Manchester at $1.2M, and the Town of LaFontaine $1.2M.
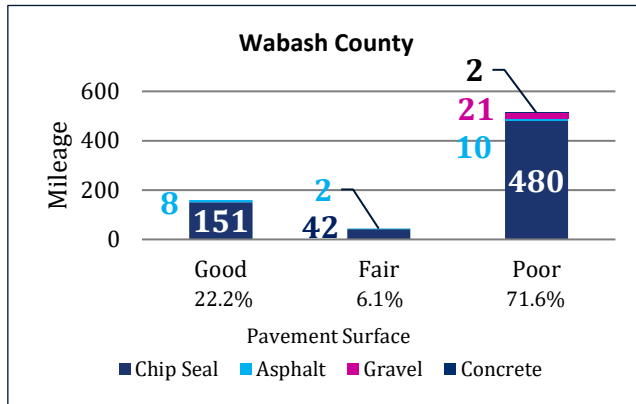
Chart 4.2 – Pavement Condition, Wabash County

Wabash County

Good 22.2%	Fair 6.1%	Poor 71.6%
8 / 151	2 / 42	2 / 21 / 10 / 480

Mileage — Pavement Surface
■ Chip Seal ■ Asphalt ■ Gravel ■ Concrete

Chart 4.3 – Pavement Condition, City of Wabash

City of Wabash

Good 7.7%	Fair 74.8%	Poor 17.4%
12	1 / 115	27

Mileage — Pavement Surface
■ Asphalt ■ Concrete
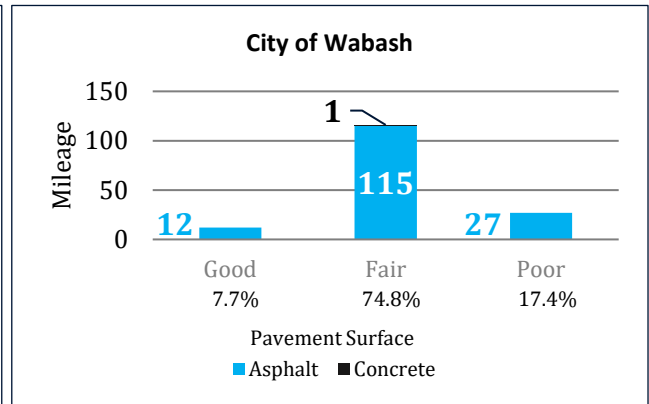
Chart 4.4 – Pavement Condition, North Manchester

North Manchester

Good 24.2%	Fair 63.6%	Poor 12.1%
8	21	1 / 3

Mileage — Pavement Surface
■ Asphalt ■ Chip Seal
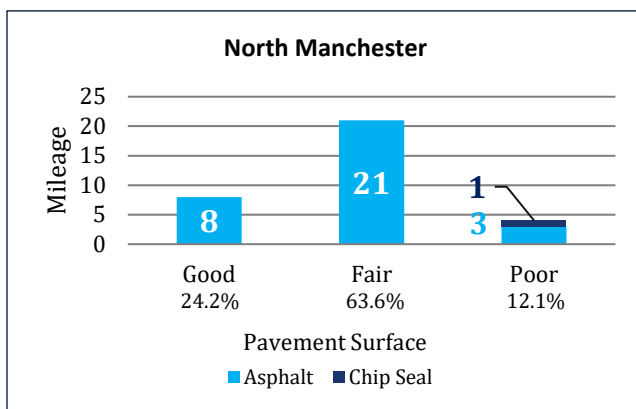
Chart 4.5 – Pavement Condition, LaFontaine

LaFontaine

Good 18.2%	Fair 9.1%	Poor 72.7%
2	1	8

Mileage — Pavement Surface
■ Asphalt
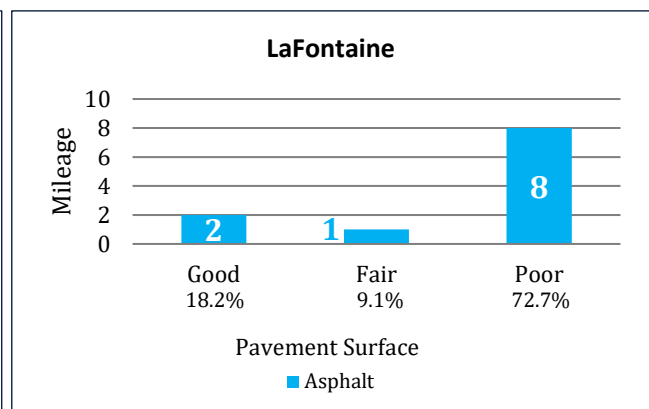
These are substantial liabilities and reflect the high cost of rehabilitating or even fully reconstructing poor condition roads. INDOT estimates the costs of these efforts range from $101,000 to $280,000 per lane-mile with an estimated service life of approximately 20 years.

While these backlogs are large, passage of the state's gas tax increase in 2018 is generating more funds to help local governments with their road and bridge maintenance. While the State Legislature's intent was to generate funds sufficient to address such backlogs, it is unclear whether future allocated funds will be enough to address the needs in Wabash County and its communities.

PLANNED ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

INDOT officials have several projects planned in the County. Near-term improvements include signal improvements in downtown Wabash in 2021 and a new signal at SR-15 and Wedcor Avenue in 2021. Looking further out, INDOT has programmed an intersection improvement at N Wabash Street and US-24 for construction in 2025, but the details of what this improvement will be have not yet been finalized.

Transit

Wabash Transit is a FTA 5311 rural public transit agency which operates as a division of Living Well in Wabash County, the area's Council on Aging. The transit agency primarily offers demand-response service—where those requesting a ride generally must schedule it in advance. The agency has operated a fixed-route service between Wabash and North Manchester, a route the agency hopes to resume post-COVID.

Data from the 2019 Indiana Public Transit Annual Report shows the agency had approximately 24,000 boardings in 2019, down from a five-year high of 31,000 in 2016. The agency operated 11 vehicles and had 15 part-time and one full-time employee. The agency's $560,000 annual budget is supported by federal, state, and local sources, as well as a small amount of fare revenue—typical for rural transit agencies.

Not captured by usage and financial information, Director Bev Ferry says Wabash Transit provides an essential service for those who often have no other choice. This includes those who cannot drive, as well as those who do not own a vehicle. The agency's services are necessary for some, particularly seniors, who may no longer be able to drive, yet are still aging in place. This service provides a measure of independence, allowing trips to the grocery, doctor offices, and other destinations. Without this service, Ferry suspects many older residents may need to move out of the area as they would have no other option. Beyond seniors, most riders are those who do not own a car. These include college students needing a ride to get groceries or supplies; those starting their first job—before they arrange to carpool or save up enough to buy a car; and the destitute, needing rides to social services, the foodbank, etc. For this last group, fares for trips to receive social services are generally paid for by private donations and/or social service agencies.

The most critical issue before the transit agency is its difficulty in attracting and retaining dependable and qualified drivers and support staff, particularly those with computer skills. Wage disparity is part of the issue. The agency can only afford to pay about $8 per hour, and most all positions are part-time. Similarly, the agency cannot afford to offer benefits. To the Director's knowledge, the only 5311 agencies which offer benefits are those which are a division of city or county government. Wabash-area governments have tried to help, having gifted several vehicles over the years. While appreciated, it is more beneficial under Federal Transit Agency funding rules to accept equivalent monetary contributions.

Air Travel

Wabash Municipal Airport, also known as Lynch Field, is the primary general aviation airport in the county. While owned by the City, Northern Indiana Aviation, LLC serves as the airports Fixed Base Operator (FBO) and is responsible for day-to-day operations. The airport has two runways, 18-36 at approximately 1,500 feet, and 9-27, which is 4,401 feet long. There are a few hangers for storage, an outdoor area to tie down aircraft, and fuel for sale.

The top challenge for the airport is an insurance regulation—jet owners cannot obtain insurance to cover hangered jets at airports without a runway that is at least 5,001 feet in length. This is an economic development issue as some business owners prefer to locate operations in places where they can fly into town to visit their operations. The closest general aviation airports with runways longer than 5,000 feet are in Huntington (18 miles east), Marion (19.5 miles south-southeast), Kokomo (21.5 miles southwest), Rochester (Fulton County, 28 miles northwest), and Warsaw (35 miles north).

There have been discussions about extending the runway to the west, across S 100 W. If extended, the edge of the runway would be just 125 feet from the closest residential structure along this road, and the homeowners have said they are interested in moving. An extension to the east may also be possible, but could require a portion of S Bailey Road to be closed to traffic.

Walking and Biking

Walking and biking conditions substantially vary around the county. For those who live on rural roads, their high posted speed limits can make it hard to safely share the road with motorists. Aside from those who like to bike on rural roads, conditions are poor for children and many others to walk or bike for recreation on these roads. When considering walking or biking for transportation, the sheer distance between most homes and like destinations—parks, schools, grocery stores—make walking or biking for transportation impractical.

By contrast, conditions in Wabash, North Manchester, and most rural communities are substantially better. Most residential streets have low traffic volumes and vehicle speeds. Many of these streets are nice places to walk or ride one's bike—even when sidewalks are missing or not complete. Beyond walking or biking for recreation in one's neighborhood, the compact and connected development pattern of Wabash and North Manchester in particular make it easy to walk or bike to downtown, city parks and, in some cases, one's primary and secondary schools.

Beyond these general conditions, facilities such as shared-use paths and barriers such as busy roads, railroads, streams, and highways were mapped. These are presented in **Map 4.3 Walking and Biking**.

In Wabash, the Wabash River Trail provides a nice place to walk or bike and parking lots at several of the connected parks allow for those who live further away to drive to the trail, park, and enjoy the amenity. More paths are in the planning stage. In terms of barriers, the most prominent include:

- SR-15, from Harrison Avenue to Wedcor Avenue, a busy stretch of road lacking sidewalks, in an area where low wage employers and apartments are prevalent.
- SR-15/13 from Miami Street (north of Wabash River) to Southwood Drive (SR-13), a busy highway with no sidewalk.

In North Manchester, only one path was located on Blickenstaff Road, between SR-13 and the Timbercrest Senior Living Center—though this does not appear to be an idyllic environment for recreation. Other paths are planned along the Eel River, similar to Wabash's river trail. In terms of barriers, the most substantial include:

- SR-114 between SR-13 and Wabash Road/Railroad tracks, a commercial corridor lacking sidewalks.
- Adequate connection (e.g. sidewalk) between Manchester Elementary School and the rest of North Manchester, northwest of the Eel River.

In terms of longer distance recreational trail facilities, Wabash County does not have a long-distance rail trail or shared-use path corridor. Nearby facilities include the Nickel Plate Trail which connects Kokomo, Peru, and Rochester, and the Sweetser Switch Trail between Converse, Marion, and Jonesboro. There have been some comments made requesting such a facility between Wabash and North Manchester, allowing for better connectivity between the two towns. From downtown to downtown, the distance is approximately 15-½ miles.

Placemaking

A key aspect to placemaking is maximizing the right-of-way to establish authentic, people-oriented places where one wants to live, work, play, and learn.

By far, the strongest examples include downtown Wabash and North Manchester. Both are recognizable places by name and image, in large part to public improvements to the right-of-way. These environments allow most to park once, then comfortably walk to one or more destinations. Improvements in these places are generally made to make pedestrians feel comfortable—pedestrian scale lighting, benches, and other improvements, many with noticeable artistic details which add interest to those strolling around these places. Combined, these aspects help to reinforce each place's identity and make one's experience memorable.

Figure 4-1 – Wabash and Market streets looking northwest, downtown Wabash.

Figure 4-2 – Main Street looking East at Market Street, downtown North Manchester.

The following observations may warrant further action to further improve these spaces.

- Trucks and through traffic in downtown Wabash. While there is an official truck route for SR-15 apart from Market and Canal streets, it is circuitous. Shortening this route's travel time may divert trucks out of downtown, creating a quieter and more pedestrian friendly environment. Re-routing truck and other traffic may allow for some streets to accommodate two-way traffic, if desired.
- Both Wabash and North Manchester appear to have comparably less sidewalk dining activity than similar communities, possibly due to insufficiently wide sidewalks.
- Both downtowns have wide expanses of pavement and prominent on-street parking. While on-street parking is a good and necessary thing, the wide expanses without curb extensions make pedestrian crossings longer than needed. Where present, street trees are small and appear as if they will offer little shade.
- It may be advisable to consider converting North Manchester's pull in angle parking with back-in angled parking—which can be more convenient for those parking and safer for those driving or biking in the street.

In contrast, more recently developed commercial corridors in Wabash and North Manchester are drastically different. These streets were designed for automobile use only, lacking sidewalks or paths to accommodate other users. Adjacent development is low density, has little character. Aside from not satisfying the needs of all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists, Figures 4-3 and 4-4 are nearly indistinguishable from many other places across the nation.

Figure 4-3 – SR-15 or Cass Street, looking northwest approximately 200 feet northwest of Harrison Avenue.

Figure 4-4 – SR-114 or County Road 1200N, looking east from approximately 200 feet east of Colonial Lane.

This is not to say all streets can or should be improved to look like downtown Wabash or North Manchester. Streetscapes and right-of-way improvements should support their context and accommodate the needs of those who are present—not try to make a street something that it is not.

2. HAZARD MITIGATION

In order to promote safety and resiliency, a community's comprehensive plan should work in tandem with its hazard mitigation efforts. This chapter evaluates the primary findings of the 2019 Wabash County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan and identifies other potential hazards that were not included in the latest plan.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Hazardous Materials Incidents were identified as the highest vulnerability in the County.** This was based on factors such as risk probability, magnitude/severity, warning time, and the duration of the incident for each event.

- **Public education and outreach is the County's highest priority mitigation practice.** It meets the criteria of 5 out of the 6 primary mitigation strategies and can apply to all 11 identified hazards.

- **Biological Hazards, including global pandemics, are not addressed in the current MHMP.** These types of hazards follow similar patterns to Natural Hazards.

1. Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Overview

The Wabash County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update replaced the previous plan from 2011. According to FEMA, mitigation efforts are most effective when they are based on an inclusive, comprehensive, long-term plan that is developed before a disaster occurs.

DISASTER LIFE CYCLE

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines the disaster life cycle as the process through which emergency managers respond to disasters when they occur; help people and institutions recover from them; reduce the risk of future losses; and prepare for emergencies and disasters. The disaster life cycle, can be broken down into 4 phases:

1) **Response** - the mobilization of the necessary emergency services and first responders to the disaster area (search and rescue; emergency relief)
2) **Recovery** - to restore the affected area to its previous state (rebuilding destroyed property, re-employment, and the repair of other essential infrastructure)
3) **Mitigation** - to prevent or to reduce the effects of disasters (building codes and zoning, vulnerability analyses, public education)
4) **Preparedness** - planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluation and improvement activities to ensure effective coordination and the enhancement of capabilities (preparedness plans, emergency exercises/training, warning systems)

Figure 4-4 Disaster Life Cycle

PLAN BACKGROUND

The 2019 Wabash County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP) was a multi-jurisdictional planning effort led by the Wabash County Emergency Management Agency (EMA). Plan partners included Wabash County, the Towns of LaFontaine, Lagro, North Manchester, and Roann; and the City of Wabash. The overall goal of the Wabash County MHMP is to reduce the social, physical, and economic losses associated with hazard incidents through emergency services, natural resource protection, prevention, property protection, public information, and structural control mitigation practices.

Communities are required to have a MHMP approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in order to maintain eligibility to various grant funding programs such as the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM), and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA). An adopted MHMP is also crucial for communities looking to access mitigation funds through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

In order to guide the development of the MHMP, a committee that included staff from a variety of local departments and agencies was formed. The planning process also relied on an analysis of existing community plans and other technical reports. There were also opportunities for public engagement.

PLAN STRUCTURE

The 2019 MHMP Update analyzed the same hazards that were reviewed in the 2011 MHMP and the 2014 Indiana MHMP. This included three additional topics that were not included in the 2011 plan (Drought, Extreme Temperature, and Land Subsidence). These were separated into two categories - natural hazards and technological hazards.

Natural Hazards included:

- **Drought** - a moisture deficit extensive enough to have social, environmental, or economic effects.
- **Earthquake** - a sudden, rapid shaking of the earth caused by the breaking and shifting of rock beneath the earth's surface.
- **Extreme Temperature** - a temporary elevation of average daily temperatures that hover 10 degrees or more above the average high temperature for the region for the duration of several weeks.
- **Flood** - a general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation or two or more acres of normally dry land area or of two or more properties from overflow of inland or tidal waters and unusual and rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters from any sources, or a mudflow.
- **Hail / Thunder / Wind**
  - Hail occurs when frozen water droplets form inside a thunderstorm cloud, and then grow into ice formations held aloft by powerful thunderstorm updrafts, and when the weight of the ice formations becomes too heavy, they fall to the ground as hail.
  - Thunderstorms are defined as strong storm systems produced by a cumulonimbus cloud, usually accompanied by thunder, lightning, gusty winds, and heavy rains. Windstorms or high winds can result from thunderstorm inflow and outflow, or downburst winds when the storm cloud collapses, and can result from strong frontal systems, or gradient winds.
  - Windstorms or high winds can result from thunderstorm inflow and outflow, or downburst winds when the storm cloud collapses, and can result from strong frontal systems, or gradient winds.

- **Landslide / Subsidence**
  - The term landslide includes a wide range of ground movement, such as rock falls, deep failure of slopes, and shallow debris flows.
  - Land subsidence, according to the USGS, is "a gradual settling or sudden sinking of the Earth's surface owing to subsurface movement of earth materials".
- **Tornado** - defined as violently rotating columns of air extending from thunderstorms to the ground.
- **Wildfire** - also known as a forest fire, vegetation fire, or a bushfire, is an uncontrolled fire in wildland areas and is often caused by lightning; other common causes are human carelessness and arson.
- **Winter Storm / Ice** - A winter storm can range from moderate snow over a few hours to blizzard conditions with high winds, ice storms, freezing rain or sleet, heavy snowfall with blinding wind-driven snow, and extremely cold temperatures that can last for several days.

Technological Hazards included:

- **Dam Failure** - A dam is defined as a barrier constructed across a watercourse for the purpose of storage, control, or diversion of water. A dam failure is a collapse, breach, or other failure resulting in downstream flooding.
- **Hazardous Material Incident** - Hazardous materials are substances that pose a potential threat to life, health, property, and the environment if they are released. Despite precautions taken to ensure careful handling during manufacture, transport, storage, use, and disposal, accidental releases are bound to occur. Emergency response may require fire, safety/law enforcement, search and rescue, and hazardous materials response units.

A risk assessment was conducted for each hazard to determine the vulnerability of buildings, infrastructure, and people in a community and measure potential loss. Following the methodology laid out in FEMA's 2008 Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning Guidance, the Wabash MHMP identifies the characteristics and potential consequences of hazards, how much of the community may be affected by a hazard, and the impact on community assets.

Hazard were studied using the following criteria:

- **Probability** - defined as the likelihood of the hazard occurring over a given period.
- **Magnitude / Severity** - defined by the extent of the injuries, shutdown of critical infrastructure, the extent of property damage sustained, and the duration of the incident response.
- **Warning Time** - defined as the length of time before the event occurs
- **Duration** - defined as the length of time that the actual event occurs (does not include response or recovery efforts).
- **CPRI Value** -the CRPRI value can be obtained by assigning varying degrees of risk probability, magnitude/severity, warning time, and the duration of the incident for each event, and then calculating as index value based on a weighted scheme.

Table 1: Combined CPRI

Type of Hazard	List of Hazards	Weighted Average CPRI in Wabash County
Natural	Drought	Low ▼ Severe (marker left-center)
	Earthquake	Low ▼ Severe (marker center)
	Extreme Temperature	Low ▼ Severe (marker center)
	Flood	Low ▼ Severe (marker center-right)
	Hail/Thunder/Windstorm	Low ▼ Severe (marker right)
	Landslide/Subsidence	Low ▼ Severe (marker center)
	Tornado	Low ▼ Severe (marker center-right)
	Wildfire	Low ▼ Severe (marker left)
	Winter Storm/Ice	Low ▼ Severe (marker center-right)
Technological	Dam Failure	Low ▼ Severe (marker center)
	Hazardous Materials Incident	Low ▼ Severe (marker far right)

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommended mitigation practices laid out in the 2019 Wabash MHMP were the result of careful evaluation of the existing mitigation practices. The six primary mitigation practices defined by FEMA are:

- **Emergency services - measures that protect people during and after a hazard**
- **Natural resource protection** - opportunities to preserve and restore natural areas and their function to reduce the impact of hazards
- **Prevention** - measures that are designed to keep the problem from occurring or getting worse
- **Property protection** - measures that are used to modify buildings subject to hazard damage rather than to keep the hazard away
- **Public information** - those activities that advise property owners, potential property owners, and visitors about the hazards, ways to protect themselves and their property from the hazards
- **Structural control** - physical measures used to prevent hazards from reaching a property

Proposed recommendations included improvements to the existing practices from the 2011 MHMP, as well as brand new practices that would address unmet needs. New ideas were evaluated using the following criteria:

- **Social** - mitigation projects will have community acceptance, they are compatible with present and future community values, and do not adversely affect one segment of the population
- **Technical** - mitigation project will be technically feasible, reduce losses in the long-term, and will not create more problems than they solve
- **Administrative** - mitigation projects may require additional staff time, alternative sources of funding, and have some maintenance requirements
- **Political** - mitigation projects will have political and public support
- **Legal** - mitigation projects will be implemented through the laws, ordinances, and resolutions that are in place
- **Economic** - mitigation projects can be funded in current or upcoming budget cycles
- **Environmental -** mitigation projects may have negative consequences on environmental assets such as wetlands, threatened or endangered species, or other protected natural resources

A total of eleven proposed mitigation practices were included in the 2019 MHMP. Each practice may align with multiple mitigation strategies and be applicable to a number of different hazards. Additional information related to the local status, local priority, benefit-cost ratio, project location, responsible entity, and potential funding source accompanied each proposed practice.

Table 2: Proposed Mitigation Practice Overview

Mitigation Practice	Related Comprehensive Plan Topics	Mitigation Strategy	Hazards Addressed
Public Education & Outreach	Land Use Public Health & Resiliency Public Facilities & Services	Emergency Services Nat Res Protection Prevention Property Protection Public Information	Drought Earthquake Extreme temperature Flood Hail/Thunder/Wind Landslide/Subsidence Tornado Wildfire Winter Storm/Ice Dam Failure HazMat Incident
Hazardous Materials	Public Health & Resiliency Transportation Public Facilities & Services	Emergency Services Prevention Property Protection	Earthquake Flood Hail/Thunder/Wind Landslide/Subsidence Tornado Wildfire Winter Storm/Ice Dam Failure HazMat Incident
Emergency Preparedness & Warning	Public Facilities & Services Public Health & Resiliency	Emergency Services Nat Res Protection Prevention Property Protection Public Information	Drought Earthquake Extreme temperature Flood Hail/Thunder/Wind Landslide/Subsidence Tornado Wildfire Winter Storm/Ice Dam Failure HazMat Incident
Geographic Information Systems	Land Use Transportation Public Facilities & Services	Emergency Services Nat Res Protection Property Protection Public Information	Drought Earthquake Extreme temperature Flood Hail/Thunder/Wind Landslide/Subsidence Tornado Wildfire Winter Storm/Ice Dam Failure HazMat Incident
Safer Rooms & Community Shelters	Housing	Emergency Services Public Information	Earthquake Extreme temperature

	Public Health & Resiliency Public Facilities & Services	Structural Control	Flood Hail/Thunder/Wind Landslide/Subsidence Tornado Wildfire Winter Storm/Ice Dam Failure HazMat Incident
Power Back-Up Generators	Transportation Public Facilities & Services	Emergency Services Prevention Property Protection	Earthquake Flood Hail/Thunder/Wind Landslide/Subsidence Tornado Wildfire Winter Storm/Ice Dam Failure HazMat Incident
Building Protection	Land Use Public Facilities & Services	Emergency Services Nat Res Protection Prevention Property Protection Public Information Structural Control	Earthquake Flood Wildfire Winter Storm/Ice Dam Failure HazMat Incident
Emergency Response & Recovery	Transportation Public Health & Resiliency Public Facilities & Services	Emergency Services Nat Res Protection Prevention Public Information	Drought Earthquake Extreme temperature Flood Hail/Thunder/Wind Landslide/Subsidence Tornado Wildfire Winter Storm/Ice Dam Failure HazMat Incident
Community Rating System	Land Use Economic Development Housing	Emergency Services Nat Res Protection Prevention Property Protection Public Information Structural Control	Flood
Floodplain Management	Land Use Agriculture Natural Resources Public Facilities & Services	Emergency Services Nat Res Protection Prevention Property Protection Public Information Structural Control	Flood

| Management of High Hazard Dams | Natural Resources

Public Facilities & Services | Emergency Services
Nat Res Protection
Prevention
Property Protection
Public Information | Earthquake
Flood
Landslide/Subsidence
Dam Failure |

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation Plan lays out a framework on how to enact the high priority mitigation practices proposed in the MHMP. The proposed mitigation practices are listed in order of importance to Wabash County for implementation and were categories into High, Moderate, and Low local priorities. High priority projects should be implemented within five years from the adoption of the plan. Moderate projects should have an implementation timeline of five to ten years. Finally, projects with a low local priority designation may be implemented more than ten years from plan adoption.

Mitigation practices may be implemented independently, by the individual NFIP communities, or through local partnerships, depending on the availability of grant opportunities or other fiscal resources. Successful implementation of the MHMP will require the participation and cooperation of all participating communities .

Table 3: Proposed Mitigation Practice Implementation Matrix

Mitigation Practice	Priority	Benefit-Cost Ratio	Funding Source
Public Education & Outreach	High	High	Existing Budget
Hazardous Materials	High	Moderate	Existing Budget
Emergency Preparedness & Warning	High (*CERT, warning sirens*) Moderate (*COAD, mobile message boards, weather radios*)	High	Existing Budget Grants
Geographic Information Systems	High (*address verification*) Moderate (*dry hydrant layer, training*)	Low	Existing Budget
Safer Rooms & Community Shelters	High (*harden public facilities*)	High	Existing Budget

	Low (*incentives, advertisement, recreational and mobile home parks*)		Facility owners
Power Back-Up Generators	High (*generators*) Low(f*uel reserve, fuel route, wind, or solar generators*)	Low	Existing Budget Grant
Building Protection	High (*protect existing critical facilities, dry hydrants, fire equipment*) Moderate (*existing, non-residential, non-critical*) Low (*inertial valves, at-risk structures*)	Moderate	Grant Existing Budget
Emergency Response & Recovery	High (*data terminals, evacuations, water rescue team*) Moderate (*immunizations, record-keeping, sand bagging equipment, snow routes, snow equipment*) Low (*reciprocal agreements, new EOC*)	Moderate	Existing Budget Grant
Community Rating System	Moderate	Moderate	Existing Budget
Floodplain Management	Moderate	Moderate	Existing Budget Grant
Management of High Hazard Dams	Low	Moderate	Existing Budget

2. Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Evaluation

A key component to the overall success of Wabash's MHMP is the need to constantly monitor, evaluate, and update the contents of the plan. While the 2019 MHMP provided several important updates that were not present in the 2011 version, recent events prove there are still additional hazard topics that should be considered moving forward.

CONNECTIONS TO A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A key component of ongoing implementation will be incorporating the MHMP's recommendations into existing planning documents and ordinances. Necessary modifications will be proposed to be made to each NFIP communities' planning documents and ordinances during the regularly scheduled update. This applies to comprehensive planning efforts that may go on to inform updated zoning ordinances, floodplain management ordinances, building codes, site development regulations, or permits. Potential modifications may include discussions related to hazardous material facility buffers, floodplain areas, and discouraging development of new critical infrastructure in known hazard areas.

BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

Widespread biological hazards such as the COVID-19 pandemic follow a disaster life cycle pattern that mimics other natural disasters. Because of this, the County should look to prepare for these incidents in a similar manner.

The COVID-19 pandemic originated in China in the winter of 2019. As of Quarter 1, 2021, COVID has infected more than 80 million people worldwide and has led to at least 1.7 million deaths[5]. Classified as a novel coronavirus, this infectious disease is transmitted mainly through the exposure of respiratory droplets. The first reported cases in the United States were noted by public health agencies in January 2020. While major metros such as New York City and Seattle were impacted during the initial surge, COVID eventually made its way from the coasts to the interior of the country causing subsequent surges in the South and the Midwest.

The State of Indiana did not receive its first confirmed COVID case until March 6, 2020. Indiana's first reported death due to COVID followed several days later on March 16th. By the end of March 2020, the United States became the hardest hit country with more reported cases than any other country at the time. Indiana's positive cases showed gradual growth during the summer before rapidly escalating throughout the fall and into the winter. As of March 2021, Indiana has experienced 662,750 total positive cases and 12,192 deaths.

According to Indiana's COVID-19 Dashboard, Wabash County has 3,314 reported cases and 76 deaths as of March 2021. The County reported its first positive case in early April 2020, a little over a month after Indiana's first confirmed case. While rural counties such as Wabash have much lower overall cases of COVID, they have higher cases per 100,000 residents than the more populous counties such as Marion or Lake. This demonstrates that high rates of infection can still occur in places that lack urban or suburban density. Similarly to the state, Wabash experienced its highest positivity rates during late November 2020.

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[5] https://www.nytimes.com/article/coronavirus-timeline.html
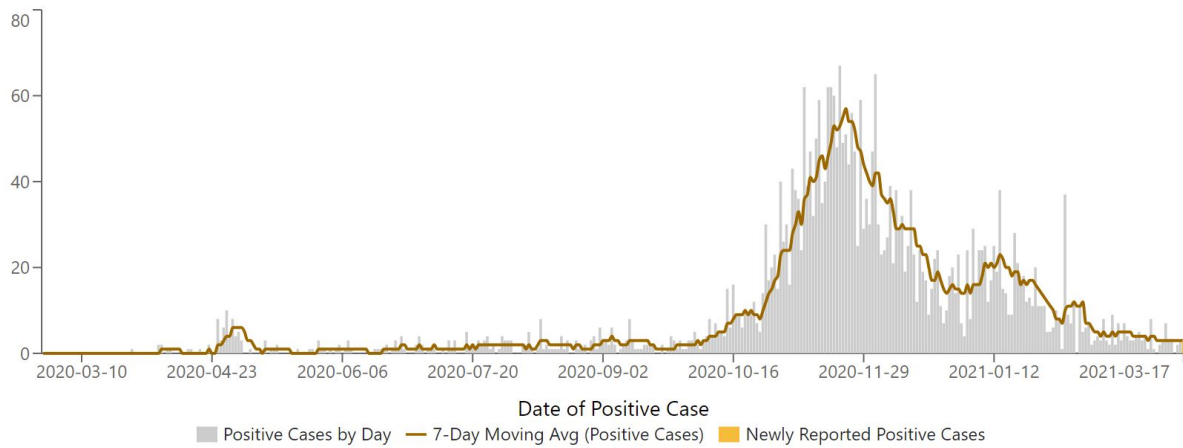
Wabash County Positive Cases by Day ⓘ

Figure 4-5: Wabash County Profile - Indiana COVID 19 Dashboard

Wabash County has a total ICU capacity of 317 beds and a total ventilator capacity of 269. The County saw its highest ICU beds usage by COVID patients in December 2020 (46.6%). The County almost exhausted all of its ICU capacity in early August, but 82.2% of the beds were taken by non-COVID patients. Throughout the pandemic, Wabash County has maintained wide availability of its supply of ventilators and has never fallen below 50%. The County should continue to be mindful of its capacity, especially as new variants of COVID continue to surface.

ADDITIONAL TECHNOLOGICAL HAZARDS

A technological threat that is becoming more prevalent are ransomware attacks. Ransomware is a form of malicious software used by cyber actors that targets data and systems for extortion. While not an area that is typically included in mitigation plans, ransomware is the fastest growing malware threat that targets a wide spectrum of users including organizations, businesses, and local government entities of all sizes. These types of incidents can have severe impacts related to critical infrastructure and data privacy.

In July 2019, government officials in La Porte County, IN were hit by a ransomware attack that disabled their computer network, website, and email service systems. La Porte eventually agreed to pay $130,000 in bitcoin to regain access. While local municipalities are a preferred target for cyber criminals, their focus has also expanded to education and healthcare.

The Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) works to maintain awareness of these kinds of attacks and associated tactics, techniques, and procedures across the country. At the state level, the Indiana Cyber Security Hub provides an assessment tool as well as best practices, standards, and resources for local governments.

3. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The Public Facilities and Services chapter takes inventory of the different utility services, facilities, and infrastructure that are currently provided by the City of Wabash, the Towns of North Manchester, LaFontaine, Lagro, and Roann, and the unincorporated areas in Wabash County.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Approximately one-third of residents lack access to high-speed internet.** Fiber optic internet is limited within the County; only the City of Wabash and the Town of North Manchester have access to fiber.

- **Improving Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) is an area of focus.** Wabash and North Manchester both have Long-Term Control Plans related to their stormwater and sanitary systems.

- **Septic system monitoring and maintenance in the unincorporated portions of the county are necessary to protect and improve water quality.** Failures of the residential septic systems, especially in clusters, are deleterious to surface and groundwater quality. These systems are prevalent outside of the water and sewer service areas and there have been recent, notable failures.

1. State of Indiana Overview

This section describes how municipal service is provided in Indiana and identifies some of the key state government agencies that regulate these utilities.

INDIANA STATUTE OVERVIEW

Indiana law allows municipalities to establish and regulate utility service to the public. These types of services may include water, power, gas, wastewater, and sewer. Indiana's statutes apply to all providers whether they are the state, county, city, or private companies. Rates and charges of most municipal utilities in Indiana are set at the local government level.

487 water, electric and natural gas utilities are owned and operated by city and town governments in Indiana. 449 of these utilities (92 percent) have withdrawn from Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) jurisdiction over their rates, charges and finances as allowed by state law.

INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) is an administrative agency that hears evidence in cases filed before it and makes decisions based on the evidence presented in those cases. An advocate of neither the public nor the utilities, the Commission is required by state statute to make decisions in the public interest to ensure the utilities provide safe and reliable service at just and reasonable rates.

The Commission regulates electric, natural gas, steam, water, and wastewater utilities that may be investor-owned, municipal, not-for-profit, or cooperative utilities, or operate as water conservancy districts. The Commission's authority over municipal wastewater utilities is limited to petitions and disputes regarding rates and charges. Under state law, municipal sewer utilities are exempt from IURC jurisdiction.

Indiana statutes allow municipal utilities, not-for-profit corporations, and electric companies to remove themselves from certain aspects of the Commission's authority (such as rates and charges) by ordinance of

the local governing body or by a majority vote of the people in the municipalities and services territories for customers outside of the municipal corporate boundaries.

INDIANA OFFICE OF UTILITY CONSUMER COUNSELOR

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) is one of the oldest state agencies of its type and seeks to give all Indiana consumers a voice when decisions are made that could affect utility rates and services. The OUCC represents the interests of residential, commercial, and industrial utility customers in cases before the IURC, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and the Indiana Court of Appeals and Indiana Supreme Court.

2. City of Wabash

This section provides an overview of the services and facilities provided by the City of Wabash.

WASTEWATER PLANT

The City of Wabash operates a Class III activated sludge facility. This wastewater plant utilizes mechanical bar screens, submersible pumps, oxidation ditches, circular clarifiers, and ultra-violet disinfection to treat wastewater before it is discharged back to the Wabash River. The facility is rated at 4 MGPD (million gallons per day) and has a peak flow rate of 10 MGPD for 1 hour. The facility has a sustainable flow treatment of 7 MGPD during wet weather events.

The Wabash Wastewater Plant removes biosolids through aerated primary digesters. They are then recirculated between digestion and thickening tanks (stabilization) until final storage at the final aerated digesters. The biosolids remain here until the solids are sent to the facility's 10 reed beds where they stay continually stabilizing for as long as 12 years.

The facility is staffed by 5 state licensed wastewater operators, an operator in training (OIT), 2 billing clerks, and an office manager.

Figure 4-6: City of Wabash Sewage Plant

STORMWATER

Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) are an early form of infrastructure in which both stormwater runoff and untreated wastewater flow through the same pipes. In dry weather, all wastewater is transported directly to the treatment plant; when wastewater volume exceeds capacity, however, the excess wastewater overflows into nearby natural waterbodies, carrying toxins and contaminants. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management now require municipalities with CSOs to adopt mitigation strategies to comply with the Clean Water Act and to improve water quality.

The City of Wabash is currently implementing its Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan. Once all 4 phases are complete (by 2025), Wabash's stormwater infrastructure will be reduced to 20-30% CSO.

FIBER

Wabash is one of only two communities in the County with access to fiber optic internet. Fiber is provided by Metronet Holdings, LLC with rates starting at $49.95/month and covering 67% of the county. All other broadband access utilizes asymmetric digital subscriber line (ADSL), cable, fixed wireless, or satellite.

FIRE

The City of Wabash Fire Department employs 31 staff, most of whom are firefighter / paramedics and EMTs. The department operates out of two stations – the North Station on N. Wabash St, and the South Station on Vernon St.

POLICE

The City of Wabash operates a Police Department with 29 staff.

SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

The City of Wabash contracts with Republic Services to provide curbside trash service to its residents.

3. Town of North Manchester

This section provides an overview of the services and facilities provided by the Town of North Manchester.

NORTH MANCHESTER MUNICIPAL WATER

North Manchester sources its water from 5 wells in 2 different aquifers that is then pumped to the water treatment plant. The system has a capacity of 1.8 MGPD and an average daily consumption of 1.0 MGPD. The water undergoes multiple treatment processes including aeration and filtration to remove iron and disease-causing bacteria. The North Manchester Water Department routinely monitors for substances in the drinking water according to all Federal and State laws.

WATERWATER PLANT

North Manchester operates a conventional activated sludge plant to treat around 250 million gallons annually of wastewater. Current treatment at the wastewater plant produces 99% BOD removal, 98% Ammonia removal, and 97% total solids removal on a daily basis. The treated water is then returned to the Eel River. Around 120 dry tons of biosolids are produced by the facility annually and utilized by local farmland to replenish nutrients in the soil.

The wastewater facility has a team of 6 individuals who manage the town's wastewater treatment plant, collection system, and stormwater system. This team performs various tasks including laboratory analysis, maintenance of equipment, grounds keeping, sewer cleaning, catch basin cleaning, locating utilities, etc.

STORMWATER / SANITARY SEWER

The Town's sewer system is a combined storm/sanitary system with over 28 miles of sanitary and 12 miles of storm pipe. The sanitary system covers 100% of the community and has an average daily load of 950,000 - 1.0 MGPD and an overall capacity of 1.25 MGPD. The stormwater system covers 60% of the community.

North Manchester's Long Term Control Plan seeks to reduce and/or eliminate all wet weather Combined Sewer Overflows through several projects to meet EPA water quality standards.

FIBER

North Manchester is the second community in Wabash County that has access to fiber optic internet. Fiber providers include Frontier Communications Corporation and Metronet Holdings, LLC. Similarly to the City of Wabash, other broadband access relies on asymmetric digital subscriber line (ADSL), cable, fixed wireless, or satellite.

FIRE

The North Manchester Fire Department provides fire protection, emergency medical first response, fire prevention and education, and other services to the community. The department employs three full-time drivers and relies on 25 volunteer firefighters. Seven volunteers also serve part-time as relief drivers.

POLICE

The North Manchester Police Department has 11 full-time offers and also coordinates a Police Reserve unit.

Manchester University's Office of University Safety consists of 7 full-time officers and 4 part-time officers.

SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

The Town of North Manchester provides its residents with weekly curbside trash service and bi-weekly recycling through cooperation with Republic Services.

4. Towns of LaFontaine, Lagro, and Roann

This section provides an overview of the services provided by the Towns of LaFontaine, Lagro, and Roann.

LAFONTAINE

The Town of LaFontaine operates a waterworks and sewer works utility for the benefit of ratepayers located within the Town as well as the surrounding areas. Residents can start or stop water, wastewater, sanitation and stormwater services by visiting the LaFontaine Town Hall. The LaFontaine – Liberty Township Volunteer Fire Department provides fire protection services. Police services are provided by a Town Marshal and the Wabash County Sheriff's Department.

LAGRO

The Town of Lagro provides the following utility services to their residents: water, wastewater and sanitation. Lagro's utility superintendent is housed within the public works department. The Lincolnville – Lagro Township Volunteer Fire Department provides fire protection services.

ROANN

The Town of Roann's municipal water distribution system is operated by Roann Water Utility. Wastewater in the community is handled by Roann's Municipal Sewage Works. The Roann Volunteer Fire Department provides fire protection services, and the Town Marshal's office provides police and safety services.

5. Unincorporated Communities and Countywide Services

This section provides an overview of the services provided to the County at large and to unincorporated communities like Liberty Mills, Urbana, Ijamsville, Servia and others.

FIRE

The unincorporated areas of Wabash County are served by volunteer fire departments in a number of townships. In addition to the fire departments associated with the cities and towns listed above, the following departments operate throughout the county:

- Chester Township Fire Department
- Noble Township Fire Department
- Pleasant Township Fire Department
- Urbana Community Volunteer Fire Department

POLICE

The Wabash County Sheriff's Department provides police and safety services to unincorporated areas of the county. The department has 14 employees.

INTERNET

Internet access in the County is better and more concentrated in the larger communities. Whereas most households in the City of Wabash and the Town of North Manchester have more than three options for internet service providers, many households in the County have only one or two choices and others have none. Fiber and high-speed technology are less available in the unincorporated areas of the County, and approximately 4,000 people do not have access to any wired internet. Countywide, approximately 10,000 people do not have access to download speeds of at least 25 megabits per second (Mbps);[6] this means that one-third of the County lacks high-speed internet, or broadband, as defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

The Wabash County Solid Waste Management District offers a variety of solid waste management and recycling services to all residents in Wabash County. Residents may drop off recyclable materials and hazardous waste to the site located on Manchester Avenue in Wabash.

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Unincorporated portions of the county utilize well and septic systems for water and waste handling. These systems are appropriate in more rural areas with limited density and/or service coverage from municipal sources. Residential wells tap into the groundwater aquifer and pump potable water into the residence for use. These are typically bored, driven or drilled
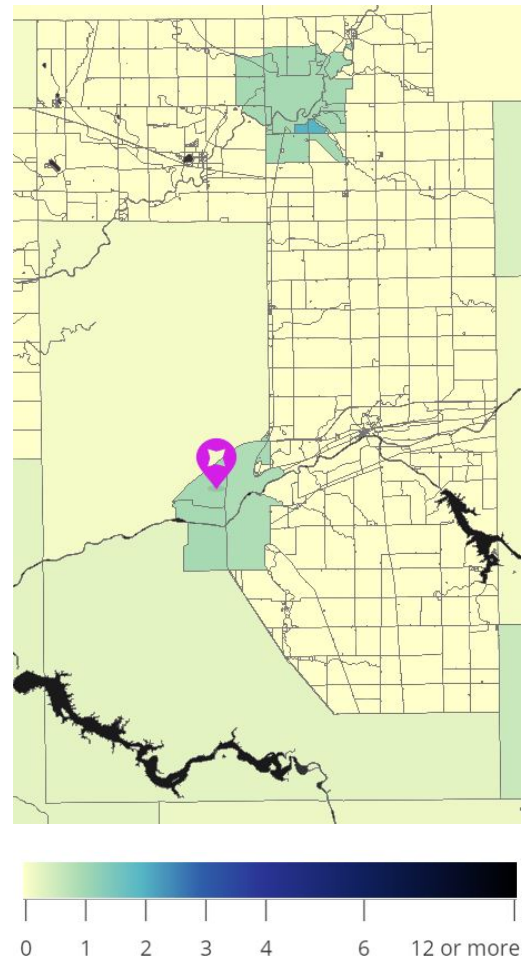
Figure 4-7: Number of Fiber Internet Providers in Wabash County

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[6] https://broadbandnow.com/Indiana/North-Manchester

based on the underlying substrate. The location of wells is important especially when household water system is paired with on-site wastewater treatment provided by a septic tank and leach field.

A septic system provides an on-site alternative to wastewater and is common for residential properties that are built outside of a sewer service area. These systems treat wastewater and effluent using a tank (septic tank) and leach field. "Leaching" is a slow process where effluent is further treated as it permeates the surrounding soil. Soil types determine where such a system can be safely installed, and siting should follow a site review, soil evaluation, and permeability tests. Additionally, septic systems are not static and require ongoing maintenance. This includes periodic pumping of the tank, rotating the leach field, and general inspections of the supportive systems. These systems can easily fail without regular maintenance or based on in-proper siting / installation.

Septic failures, especially those happening in a cluster, can impact water quality both at the surface and in the groundwater aquifer. Monitoring and maintenance are paramount especially in areas with older, clustered housing.

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

WHITLEY COUNTY

MIAMI COUNTY

HUNTINGTON COUNTY

GRANT COUNTY

LIBERTY MILLS

NORTH MANCHESTER

LAKETON

IJAMSVILLE

SERVIA

ROANN

URBANA

LAGRO

RICHVALLEY

WABASH

WABASH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

LA FONTAINE

EEL RIVER

WABASH RIVER

SALAMONIE LAKE

MISSISSINEWA LAKE
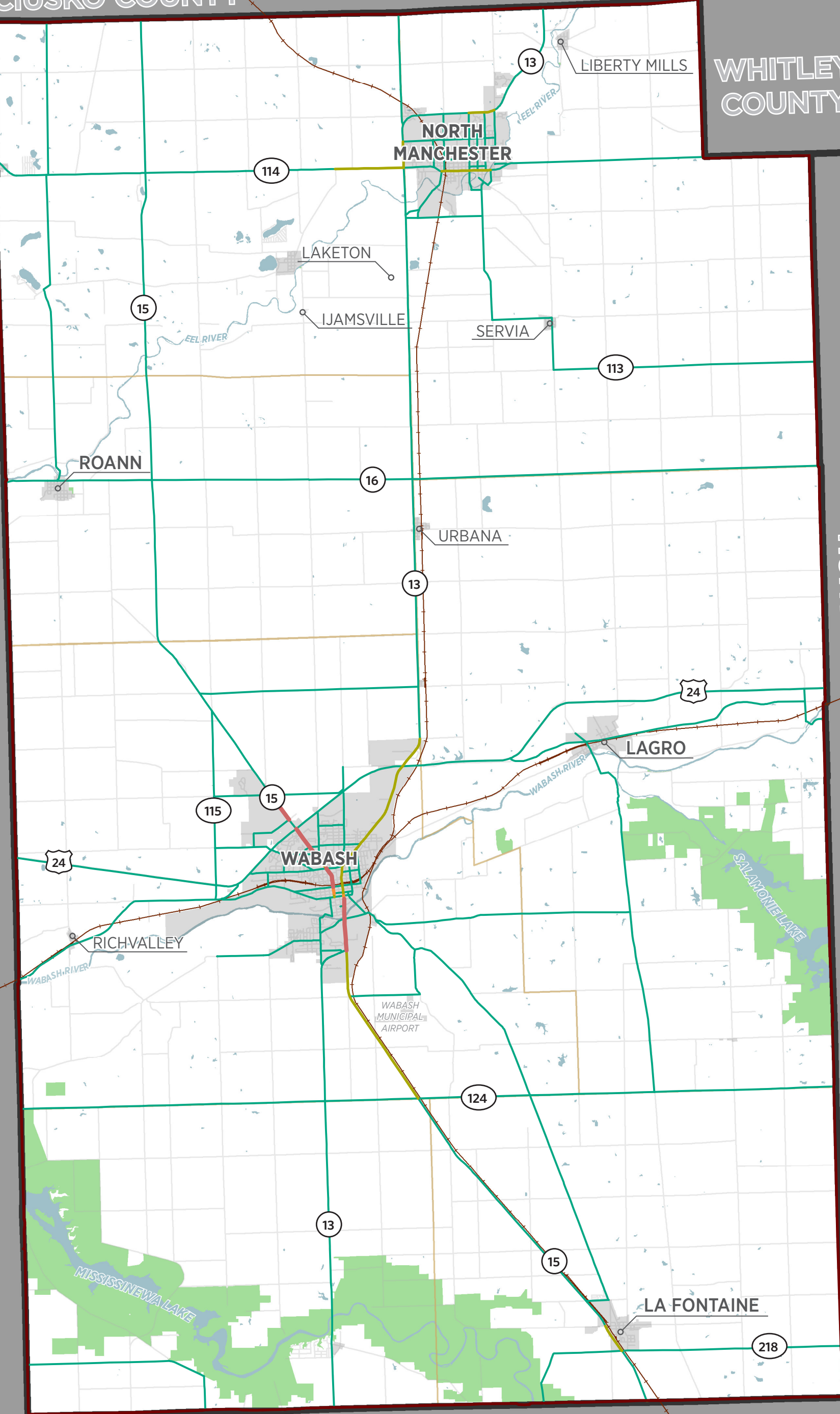
IMAGINE ONE 85

MAP 4.1 CORRIDOR TRAFFIC
COUNTYWIDE VIEW

— LOS C or Better
— LOS D
— LOS E
— LOS F

24 US Highway
13 State Highway
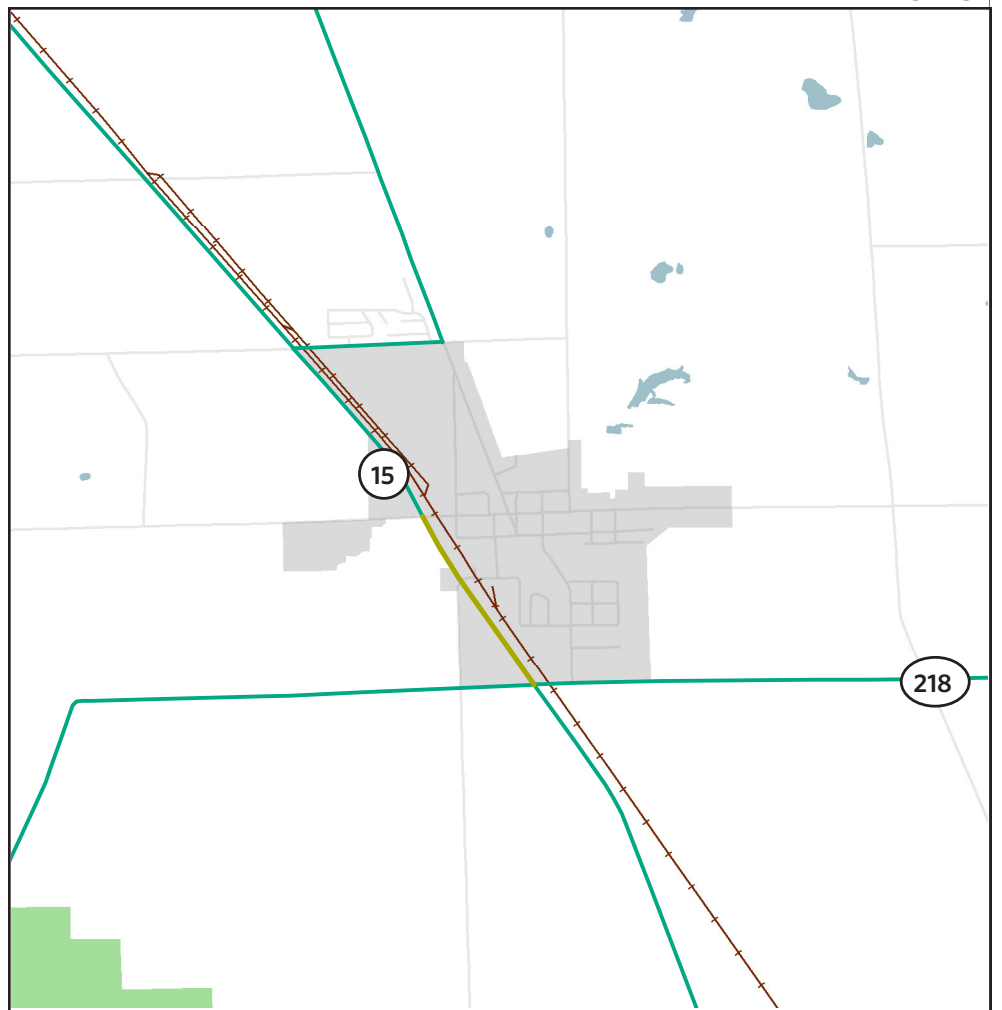⬚ Wabash County
⬚ Counties

+++ Railroad
⬚ Water

NORTH MANCHESTER

ROANN

WABASH

WABASH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT
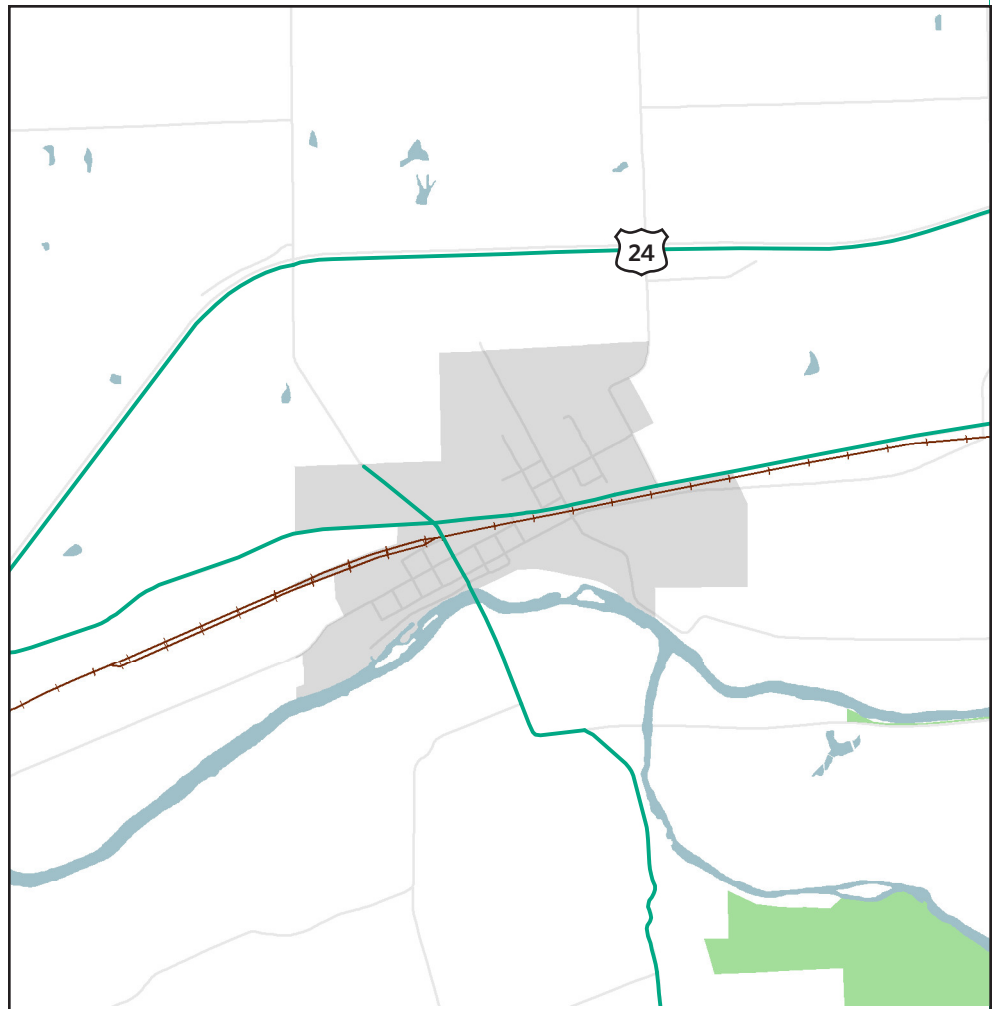
LAGRO

LA FONTAINE

IMAGINE ONE 85

MAP 4.1 CORRIDOR TRAFFIC
COMMUNITY VIEW

— LOS C or Better
— LOS D
— LOS E
— LOS F

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

WHITLEY COUNTY

LIBERTY MILLS

13

NORTH MANCHESTER

114

LAKETON

15

IJAMSVILLE

SERVIA

113

EEL RIVER

ROANN

16

URBANA

13

24

MIAMI COUNTY

HUNTINGTON COUNTY

LAGRO

WABASH RIVER

115

15

WABASH

24

RICHVALLEY

WABASH RIVER

SALAMONIE LAKE

WABASH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

124

13

15

MISSISSINEWA LAKE

LA FONTAINE

218

GRANT COUNTY
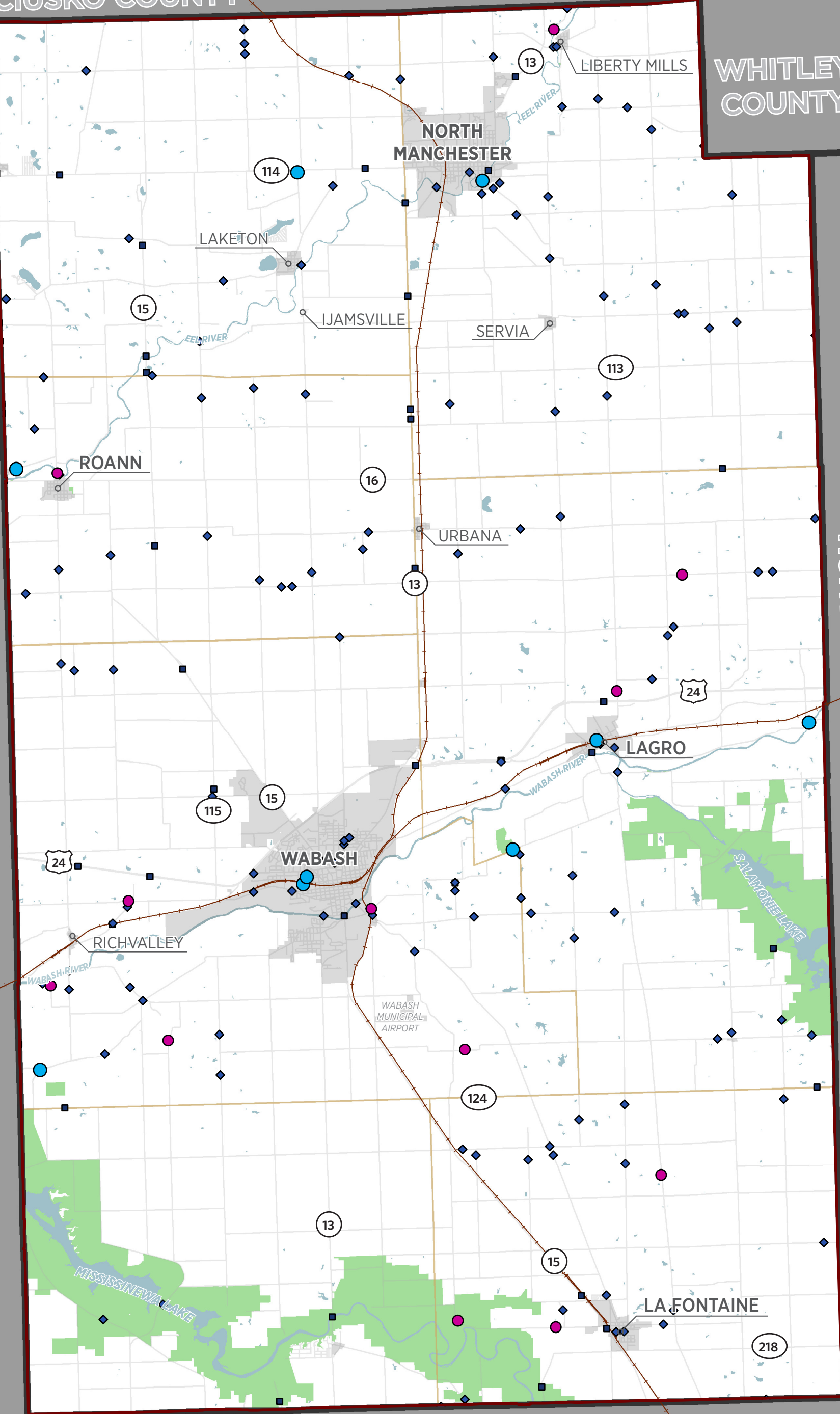
IMAGINE ONE 85

MAP 4.2 BRIDGE CONDITIONS
COUNTYWIDE VIEW

○ Functionally Obsolete

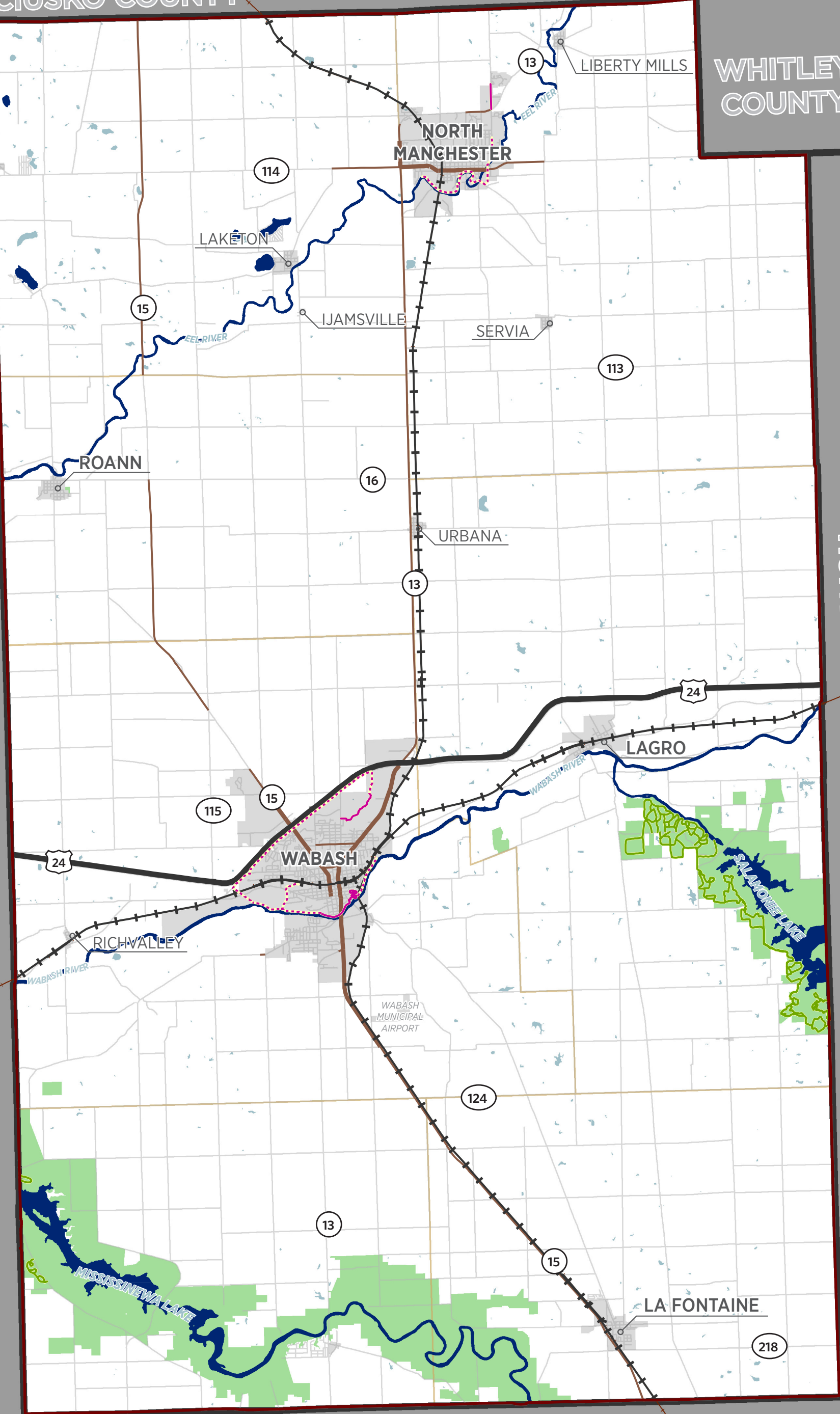● Structurally Deficient

◆ Acceptable

■ Unknown/INDOT Owned

24 US Highway

13 State Highway

▭ Wabash County

▭ Counties

+ Railroad

▨ Water
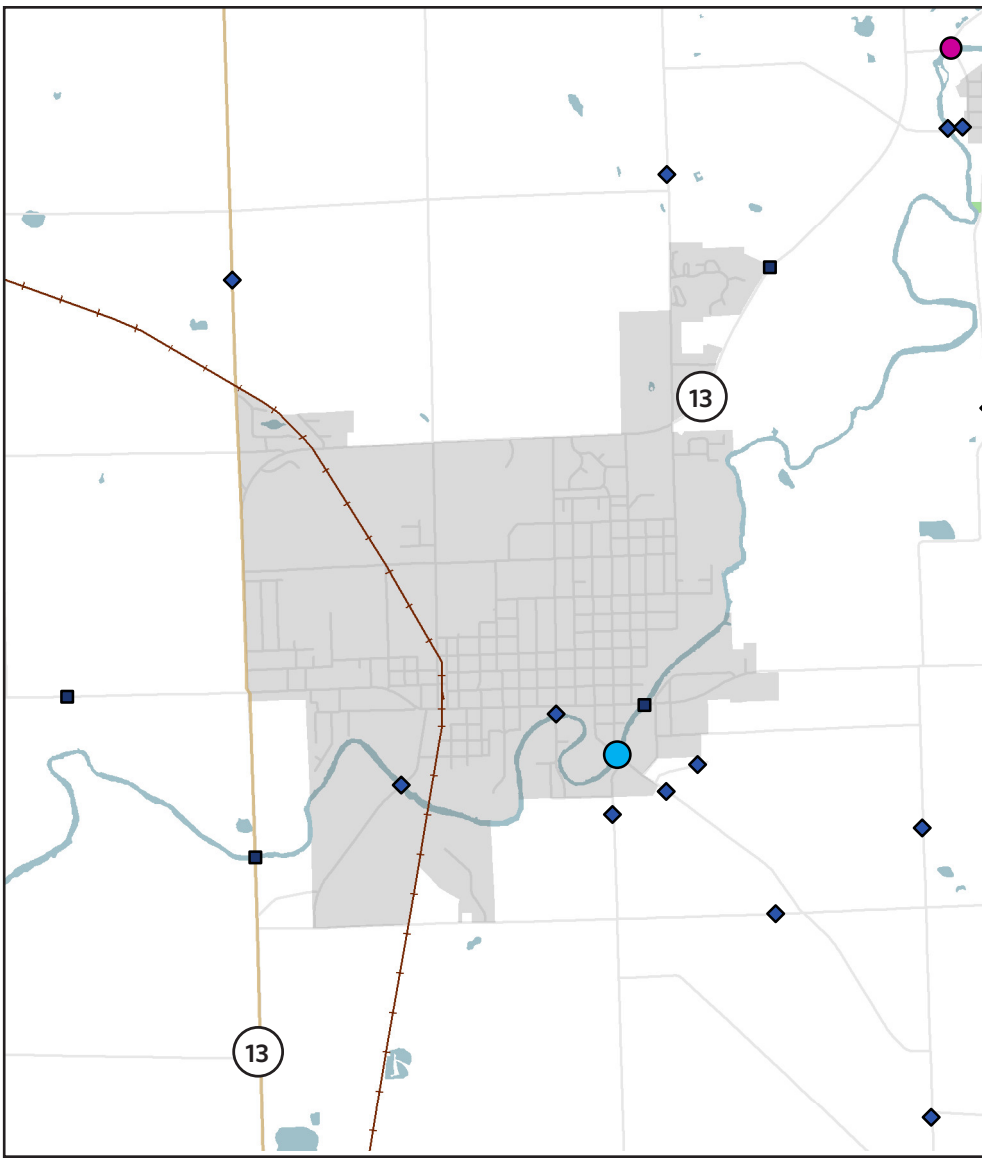
NORTH MANCHESTER
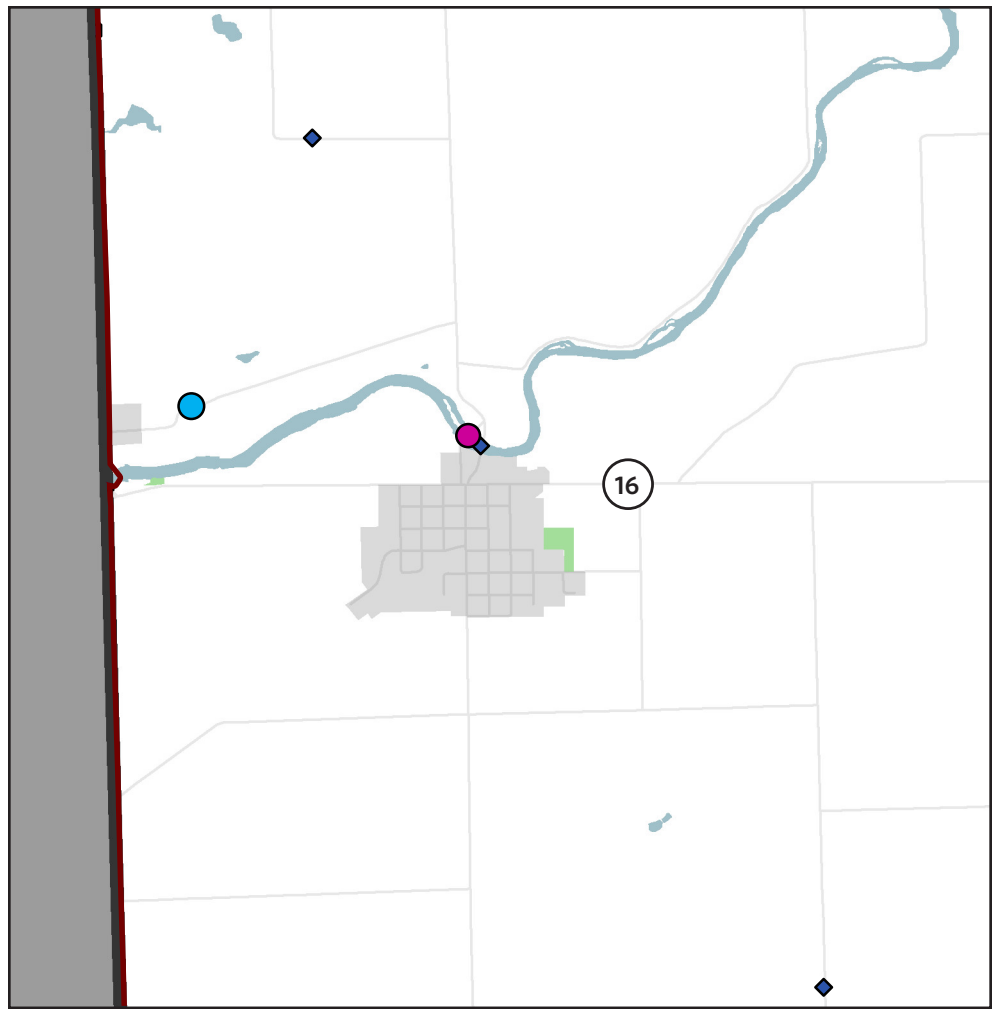
ROANN
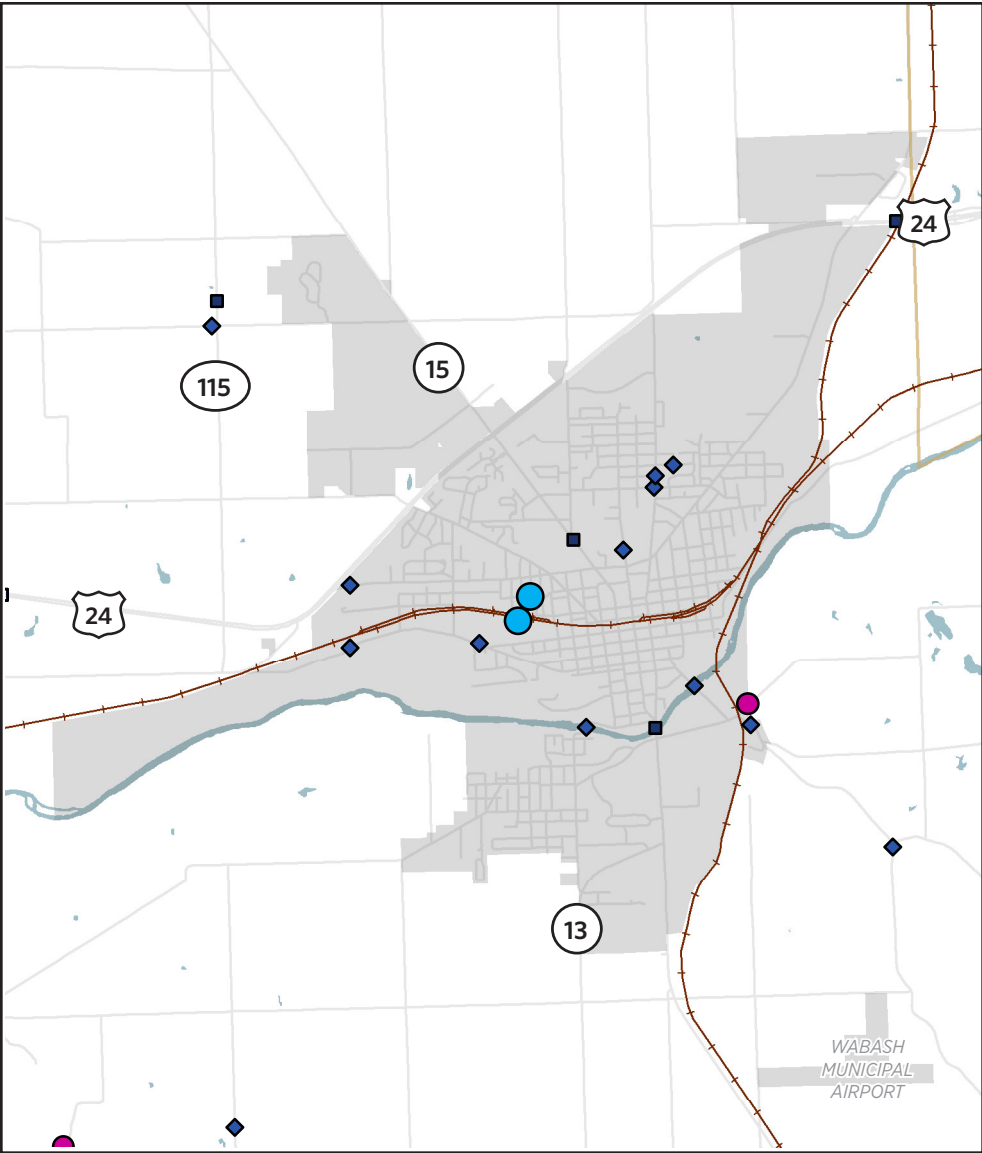
WABASH
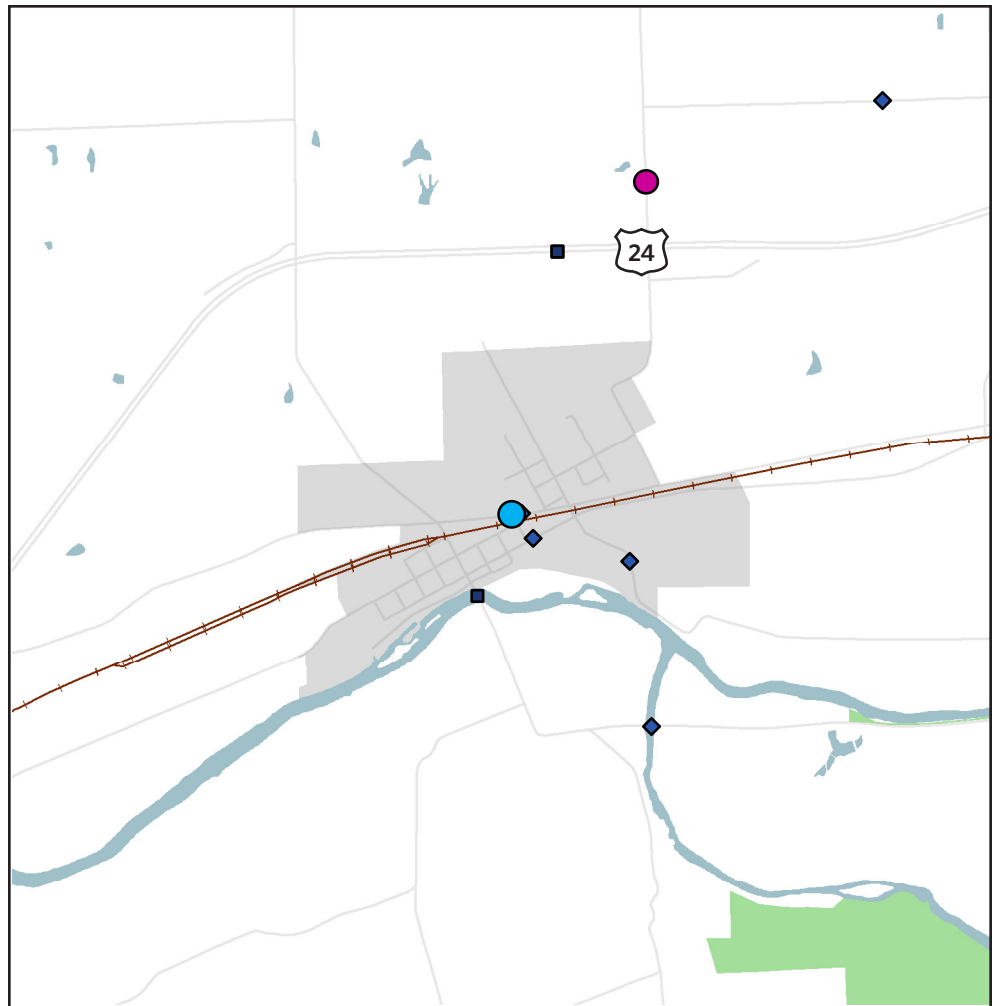
LAGRO
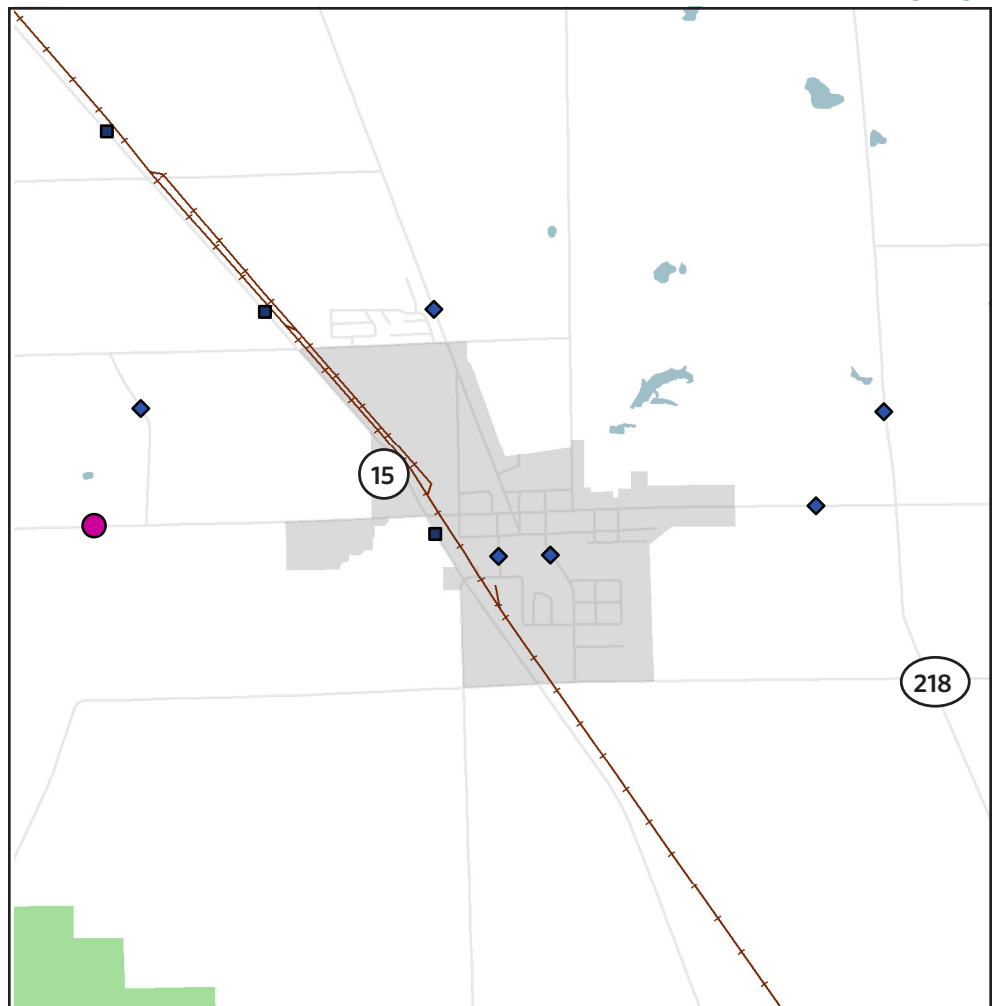
LA FONTAINE

IMAGINE ONE 85

MAP 4.2 BRIDGE CONDITIONS
COMMUNITY VIEW

- Functionally Obsolete
- Structurally Deficient
- Acceptable
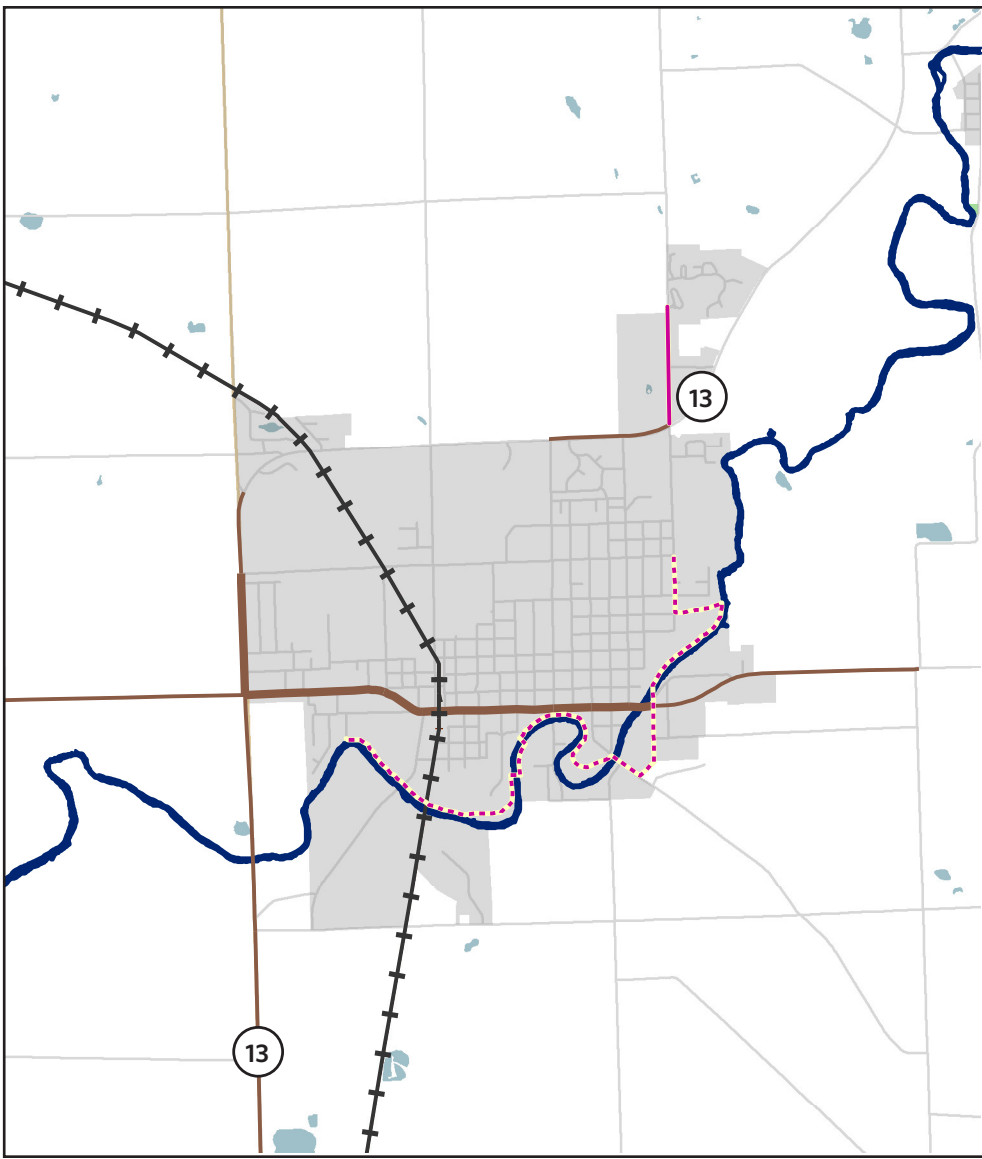- Unknown/INDOT Owned

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

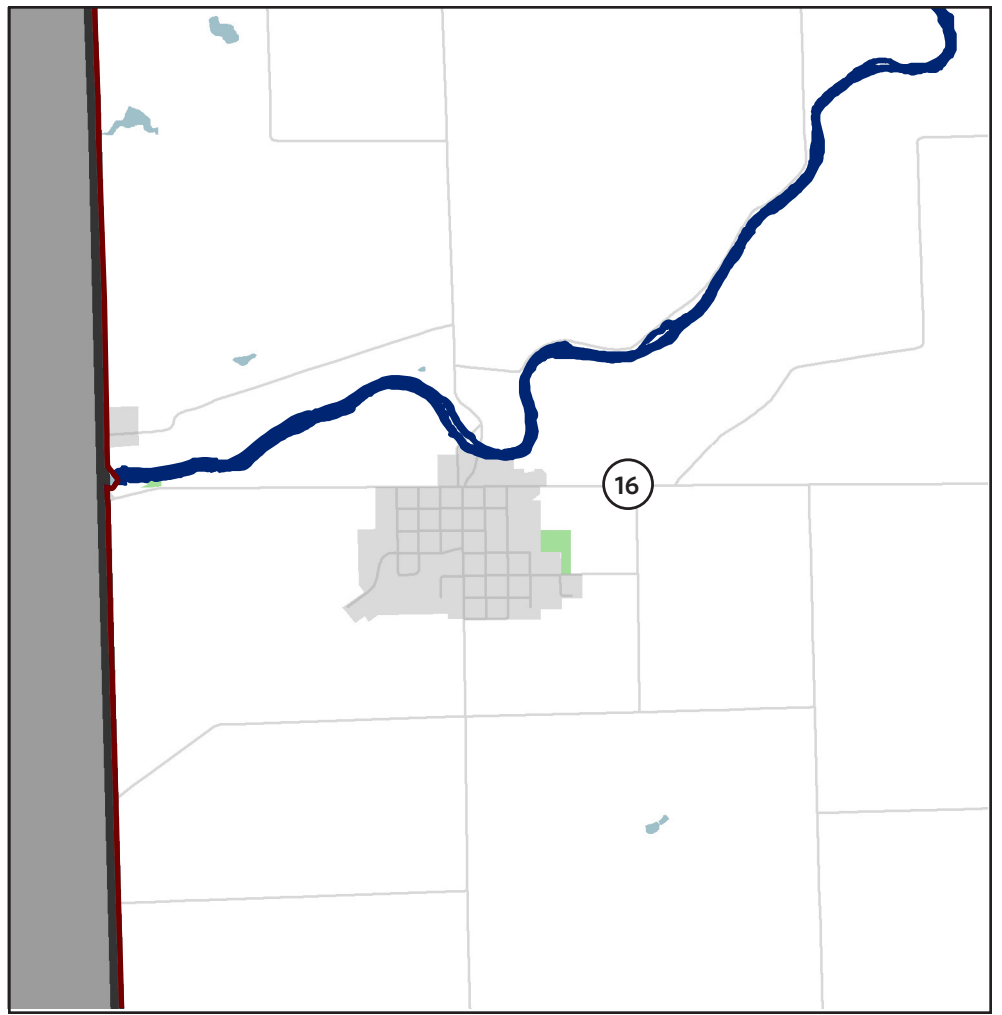WHITLEY COUNTY

MIAMI COUNTY

HUNTINGTON COUNTY

GRANT COUNTY

LIBERTY MILLS

13

NORTH MANCHESTER

114

LAKETON

15

IJAMSVILLE

SERVIA

113

ROANN

16

URBANA

13

24

LAGRO

15

115

WABASH

RICH VALLEY

WABASH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

124

SALAMONIE LAKE

13

15

LA FONTAINE

218

MISSISSINEWA LAKE

EEL RIVER

WABASH RIVER

IMAGINE ONE 85

MAP 4.3 WALKING AND BIKING
COUNTYWIDE VIEW

Shared-Use Trails
Shared-Use Trails (Planned)
Park Trails
Water

Park Trails (Planned)
Limited Access
Railroads

Moderately Busy Street
Very Busy Street
Neighborhood Street

24 US Highway
13 State Highway
Wabash County
Counties

NORTH MANCHESTER

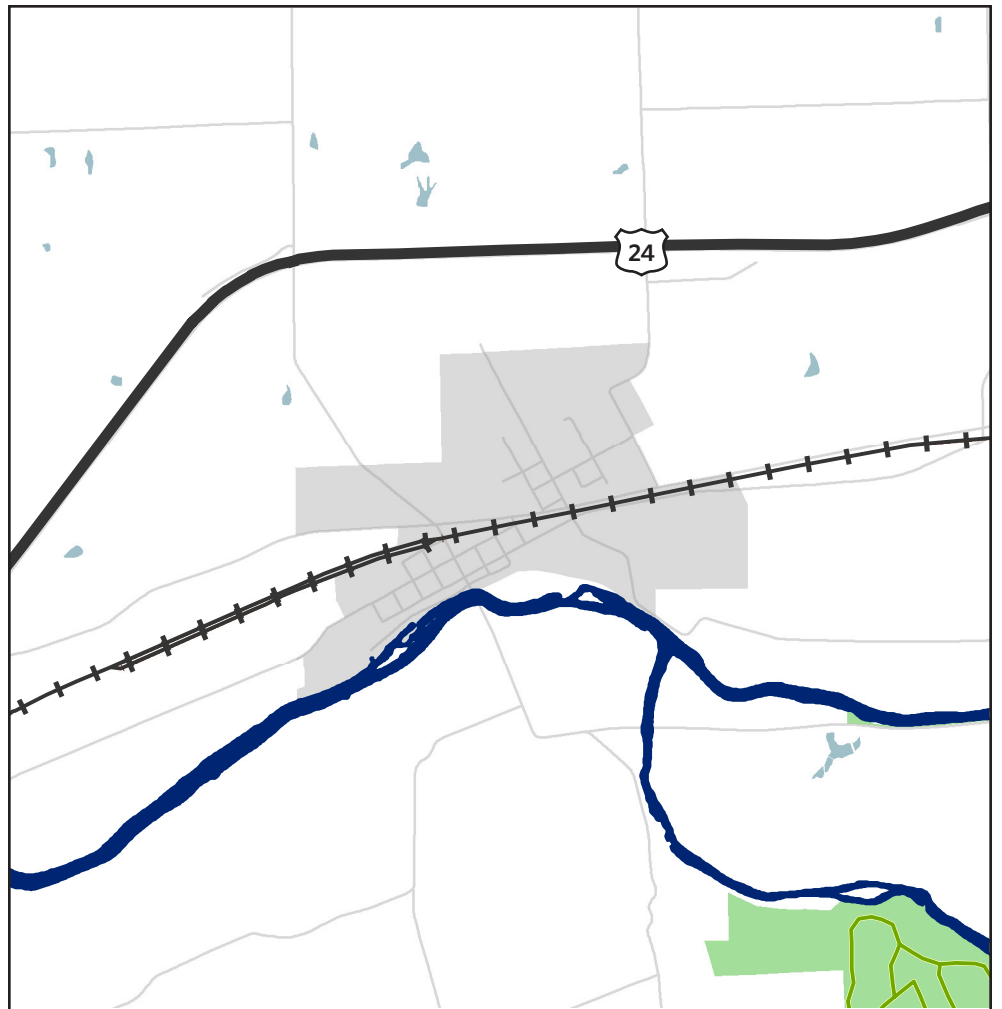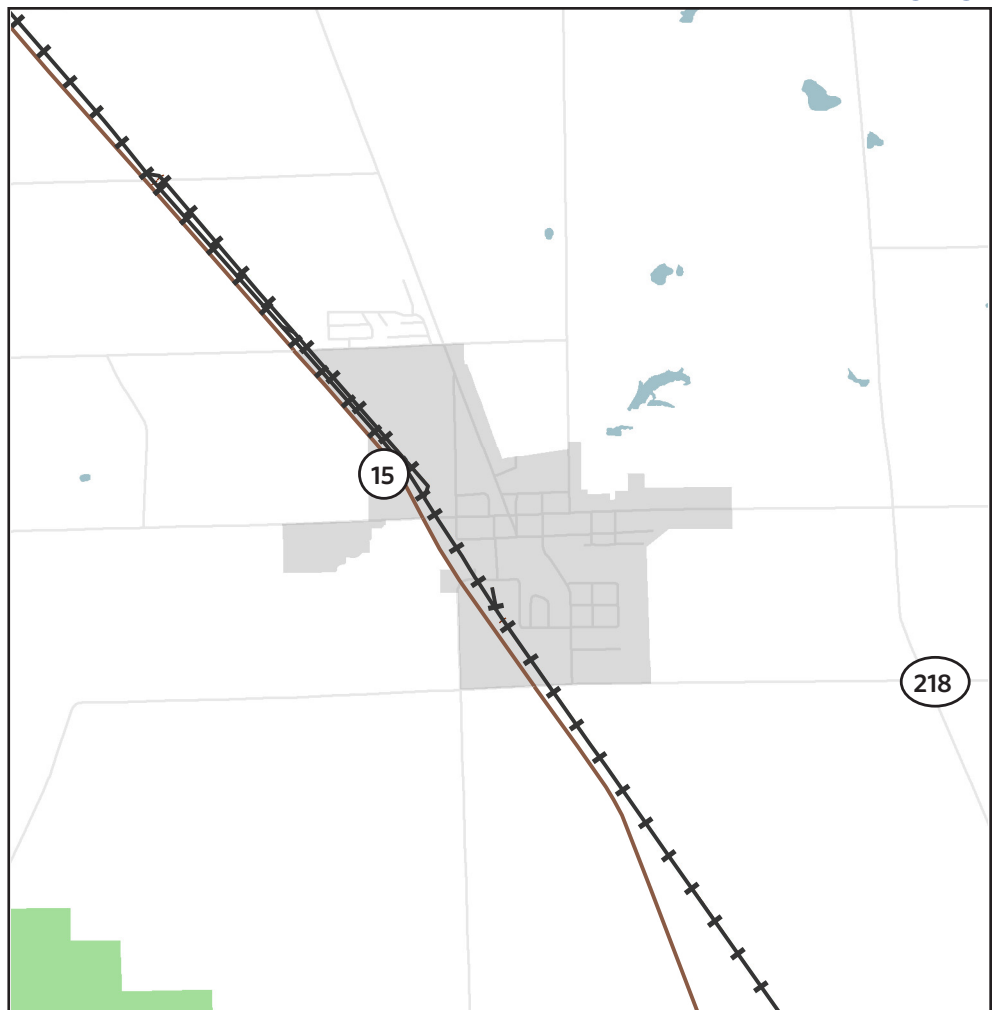**ROANN**

WABASH

LAGRO

IMAGINE ONE 85

MAP 4.3 WALKING AND BIKING
COMMUNITY VIEW

Parks and Trails

— Shared-Use Trails

⋯ Shared-Use Trails (Planned)

— Park Trails

‒ ‒ Park Trails (Planned)

— Neighborhood Street

Barriers

— Moderately Busy Street

— Very Busy Street

▬ Water

▬ Limited Access

╬ Railroads

LA FONTAINE