

HENDRICKS COUNTY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Hendricks County Comprehensive Plan would not have been possible without the input, feedback, and expertise of the project steering committee, county leadership, and staff. We would also like to give a special thank you to the many residents who participated in the planning process and shared their time and ideas for the future of Hendricks County.

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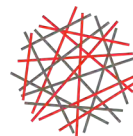
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



MANAGING GROWTH

Hendricks County has experienced sustained growth and development to remain one of the fastest growing counties in Indiana for the past two decades. The community has a rich agricultural history and farming continues to be a major component of the Hendricks County economy and community character. As residential and industrial development continues westward, Hendricks County wishes to identify appropriate growth areas, support small towns, and largely preserve the remaining areas of the county for agriculture use and open space.

Growth in Avon, Brownsburg, and Plainfield has brought new amenities, retail businesses, and employment to the region, but also caused worries in rural areas of the community. Proximity to employment hubs, access to major transportation routes, and development around I-70 and I-74 has also increased these worries, as development pressure is no longer limited to existing municipalities.

Hendricks County is now in a position where responding to the increasing demand for new services and development must coexist with the preservation of farmland and small town culture. This plan strives to achieve that goal and create a guide for community leadership, businesses, non-profits, and residents to rely on when faced with critical decisions about future growth, development, and preservation.

WHAT IS THE HENDRICKS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Hendricks County Comprehensive Plan is a long-range guide to development, preservation, and community building efforts. It will be used by county staff, elected leaders, and appointed officials as they make decisions regarding future county investments and review potential projects on private properties across unincorporated Hendricks County and the communities of Amo, Coatesville, North Salem, and Stilesville. The plan is based on community input and reflects the vision and goals of Hendricks County residents, business owners, and local leaders expressed through the planning process.

PROCESS

The Hendricks County Comprehensive Plan was developed from a foundation of community participation, analytical research, and knowledge from county leadership, staff, and other stakeholders. The process was guided by a project steering committee that included elected and appointed leaders, county staff, residents, business owners, and representatives from many community organizations. The plan's creation took place over a 18-month period from June 2023 to November 2024 and included multiple opportunities for residents to directly engage in the process and inform plan recommendations. Engagement activities included in-person workshops and open houses, online surveys, an interactive mapping tool, and participation at the Hendricks County Fair.

PLANNING AREA

This plan addresses all unincorporated areas of Hendricks County as well as the incorporated towns that are part of the Hendricks County Area Plan Commission. This includes the towns of Amo, Coatesville, North Salem, and Stilesville. The remaining incorporated towns in Hendricks County (Avon, Brownsburg, Clayton, Danville, Lizton, Pittsboro, and Plainfield) each have their own planning and zoning jurisdiction that aligns with municipal limits. These communities were included in the planning process and will have a part in many plan recommendations, but are outside of the specific area covered by the comprehensive plan.



Participants at the plan's first public workshop.

CAST A VISION

April (2023) - June

- Steering Committee Organization
- Initial Coordination Visit
- Data Collection & Demographic Profile
- Steering Committee Workshop #1

FORM THE PLAN

September - February

- Existing Conditions Report
- Steering Committee Workshop #2
- Steering Committee Workshop #3
- Big Ideas Open House
- Steering Committee Workshop #4

REACH A CONSENSUS

June - August

- Project Website
- In-person Public Workshop #1 & #2
- Online Public Workshop
- Focus Group/Stakeholder Interviews
- Pop-Up Event at County Fair
- Public Participation Report

PLAN REVIEW & ADOPTION

February - January (2025)

- Action Plan
- Steering Committee Workshop #5
- Draft Comprehensive Plan
- Public Draft & Presentation
- Final Draft
- Adoption Meetings

Planning Process & Timeline.

HENDRICKS COUNTY'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Hendricks County will continue to thoughtfully manage growth, support our vibrant towns, and protect our valuable farmlands and open spaces. By preserving our rural community character and using growth as a means to continue quality of life investments, we will ensure our residents and businesses are healthy and thriving.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The plan is organized into 13 chapters, identifying the opportunities and issues that will influence Hendricks County over the next 10 to 20 years and describing a path forward to better the county and many communities included within. The chapters are:

01 Executive Summary: This chapter introduces the purpose and process of the comprehensive plan, why it needed to be updated, how it is organized, and the key themes that emerged from the planning process.

02 Introduction & Process: The Introduction chapter describes what a comprehensive plan is and how it is used, state code requirements for comprehensive plans, and additional details about the planning process.

03 Background: The Background chapter summarizes current conditions and demographic, housing, and employment trends for Hendricks County.

04 Implementation: The Implementation chapter focuses on how to use and update the comprehensive plan, as well as key initiatives and critical next steps to help implement plan recommendations.

05 Land Use: The Land Use chapter outlines strategies to achieve Hendricks County's goals for future development and preservation. It includes the Future Land Use Map and future land use classifications.



View of the Vandalia Trail in Coatesville.

06 Transportation: The Transportation chapter includes recommendations to ensure a safe and efficient transportation network that serves county residents and businesses. It also emphasizes the need for collaboration between Hendricks County, incorporated towns, and the Indiana Department of Transportation.

07 Infrastructure: The Infrastructure chapter outlines strategies and policies needed to appropriately manage and serve growth in desired areas.

08 Housing: The Housing chapter includes recommendations on how and where to promote residential development with the goal of diversifying housing opportunities across the county.

09 Agriculture: The Agriculture chapter promotes land stewardship and the preservation of large agriculture tracts to ensure the long-term sustainability of agriculture in Hendricks County.

10 Quality of Place: The Quality of Place chapter identifies strategies to expand parks and trails across Hendricks County and better promote and protect the history and culture of the community.

11 Economic Development: The Economic Development chapter focuses on readying the next group of employment sites for development and expanding partnerships between educational institutions, employers, and other organizations related to workforce development.

12 Government: The Government chapter details recommendations to improve communications across Hendricks County and ensure public services are expanded in conjunction with new development.

13 Natural Resources: The Natural Resources chapter outlines strategies to protect more open space in Hendricks County.

14 Conclusion: The plan concludes with a note on the future of Hendricks County and the important work ahead to implement the recommendations of the comprehensive plan.

KEY THEMES

Several themes were repeatedly identified over the course of the planning process. These key themes cross several plan topics, relate to many plan goals, and represent some of the critical next steps in creating a work plan to implement the recommendations of the comprehensive plan. Implementation of these projects and initiatives will be dependent on several factors including county capacity and resources, private sector investment, and state and regional partner support.

Managing Growth

The most consistent theme throughout the planning process was the need to properly manage growth and future development. This aligns with years of past planning efforts and the title of the previous comprehensive plan “Growing Smarter.” Growth in Hendricks County should occur where it will be served by municipal or regional utility districts and in a coordinated pattern around existing towns and development centers.

Balancing Quality and Affordability

The cost of housing, both new construction and existing stock, has increased significantly in recent years. Factors contributing to the increased prices of new housing are rising land, material, and labor costs. At the same time, new development must contribute to community character and the cost of growth can't come at the expense of existing residents and businesses. Hendricks County must support new housing that contributes to community character while ensuring development standards and processes don't unnecessarily add to housing cost.

Improving the Transportation Network

Concerns about the transportation network were a common theme expressed during the planning process. This included issues with the existing roadway network and concerns about future congestion as additional growth occurs. It will be critical that County leadership and staff continue efforts to collaborate with town officials, adjacent counties, and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) on projects addressing safety concerns, making key connections to major destinations, and protecting key thoroughfare corridors used by residents and businesses.

Increasing Communication

People are changing how they receive and share information. Challenges faced by local newspapers are not unique to Hendricks County as the number of newspapers and newspaper journalists declines across the country. Hendricks County must actively work to fill this void and increase communication efforts with residents and businesses. Beyond sharing information and promoting transparency in local government, the county must also increase communication and collaboration with town governments to ensure coordinated planning and efficient resource use.

Sustaining Business Attraction

Hendricks County wants to keep attracting jobs. As commercial and industrial development have occurred, the number of potential employment sites has decreased. The county and associated towns must prepare to serve the next group of employment sites with transportation and utility infrastructure so that Hendricks County stays competitive from an economic development standpoint and can attract the types of jobs desired by the community.



Construction of the current Hendricks County Courthouse in Danville began in 1912 and was completed in 1914.



02

INTRODUCTION & PROCESS



WHY WE HAVE A PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is a guiding document used by elected officials and community leaders to establish a long-range vision for Hendricks County. As a statement of official policy, comprehensive plans are important tools that should be used to inform land use, infrastructure, and other community development decisions while providing the policy basis for zoning regulations and other construction and development standards. Existing conditions research and analysis, including a profile of community demographics and economics, helped lay the foundation for the goals, strategies, and action items outlined in the plan. Community stakeholders were asked to provide input to inform development of the plan and ensure the needs of residents are met.

Indiana Code requires that comprehensive plans must contain:

- A statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction.
- A statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction.
- A statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.

WHY IS A NEW PLAN NEEDED?

- The previous Hendricks County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2006.
 - Many of the goals and recommendations in that plan have been accomplished.
 - The county has experienced sustained growth since that time and the plan needs to reflect these changes.
 - There are continued internal and external factors creating growth pressure and impacting Hendricks County's built and natural environments.
 - County leaders want to ensure the plan vision reflects the goals of current residents and results in development that meets community expectations.
 - The planning process can be used to educate and engage the next group of community leaders.
-

A comprehensive plan is intended to serve as a long-range guiding document for a community based on demographic, economic, and development trends. To ensure a plan continues to align with the needs of residents, businesses, and community leaders, the goals and strategies within a comprehensive plan should be reviewed annually and updated every five to ten years. Annual reviews should include the same groups that helped form the Hendricks County Comprehensive Plan, as many of the strategies within the document rely on coordination with those groups to ensure successful implementation. The updating process should always remain transparent and open to community involvement.



The Hendricks Comprehensive Plan drew on the knowledge and expertise of residents, businesses owners, and community leadership during its creation.



Hendricks County's shifting populations and market needs can be seen through old commercial structures and historic sites within the county.

History & Setting

Hendricks County is located west of Marion County/Indianapolis, forming the suburban boundary for Indiana's largest metropolitan region. The county was formed in 1824, growing initially from migrants from states on the east coast and large Quaker populations. Growth continued as a result of the Cumberland Road (National Road) and Indianapolis/Terre Haute Railroad (Vandalia Line) crossing through the county. These transportation corridors brought new residents, workers, and industries to the primarily agricultural region. Several other rail lines were built in the following years, causing a boom in livestock trading and shipping across the Midwest. Although many immigrants left Indianapolis in the early 1800s for Hendricks County due to quality farming conditions, the trend changed later in the century when manufacturing jobs became more abundant and higher paying.

Over the decades, Hendricks County has changed from a rural, agriculturally based community to an ever-growing suburban region. As housing tracts became more common after WWII in the eastern areas of the county and major highways formed better connections with regional destinations, the county experienced major population growth which continues to this day. Today, Hendricks County has become the premier location for logistics and transportation-based industries with access to interstates, the Indianapolis International Airport, and national rail lines. As employment focused industries continue to find their way to the community and new residents migrate to the region, Hendricks County will need to maintain strategic planning efforts to accommodate rapid growth. This plan is a direct result of the quickly changing demographics and socioeconomic conditions within the community.

Planning Process

This updated guide for development and growth was built on a foundation past planning initiative success, renewed public engagement and support, and direction gained from community leadership. The plan's creation took place over a 16-month period that included multiple public engagement opportunities targeting elected officials, local businesses, utility providers, community organizations, county and town staff, and Hendricks County residents who wished to provide their input and feedback. Input from the community was used to develop the goals and strategies present within this document, as well as future mapping and other long-term initiatives developed for individual towns or the county as a whole. The project was split into four distinct phases, each with unique purposes and deliverables.

Cast a Vision: The initial phase of the project included several administrative tasks and data collection. Coordination with county staff was important to determine the location of future meetings and determine how to reach the public most effectively. Broad demographic and socioeconomic data was analyzed during this phase to begin understanding existing strengths and identifying potential challenges the county has faced over the last decade.

Reach a Consensus: This phase held the majority of community outreach, ranging from steering committee meetings to public workshops and online activities for residents. The goal of this phase was not only to collect as much information from residents and community stakeholders as possible, but to use each engagement opportunity to market the project and build support for the final document.

Form the Plan: The largest phase during the creation of the Hendricks County Comprehensive Plan contained drafting the document and its key strategies, working sessions with county staff, and multiple meetings with the project steering committee to ensure the plan was headed in the correct direction.

Plan View & Adoption: The final months of the process included working through the plan's strategic action steps as well as amendments needed to finalize the Hendricks County Comprehensive Plan. This included the public draft document and public presentation, as well as the adoption meetings with the Hendricks County Area Planning Commission and County Commissioners.



The project steering committee met multiple times during the plan's creation to review public feedback and provide guidance on the plans creation.



Stakeholder meetings invited utility groups, municipality leadership, non-profit organizations, business owners, and others to hold round-table discussions.

Public Input Overview

Early phases of community engagement and input during the update of the Hendricks County Comprehensive Plan were crucial in directing development of the plan's recommendations and strategies. Early input helped highlight areas of consensus as well as topics that needed to be explored in more detail, ultimately ensuring the needs and desires of residents align with the vision of leadership and elected officials. Aligning the multitude of interests within the county began with a series of engagement opportunities that gathered feedback on existing opportunities and issues, current planning efforts, big ideas from residents and community leaders, and general conversations about how the county has managed growth in the past. Early community engagement methods included the first steering committee meeting, a pop-up event at the county fair, two in-person community workshops, ten separate stakeholder meetings, and an online workshop.

Project Steering Committee: The project steering committee is a dedicated group of individuals made up of residents, business owners, local elected officials, and members of countywide government organizations. The steering committee was tasked with meeting multiple times over the course of the plan's creation, initially providing their thoughts on the region's future challenges and vision for growth, and later providing feedback on the draft strategies and projects within the plan. The group also held duties outside the planned meetings, such as helping to advertise community engagement events and being champions of the plan in their communities.

Key Stakeholder Meetings: A series of ten stakeholder meetings were held across two days in August 2023 to discuss recent trends and anticipated opportunities with county leaders and subject matter experts. Participants included those involved with local utilities, transportation infrastructure, economic development, and real estate, as well as business owners, local leadership, and property owners. While each meeting was loosely organized around a specific group, the conversations all revolved around how new growth and development should fit into the county's desire to retain rural character and manage growth from the east while increasing quality of life for all residents. There were 57 participants in total present for the initial meetings, with individuals who were unable to attend following up with the consulting team in the following weeks.

Staff Working Sessions: Throughout the entire planning process Hendricks County planning staff provided feedback and direction on the document's organization and subject matter to ensure it aligned with the community's vision of growth. These sessions typically focused on potential challenges brought up during other public engagement where strong group consensus wasn't achieved.

Community Workshops: In-person engagement opportunities allow participants to interact and create a dialog with community leaders, county staff, steering committee members, and other residents. Two public workshops, held at separate locations, were held in July 2023 inviting residents, business owners, and other interested parties to share their thoughts on Hendricks County's current strengths, future challenges, and goals for growth and development. The meetings were held in an open house style, allowing for people to come and go at times convenient for them, and included several facilitated exercises for participants to complete. These activities ranged from identifying existing assets and challenges on large aerial maps to identifying what types of development should be encouraged in the county.

Public Open House: The final community-wide in-person engagement opportunity took place in November 2023 at the Hendricks County Government Center and was attended by over 50 residents. Those attending the open house were presented with the draft goals and strategies for the plan, developed from past public engagement and conversations with the project steering committee. Participants were asked to vote on what they believed Hendricks County should prioritize in the future and make comments for potential edits as necessary. The meeting boards also displayed key issues that had been brought up in previous steering committee and staff meetings that needed additional public input and feedback before final decisions were reached. These largely focused on growth boundaries and how to address new development in more rural areas of the county



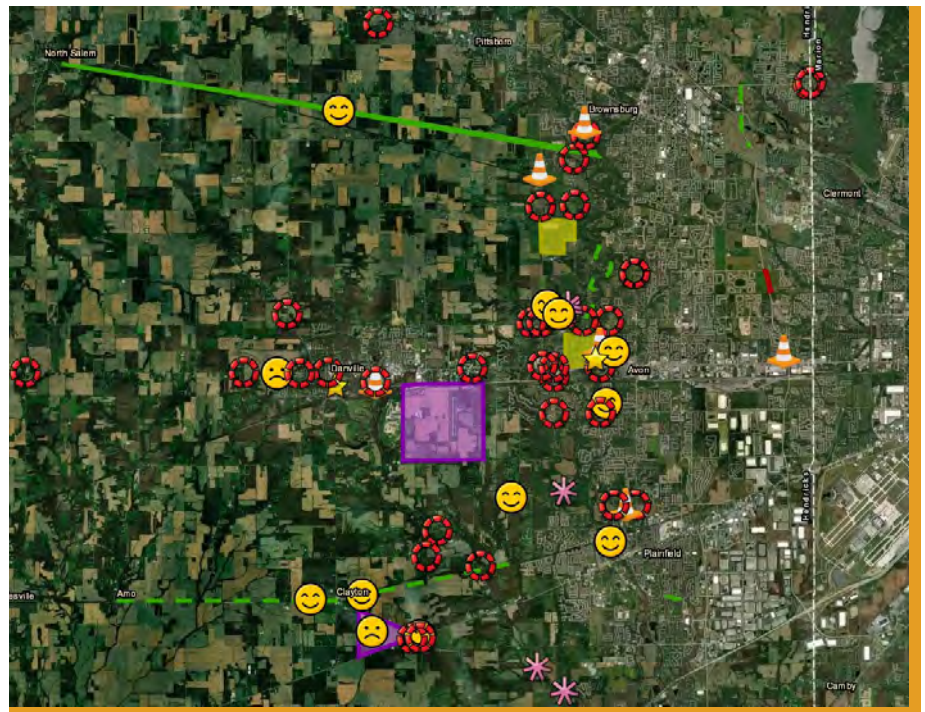
Discussion future opportunities at a Community Workshop at Washington Township Park.



Residents participating in the Public Open House at the Hendricks County Government Center.

Online Workshop: The online workshop provided the opportunity for community members to anonymously voice their concerns and desires for the county’s future and allowed participation from individuals who were unable to attend in-person meetings. The initial online workshop was launched in early July 2023 and remained open through November 2023, it consisted of a survey and interactive map. The survey asked similar questions to what was presented in the public workshop, such as the county’s strengths and weaknesses, what type of development is needed in Hendricks County, where new growth should occur, and what community amenities were missing or needed. There were over 250 respondents on the first survey. The interactive map allowed participants to comment on specific geographies of the county and place markers that signified areas for potential growth, dangerous intersections and roadways, traffic congestion, points of interest, and more. As of June 2024, the interactive map had nearly 100 unique features and over 400 comments, likes, and dislikes.

In the later stages of the project a new survey was posted to the project website reflecting questions and activities presented at the Public Open House. The purpose of the second survey was to gather consensus for prioritization of the plan’s draft goals and strategies, and to ask respondents to help address key issues the steering committee needed further guidance on before making final decisions. The open house survey was opened December 2023 and closed April 2024. The online interactive map was left open for the majority of the planning timeline and closed alongside the open house survey, although other project website updates still occurred.



Hendricks County residents were able to use an online mapping tool to provide input into the comprehensive planning process.



BACKGROUND



HOW WE ARE CHANGING

Hendricks County is undergoing rapid change. Development pressures from the Indianapolis metropolitan region combined with the desire for rural lifestyles and new housing have shifted the county's demographics and socioeconomic conditions over the last two decades. This data and community input were used as the foundation for the plan's goals and actionable strategies.

This document also builds on the success of the county's previous comprehensive plan adopted in 2006, *Growing Smarter*. This plan focused on balanced growth management, enhancing and celebrating neighborhood uniqueness, and building physical and social connections across the community. While the document laid a strong road map for Hendricks County leadership, higher than predicted rates of development necessitated the need for an updated vision.

Demographics for Hendricks County were benchmarked against other, similarly positioned communities across the state to see how Hendricks County is performing. The comparison communities within the following tables were selected based on similar population size and geographic location, as all selected counties are adjacent to major metropolitan areas in Indiana.

WHERE IS HENDRICKS COUNTY TODAY?

Through strong management of growth, Hendricks County will maintain its traditional identity while enhancing its vital, progressive, and dynamic community.

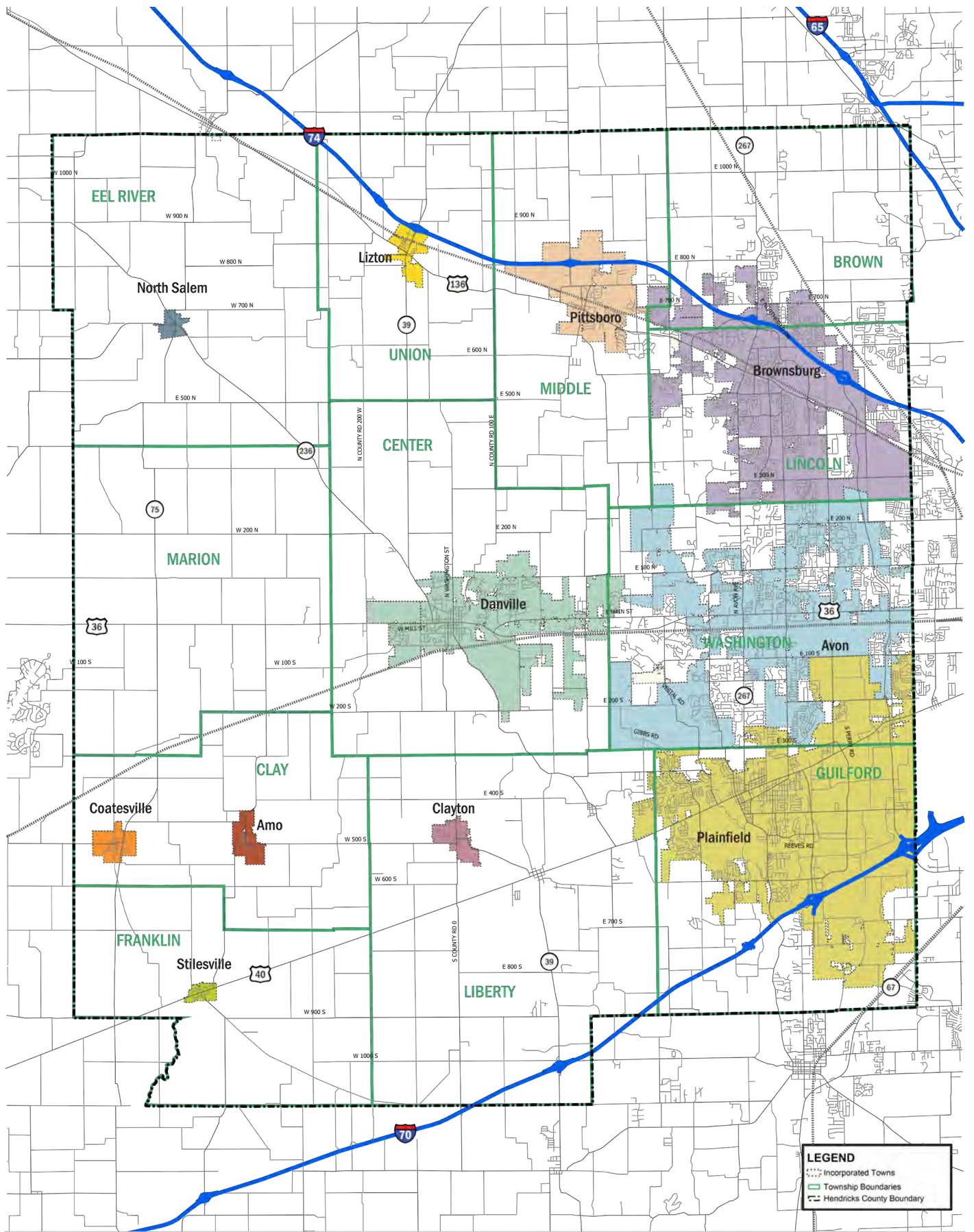
2006 Hendricks County Quality Growth Strategy

Population Growth

Hendricks County has experienced high rates of growth over the last two decades, gaining over 70,000 residents since 2000 and growing 68%. This rate of growth outpaces many other suburban counties within Indiana as well as the state as a whole (4.7% increase). Part of the county’s significant growth can be attributed to success of the broader Indianapolis metropolitan area and spillover to adjacent communities. Hamilton County (90.1%), Boone County (53.6%), and Johnson County (40.4%) have all experienced high rates of growth as well. Hendricks County is projected to grow another 32% by 2040 to an estimated 230,568 residents (STATS Indiana, Indiana Business Research Center, IU Kelley School of Business, July 2024).

Hendricks County Population Growth by Community			
Community	2000	2020	2000 to 2020 % Change
Amo	404	408	1%
Avon	5840	21,474	267%
Brownsburg	14344	28,973	102%
Clayton	737	908	23%
Coatesville	531	555	5%
Danville	6362	10,559	66%
Lizton	386	511	32%
North Salem	582	464	-20%
Pittsboro	1609	3,682	129%
Plainfield	18883	34,625	83%
Stilesville	285	269	-6%
Unincorporated County	54,130	72,360	34%
Hendricks County (total)	104,093	174,788	68%

Source: STATS Indiana



MUNICIPALITIES & CORPORATE LIMITS

HENDRICKS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PEOPLE



174,788

2020 POPULATION
(U.S. Census)



+68%

POPULATION CHANGE, 2000-2020
(U.S. Census)



38.2

MEDIAN AGE
(2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

The median age of residents living in Hendricks County (38.2 years) is slightly higher in comparison to communities across the state and around the Indianapolis Metro, rising since 2010 but still in line with national averages. When breaking down the county based on age there are two groups that make up larger proportions of the community, 10 to 14 years of age (7.83%) and 35 to 39 years of age (7.59%). These are indicative of a community with young families and school aged children, both critical factors in a community experiencing, or wanting to experience, population increases.

Just over three quarters of occupied housing units in Hendricks County are family households, much higher than the state (64.4%) and in line with trends seen in counties surrounding the Indianapolis Metro. Nearly 15% of the family households in Hendricks County are single parents. Opposite of family household trends, Hendricks County's proportion of one-person households (19.3%) is lower than the state (29.1%) and nation (28.1%). The percentage of one-person households in Hendricks County has remained steady since 2010 (19.6%).

Census Population Counts 2000 - 2020

Community	2000	2010	2020	2000 to 2020 % Change
Hendricks County	104,093	145,448	174,788	67.9%
Boone County	46,107	56,640	70,812	53.6%
Clark County	96,472	110,232	121,093	25.5%
Elkhart County	182,791	197,559	207,047	13.3%
Hamilton County	182,740	274,569	347,467	90.1%
Johnson County	115,209	139,654	161,765	40.4%
Indiana	6,080,485	6,483,802	6,785,528	11.6%

Source: STATS Indiana

HOUSING



78.1%

OWNER-OCCUPIED
(2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates)



21.9%

RENTER-OCCUPIED
(2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates)



\$220,800

MEDIAN HOME VALUE
(2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

Housing & Cost of Living

Hendricks County has experienced major housing growth over the last decade climbing from 54,300 units in 2010 to 65,850 units in 2021, a 21.3% increase for the entire community. When looking at housing unit growth occurring outside of major towns (Avon, Brownsburg, Danville, Plainfield) there was an 8.6% increase in units from 2010 to 2021. The county's total housing unit growth far exceeded state (4.8%) and national (7.4%) growth trends. While all types of housing within Hendricks County increased over the last decade, rented units saw a faster rate of growth, increasing by 53.9% and accounting for 21.9% (13,780 units) of all occupied housing in the community.

Median home values in Hendricks County grew from \$161,100 in 2010 to \$220,800 in 2021, a 37.1% increase that exceeds state levels (28.9%) and in line with similar trends seen in communities in the doughnut region surrounding Marion County. The county's median home value also exceeds Indiana (\$158,500) and counties such as Elkhart (\$159,000) and Clark (\$162,800), although it falls slightly below communities such as Boone County (\$270,600) and Hamilton County (\$302,400) who far outpace most areas in Indiana and national trends. While using Census data for home value helps identify trends it can be skewed in terms of actual market value, other data sources such as Zillow can often give a better representation of current housing value trends.

Median Value (2021 ACS) vs Median Sales Price (2021 Zillow)

Community	Median Value	Median Sales Price	% Difference
Hendricks County	\$220,800	\$268,026	21.4%
Boone County	\$270,600	\$311,385	15.1%
Clark County	\$162,800	\$199,263	22.4%
Elkhart County	\$159,000	\$198,674	25.0%
Hamilton County	\$302,400	\$353,603	16.9%
Johnson County	\$196,200	\$245,103	24.9%
Indiana	\$158,500	\$189,756	19.7%

Based on Zillow’s database of home value trends, Hendricks County home sale values have increased 62.5% over the past decade, climbing from \$164,900 in 2010 to \$268,000 in 2021. While home sale values in 2010 were similar to census results, there was a \$48,000 difference between sale values and median home values in 2021. While this trend is not unique to Hendricks County, it highlights the rapid increase in housing costs that outpace income growth during the same period.

In addition to rising home costs, renting costs in Hendricks County have also grown since 2010. Median gross rent has risen from \$860 in 2010 to \$1,160 in 2021, a 34.8% increase. Although the rate of increase for rent in Hendricks County is similar to trends seen surrounding Indianapolis and across the nation (38.3% national increase), the total rent in 2021 is higher than most communities throughout Indiana (\$891). With the exception of Hamilton County (\$1,265), all other comparison communities used when analyzing Hendrick County’s demographic data had lower gross rents.

Gross Rent			
Community	2010 Rent	2021 Rent	% Difference
Hendricks County	\$860	\$1,160	34.8%
Boone County	\$758	\$1,122	48.0%
Clark County	\$692	\$903	30.5%
Elkhart County	\$695	\$859	23.6%
Hamilton County	\$903	\$1,265	40.1%
Johnson County	\$781	\$1,056	35.2%
Indiana	\$683	\$891	30.5%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimate Census Data

EMPLOYMENT & INCOME



24.8%

WORKFORCE IN THE EDUCATIONAL
SERVICES, AND HEALTHCARE AND
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE INDUSTRY
(2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates)



2.7%

ANNUAL AVERAGE
UNEMPLOYMENT
(2023 Bureau of Labor Statistics)



\$87,960

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
(2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

Income

Median household income represents the combined incomes of everyone within a single household and is often used as an indicator of a community's economic well-being. Hendricks County's median household income is \$87,960 and has increased 30.9% since 2010 (\$67,180). Although lower than Boone County (\$94,840) and Hamilton County (\$104,860), Hendricks County exceeds the median household income of other communities surrounding Marion County and has grown incomes at similar rates compared to Indiana (29.9%) and the nation (33.0%). Household income can also be broken down by ownership type. The median household income for owner-occupied units is \$100,860 while renter-occupied is \$54,420.

Another income indicator used to define economic stability is per capita income, which relates to the disposable income within a community. Hendricks County's income per capita is \$40,540, higher than the state average (\$32,537) and faster growing (40.4% increase from 2010 to 2021) than most county's surrounding Indianapolis.

Median Household Income			
Community	2010 Income	2021 Income	% Difference
Hendricks County	\$67,180	\$87,960	30.9%
Boone County	\$68,594	\$94,843	38.3%
Clark County	\$47,368	\$62,296	31.5%
Elkhart County	\$47,258	\$61,182	29.5%
Hamilton County	\$81,947	\$104,858	28.0%
Johnson County	\$61,629	\$77,977	26.5%
Indiana	\$47,697	\$61,944	29.9%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimate Census Data

Educational Attainment

Residents in Hendricks County are very well educated, with 95.4% of residents over the age of 16 having at least a high school diploma, 40% having a bachelor's degree or higher, and 13.3% having a graduate or professional degree. These numbers all exceed Indiana's educational attainment and outpace most communities surrounding Indianapolis except for Boone County, (96.1% high school, 48.1% bachelors, 16.3% professional) and Hamilton County (97.7% high school, 62.3% bachelors, 22.7% professional). Employers often look to educational attainment levels when determining where to locate new investments, as highly educated communities are more likely to hold workers with the skill sets required for various business operations. Hendricks County residents have continued to improve their educational attainment over the last 10 years, with the number of people without at least a high school diploma falling 8%.

Educational Attainment			
Community	High School Graduate or Higher	Bachelor Degree or Higher	Graduate or Professional Degree
Hendricks County	95.4%	40.0%	13.3%
Boone County	96.1%	48.1%	16.3%
Clark County	90.8%	25.9%	6.6%
Elkhart County	82.9%	21.8%	7.5%
Hamilton County	97.7%	62.3%	22.7%
Johnson County	93.8%	34.9%	14.7%
Indiana	90.6%	28.9%	10.4%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimate Census Data

Commuting Patterns

According to data gathered through STATS Indiana 2020 Commuting Trend Profiles, Hendricks County exports more workers on a daily basis than it imports. On average, 41,260 workers leave Hendricks County daily for work with the majority traveling to Marion County (32,410 workers), Hamilton County (1,990 workers), and Boone County (1,570 workers). In comparison, Hendricks County attracts around 21,240 workers from outside communities daily, with the largest numbers coming from Marion County (11,150 workers), Morgan County (3,030 workers), and Putnam County (1,660 workers). The average travel time to work for those living in Hendricks County is 26.5 minutes, an increase from 25.9 minutes in 2010.

An influencing factor for Hendricks County's high commuter volumes are the major interstate and highway corridors crossing through the county. I-70, the primary route connecting Indianapolis to St. Louis, has seen increased traffic over the last decade as Plainfield and the industrial park on State Road 39 have grown. According to traffic count data provided by INDOT's Transportation Data Management System, the road segment immediately east of the I-70/State Road 39 interchange saw an increase in vehicular traffic each year from 2014 to 2022 (increase from 40,280 AADT to 51,640 AADT), with the exception of 2020. Similarly, the segment along I-74 east of the Lizton exit experienced steady growth each year from 2014 to 2022, increasing from 21,380 AADT to 23,640 AADT.

In the opposite trend to the interstates and what was reported by residents, State Road 36 saw a slight decline in total traffic from 2014 to 2022, going from 22,660 AADT to 21,580 AADT.



IMPLEMENTATION



PUTTING THE PLAN TO WORK

Implementation of the Hendricks County Comprehensive Plan will occur as elected and appointed officials make decisions on future development proposals and how to allocate county funds for various programs and capital improvements. It will also happen as county staff across multiple departments review development petitions, write staff reports and make recommendations, and administer programs and projects created by the County Commissioners, County Council, and other boards and commissions. Successful implementation of comprehensive plan recommendations will also require the support of residents, business owners, property owners, developers, and organizations working in the county.

The objectives and action plans included with each topic chapter (Land Use, Transportation, Infrastructure, Housing, Agriculture, Quality of Place, Economic Development, Government, Natural Resources) serve to break down the broader goals into more incremental and day-to-day actions of county government. Some plan recommendations focus on continuing existing programs and policies, and work has already begun on other initiatives. Other recommendations will take much longer to realize and will be based on private property owner interest, market demand, county resources, and in some cases, the ability to obtain additional funding through grants and loan opportunities.

TRANSLATING VISION INTO ACTION

The key to successful implementation is translating the plan's vision, goals, and recommendations into the day-to-day operations and actions of Hendricks County government.

Goals, Objectives, and Action Plans

The following topic chapters are organized around a series of goals and supporting objectives. Some objectives are action-oriented while others reflect broader policies the county should look to promote. Each topic chapter concludes an Action Plan that focuses on key projects and initiatives that will be necessary to realize the goals and objectives presented earlier. Each project or initiative then has a number of action steps that serve to complete the strategy. These are intended to help advance day-to-day efforts in implementing the comprehensive plan.

The relative timeframes presented in the Action Plans are intended only to serve as a guide for plan implementation and should be considered flexible. Some strategies are already underway, while others won't begin until other initiatives or existing conditions change. Implementation timeframes will ultimately depend on funding availability, staff capacity, citizen involvement, and market conditions. They are:

Short-Term: 0 to 3 years

Medium-Term: 4 to 7 years

Long-Term: 8+ years

The responsible parties identified with each project and strategy help to assign lead and support efforts that will be needed for successful implementation. Many of the goals and strategies will be the responsibility of county leaders and staff. However, in most cases, the county will need additional support from town leadership and staff, partner agencies, organizations, residents, and business owners.

Plan Monitoring and Update

Planning is a continual process that responds to changing conditions and incorporates new information into decisions. Changes may occur with respect to the physical conditions of buildings and infrastructure, economic climate, and social and community goals. Once adopted, the comprehensive plan will need to be revised from time to time to ensure that it stays consistent and relevant to current conditions and community interests in Hendricks County. On an annual basis, county staff, Area Plan Commission, and County Commissioners should review implementation progress and how the plan was used to make development decisions over the previous year. Identifying areas of the plan's success can help build support for future planning initiatives and implementation. Alternatively, if decisions were made that are in conflict with plan recommendations or if conditions have changed that make recommendations no longer applicable, plan amendments are likely needed.

Incremental plan updates and amendments are part of successful planning and will extend the life of the comprehensive plan. The purpose of these updates is to re-evaluate the goals, policies, and strategies contained within this plan, noting those to change and those to remove. New goals and recommendations should be added as needed, to make sure the plan is effective and provides the needed direction. The intent is to make the plan relevant and applicable over time and not keep it in its original form for a number of years until it has to be systematically rewritten.



Known locally as the Haunted Bridge, the CSX rail bridge crosses over CR 625 E, White Lick Creek, and Whipple Lane.

Key Themes

Several themes were repeatedly identified over the course of the planning process. These key themes cross several plan topics, relate to many plan goals, and represent some of the critical next steps in creating a work plan to implement the recommendations of the comprehensive plan. Implementation of these projects and initiatives will be dependent on several factors including county capacity and resources, private sector investment, and state and regional partner support.

Managing Growth

The most consistent theme throughout the planning process was the need to properly manage growth and future development. This aligns with years of past planning efforts and the title of the previous comprehensive plan “Growing Smarter.” Growth in Hendricks County should occur where it will be served by municipal or regional utility districts and in a coordinated pattern around existing towns and development centers.

Balancing Quality and Affordability

The cost of housing, both new construction and existing stock, has increased significantly in recent years. Factors contributing to the increased prices of new housing are rising land, material, and labor costs. At the same time, new development must contribute to community character and the cost of growth can't come at the expense of existing residents and businesses. Hendricks County must support new housing that contributes to community character while ensuring development standards and processes don't unnecessarily add to housing cost.



Balancing the affordability of new housing with established character requires careful planning to ensure that new development meets the needs of diverse residents while preserving the unique identity of the community.

Improving the Transportation Network

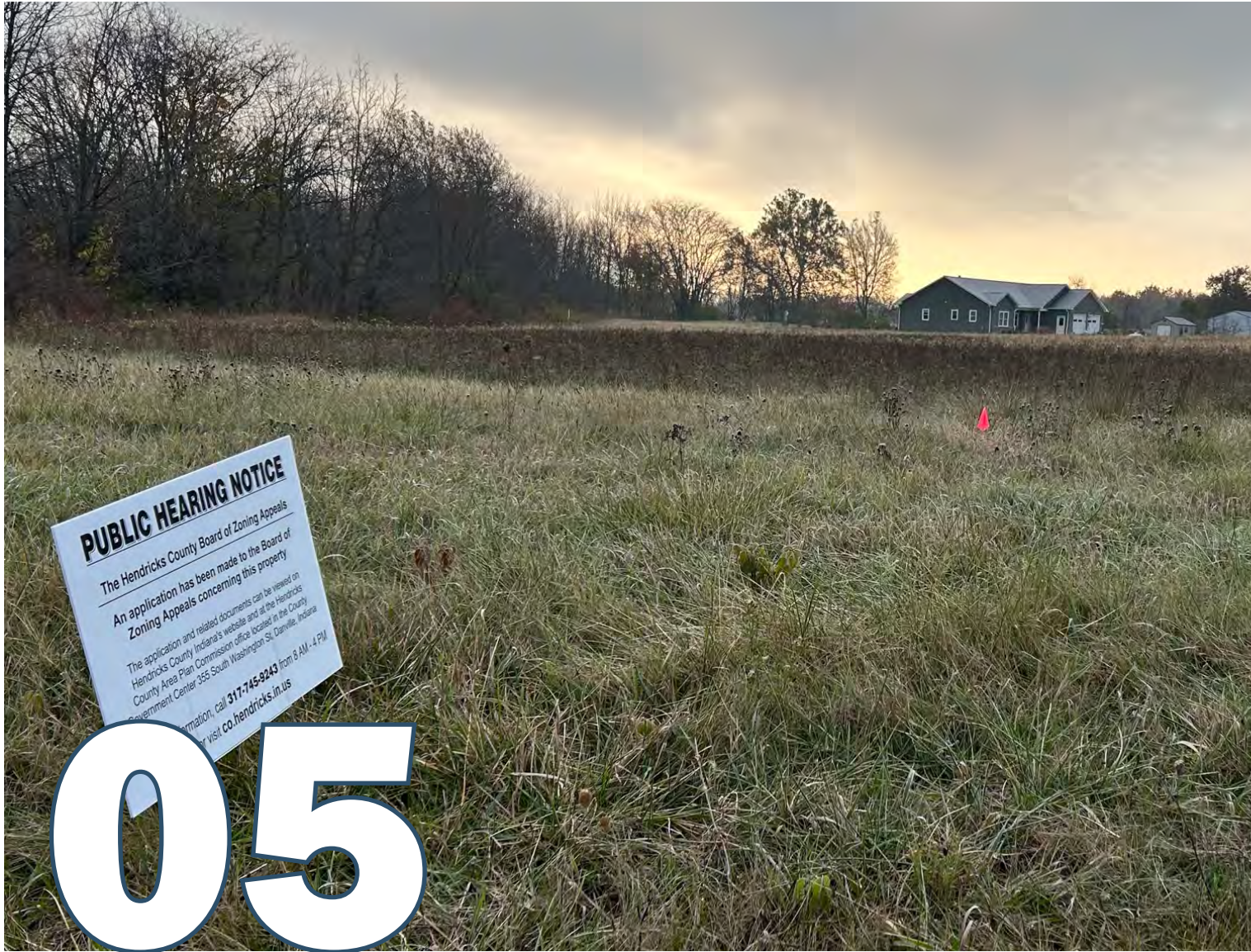
Concerns about the existing transportation network and past development have heightened awareness about how to address new traffic generated by future growth. This was a common theme expressed by residents during the planning process. County leadership and staff must collaborate with towns, adjacent counties, and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) on projects addressing safety concerns, making key connections to major destinations, and protecting key thoroughfare corridors used by locals and commuters.

Increasing Communication

People are changing how they receive and share information. Challenges faced by local newspapers are not unique to Hendricks County as the number of newspapers and newspaper journalists declines across the country. Hendricks County must actively work to fill this void and increase communication efforts with residents and businesses. Beyond sharing information and promoting transparency in local government, the county must also increase communication and collaboration with town governments to ensure coordinated planning and efficient resource use.

Sustaining Business Attraction

Hendricks County wants to keep attracting jobs. As commercial and industrial development have occurred, the number of potential employment sites has decreased. The county and associated towns must prepare to serve the next group of employment sites with transportation and utility infrastructure so that Hendricks County stays competitive from an economic development standpoint and can attract the types of jobs desired by the community.



05

LAND USE



PLANNING AHEAD

The land use pattern across Hendricks County varies to include growing urban centers in Plainfield and Brownsburg to suburban neighborhoods in Avon and Danville. It is also characterized by small town downtowns and large agricultural tracts spread across the western portion of the county. Hendricks County and its communities have attracted a mixture of commercial, industrial, and residential growth in recent decades. Collectively, these developments have resulted in reductions to agricultural acreage and open space. The community vision of managed growth still applies, but there is a growing sense that more needs to be done to protect agriculture lands and open spaces. Providing continued opportunities for housing and employment growth at varying densities while ensuring the sustained success of farming operations will foster Hendricks County's continued success into the future.

Identifying potentially appropriate locations for new growth and development is a major function of the comprehensive plan. At the county level, it is important to consider the development goals of incorporated communities as this is where most of the growth has and will continue to occur. Most major residential, commercial, and industrial developments will need public water and sewer service. The communities that will be providing utility and public services should have a role in making decisions regarding growth in these areas. When low density development utilizes on-site well and septic systems within the unincorporated county but adjacent to incorporated town limits, it could become a barrier to continued municipal utility extension in the future.

There will be other areas in the rural portion of the county that see growth pressure and would need to be served by Hendricks County Regional Sewer District or other utility providers but likely not be annexed into a municipality. This has already occurred in Liberty Township around the I-70 and SR 39 interchange and is expected to continue. It may also occur in Brown Township with continuation of Ronald Reagan Parkway and the development opportunities it will create. Hendricks County will increasingly be in a position to consider more intense development in unincorporated areas where served by water and sewer utilities.

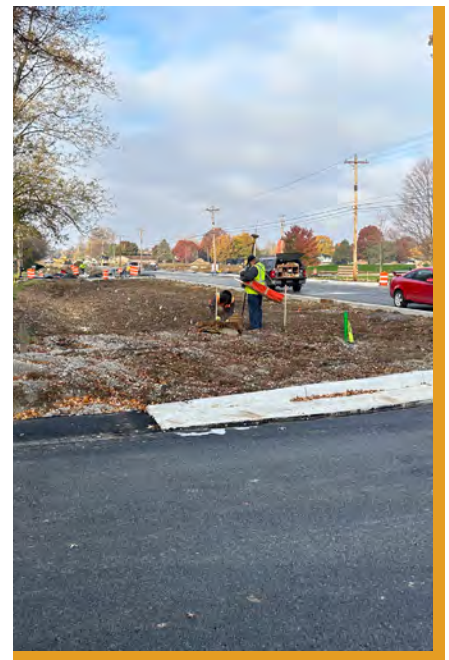
A PLAN TO MANAGE GROWTH

Key Findings

- According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture (USDA), there are 544 farms in Hendricks County, this represents a 17.3% decrease from 2017 (658 farms).
 - Average farm size is down 8.6% to 212 acres (from 232 acres in 2017).
 - In total, 115,423 acres of Hendricks County's land area is in farms, of which approximately 90% is harvested cropland. There was a 24.5% loss in land in farms from 2022 to 2017 (152,836 acres).
 - Development continues to push west across Hendricks County. Avon, Brownsburg, Danville, Plainfield, and Pittsboro all experienced population growth of over 60% from 2000 to 2020. Development is not just happening in incorporated towns; the population in unincorporated Hendricks County grew by 34% over this time period.
 - Properties along thoroughfares with good access to Interstates 70 and 74 continue to see warehouse and distribution development.
 - A common theme across community engagement efforts was balancing the preservation of farmland and agricultural character with allowing development in appropriate locations where it can be served by water and sewer utilities.
-

The 2006 Hendricks County Comprehensive Plan envisioned a wide rural residential future land use classification to provide a transition and buffer between more intense development in eastern Hendricks County and the largely agriculture lands in western Hendricks County. While this development pattern is logical, it assumed a clearly defined stop to suburban residential growth so that such a transition could occur. It is hard to predict where that suburban growth would stop and classifies too large an area for low density development that uses land inefficiently. In reality, the suburban to rural transition in Hendricks County is sharper and continually changing. Because of this, it is not a preferred location for large rural lots or small hobby farms. Rural estate lots and hobby farms will remain popular and have their place in Hendricks County, but the county does not want to advocate and plan for extensive areas of low-density rural residential development in this transition zone. Creation of new rural residential lots in other areas of the county should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with consideration of site specific characteristics related to the land, soil, roadway network, and surrounding context. This is a significant shift as compared to the 2006 plan but is necessary to promote development where it can be served by municipal or regional water and utility infrastructure and also preserve larger agriculture tracts elsewhere.

The land use recommendations within this chapter should be used by the Area Plan Commission (APC) when reviewing zoning change requests and development proposals within unincorporated Hendricks County and the incorporated towns under the APC's jurisdiction.



Road improvement projects on CR 700 N and other locations in the northeast corner of the county were called out within the previous comprehensive plan.

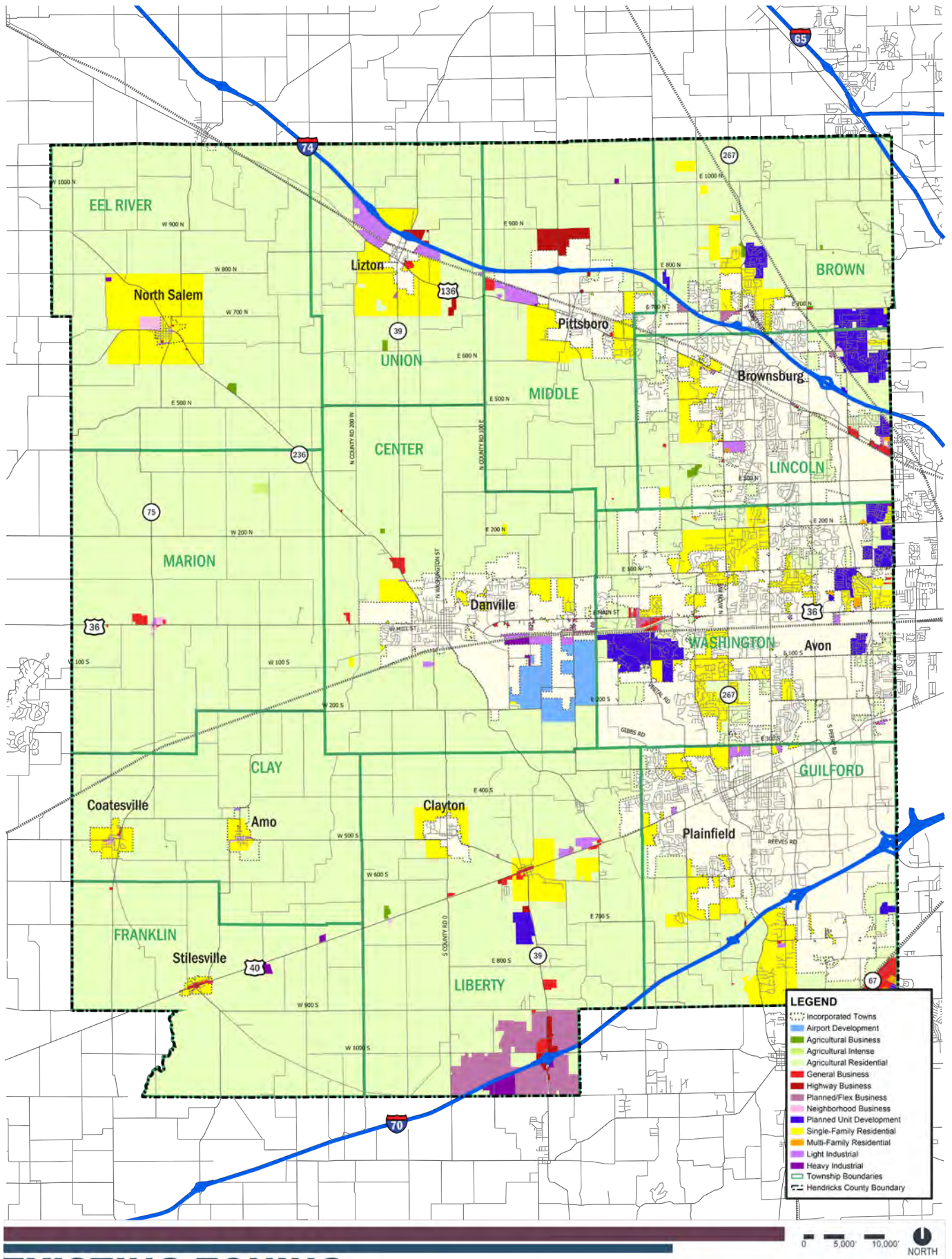
Existing County Zoning

Reviewing the county's existing zoning at the time of the comprehensive plan's creation is critical to understanding past development patterns and forming a vision for future land uses. The county's zoning ordinance holds 17 separate zoning districts in addition to Planned Unit Development Districts (PUDs) and overlay districts covering specific locations with unique development criteria. The majority of unincorporated county is zoned as "AGR" Agriculture, Residential District which allows for both agricultural-related land uses and very low-density residential. There are rings of single-family housing districts surrounding each incorporated community, providing a buffer intended to support new subdivisions. Commercial zoning is primarily concentrated in downtown cores and along major thoroughfares. Also located along major thoroughfares and surrounding interchanges lies the majority of the county's industrial zoning. The interstates and various state highways crossing through Hendricks County make it an ideal location for such developments, with the potential for more as roadways are improved.

The map on the following page shows existing zoning in Hendricks County. For simplification of the map, the five single-family zoning districts have been consolidated into a single category.



Playground equipment and basketball court in North Salem Town Park.



EXISTING ZONING HENDRICKS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

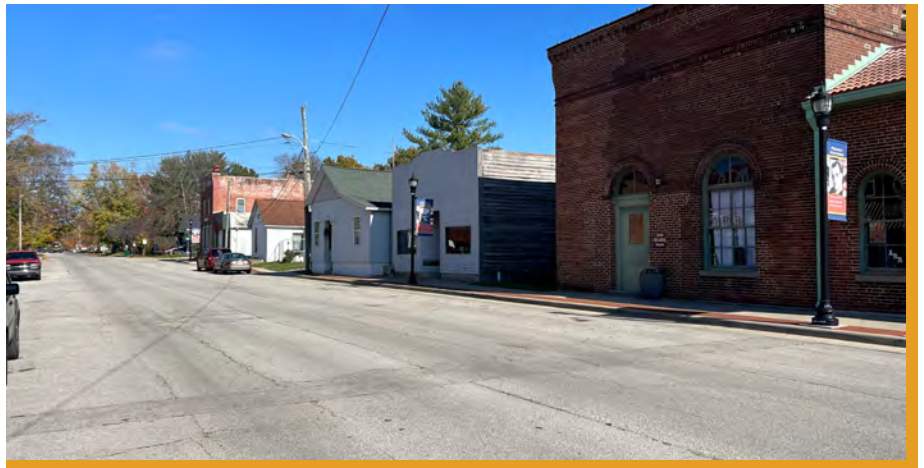
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The future land use plan was developed using both physical analysis of the county and visioning and growth discussions with planning process participants. In many cases, the existing land use is the desired future land use. In other cases, the future land use plan indicates a potential change in the future as agriculture properties are developed for the first time or vacant and under-utilized properties are redeveloped. Changes in use of private property will be at the property owner's interest and dependent upon receiving necessary approvals from the applicable jurisdiction.

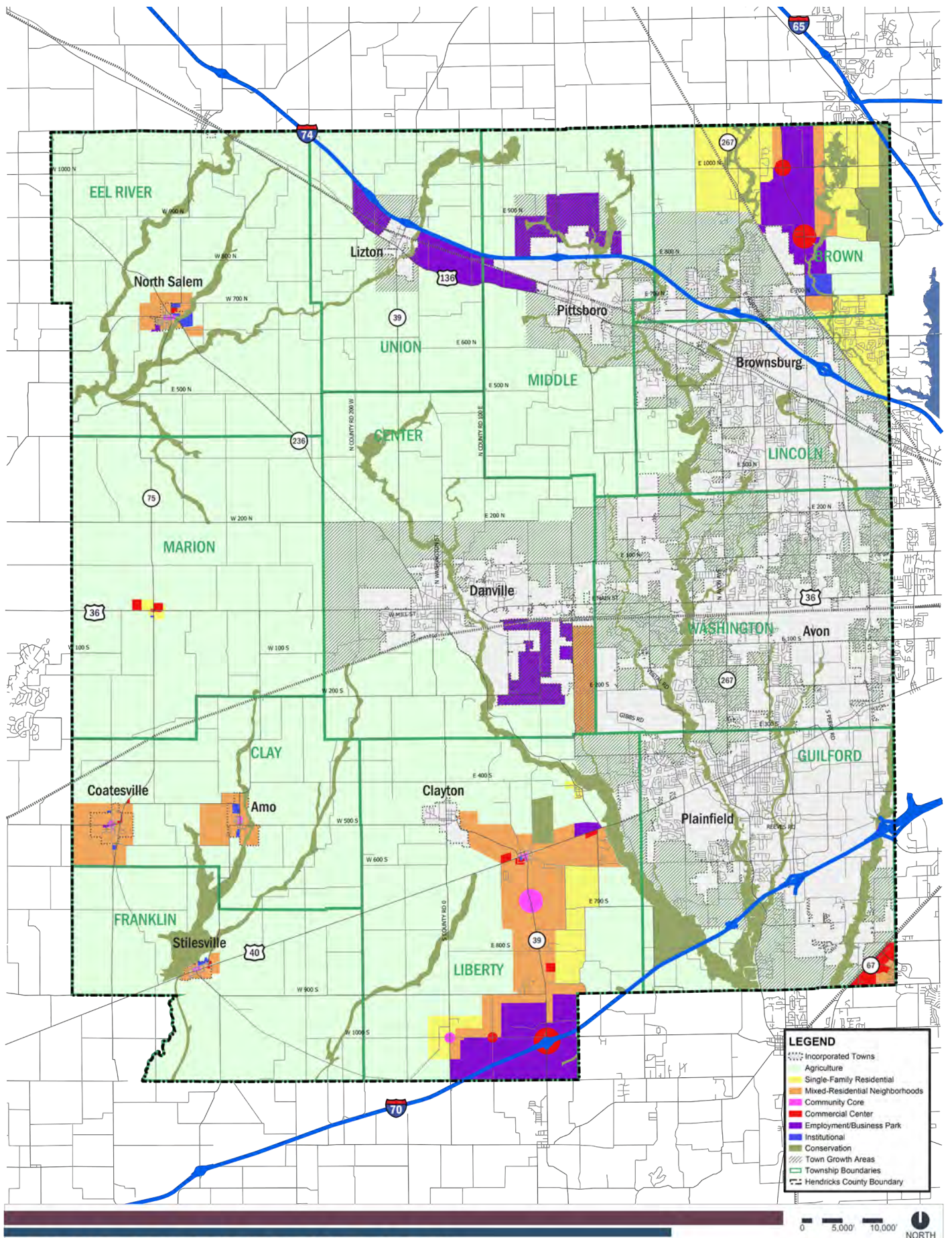
The future land use plan should be referred to when evaluating land use and development petitions such as rezonings and subdivision requests. The future land use map should not be confused with the county's official zoning map. While related, zoning and land use serve separate functions. The future land use map identifies broader use classifications and begins to identify development intensity and character considerations of different development types. It is used as a guide when considering rezoning requests to a particular zoning district, which then regulates more specific uses, lot sizes, building setbacks, access, and other development standards.

The future land use map is intended to be general in nature and not based on specific property lines. This allows for some interpretation on a project by project basis while still establishing the foundation by which to make judgments on the appropriateness of future development petitions. It's also important to understand that the future land use map looks years into the future. Even if a development proposal aligns with the future land use map, there may be infrastructure or other improvements needed and that proposal should not be approved until utilities and municipal services are in place or can readily be extended to the site as part of the development process.

The future land use classifications begin on page 45 and correspond to the Future Land Use Map on page 44.



Amo's downtown core.



FUTURE LAND USE MAP HENDRICKS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS



Agriculture

The Agriculture classification exists to protect and preserve productive farmland in Hendricks County, as well as accommodate low-density, single-family residential homes when they can be appropriately located to minimize impacts to agriculture and the natural environment. Areas within this classification should be used for agricultural activities including raising crops and livestock, as well as agriculture-related businesses, including agritourism and on-farm sales. This classification focuses on the continued use of existing agricultural land; therefore, larger lots are supported, and major subdivisions are discouraged. It may not be feasible for properties in this classification to be serviced by public utilities, such as water and sanitary sewer service, unless located adjacent to a municipality or other utility provider. In areas with public utilities and exceptional natural features – such as rolling hills and farmland, high quality woodlands, and wetlands – rural estate type neighborhoods could be considered if housing is clustered to preserve open space.



Single-Family Residential

The Single-Family Residential classification supports low to medium-density, single-family residential development, often in the form of conventional subdivisions. In addition to single-family homes, duplexes and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are also appropriate within this classification. These areas are typically served by water and sewer utilities although there are existing single-family neighborhoods that have been developed with on-site well and septic systems. Single-family residential areas may serve as a transition between agricultural land and more intensive land uses, such as commercial or industrial development. New single-family residential areas should be served by municipal or regional water and sewer utilities.



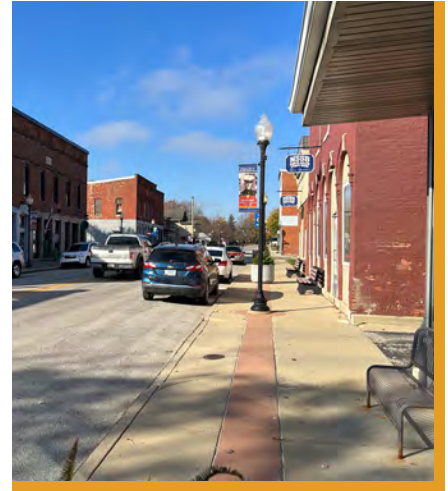
Mixed-Residential Neighborhoods

The Mixed-Residential classification designates appropriate locations for housing development that may include single-family homes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), duplexes, patio homes, and apartments depending on surrounding context and available transportation and utility infrastructure. New mixed-residential neighborhoods should have walkable, well-connected street systems that connect to adjacent neighborhoods and nearby destinations. They should be designed around natural features to highlight existing woodlands and water bodies as accessible community amenities. While these areas allow for different housing products, they can also be primarily single-family focused with an emphasis on smaller lot sizes. Mixed-residential neighborhoods must be served with public water and sewer systems.

FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Community Core

The Community Core classification accommodates a variety of commercial, residential, and institutional uses found within a community's downtown, Main Street, or mixed use center. Land uses may include a mix of single-family homes on smaller lots, apartments, commercial businesses, town facilities, institutional uses, and mixed-use structures (retail with apartments or offices above). This land classification allows for any land use that supports downtown activities and builds the character of the community. New downtown development should maintain a coordinated street and lot pattern, be walkable, with high-quality architecture, plazas, sidewalks, and pedestrian and bicycle amenities to activate the area and connect to the residential neighborhoods it supports. It is important that any new public streets within community core areas expand the established grid street pattern and connect to existing streets, especially where they dead-end or stub to the subject property.



Commercial Center

The Commercial Center classification generally applies along major thoroughfares and is intended to accommodate a range of commercial business activities, including retail, office, and service uses for residents, businesses, and visitors to Hendricks County. The scale of these commercial activities varies from small-scale neighborhood service centers to regional shopping destinations. Commercial development areas should be planned with coordinated access to ensure safe and efficient function of the adjacent road network.



Employment/Business Park

The Employment/Business Park classification indicates appropriate locations for light or medium-intensity industrial uses, including manufacturing, logistics, distribution, as well as high-intensity commercials uses. Building types may include both large footprint users with multi-story buildings on large parcels or groups of smaller structures in a business park setting. Some of these uses may involve exterior storage or movement of goods and require measures to mitigate adverse visual impacts. These areas should be located near major thoroughfares and adjacent to interchanges within both urban and rural areas of the county. Heavy industrial uses should be limited in the county and located away from residential development and sensitive environmental areas.



FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Institutional

The Institutional classification identifies areas dedicated for public use such as schools and airports. These uses may vary in scale and impact to the transportation system. Large institutional uses should be located along thoroughfares with the capacity to handle anticipated traffic volumes. The institutional areas identified on the Future Land Use Map typically reflect existing anchor institutions. Institutional uses are often incorporated into other land use classifications and many more such uses are present in Hendricks County. New institutional uses may be appropriate within other land use classifications when potential negative impacts to surrounding development can be mitigated. For example, religious institutions are appropriate within residential areas when they can be adequately served by the transportation network.



Conservation

The Conservation classification indicates areas where conservation and preservation are priorities. These areas are often adjacent to ecologically sensitive community assets, including wetlands, waterways, nature preserves, trail systems, and State Recreation Areas (SRAs). Limited residential development is allowed, but it is important to prevent development in the floodplain, along steep slopes, in heavily forested areas (to prevent tree clearing), and in wetlands. Limited nonresidential developments can also be considered with an appropriate development plan that ensures long-term protection and minimizes impact to the conservation portion of the site. All development should be restricted to properties with a lot size that is conducive to proper septic system installation to ensure rivers and streams remain free from contamination.



Town Growth Areas

Town Growth Areas are locations within Hendricks County that are currently unincorporated, adjacent to municipalities outside the Area Plan Commission's jurisdiction, and have the potential to experience new growth and development in the future. The purpose of these areas is to provide a buffer around incorporated towns that allows them to plan for and manage their growth. It is expected that the existing land uses in these areas will remain until potential development can be served by utilities and annexed into a municipality. If development is proposed in these areas but cannot immediately be annexed into the nearby municipality, it should be designed and platted in a way that allows for the future extension of transportation and utility infrastructure.



COORDINATING TOWN GROWTH AREAS

The Town Growth Areas shown on the Future Land Use Map and described above, represent a key mechanism to manage future growth in Hendricks County. Beyond identifying them on the Future Land Use Map, it will be critical that Hendricks County leadership and staff develop a formal coordination and review procedure with staff from each town. At a minimum, this should include sharing information about development petitions and inviting town representatives to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting when there is a proposal within the town growth area. The goal is ultimately to see town growth areas annexed into the respective municipal limits, and as such, proposed development should generally align with town requirements and standards. Long-term, Hendricks County should support municipalities in cleaning up jurisdictional boundaries in these growth areas and eliminate pockets of unincorporated area completely surrounded by a municipality. Annexation of these pockets will require town-government action with property owner support in accordance with Indiana statutes, but Hendricks County recognizes the potential for challenges created by the current jurisdictional boundaries around Avon, Brownsburg, and Plainfield.

RONALD REAGAN CORRIDOR THROUGH BROWN TOWNSHIP

One of the largest areas of significant development interest within the County's sewer territory, eastern Brown Township is unique in its location and landscape. The on-going extension of Ronald Reagan Parkway north through Brown Township will enhance transportation access to this part of Hendricks County and is expected to bring additional development interest. At the same time, the area will always face east/west connectivity issues given the presence of Eagle Creek Reservoir, Eagle Creek, and Interstate 65 just across the county line to the east.

The Future Land Use Map identifies potential employment, commercial, and residential uses along the Ronald Reagan corridor. It is important that new development respects the location and character of established neighborhoods and rural estates - many of which are long-established. In consideration of the challenges of developing east-west corridors, future development should transition in intensity, from higher intensity commercial and employment uses immediately adjacent to Ronald Reagan Parkway, to agriculture, single-family residential, and/or conservation to the east.

Although the Future Land Use Map classifies much of the land in Brown Township as something other than the current use, it is not all "shovel-ready". Development should originate from the Parkway or existing development and not skip areas with unimproved infrastructure. In all cases, future development of any significant intensity will be dependent on water and sewer utility expansions and improvements to the transportation network. In cases where a more intense use is proposed adjacent to established development, additional open space, landscape buffers, or development standards may be required.

Goal 1

Use the Future Land Use Plan to guide decision making and ensure new development occurs in the most appropriate locations of Hendricks County.



Land east of existing Amo neighborhoods on CR 500 S was preemptively zoned as part of a residential buffer.

Objective 1: Reevaluate zoning classifications surrounding incorporated towns to improve each community's ability to control development adjacent to their corporate limits.

Unincorporated areas around Amo, Coatesville, Lizton, North Salem, and Pittsboro are zoned into the RB Single-Family Residential District. In some instances this zoning only applies to a depth of one or two parcels around the town. In other locations, such as North Salem, the RB district creates a 1-mile buffer around the incorporated town limits. By zoning these largely agricultural parcels for single-family residential use, the county may be unintentionally limiting each town's ability to manage future growth and the extension of municipal services and utilities with it.

The Future Land Use Map classifies these areas for mixed density residential development, which will allow for more varied housing types if the respective town elects to serve them with water and sewer infrastructure. If a town cannot or does not want to extend municipal services, the existing RB zoning still works with the proposed mixed density residential classification, but lot sizes will need to be larger to accommodate well and septic system requirements.

Objective 2: Assess current suburban to agriculture development buffer requirements and identify ways to manage transitional zones between rural Hendricks County and areas with municipal services.

The 2006 Hendricks County Comprehensive Plan classified a wide band of land for Rural Residential development to provide a transition between the suburban development occurring in eastern Hendricks County and the primarily agriculture areas to the west. While there will always be a demand for rural estate lots and they certainly have their place in Hendricks County, they should be limited to areas with appropriate soils for on-site septic systems and where they will not impact agriculture operations. While each lot may not take much farm ground out of production, in aggregate, such a large transitional area would represent a significant loss of farmland. Instead, the suburban to agriculture transition will be sharper, and as such, it is important that new development, whether residential, commercial, or industrial, is appropriately buffered from adjacent agriculture uses.

Objective 3: Discourage development that utilizes on-site wells and septic systems near areas with municipal utilities so that this development doesn't become a barrier to future utility expansion.

Extension of municipal sewer and water infrastructure generally happens in an outward progression. As towns grow, so does their utility infrastructure, often incrementally down a roadway or natural corridor. When development is allowed to occur using on-site well and septic systems or development specific package plants, it may create a barrier to future utility extensions. The cost to extend a water or sewer main past properties that won't be connected to it may result in construction costs that make future development projects unfeasible.

Objective 4: Direct unincorporated growth and higher densities to areas with planned water and sewer services.

Utility service and capacity will be a limiting factor for future growth in Hendricks County. Therefore, areas that are presently or can be served by municipal or regional water and sewer districts should be used to realize more intense residential, commercial, or industrial development. By accommodating density in some areas, agriculture and open space areas may be better preserved elsewhere.



Unincorporated areas north Brownsburg, where Ronald Reagan Parkway is set to extend, have utilities in place for new growth.

Goal 2

Reinforce the State Road 39 corridor as a gateway into Hendricks County and a location for future housing, commerce, and employment.



Westpoint Business Park is located at the SR 39 and I-70 interchange and has room for upcoming developments.

Objective 1: Coordinate with Plainfield to determine future utility service, potential annexation, and a shared land use vision for development along the corridor.

The I-70 and SR 39 interchange area has been one of the fastest developing areas in Hendricks County over the past five years, and additional development is planned all around the interchange. While Hendricks County has partnered with various utility and public service providers and strives to reinforce quality design practices for upcoming development, there is not a cohesive vision for what the corridor should become in terms of commercial development, housing products, community amenities, and connectivity. In the long-term, county leadership need to identify how the southern corridor can best represent the community's character, best serve surrounding residents, and how the area can be planned into a regional hub for visitors.

In the short-term, major portions of the corridor do not meet contiguity requirements and subsequently cannot be annexed into Plainfield's corporate limits. However, it may be more cost effective to serve northern portions of this area with sewer service, and other public services, from Plainfield. The county, Plainfield, existing property owners, and potential developers will need to work together to ensure development occurs in a responsible and financially sustainable manner for all service providers.

Objective 2: Elevate the quality of future development along the SR 39 corridor to create a vibrant and attractive entrance into the community.

The SR 39 corridor is increasingly becoming a gateway into Hendricks County. Continued warehousing and logistics development around the interchange has added to the county's tax base and the corridor holds more potential to accomplish development goals. The county is investing in roadway and intersection improvements in collaboration with the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and can use this show of public investment as a means to reinforce a higher quality of private investment in the area.

Future development should preserve natural features, use high quality building materials to address the SR 39 frontage, be designed with access management best practices to ensure safe roadway function, and include buffers to protect areas that will remain in agriculture use.

Goal 3

Preserve the rural character of Hendricks County.

Objective 1: Protect viewsheds and limit the visual impact of development in rural areas.

The value of Hendricks County's rural character and scenic views of farmland and open spaces was reiterated throughout the planning process. Utility scale wind farms are detrimental to these assets and are not supported by the majority of residents. The county's policies should reflect a desire to protect rural character by restricting the visual impact of land uses such as commercial-scale large wind turbines. Large solar facilities do not have the height impacts of wind farms but should be appropriately setback and screened from adjacent thoroughfares to preserve rural corridor aesthetics.

Objective 2: Ensure development in Hendricks County is compatible with the established character of agriculture areas.

Across broader Hendricks County, new development in rural areas should be dispersed and integrated with natural features such as hills, valleys, and woodlands. This development pattern will better mimic historical patterns of dispersed farmsteads. Minor subdivisions in close proximity to each other that result in rows of houses along county road frontages should be discouraged. Too many structures immediately adjacent to the roadway will diminish from the rural character that is valued not only by residents of the area, but also those living in eastern parts of the county that were drawn to Hendricks County because of the greater community atmosphere.

At the same time, minor subdivisions should be seen as an opportunity to expand the county road network, make needed connections, and create easements or stub streets to facilitate future improvements to the transportation system. This may not be necessary in all situations, but it is important that new residential lots do not become a barrier to future infrastructure improvements.



Preserved woodlands and other natural areas in Hendricks County are a large factor in attracting and retaining residents in the county's western communities.

LAND USE ACTION PLAN

	Project & Strategies	Timeframe	Responsible Party
GOAL 1	<p>Update Zoning and Subdivision Control Ordinances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate buffer requirements for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Review and amend subdivision standards and procedures to ensure easements allow for future infrastructure extensions even if the proposed development will utilize on-site well and septic systems. 	Short-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & Building Department <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area Plan Commission County Commissioners
GOAL 1	<p>Update the Zoning Map.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with town leaders to review current application of the RB-Single-Family Residential district around each town. Conduct outreach to property owners in these areas. Initiate rezonings based on town and property owner interest. Rezone applicable parcels. 	Medium-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & Building Department <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area Plan Commission County Commissioners Town Leadership Property Owners
GOAL 1	<p>Develop official review, recommendation, and approval processes for proposed development in town growth areas when it will not immediately be annexed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct stakeholder meetings with town leadership, staff, and utility providers. Formalize how municipalities will review and provide input to Hendricks County staff and Advisory Plan Commission. Incorporate procedures into zoning and subdivision ordinances or rules of procedure where appropriate. 	Short-Term	<p>Leads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Commissioners <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & Building Department Area Plan Commission Town Planning Depts. Utility Providers Developers/Builders
GOAL 2	<p>Organize a SR 39 working group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify representatives from Hendricks County, Plainfield, utility providers, and property owners to participate. Engage Morgan County and Monrovia to understand their goals for the corridor. Confirm shared vision and goals for the corridor. Identify utility and service territory boundaries. Consider additional design requirements for the SR 39 corridor. Share information with the community. 	Short-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & Building Department <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area Plan Commission County Commissioners Plainfield Morgan County and Monrovia Utility Providers INDOT Property Owners



06

TRANSPORTATION



A SAFE AND CONNECTED SYSTEM

Much of Hendricks County's development pattern can be attributed to the transportation network, and a number of economic development successes across the county have followed the I-70, I-74, U.S. 39, U.S. 40, U.S. 136, and Ronald Reagan Parkway corridors. A safe and efficient transportation network is critical to maintaining a high quality of life for residents and visitors and key to supporting Hendricks County businesses. More than 40,000 Hendricks County residents leave the county for work, while an additional 20,000 workers come in to Hendricks County for employment from their homes outside of the county (STATS Indiana). Hendricks County's location in the Indianapolis Metropolitan Area and relative ease of access has made it a great place to both live and work.

Many participants in the planning process identified concerns regarding traffic congestion, safety, and a need for more direct north-south routes. As a warehousing and logistics hub, some of Hendricks County's thoroughfares carry a higher than average proportion of heavy vehicle traffic. These heavy vehicles can have an out-sized impact on roadway conditions, especially lower level roads that have not been designed and constructed to carry heavy vehicle traffic. While municipalities have improved what had been county roads as they have been annexed and development occurred, the adjacent county roads that remain in unincorporated areas typically don't see immediate improvement because there is not a mechanism to require the developer to improve the road. Subsequently, these transitional areas or road segments immediately adjacent to Avon, Brownsburg, or Plainfield see increased traffic as a result of development but not the corresponding improvements.

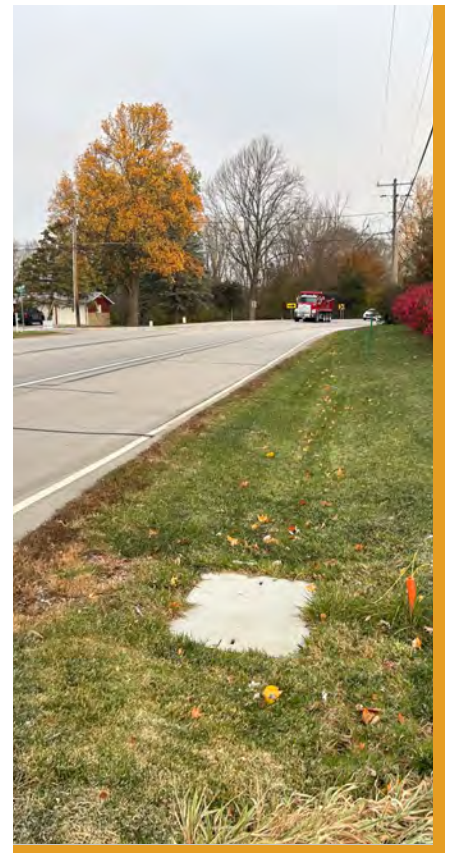
EXPANDING TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS

Key Findings

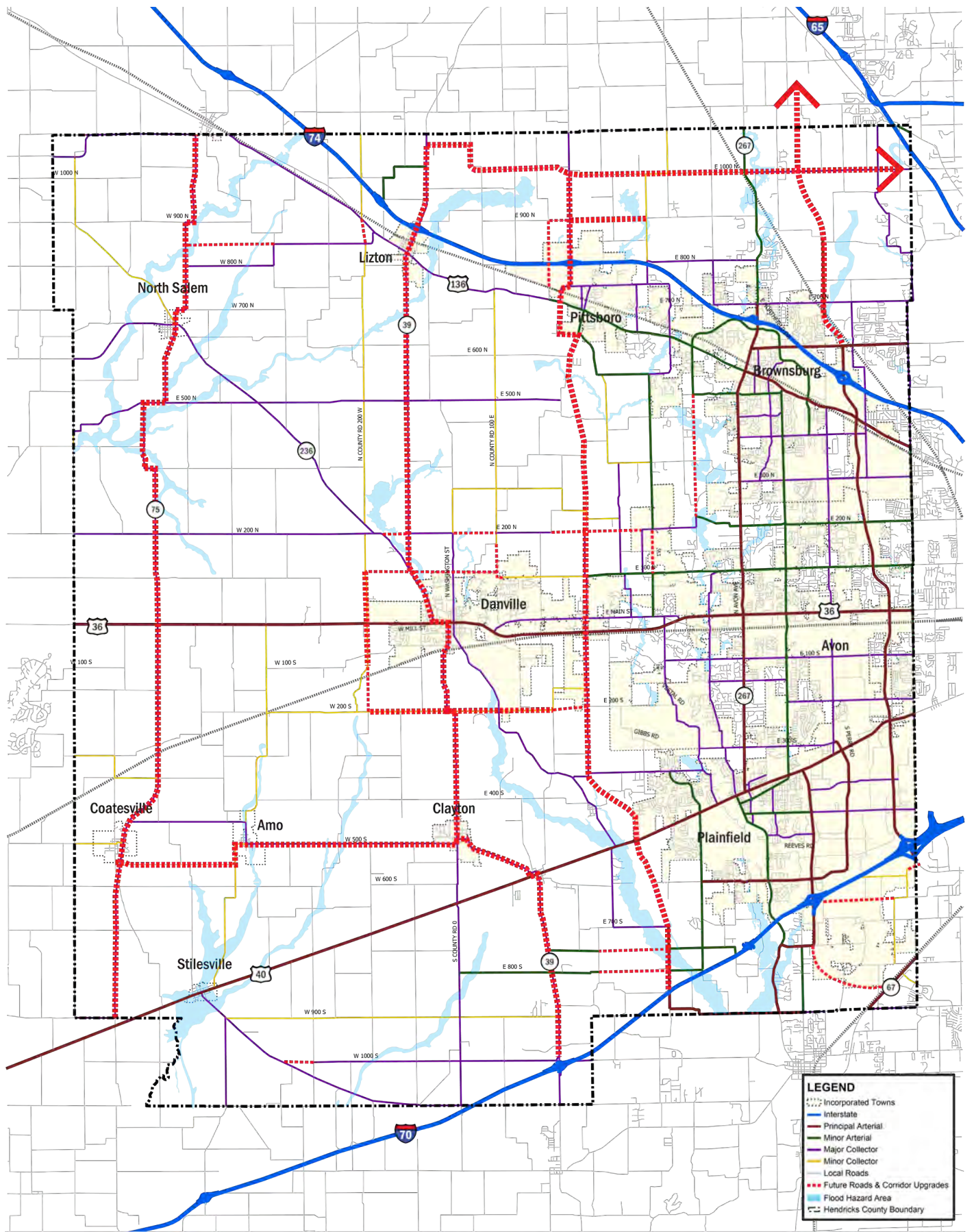
- There are 1,459.5 centerline miles of road in Hendricks County. INDOT maintains 149.3 miles of interstates, highways, and state roads; Hendricks County maintains 753.6 miles of county roads; and local municipalities maintain 556.6 miles of roads (INDOT, 2022).
 - All of the roads under the jurisdiction of the Hendricks County Highway Department are paved.
 - Concerns about the transportation network, especially related to congestion and safety, were a primary theme across community engagement opportunities.
 - More than 70% of community survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “County roads and highways are generally in good condition.”
 - The need for public transportation to serve employment and shopping areas was identified by many respondents to the community survey.
 - The 2019 Hendricks County Thoroughfare Plan outlines the community’s vision for the transportation network and focuses on connectivity, commerce, coordination, and safety.
-

The first phase of Ronald Reagan Parkway was completed in 1996. Hendricks County now has the necessary right-of-way and is pursuing funding to take the parkway to the Hendricks-Boone county line. This project has been decades in the making and provides a crucial north-south connection between Brownsburg, Avon, and Plainfield. It’s critical that Hendricks County continue planning for additional north-south routes as development progresses west to Danville and beyond. Much like the Ronald Reagan corridor, these potential routes need to be analyzed and a preferred alignment selected so that necessary right-of-way can be preserved.

Hendricks County can only control so much of the larger transportation system. The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is responsible for maintaining and improving federal and state routes in Hendricks County, including I-70, I-74, U.S. 36, U.S. 40, U.S. 136, SR 39, SR 67, SR 75, SR 236, and SR 267. While these thoroughfares are a significant benefit to the county, the county has no authority to control improvements. Additionally, where the county can make roadway improvements, many of these roads then cross into municipalities and are again, the responsibility of that community. In order to ensure safe and consistent roadways across Hendricks County, county leaders must work with INDOT, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and towns to coordinate transportation improvements for the benefit of all.



SR 267 is a major north/south arterial on the county’s east side.



TRANSPORTATION PLAN

HENDRICKS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

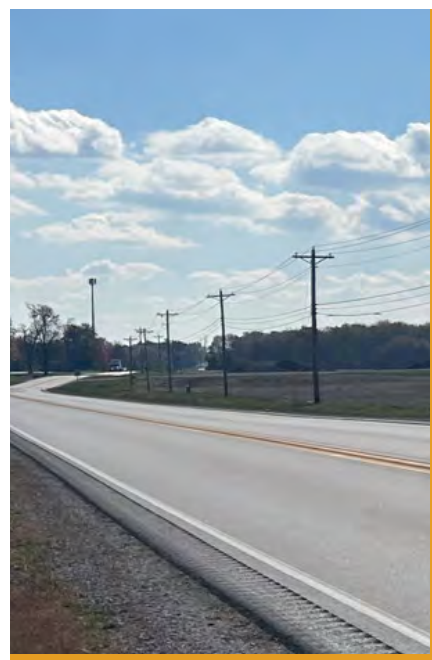


Goal 1

Improve vehicular connectivity across Hendricks County to better serve existing residents and businesses and improve access to desired development areas.

Objective 1: Identify and plan for additional north-south connectors (CR 300 E, SR 39, SR 75).

Development of Ronald Reagan Parkway has improved north-south connectivity on the east side of Hendricks County, but as development has progressed westward, the need for additional north-south routes has become more evident. Hendricks County, in coordination with INDOT and town governments, must begin planning for and protecting the right-of-way for additional north-south routes. The 2019 Thoroughfare Plan identifies a future corridor from CR S 525 E to Miles Road to CR S 300 E as the next major north-south route that would ultimately connect I-70 to I-74. This corridor was identified based on plans for an additional I-70 interchange at or near CR S 525 E. This interchange project has since been removed from the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Other improvements along this corridor, including a new two-lane road from Miles Road/U.S. 40 to CR 300 E/CR 350 S are still included in the MTP. This project will provide an important alternative and relieve traffic on Cartersburg Road. Without a new interchange, traffic along the SR 39 corridor is expected to increase and a SR 39 to CR S 200 E to CR S 225 E corridor on the east side of Danville may also serve as an important north-south route. This route, as well as additional improvements to the SR 39 and SR 75 corridors should be explored as part of future Thoroughfare Plan updates.



SR 39 looking north, between I-70 and Belleville.

Objective 2: Improve east-west connectivity (CR 1000 N, SR 39/CR 500 S, CR 200 N).

As development continues in Brown Township around Ronald Reagan Parkway and in Liberty Township along SR 39, additional east-west routes will be needed. CR 1000 N already serves as an important east-west route before becoming 86th Street in Indianapolis. Improvements to the existing CR 1000 N roadway will be needed as development occurs in Brown Township and in Pittsboro on the north side of I-74. It's also critical that Hendricks County work with Marion County so that improvements continue across the county line along 86th Street. Improvements and connection of CR 1025 E to SR 39, north of Lizton, will also enhance connectivity. Additionally, a better route from the I-70 and SR 39 interchange to Amo and Coatesville was identified as a need during the planning process. Improvements to the W CR 500 S corridor will advance this goal. The 2019 Thoroughfare Plan also identifies CR 200 N as a major collector that should run contiguously across the county, and will become increasingly important as Danville grows northward.

Objective 3: Follow the goals and recommendations outlined in the 2019 Hendricks County Thoroughfare Plan and make necessary updates based on strategies within the comprehensive plan.

The 2019 Hendricks County Thoroughfare Plan recommends changes to the functional classification of roadways based on their role in the larger network, right-of-way standards for each functional classification, and a number of proposed intersection and roadway improvement projects. These projects seek to improve safety and reduce congestion. The thoroughfare plan also creates the foundation by which to require developers to construct/improve roads or dedicate right-of-way as part of the development process. Given the importance of the transportation network to residential quality of life and business success, Hendricks County must continue to plan and implement thoroughfare improvements. Given the pace of change in Hendricks County over the last five years, removal of the interchange project from long-range transportation plans, and the updated recommendations described in this plan, regular reviews of the thoroughfare plan are needed. Incremental updates to the plan are possible without a comprehensive rewrite.

Objective 4: Address safety concerns at key intersections and roadway segments.

Concerns about roadway safety, especially at intersections, was a primary theme throughout community engagement efforts. Unfortunately, some of the most traveled roads, and subsequently busiest intersections, are along state-controlled routes (interstate interchanges, SR 39, U.S. 40, U.S. 36, U.S. 136). Changes to these intersections and corridors will largely be dependent upon INDOT and based on programming the projects into the MPO's long-range transportation plan. However, the Hendricks County Thoroughfare Plan identified a number of intersections in unincorporated areas where a relatively high number of crashes have occurred relative to the amount of traffic at those intersections. These intersections included:

- CR 200 N. and Washington Street near Danville
- CR 225 N. and CR 300 E. near Danville
- CR 500 N. and CR 100 E.
- CR 900 S. and CR 0
- CR 450 N. and CR 500 E. near Brownsburg
- CR 200 S. and CR 225 E. near Danville
- CR 350 N. and CR 500 E. near Brownsburg
- CR 700 S. and CR 400 E.
- CR 425 S. and CR 500 W.
- CR 300 S. and CR 800 W.
- CR 800 N. and CR 500 E.

This analysis should be updated with more recent crash data to determine if these intersections still experience high relative crash rates. Potential improvements should then be examined and programmed into Hendricks County Highway Department plans.

Goal 2

Coordinate with Hendricks County municipalities and outside jurisdictions on major transportation projects that improve connectivity and encourage economic growth.

Objective 1: Assist Danville in planning for an alternate route(s) around the community for through traffic on State Road 39 and U.S. 36.

U.S. 36 serves as Main Street through Danville and carries approximately 20,000 vehicles per day (INDOT, 2023). Traffic counts on SR 39 vary by segment, but average more than 7,500 vehicles per day north of U.S. 36. State Road 39 does not have a straight path through Danville and runs east-west with U.S. 36/Main Street between Cross Street and Urban Street. This routing further increases traffic on U.S. 36/Main Street and complicates travel through Danville. Plans for a SR 39 western bypass have long been discussed. This project would need to be led by INDOT and would take years to study, design, and fund. In the meantime, Hendricks County and Danville should work together to explore additional improvements to east/west and north/south corridors to relieve congestion on U.S. 36/Main Street. This could include improvements to Lincoln Street and W CR 50 S as well as enhancements to S CR 75 W and S CR 200 W.

Objective 2: Continue discussions with Boone County, Whitestown, and Zionsville to connect Ronald Reagan Parkway to I-65.

Planning and construction of Ronald Reagan Parkway has been a collaborative effort involving many communities, agencies, and business and property owners over more than two decades. To realize the full benefit and potential of the corridor, it must connect to I-65 in Boone County. Hendricks County is currently in the process of extending the parkway from CR 600 N to CR 750 N, with anticipated completion in 2024. Plans for the next phase, from CR 750 N to CR 1000 N, are complete but awaiting funding. A final phase from CR 1000 N to the Hendricks/Boone county line will also be needed, but is only likely to occur once an alignment through Boone County has been planned.

The 2017 Boone County Thoroughfare Plan includes a potential Ronald Reagan Parkway extension that would continue north from the Hendricks/Boone county line before turning west and intersecting SR 267 south of Boone County Road 550 S. It will be incumbent upon Boone County, Whitestown, and Zionsville to drive this project forward, but Hendricks County should partner with them to advocate for the project and its inclusion in the Indianapolis MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).



Northern terminus of Ronald Reagan Parkway at CR 600 N.

INTERCHANGE AREA PLANNING

The Town of Plainfield recently studied alternatives for a potential I-70 interchange between Quaker Boulevard (Exit 66) and SR 39 (Exit 59). An alternative that would have created a new interchange at S County Road 525 E was at one point included on the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). This project was ultimately removed from the MTP in 2023 and a new interchange in this area is no longer included on MPO/INDOT long range plans. Hendricks County did not take a position for or against the previous interchange proposal but residents and property owners in the area did voice concerns. If additional interchange plans are revisited, here or elsewhere along I-70, Hendricks County will need to better understand potential costs and benefits before supporting or opposing a project. If a future interchange is approved, a detailed sub-area study will be needed to evaluate transportation impacts and potential development in the area. Because of the time required to apply for and receive federal funding, in addition to design and construction, the county would have ample time to conduct a planning process before any future interchange would be open.

Objective 3: Coordinate with IndyGo to enhance public transportation service within Hendricks County as a critical component of workforce mobility needs.

Public transit service in Hendricks County is limited to on-demand, curb-to-curb transportation provided by LINK Hendricks County and Hendricks County Senior Services. These services are typically offered Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and must be scheduled in advance. At the time of the comprehensive planning process, there was no fixed route transit service in the county. IndyGo operates a route (Number 10) that runs between downtown Indianapolis and Raceway Road (the county line) between Rockville Road and 10th Street, but it does not extend into Hendricks County.

To assist with ensuring continued economic development success and a workforce that is able to access jobs within employment districts in Avon, Brownsburg, and Plainfield, public transit service will be critical. Hendricks County should work to organize regional leaders, employers, and potential transit service providers to explore enhancements to public transportation options between residential and employment concentrations.

Goal 3

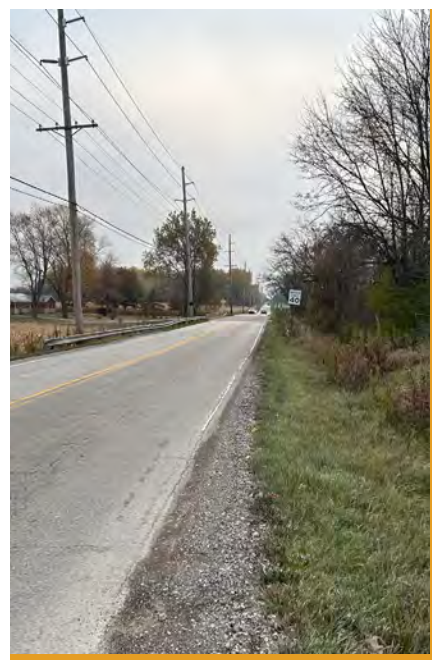
Manage access along County thoroughfares to ensure safe and efficient traffic flow.

Objective 1: Utilize corridor planning and access management master plans for key thoroughfares to identify existing and future access points so that future development and redevelopment projects happen with respect to the broader corridor vision.

As development occurs along the extended Ronald Reagan Parkway, SR 39, CR 1000 N, and other key corridors, it is essential that roadway safety and functionality are protected. The number of driveways or curb cuts along a road has a significant impact on safety and traffic capacity. Access management strategies involve coordinating and balancing development access needs with the area-wide transportation purpose of a corridor. Successful access management strategies require careful planning and anticipation of future development needs to facilitate access in a regular and consistent manner. Well-designed access systems can contribute to established community character, advance economic development goals, and protect the county's investment in local roads.

Objective 2: Reinforce existing standards that limit individual lot access onto arterial and collector roadways.

The Hendricks County Highway Department, which is responsible for maintaining the 772 miles of county roadways, made a concerted effort to pave all of these road miles and eliminate public gravel roads from the county. This has improved access across the county and supported rural residents' quality of life. At the same time, this improved access has resulted in more interest in rural estate lots dispersed across the county. There are currently development standards in place within the subdivision control ordinance that prohibit individual lots in a residential subdivision to have access from an arterial or collector roadway. The county must continue to promote and enforce these standards not only to ensure the safety of motorists, but also to protect rural character. Continued minor subdivisions along road frontages can result in rows of houses that begin to diminish safety, access, development potential, and character of the county.



CR 1000 N is a major east/west connector on the county's northern boundary.

TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

	Project & Strategies	Timeframe	Responsible Party
GOAL 1	<p>Update the Hendricks County Thoroughfare Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Future Land Use Map, as well as transportation and land use recommendations from town comprehensive plans, to coordinate future transportation network goals and projects. • Update analyses with more recent traffic and crash data. • Develop a list of key projects and work with the Indianapolis MPO to ensure they are included in future transportation plans. 	Short-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Building Department <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway Department • Engineering Department • Area Plan Commission • County Commissioners
GOAL 1	<p>Program local road and intersection improvements into Hendricks County capital improvements planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine, based on evidence, and prioritize a list of needed intersection and roadway enhancement projects. • Identify which projects would be candidates for funding through the Indianapolis MPO versus what will need to be funded locally. • Allocate resources as available to improve the transportation network. 	Short-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering Department • County Council <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway Department • Planning & Building Department • County Commissioners
GOAL 2	<p>Continue planning for Ronald Reagan Parkway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue funding for the already designed phase from CR 750 N to CR 1000 N. • Allocate funds for the design and construction of a future phase to extend the parkway from CR 1000 N to the Hendricks/Boone county line. • Support Boone County efforts to extend the parkway north to SR 267/I-65. 	Medium-Term / Long-Term	<p>Leads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering Department • County Council <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway Department • Planning & Building Department • County Commissioners • Boone County (including Whitestown and Zionsville) • INDOT
GOAL 2	<p>Create a Hendricks County Transit Task Force.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct outreach with area workforce to identify potential ridership. • Organize county and town leaders, employers, and transit providers to better understand opportunities and barriers to enhancing transit service to key employment and shopping areas. • Pursue grant funding for temporary/trial route expansions into Hendricks County. 	Medium-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA) • Indianapolis MPO • Town Leaders • Major Employers • IndyGo • LINK Hendricks County • Hendricks County Senior Services



INFRASTRUCTURE



INFRASTRUCTURE AVAILABILITY

The availability of infrastructure and ability to extend it will be the biggest driver of growth in rural Hendricks County. While it is possible to develop individual home sites and small commercial or industrial businesses using on-site septic sewer systems and wells, development of any significant intensity will require service by municipal or regional water and wastewater utilities. The extension of water and sewer utility infrastructure is a key growth management tool, dictating where and when development can occur. Municipalities will typically annex property as they extend water and sewer service, but there will be areas across unincorporated Hendricks County that are appropriate for development but will be served by the Hendricks County Regional Sewer District or a municipality but in an area that will not be annexed.

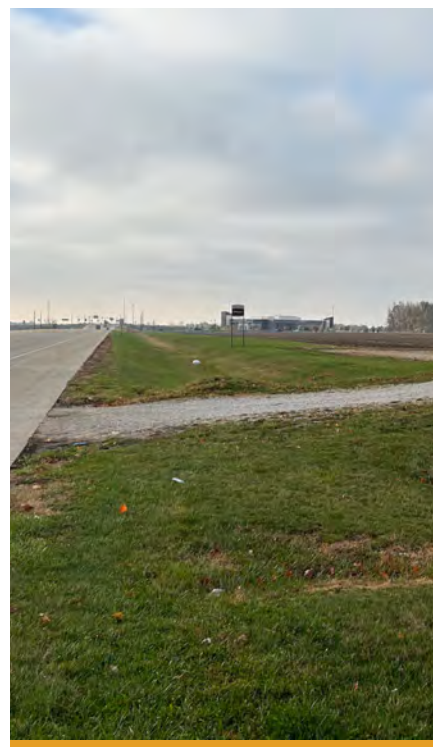
UTILITIES ARE THE KEY GROWTH MANAGEMENT TOOL

Key Findings

- Where available, a majority of respondents to the community survey agreed or strongly agreed that water and sanitary sewer service is reliable and affordable.
 - Most of the growing communities in Hendricks County continue to plan infrastructure capacity increases to serve potential development.
 - Water and sewer utility networks in small towns have generally been able to meet resident needs but there may be limited capacity to serve new growth. There are also potential issues with the age and condition of some infrastructure in these communities.
 - Residents had mixed opinions regarding options and quality of high-speed internet across Hendricks County. The eastern two-thirds of the county generally has good coverage; more significant service gaps are present in the western third.
-

There are a number of sewer service providers across Hendricks County. This includes town-operated systems in Brownsburg, Clayton, Danville, Lizton, North Salem, Pittsboro, and Plainfield, and a combined wastewater treatment plant that serves both Amo and Coatesville and is located approximately halfway between the communities. Hendricks County Regional Sewer District serves portions of incorporated Brownsburg and Avon as well as unincorporated portions of Brown, Liberty, and Lincoln townships. West Central Conservancy District serves the majority of Avon, Washington Township, and small portions of Central and Lincoln townships. Stilesville has a sewer system but is an effluent system which means each user has an on-site septic tank for solids and only the effluent (liquid) is conveyed for treatment. This is a likely limiting factor for growth in and near Stilesville.

Town-operated water utilities are present in Brownsburg, Danville, North Salem, Pittsboro, Plainfield. Citizens Energy Group provides water to much of Avon and Lizton, portions of Brownsburg, and certain areas of unincorporated Hendricks County, including around the I-70 and SR 39 interchange.



While currently unincorporated, areas along Ronald Reagan Parkway are served by utilities from adjacent towns.

Goal 1

Expand utility infrastructure to key locations within Hendricks County as a way to direct growth and development.



Hazelwood has potential for new development due to the demand surrounding the SR 39 and I-70 interchange, but lack of utility infrastructure will limit growth potential.

Objective 1: Coordinate utility master planning across regional utility districts and municipal utility departments to serve potential growth areas.

The ability to expand sewer and water infrastructure networks to growth areas will be the biggest determinant of if and when future development can occur. As municipalities have grown, so to have their infrastructure networks, including beyond municipal limits in many instances. Most of Avon is served by West Central Conservancy District (WCCD) and Brownsburg operates their own sewer and water utilities. However, Hendricks County Regional Sewer District (HCRSD) also serves parts of Brownsburg and Avon through past territory agreements. HCRSD is also expanding its network in Brown and Liberty townships. These networks will continue to grow together and it is imperative town and county officials work together to ensure clarity and efficiency in phased expansion into future service areas.

Objective 2: Evaluate alternatives for serving unincorporated communities, such as Cartersburg and Hazelwood, through regional utility districts or extensions from adjacent towns.

There are several unincorporated communities across Hendricks County that lack municipal sewer, water, and stormwater infrastructure. Individual lots have on-site well and septic systems, but many of the lots are not large enough to construct a new septic system if the original one fails. Failing septic systems can cause public health and water quality issues, especially where homes and businesses are also utilizing wells for drinking water. While there are no known issues at present, homes in these areas tend to be much older than the county average and the potential for issues will only increase with time.

Cartersburg lies between Plainfield, Clayton, and Hendricks County Regional Sewer District (HCRSD) territories and there may be multiple options to serve the community. More detailed alternatives analysis and cost estimates will be needed. Service to Hazelwood would likely need to come from a westward expansion of the HCRSD network around the I-70 and SR 39 interchange.

Goal 2

Improve utility infrastructure in small-towns to better serve existing residents and businesses and attract limited growth.

Objective 1: Determine the feasibility of creating municipal water or sewer networks where they are currently missing from communities.

In addition to several unincorporated communities that lack sewer and water infrastructure, some incorporated towns in Hendricks County provide sewer or water service but not both. Retrofitting utilities in already developed areas will be costly and create temporary disruptions to properties and the roadway network. Some property owners may also resist change and fear the costs of an additional utility bill. However, there are significant public health and environmental benefits of access to clean water and connection to sewer conveyance and treatment systems. These utility upgrades will also be critical in reversing declining population trends and supporting efforts to realize limited housing and business development. Modern utility systems will help to maintain or increase property values and provide much needed relief to property owners should on-site well or septic systems fail and need replacement.

Beyond sewer and water infrastructure, many of the small towns in Hendricks County lack complete stormwater infrastructure networks and subsequently experience localized flooding after heavy rain events. In conjunction with sewer or water improvements, these communities should look to expand their stormwater networks.

Objective 2: Address capacity issues in small-town utility systems that, when improved, would allow towns to better control the character and density of new development.

Through the planning process, many of the smaller towns in Hendricks County expressed an interest in capturing reinvestment and attracting at least a small amount of growth. To be able to do this, these communities must maintain local utilities to a satisfactory level of service for new and existing customers. Expanding water and sewer treatment capacity to serve new investment, rather than relying on private wells and septic systems also promotes efficient use of land and road infrastructure by encouraging more compact development within existing town limits or near existing developed areas. Much like the larger communities to the east, low density development utilizing well and septic systems may serve as a future barrier to town growth as infrastructure extensions will be more costly, therefore making projects financially unfeasible.



The Coatesville and Amo Conservancy District provides sewer services to residents and businesses in both communities.

Goal 3

Speed up broadband deployment to underserved parts of the County and work to clarify potential territory conflicts between providers.



Publicly available broadband is a major asset to rural communities and can often be implemented at a town's community center.

Objective 1: Help communities become “Broadband Ready” through the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA).

For Hendricks County to remain an attractive place to live and work, access to suitable broadband service is essential. A fast, reliable connection is increasingly necessary for residents to work from home, complete schoolwork or participate in remote learning, schedule or attend healthcare appointments, explore job opportunities, and connect with friends and family. The Broadband Ready Communities Program was created as a tool to encourage broadband development throughout Indiana by serving as an information resource and certifying local communities as being broadband ready. This certification helps notify telecommunications businesses that a community has taken steps to reduce barriers to infrastructure installation and investment. While several Hendricks County communities have conducted different broadband readiness assessments, none are Broadband Ready Certified by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA). While becoming certified does not guarantee new investments, it can help reduce regulatory hurdles and help local providers acquire Next Level Connections Broadband Grants as additional rounds are funded.

Objective 2: Encourage broadband providers to pursue Next Level Connections Broadband Grants or other funding sources to help reduce the cost of broadband infrastructure installation.

The Next Level Connections Broadband Grant Program was created to fund the deployment of broadband infrastructure and provide eligible broadband service to unserved end users, including households, businesses and community institutions, such as schools and medical facilities. Indiana broadband providers serving at least 100 customers for at least three years in Indiana are eligible for this program.

INFRASTRUCTURE ACTION PLAN

	Project & Strategies	Timeframe	Responsible Party
GOAL 1	<p>Continue utility master planning efforts to serve potential growth areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop long-term sewer master plans Hendricks County Regional Sewer District (HCRSD) in Brown and Liberty townships. • Coordinate HCRSD efforts with town utilities and other regional providers to build-out infrastructure networks as efficiently as possible. • Create Preliminary Engineering Reports (PERs) to identify more detailed improvements and cost estimates so they may be programmed into capital improvements plans. 	Short-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility Providers <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners • County Council • Town Leadership • Planning & Building Department
GOAL 1	<p>Conduct feasibility studies to determine the possibility of providing sewer and water utility service to unincorporated communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct outreach to property owners to understand current issues and potential interest in municipal or regional utility service. • Identify potential utility providers for each unincorporated community. • Pursue grant funding for studies to identify and evaluate alternatives for each community. 	Long-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility Providers <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners • County Council • Property Owners
GOAL 2	<p>Improve utility infrastructure and capacity in small town systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain existing levels of service for current residents and businesses. • Create Preliminary Engineering Reports (PERs) to identify potential improvements and cost estimates for water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure improvements. • Use PERs to pursue grant funding and low/no-interest loans to construct improvements. 	Short-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Leadership • Utility Providers <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property Owners
GOAL 3	<p>Create a Broadband Task Force and pursue Broadband Ready certification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize county and town leaders and broadband providers. • Use materials created by the Indiana Broadband Office to prepare for and pursue Broadband Ready status. • Use Broadband Ready status to assist providers with expansion of broadband networks across western Hendricks County. 	Medium-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Leadership • Broadband Providers • Indiana Broadband Office





08

HOUSING



DIVERSE HOUSING

Increasing both the type and number of housing units is critical for a growing community such as Hendricks County to remain competitive in the greater metropolitan region as new employment-based growth continues to occur. Focusing efforts to diversify the housing stock in small towns and unincorporated areas of the county will also help drive quality of life initiatives and spur reinvestment in community cores.

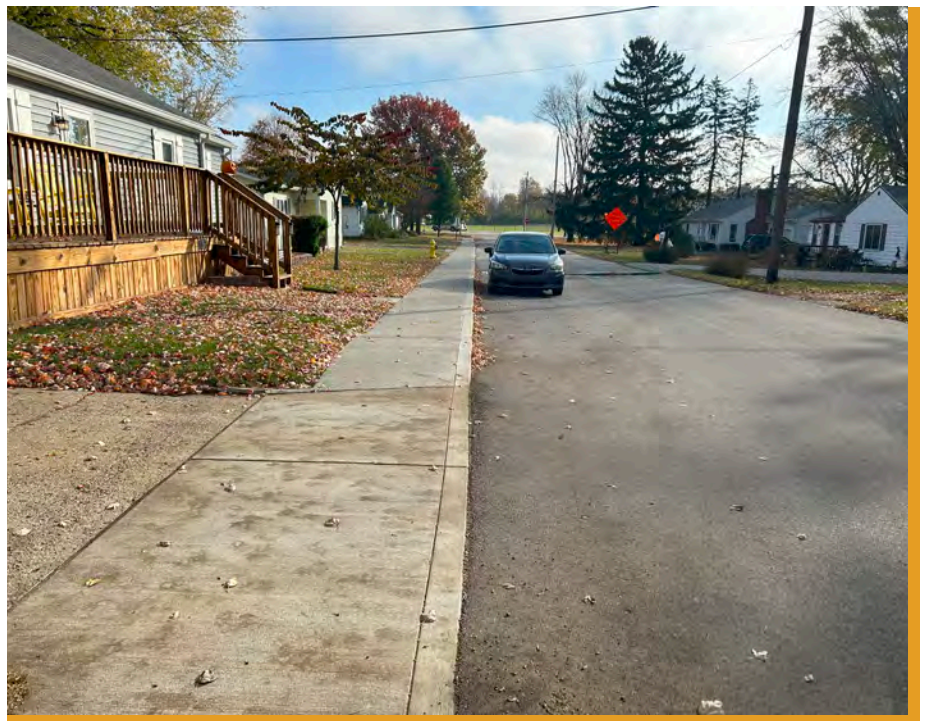
Rural Hendricks County has historically preserved farmland and natural landscapes from over-development through zoning and subdivision control ordinances, including larger minimum lot sizes and limited permitted uses. While these policies have partially worked as intended over the last decade, additional policies and standards may be needed to better manage rural residential development pressures.

DIVERSIFYING THE HOUSING SUPPLY

Key Findings

- Housing in unincorporated areas of Hendricks County is primarily comprised of single-family dwellings, with lot sizes determined by the prevailing ordinances at that time. Previous ordinances required a 1-acre minimum lot size during much of the 1970s; this was later increased to a 20-acre minimum lot size in hopes of better preserving farmland. The minimum lot size is now primarily dictated by the land area needed for on-site well and septic systems in areas not served by water and sewer utilities.
 - Although housing diversity has grown on the eastern edge of the county, there remains a lack of options for first-time home buyers, renters, retirees, or those looking to upsize within the smaller communities or rural regions.
 - Rising housing costs have created gaps in affordability throughout the county, especially in town's with limited housing unit diversity that have seen low development interest over the last decade.
 - Multi-family housing was supported at public engagement events and online surveys but should be directed to areas with high traffic access, community services, and existing utilities.
-

Diversifying the unincorporated county's housing stock to support current and future residents is a critical theme in this plan. At the same time, new housing or rehabilitation of existing structures should not conflict with existing neighborhood or town character. Each community in Hendricks County has unique building character born from the needs of past residents. While converting the second floor of commercial buildings to residential uses may work in Coatesville, it may be possible in Amo. It is up to county and town leaders to understand the specific needs of each community and implement development that works best.



Hendrick County's rural communities hold a variety of housing types within and adjacent to their downtown cores which fill both owner-occupied and renter needs.

While not frequently seen in unincorporated areas of Hendricks County, multi-family housing, like the complex outside of Clayton, is a growing market. New multi-family development will need to be directed to locations within the county with adequate transportation and utility access and be situated as to not conflict with existing land uses.



The Waveland Place in Lizton is an example of how historic building adaptive reuse can benefit a community. The three-story school house built in 1921 was converted into apartments in an area of the county lacking housing diversity.



Large-lot subdivisions are the most common type of residential development in rural Hendricks County. Although they are a very desired product, they can consume more farmland when compared to compact options and are costly to serve with infrastructure and public services.



Goal 1

Allow for diverse housing densities and product types to support housing affordability in Hendricks County.

Objective 1: Use planned utility service areas to identify locations suitable for multi-family development.

Rising home costs and shifting age demographics across the state have led to higher demand for rental housing including apartments, townhomes, duplexes, and patio homes. Although Avon, Brownsburg, and Plainfield are the typical locations for these housing types, there is demand elsewhere within the county for housing beyond single-family subdivisions and rural estates. While the demand may exist for multi-family or higher density housing, these developments cannot occur without supporting infrastructure. Due to this, planned infrastructure projects meant to expand the county's utility service areas should be used as a guide to determine prime locations for multi-family housing and related residential development. Areas north of I-74 or along the SR 39 corridor south of Clayton to the county line are where these developments should first be targeted. These developments should not be located in historically rural areas of the county that are targets for agricultural estates and only served by local road networks.

Objective 2: Promote duplexes, townhomes, and patio homes in small towns to increase housing availability without negatively impacting existing town character or services.

Many of the rural communities in Hendricks County plan to incentivize housing development and rehabilitation over the next decade to improve their housing stock, attract new residents, and offer options to current residents wanting to upgrade or downsize. Allowing a more diverse housing mix in these communities, that fits with the character of existing structures, will help accomplish these goals. Townhomes, duplexes, and patio home developments are all examples of how more dense housing could be used to supplement the existing stock in these towns. Patio homes are typically smaller-size, single-story units attached in pairs or smaller groupings. These towns may have a hard time supporting larger multi-family apartment developments, but individual buildings of 4 to eight units may potentially be integrated into existing development patterns.



Older housing stock can be rehabilitated from single-family to duplexes while retaining neighborhood character. Source: John & Sherry Petersik

Objective 3: Consider amending the County's zoning ordinance to allow higher residential densities and smaller structure sizes near employment centers and regional transportation corridors.

Hendricks County has historically permitted rural estates and large-lot single-family subdivisions in unincorporated areas with few allowances for other options. However, as land around interchanges and major thoroughfares is built out and residential demand increases there may be a need for higher density housing growth to accommodate demand and preserve agricultural land. These housing options would also support the need for workforce obtainable housing in the region, which will become increasingly important as the county's interstate and highway corridors are built out with employment-focused development. Although current zoning districts Single-family (RD) and Multifamily Residential (RE) begin to address higher densities, their lot size and frontage minimums may need updated to allow for more compact development.



Commercial buildings in the county's small towns could be re-purposed to diversity housing options and find uses for older buildings.

Goal 2

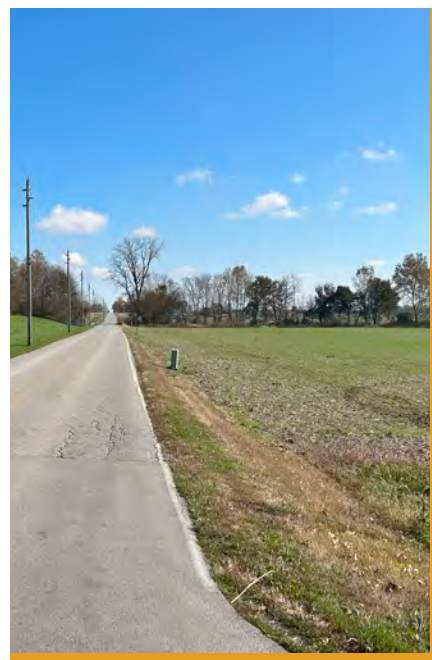
Direct rural estate lots to locations outside Town Growth Areas and where development does not impact existing rural character or agricultural practices.

Objective 1: Develop specific site evaluation criteria that balances the preservation of agricultural land with private property rights and the demand for large lot residential development.

The County has historically used minimum lot sizes as a method to try to preserve agricultural land in the face of increasing demand for residential development. The previous 20-acre minimum lot size was used to ensure new homes were compatible with existing agriculture character. However, it may have unintentionally resulted in more land taken out of crop production in cases where someone would have been happy with five acres but had to create a 20-acre lot. That standard has been removed, but the county still faces challenges in guiding and evaluating proposed residential lots in agriculture areas. Going forward, county leadership and staff should assess the long-term viability of current residential, large-lot development criteria and determine if more defined guidelines would be beneficial. This could include changes to lot size and setback standards, expanding permitted uses in agricultural districts, or amending design standards to better allow new lots to conform with natural landscapes or existing development. For example, there may be cases where shared access, access only via easement, or atypical lot configurations may better preserve tillable acreage while still allowing for new home sites.

Objective 2: Ensure subdivisions in potential town growth areas are designed to facilitate future utility and transportation infrastructure extensions through thoughtful site design and the dedication of public-right-of-way and easements.

As the major towns in Hendricks County continue to expand their corporate limits it will be critical that new development and subdivisions in potential town growth areas (identified on the Future Land Use Map, page 35) don't negatively impact future growth. This can be accomplished through additional criteria that ensure future annexation, utilities, and other infrastructure extensions are not limited due to poor site design or lack of easements. These criteria, while administrative in nature, should be incorporated into future zoning and subdivision ordinance updates. Similar policies are also outlined in the county's 2019 Thoroughfare Plan, calling out the need for right away along roads leading to new development that may have potential for growth further into the future.



Towns such as Amo have adjacent areas suitable for new subdivisions.

Objective 3: Maintain the exempt subdivision process for single lot splits.

As outlined in Hendricks County's Subdivision Control Ordinance, the exempt subdivision process is for the purpose of splitting off an existing legally conforming residence and accessory structures, provided that the new residential parcel meets all current development standards applicable to a residential parcel in the relevant zoning district, and the remaining parent parcel is at least 20 acres in size. This process has been supported by local developers and should remain as an administrative process, not requiring approval by the Plan Commission, in the future.

HOUSING ACTION PLAN

	Project & Strategies	Timeframe	Responsible Party
GOAL 1	Update Zoning and Subdivision Control Ordinances. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review residential development standards, including minimum building and lot sizes, and their potential impact to housing cost. Remove standards that increase development costs without a public benefit. Allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and other housing types in more districts. 	Short-Term	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & Building Department Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area Plan Commission County Commissioners
GOAL 1	Create site evaluation forms to assist staff in determining building suitability. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize GIS data to build a template that looks at existing land use patterns, functional class, soil suitability, and other factors that can be used by county staff. Set criteria thresholds that can indicate if a development type is unsuited to a particular site. 	Medium-Term	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & Building Department Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engineering Department (GIS) Local Developers
GOAL 2	Educate residents on how compact development can preserve farmland and natural assets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with local agricultural groups to create informational packets and resources to assist county staff when speaking with residents. 	Medium-Term	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & Building Department Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purdue Extension Local Property Owners
GOAL 2	Manage residential development inside Town Growth Areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with town officials and developers to update development regulations and procedures for new growth in these areas. 	Long-Term	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & Building Department Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Developers Town Staff



09

AGRICULTURE



AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR FUTURE

Development pressures from Indianapolis and rapid residential demand have caused explosive growth in Hendricks County over the past decade, primarily along the eastern border of the county. Although logistics, manufacturing, and retail have slowly grown into the prominent industry bases over the last several decades, community leadership recognizes agriculture as an industry that will continue to be a prominent characteristic for Hendricks County. This plan strives to support established agricultural uses while allowing moderate development in more rural settings to occur when opportunities arise where appropriate.

SUPPORTING AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY

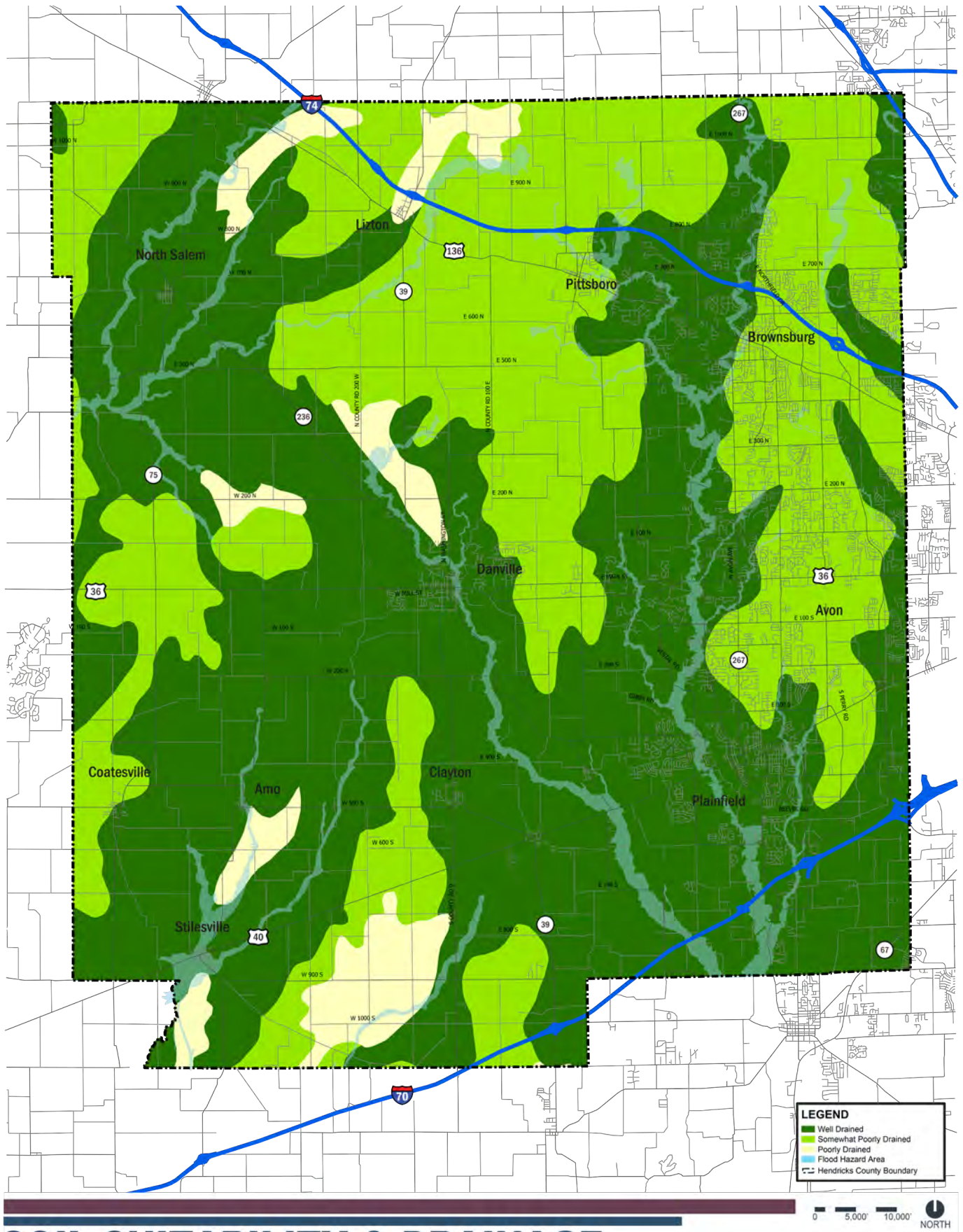
Key Findings

- Hendricks County's rural character and culture have been heavily influenced by its agricultural history. It is expected that it will continue to be a major part of the community in the future.
 - In terms of soil suitability and drainage, Hendricks County's rural areas are prime for crop production and other agricultural uses.
 - Approximately 64% of total land area in Hendricks County has a tax code classifying it as agricultural use, totaling just over 164,000 acres.
 - According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture (USDA), the market value of agricultural products sold in Hendricks County was \$122,231,000.
 - Agricultural land uses aren't limited to crop production or livestock, but also include hobby farms, vineyards, and operations that rely on direct consumer interaction such as orchards.
-

Although new growth has expanded in recent years onto land historically used for agriculture, nearly two-thirds of the county's land area is still used for farming or preserved in its natural wooded state. The region's soil types are a major reason for the community's continued agriculture success, with a majority of the county having soils with good drainage properties. The Soil Suitability & Drainage map on the following page highlights these areas.



Harvest season in Hendricks County.



SOIL SUITABILITY & DRAINAGE

HENDRICKS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Goal 1

Preserve large agriculture tracts and protect the viability of agricultural operations within Hendricks County.

Objective 1: Permit more compact development in appropriate areas as a way to use land more efficiently and limit the loss of farmland.

Hendricks County has historically used minimum lot size in minor subdivisions as a tool to limit development in primarily agricultural areas. This 20-acre minimum has allowed county staff to limit small lot splits that would slowly take away productive agricultural land in western areas of the county. While this method has seen success in the past, it has grown unsustainable due to rising housing demand, and the need for an alternative policy to allow denser housing development while preserving productive agricultural land has grown. This could be achieved through zoning policy updates which allow cluster development and a higher number of units per acre in agricultural zones. Where compact or cluster development occurs, it is even more important that it is high quality given the increased density.

Objective 2: Allow a range of commercial activity on farm properties as a means to increase revenue and support farm operations.

While traditional row crop and animal production will continue being prominent agricultural activities in Hendricks County, allowing accessory uses that promote local sales, demonstrations, or u-pick services could add commercial value and reinforce community character.



Field used for row crop production.

Goal 2

Promote the stewardship of farmland.

Objective 1: Don't let land sit idle; farm it up until development activity commences or plant pollinator-friendly plants if a complete growing season is unlikely.

To allow prime agricultural land to stay productive, even if it holds entitlements for future development, land with existing agricultural uses should be farmed up until development is set to occur. Either through contracts or easements, allowing land to be productive in some capacity throughout the year is preferable to vacant land awaiting development.

Objective 2: Protect fence rows and natural windbreaks for the environmental, aesthetic, and habitat benefits they provide.

Fence rows, tree lines, and other natural windbreaks seen throughout the county not only often serve as ownership boundaries, but also provide environmental and aesthetic benefits to the surrounding countryside. These barriers protect topsoil from wind erosion and create buffers for farmsteads and residential development in rural Hendricks County.

AGRICULTURE ACTION PLAN

	Project & Strategies	Timeframe	Responsible Party
GOAL 1	Update Zoning and Subdivision Control Ordinances. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate minimum lot sizes in agriculturally zoned areas and determine if they will still be successful in preserving farmland in the future. 	Short-Term	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & Building Department Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area Plan Commission County Commissioners
GOAL 2	Ensure agricultural land remains productive through and after new development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with property owners applying for zoning changes who would be willing to allow farming to continue up until the date of construction. Incorporate landscaping requirements into the county's UDO that replicate or replace fence rows and natural windbreaks. 	Long-Term	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & Building Department Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area Plan Commission County Commissioners Property Owners



QUALITY OF PLACE



PLACEMAKING INITIATIVES

Hendricks County has focused on placemaking initiatives over the last several decades to enhance the county's image and create an inviting community for new residents and businesses. While projects and programs supporting a community's quality of place can be broad in nature, for Hendricks County it involves creating new recreational opportunities, working with local organizations and schools to identify the populations needs, expanding housing options, realizing the potential of small towns, and recognizing the community's historic and cultural heritage.

While Hendricks County Parks & Recreation oversees three major recreational assets within unincorporated areas of the county, there are over 30 parks, trails, and other facilities in Hendricks County accessible by residents. This includes facilities managed by both municipalities and townships, but does not account for the smaller parks and recreation spaces managed by smaller towns.

ENHANCING COMMUNITY CAPITAL

Key Findings

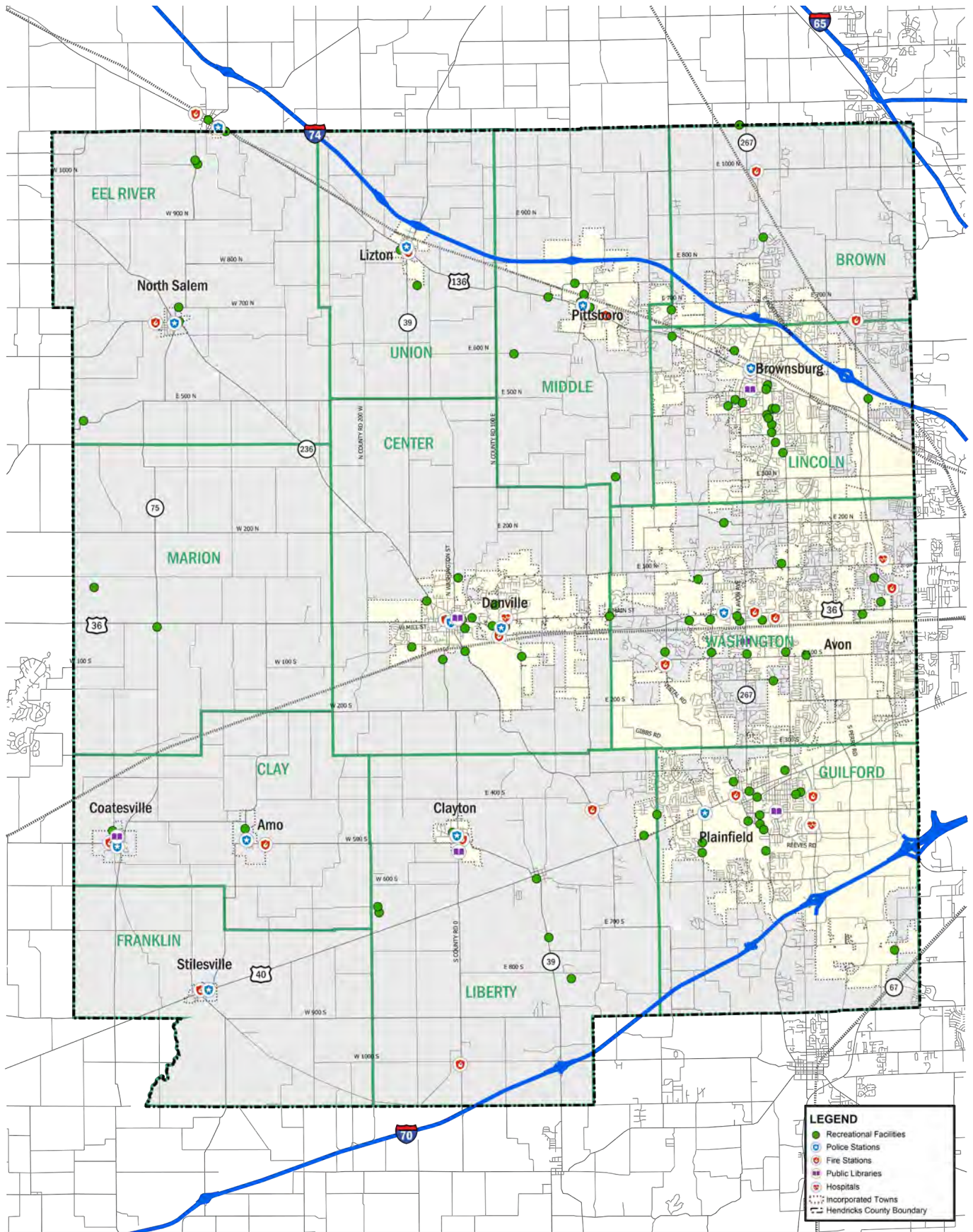
- Residents fear quality of place investments in the county's smaller towns may be overlooked in favor of new neighborhoods and development occurring on the east side of Hendricks County.
- The Hendricks County Parks & Recreation Department prefers acquiring large sites for new amenities instead of single parcels, although the former is more challenging to accomplish.
- Supporting connectivity between rural destinations, branding and identity, and infill development is needed for the long-term viability of the county's small towns.
- Downtown cores in the smaller communities have the potential to be centers of new capital investments that build from existing historic building stock and walkable neighborhoods.

There are 14 nationally registered historic sites in Hendricks County, four of which are in unincorporated areas of the county, and four historic districts, one in Plainfield, two in Danville, and one in North Salem. There are also 72 county-designated historic properties rated as 'outstanding' and 238 rated 'notable'. Structures and sites identified contribute to local history or showcase specific architectural style from the region.

The map on the following page identifies other community facilities in the county including police and fire, libraries, major healthcare facilities, and recreational amenities.



Pearl Street in North Salem is the town's commercial center.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

HENDRICKS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Goal 1

Continue to improve park, trail, and recreation facilities and programs.

Objective 1: Continue to plan for and build-out a trail network that connects communities across Hendricks County.

Hendricks County has been successful in expanding trail infrastructure throughout the community over the last decade, either through small-scale additions in towns and park spaces or regional efforts connecting residents to destinations outside the county. The Vandalia Trail is one of these efforts. While currently in Plainfield, Coatesville, and Amo, there are plans to link the trail across all communities between U.S. 36 and U.S. 40, creating a county-wide system that can link residents to both Marion County and Putnam County. The trail also serves as a linkage for larger networks across the state and country, being part of the National Road Heritage Trail System that connects users through central Indiana and to destinations and networks in both Ohio and Illinois.

There are also multiple locations where rails-to-trails are planned or could be planned within Hendricks County. One example in progress is the continuation of the B&O Walkway, which begins just south of Lucas Oil Indianapolis Raceway Park and continues northwest towards North Salem. Once complete, it will create a link between residents living in northwest Hendricks County to destinations in Brownsburg and Avon with the potential to continue east towards Speedway and the Near West Side in Indianapolis.



The Vandalia Trail cuts through a wide range of rural landscapes and towns, functioning as a local amenity and regional attraction.



Washington Township Park has a variety of amenities that make it a unique destination in Hendricks County with the ability to hold all types of programming.



Ride-shares aren't limited to strictly urban settings and can be utilized to bring recreational and transportation options to rural communities. It is important to identify on-going maintenance and funding responsibilities before a system is implemented.

Objective 2: Expand park facilities across Hendricks County in conjunction with future growth.

As areas targeted for development according to the Hendricks County Future Land Use Map begin to see growth, consideration should be given to how recreational spaces should be built alongside new development. Either through developer-led initiatives or public funded facilities, policies should be created that ensure residents moving into newly built neighborhoods have access to parks, trails, natural lands, and other spaces. It will also be important to preemptively assign ownership to these spaces, either through the Parks Department, neighborhood HOAs, or other entities to ensure proper upkeep and safety.

Objective 3: Identify potential community events or recreation-focused activities that could be integrated into County parks on an annual or monthly basis.

A common theme heard throughout public engagement during the creation of the Hendricks County Comprehensive Plan was a desire for more programming in regional and local parks. Residents identified the county's recreational spaces as major benefits to the community but felt the types of facilities and structured events could be expanded, specifically mentioning activities catering to children and older generations. Many of the physical facilities mentioned during public engagement, such as playgrounds or pickleball courts, are already within the scope and capacity of the Hendricks County Parks Department to accomplish, the programming aspects and planning annual or monthly events is where the department may lack capacity.



Hummel Park serves the residents of Guilford Township, Plainfield, and county residents.

Goal 2

Continue efforts to advertise and preserve local history and culture within small towns through placemaking projects and community branding.

Objective 1: Reinforce the idea of downtowns being the heart of small towns through building rehabilitation, pedestrian infrastructure improvements, and enhancements to public gathering spaces.

Small towns are the heart of rural Hendricks County, acting as centers of entertainment and commercial needs for surrounding residents. While rural town cores once held amenities and storefronts that covered much of the needs of residents, the willingness of rural homesteaders to travel further distances to retail centers has impacted the viability of some small-town commercial operations. Today, Hendricks County residents support the idea of rehabilitation and quality of life enhancements that revitalize their rural town cores. Not only in the physical sense, such as building façade improvements and sidewalk connections, but programmatically as well, bringing back the events and social gatherings that make these communities thrive.



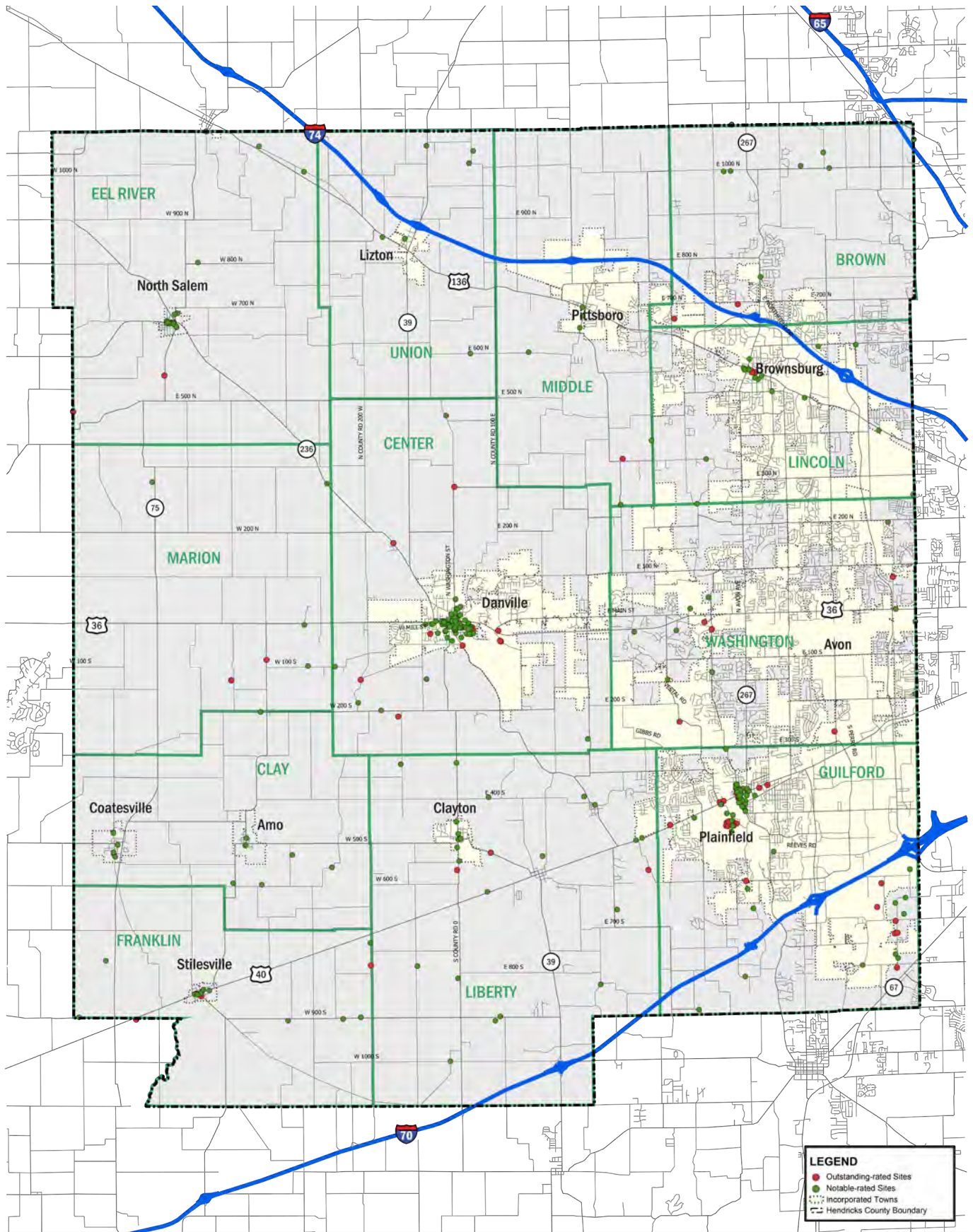
Locally preserved gas station in Coatesville.

Objective 2: Support each community's unique identity through custom gateways, signage, digital and print resources, and other forms of branding.

Reinforcing unique identities for Hendricks County's rural communities can lead to enhancements in quality of life, economic viability, and character. While the county's larger towns have undergone major rebranding efforts that tackle everything from website design to street signs, rural communities may be unable to undergo similar efforts due to staff capacity or financial limitations. Instead, there are several low-effort, highly visible strategies rural communities can employ such as ensuring town branding is present on all online platforms and printed resources, collaborative advertising with local businesses and organizations, or having quality landscaping at key entrances into the community. Communities are also encouraged to pursue grants and other funding through the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs and their many programs related to Indiana Main Street, downtown revitalization, and historic preservation.



Informative signs along trails, such as this one in Coatesville, can add activity nodes and introduce local history to trail users.



IDNR HISTORIC SURVEY SITES

HENDRICKS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

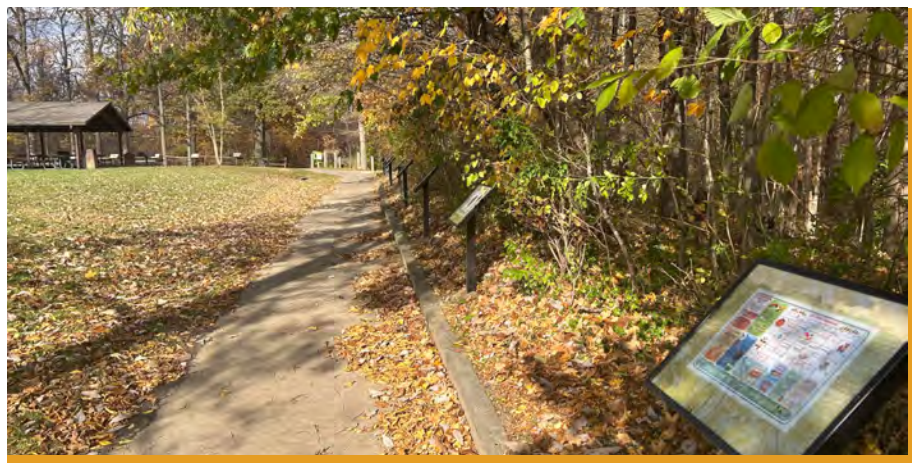


Goal 3

Ensure new and infill development fits the character and context of small towns.

Objective 1: Promote continuation of the grid-street pattern to connect new development to the existing community framework.

Amo, Coatesville, North Salem, and Stilesville are valued for their small-town charm, historic town centers, and surrounding agriculture character. Future development in these communities should extend and be built upon the existing grid street pattern. This will help reinforce existing character as opposed to introducing more contemporary subdivisions with curvilinear streets. These towns are primarily comprised of single-family homes but also include duplexes and small apartment developments. A mix of dwelling types should be promoted when the proposed intensity can sufficiently be served by municipal utilities, and they may be designed around front (street) facing garages or feature rear access via an alley.



The Vandalia Trail cuts through a wide range of rural landscapes and towns, functioning as a local amenity and regional attraction.

QUALITY OF PLACE ACTION PLAN

	Project & Strategies	Timeframe	Responsible Party
GOAL 1	<p>Continue extending the Vandalia Trail and B&O Walkway to create safe pedestrian connections between east and west Hendricks County.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue acquiring right-of-way to extend the trail networks and link: B&O Walkway to Maplewood and North Salem Vandalia Trail to Clayton and Cartersburg 	Medium-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks & Recreation Department <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Commissioners Property Owners
GOAL 1	<p>Expand the Parks & Recreation Department's programming capacity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify current gaps in staffing, amenities, or facilities that pose a challenge in holding new events or recreational programs. Use partnerships to local organizations and businesses to fill identified gaps when appropriate. 	Short-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks & Recreation Department <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Businesses Local Non-Profits
GOAL 2	<p>Determine the feasibility of each rural community applying for Main Street designation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base feasibility on each town's current staff and project capacity, as well as ongoing projects and available resources. Assist towns in their application when needed. 	Long-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Leadership <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Clerk Planning & Building Department
GOAL 2	<p>Create a program targeting rehabilitation of historic or dilapidated commercial structures in rural town cores.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with the state and local non-profits who can assist in funding and education related to rehabilitation. 	Medium-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & Building Department <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Clerk County Commissioners Plan Commission Town Leadership
GOAL 2	<p>Create a branding guide that can be adapted and utilized by all rural communities in Hendricks County.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work internally or with an outside consultant to develop new branding material across all potential mediums (print, online, social media, county vehicles, signage, etc.). Ensure base templates are accessible to town staff and easy to use. 	Short-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside Consultant <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All County Departments Town Leadership



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



NEW AND ENHANCED EMPLOYMENT DISTRICTS

Hendricks County has experienced a number of economic development successes since the previous comprehensive plan was prepared, as evidenced by significant population and employment growth. There were 113,503 total jobs in Hendricks County in 2022. This represents a 55.7% increase from 2012, when there were 72,892 jobs in the county (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis). The annual unemployment rate for Hendricks County for 2023 was just 2.7%, as compared to 3.3% for the State of Indiana as a whole (STATS Indiana and Indiana Department of Workforce Development).

Key factors contributing to Hendricks County's job growth and strength in the logistics and distribution industry include proximity to interstate corridors, location near Indianapolis and access to Indianapolis International Airport, and a business-friendly environment. This has been supported by pro-growth attitudes in many communities and the construction of commercial and industrial business parks and residential neighborhoods and apartment developments. Finally, quality of place elements including parks and recreation amenities, local schools, and healthcare facilities have made Hendricks County a place where people want to live.

GROWING QUALITY AND DIVERSE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Key Findings

- There were 113,503 jobs in Hendricks County in 2022.
 - The average annual unemployment rate for 2023 was 2.7%.
 - Hendricks County's access to major highway, rail, and air transportation networks makes it a prime location for warehousing and logistics industries.
 - Hendricks County Economic Development Partnership reports that more than 40 million square feet of commercial and industrial space is within the county.
 - Conversations with industry leaders during the planning process indicated that Hendricks County was in an 'absorption' phase, meaning there was available space for lease in finished warehouses. New warehouse construction is unlikely to occur until the amount of vacant space is reduced.
-

As new jobs have been created and attracted people to the area, land available for industrial and commercial growth has decreased. It is important that the county identify future employment sites and develop plans to ensure they are served by utility and transportation infrastructure. With this, the county wants diversify job opportunities and business types in these employment areas. The county can also help to make sure that local school corporations, post-secondary education institutions, and area employer needs are aligned to ensure an educated and trained workforce to sustain business needs into the future.



Hendricks County's agriculturally based businesses extend beyond typical crop and animal production. The Woody Warehouse Nursery provides wholesale options for all types of trees, shrubs, and groundcover plants.



Hendricks Regional Health in Danville is one of the county's largest employers, contributing to the 24.2% of county residents who work in an educational or healthcare related field (2021 ACS Data). Hendricks Regional Health and IU Health West Hospital in Avon are two major employment draws for professionals looking to move to the community.



The several interstate interchanges within Hendricks County have supported the attraction of warehousing and light manufacturing employers. These areas will continue to see additional growth so long as county and town leadership coordinate on future utility and infrastructure needs.



Major railroads in Hendricks County has supported the success of industrial sites such as SDI Pittsboro. The rail runs alongside I-74 and has the potential to attract a wide range of industrial or commercial developments that rely on rail transportation.

Goal 1

Increase the supply of employment-focused development sites to grow a wider variety of businesses and jobs.

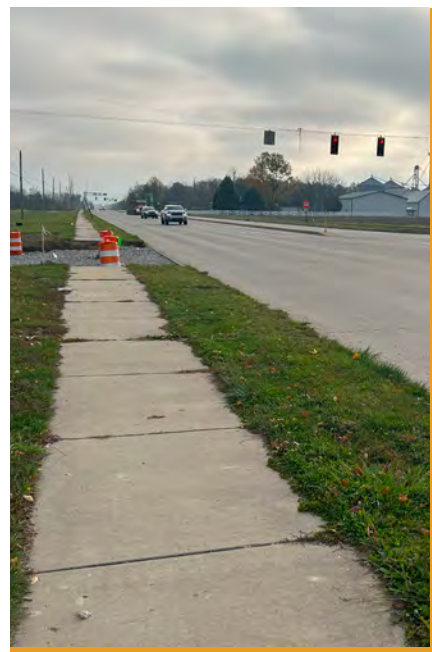
Objective 1: Target areas within Hendricks County that have potential for industrial or intensive commercial growth based on utility, transportation, and rail service.

Portions of Brown Township, especially along the on-going Ronald Reagan Parkway extension, can help accomplish the goal of increasing the supply of employer development sites. Given improved access with the continued construction of Ronald Reagan Parkway and the potential for rail served sites, this will be an important employment area in the near future. There are also additional opportunities around the I-70 and SR 39 interchange, as well as between Pittsboro and Lizton on the south side of I-74. Development in these areas could occur in unincorporated county areas if served by Hendricks County Regional Sewer District or through agreements with municipal providers. This is of course in addition to development that would be annexed into and served by incorporated towns, although there are fewer of these opportunities in Plainfield, Brownsburg, and Avon as many of their industrial areas are already built out. Pittsboro has extended utilities north of I-74 and this area has the potential to be one of the next employment growth areas for the county.

Objective 2: Mitigate potential negative impacts of large, employment generating development while ensuring site flexibility that can respond to changing market conditions.

Hendricks County's strength in the warehousing and logistics industry has helped grow the tax base of the county, Plainfield, Brownsburg, and Avon. However, there are less desirable impacts to large footprint warehouse development including truck traffic, loss of open space, and the visual impacts of these large buildings. Additionally, these uses then create the demand for related businesses such as truck parking, outdoor storage, and truck fueling and service centers.

As incorporated communities seek to limit these support businesses, they are increasingly looking to locate in unincorporated areas of Hendricks County. The county should conduct a review of the zoning ordinance to ensure that the potential negative impacts of employment generating development are mitigated as best as possible so that the benefits of such development outweigh the costs and additional warehouse and logistics development is still viewed as a net positive for Hendricks County.



CR 600 N marks the current northern boundary of Ronald Reagan Parkway, although future extensions north are planned.

Goal 2

Connect employers, local school corporations, and post-secondary education institutions to enhance workforce development training.

Objective 1: Identify key skill gaps and labor force shortages for area employers.

Addressing skill gaps and labor force shortages is critical to sustaining the economic health of Hendricks County. When employers cannot find workers with the necessary skills, it can lead to open positions, decreased productivity, and a potential loss of business. By proactively identifying and addressing these gaps, Hendricks County can better attract and retain businesses, support job creation, and promote economic growth. Additionally, these efforts will benefit workers by providing them with relevant training and career advancement opportunities, leading to higher employment rates and greater job satisfaction. This analysis will require market research, information from area employers, and industry reports to understand the specific skills that may be needed now or in the near future. Local workforce development programs should then be designed to address these needs. County government is likely to have a limited role in these efforts, but can help to connect the various organizations and businesses needed for success.



Tri West High School in Lizton is part of the Northwest Hendricks County School Corporation.

Objective 2: Use a “career pathways” approach to develop workforce education and training programs at various levels in local industry sectors, allowing individuals to develop and enhance skills not just at entry-level, but throughout their career.

A career pathways approach to workforce development offers job progression, skill development, and training for individuals, along with supportive services like career counseling and financial aid. It aligns training directly to employment opportunities, improving job placement and career stability. For employers, it ensures a qualified workforce, can reduce turnover, and strengthens partnerships with educational institutions and training providers. This approach tailors workforce development with market demands, allowing existing business operations to expand while also attracting new employers to the area.

Hendricks County should continue working to develop partnerships between major employers, community school corporations, career centers, post-secondary education institutions, and economic development organizations to better determine workforce training needs. Hendricks College Network, a local non-profit, is leading these efforts locally and works with the county’s public school districts, post-secondary education providers like Vincennes University, Indiana State, and Ivy Tech Community College, and area employers. Many programs are offered at MADE@Plainfield, an almost 100,000 square-foot facility that opened in 2021 and is the result of a partnership between the Town of Plainfield, Plainfield Community School Corporation, Vincennes University, Ivy Tech Community College, WorkOne Indy, Hendricks College Network and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

	Project & Strategies	Timeframe	Responsible Party
GOAL 1	<p>Continue working with town leadership and staff to support the creation of employment sites where they can be served by necessary transportation and utility infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate long-range planning efforts across jurisdictions by including representatives from adjacent jurisdictions in planning processes. • Continue to plan for roadway and utility extensions needed to serve potential growth. • Work with Hendricks County Economic Development Partnership and local economic development professionals to understand potential market demand and site needs. 	Short-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Building Department <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Plan Commission • County Commissioners • Town Leadership & Staff • Hendricks County Economic Development Partnership • Developers • Utility Providers
GOAL 1	<p>Review and amend the zoning and subdivision control ordinances with respect to emerging development trends including manufacturing processes, office spaces integrated into warehouses, and greater potential for exterior storage of materials or finished goods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate heavy commercial uses and businesses requiring more exterior storage within business parks or as a second tier of parcels behind non-residential property fronting major thoroughfares. • Review landscape buffer requirements to ensure they accomplish desired goals related to screening and enhanced aesthetics. • Consider allowing more commercial uses in industrial districts. 	Short-Term	<p>Leads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Building Department <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Plan Commission • County Commissioners
GOAL 2	<p>Continue to assist county organizations and institutions related to workforce development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster additional partnerships between major employers, community school corporations, career centers, post-secondary education institutions, and economic development organizations to better determine workforce training needs. • Support efforts to expand workforce and vocational training programs to develop more skilled workers in alignment with local industry needs. 	Short-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hendricks County Economic Development Partnership • Hendricks College Network • School Corporations • Post-Secondary Education Institutions • Employers • Town Leadership



GOVERNMENT



SUPERIOR SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Hendricks County's government is a combination of boards, departments, and individuals working together to ensure the county remains a place people and businesses love calling home. Whether it is high-level development decision making by elected officials, emergency services, or daily maintenance in public spaces and parks, all levels of Hendricks County's government must coordinate with each other and outside jurisdictions. As growth continues to spread across Hendricks County, improving efficiency and transparency in all levels of county, township, and town government will be critical for serving existing residents while reducing unnecessary barriers to new development.

ALIGNING MUNICIPAL PLANNING EFFORTS

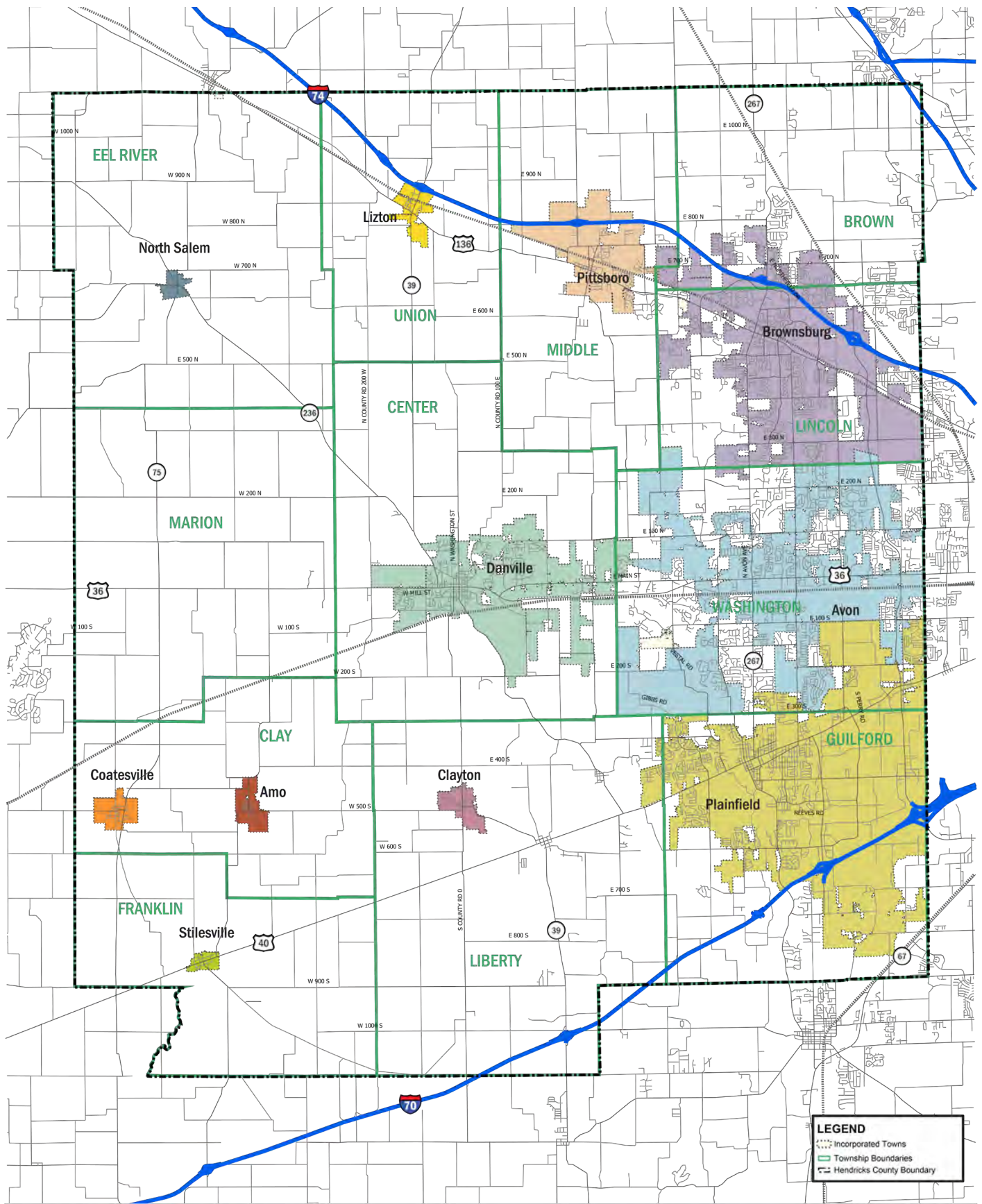
Key Findings

- Jurisdictional pockets under the county's control but inside Avon, Brownsburg, and Plainfield can potentially have issues related to emergency services, utilities, and other public services.
 - Although Hendricks County has a full-service website, it lacks any form of social media presence that can directly relay information to residents in a quick and accessible format.
 - Communication between county officials and residents was identified by the public as needing improvement.
 - As growth continues west across the county, coordination between municipalities and Hendricks County staff will be critical to avoid potential land use and jurisdictional conflicts.
-

The eastern portion of Hendricks County holds the three largest communities of Avon, Brownsburg, and Plainfield. Danville, the county seat, and Pittsboro are further west but still have corporate limits adjacent to the larger urban areas. The map on the following page identifies the major consolidated areas and highlights a major issue identified throughout the planning process, pockets of unincorporated land within the major communities.



Hendricks County Government Center.



MUNICIPALITIES & CORPORATE LIMITS

HENDRICKS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Goal 1

Improve county government communications with residents and businesses as well as other government jurisdictions within Hendricks County.

Objective 1: Expand the County's social media and online presence.

Communication is vital in today's world. Whether used for sharing local news, advertising upcoming events, or acting as an online gathering space for residents, social media and other online platforms provide a link between a municipality and their residents in a tech centric world. Hendricks County's current website offers a wide range of information for interested parties including details about local departments and boards, links to forms, and directions to pay bills or apply for a permit.

While the county's website is a major asset, it isn't the best tool for providing quick announcements or advertising events, as residents may only visit to pay a bill or find a department phone number. Establishing county specific social media pages on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other platforms would provide a direct link between Hendricks County officials and residents.

Objective 2: Identify a formal communications contact for the County and each municipality; this may be an existing role, new responsibility for a current position, or staffing expansion based on the needs of each community.

Coordination between Hendricks County and the various municipalities is crucial for efficient government operations and will remain a critical factor as growth continues west across the county. Establishing a formal point of contact for each governmental body would assist in streamlining the development process and improve information sharing. While a singular point of contact could be a new position at the county level or in the larger towns, the position could also be covered by a town council member, clerk, utilities supervisor, or other staff member who understands the processes of their community. Regardless of the person selected or hired, contact information and their position in each community should be listed in a centralized database accessible by staff and departments in all jurisdictions.

Goal 2

Ensure development does not outpace the ability to provide necessary public safety services in areas with development potential that won't be annexed into a municipality.



The North Salem Fire Department serves all residents in Eel River Township.

Objective 1: Assess the feasibility of expanding fire and police facilities through coordination with county, township, and municipal departments.

As new growth occurs throughout Hendricks County, specifically in rural regions and smaller communities, it will be critical to expand emergency services to ensure adequate levels of protection are achievable. After the county consolidated the multiple emergency call services in each municipality to one location there has been better communication between organizations which has in turn improved coverage. However, even if town departments can respond to calls in unincorporated areas on Hendricks County's east side, they are unable to support emergency service needs in more rural areas of the community. As new development occurs it will remain critical for emergency services to expand as well.

Objective 2: Use lessons learned from Liberty Township that may help address public safety needs elsewhere in Hendricks County.

While expanding emergency services in rural regions of Hendricks County is needed, precautions must be taken to avoid issues experienced in Liberty Township, where police, fire, and EMS must respond to accidents reported on U.S. 40 and I-70. Local services responding to accidents along state routes can take resources away from the territory and can be a financial burden to the department in the long term. While mutual aid between departments is often a must in rural communities, steps should be taken to ensure calls to state-controlled roads are properly compensated.

Goal 3

Resolve jurisdictional issues caused by pockets of unincorporated area completely surrounded by Avon, Brownsburg, and Plainfield.

Objective 1: Work with incorporated towns to evaluate options to remove unincorporated pockets that may include annexation, a township joinder, or other solutions as permitted by Indiana Code, and prevent their occurrence in the future.

As Avon, Brownsburg, and Plainfield have grown over the last decade areas in unincorporated Hendricks County with existing development were built around without being annexed. While this has not caused major land use conflicts, it has led to issues with providing necessary public services such as police or stormwater management. Outside of voluntary annexation, there are very few avenues available for towns wishing to bring these areas into their corporate limits. However, doing so would benefit both the county and towns as it would allow the annexing municipality to gain tax base for properties they may already be serving with municipal services and ease the burden of extending county services unnecessarily.

As municipalities grow outward and annexation occurs, guidelines should be in place that eliminate the potential of unincorporated pockets being formed due to leapfrog annexation. Coordination between the municipality, county staff, and the developer or property owner should occur for any property that has the potential for annexation.



Rapid development on fringes of larger municipalities is still controlled by Hendricks County up until voluntary annexation.

GOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN

	Project & Strategies	Timeframe	Responsible Party
GOAL 1	<p>Consider hiring a communications director or identifying an existing position that could also serve as communications director.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the communications director primary access to county or department-specific social media accounts. • Make the communications director the primary coordinator between departments in regards to public news. 	Medium-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council • All Department Heads
GOAL 1	<p>Use social media accounts as one primary form of communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new accounts on platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), and Instagram for sharing information. • Add call-outs to the county website's landing page for important community updates. 	Long-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Director <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council • All Department Heads
GOAL 2	<p>Work with towns to identify a primary contact for each municipality for coordinating intergovernmental projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with leadership in all incorporated towns and county-wide organizations • Determine the best approach in selecting formal communication contacts and how they should be contacted. 	Short-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Director <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Plan Commission • County Commissioners • Town Leadership
GOAL 2	<p>Hold quarterly meetings with members of county police, fire, and EMS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with emergency service providers on newly permitted development to ensure it does not compromise current service levels. 	Short-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Building Department <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hendricks County Police Departments • Hendricks County Fire Departments • County EMS Organizations • Emergency Management Department

GOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN

	Project & Strategies	Timeframe	Responsible Party
GOAL 2	<p>Determine how local departments should respond to emergency calls along interstates and state highways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with state agencies to determine what role Hendricks County's police, fire, and EMS should have when responding to calls. • Gain an understanding on compensation for responding to calls along state routes. 	Long-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hendricks County Police Departments • Hendricks County Fire Departments <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Agencies
GOAL 3	<p>Create a county-wide taskforce focused on eliminating unincorporated pockets within Avon, Brownsburg, and Plainfield.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and invite representatives from each municipality. • Work as a group to determine how to best rectify the unincorporated pockets while adhering to new Indiana code. 	Medium-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Building Department <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Plan Commission • County Commissioners • Town Leadership and Planning Depts. • Property Owners
GOAL 3	<p>Incorporate new policies into county ordinances that would eliminate future unincorporated pockets from occurring within larger municipalities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor future changes to Indiana state statutes, especially with regard to annexation, that would create new opportunities to clean up municipal boundaries. • Encourage annexation of future development in town growth areas as identified on the Future Land Use Map. 	Medium-Term	<p>Leads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Building Department <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Plan Commission • County Commissioners • Town Planning Depts. • Utility Providers • Developers/Builders





NATURAL RESOURCES



RICH IN NATURAL AMENITIES

Hendricks County's environmental resources and natural features are major contributors in defining the community's character and enhancing quality of life. Creeks and streams, rolling agricultural fields, and interweaving forests are all part of larger natural systems within Hendricks County used by both residents and wildlife. Protecting these resources will assist in continuing to enhance the county's image and support economic development efforts. Degradation of environmental resources through improper land use decisions could be detrimental to the public health and broader community goals for the future.

PRESERVING ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

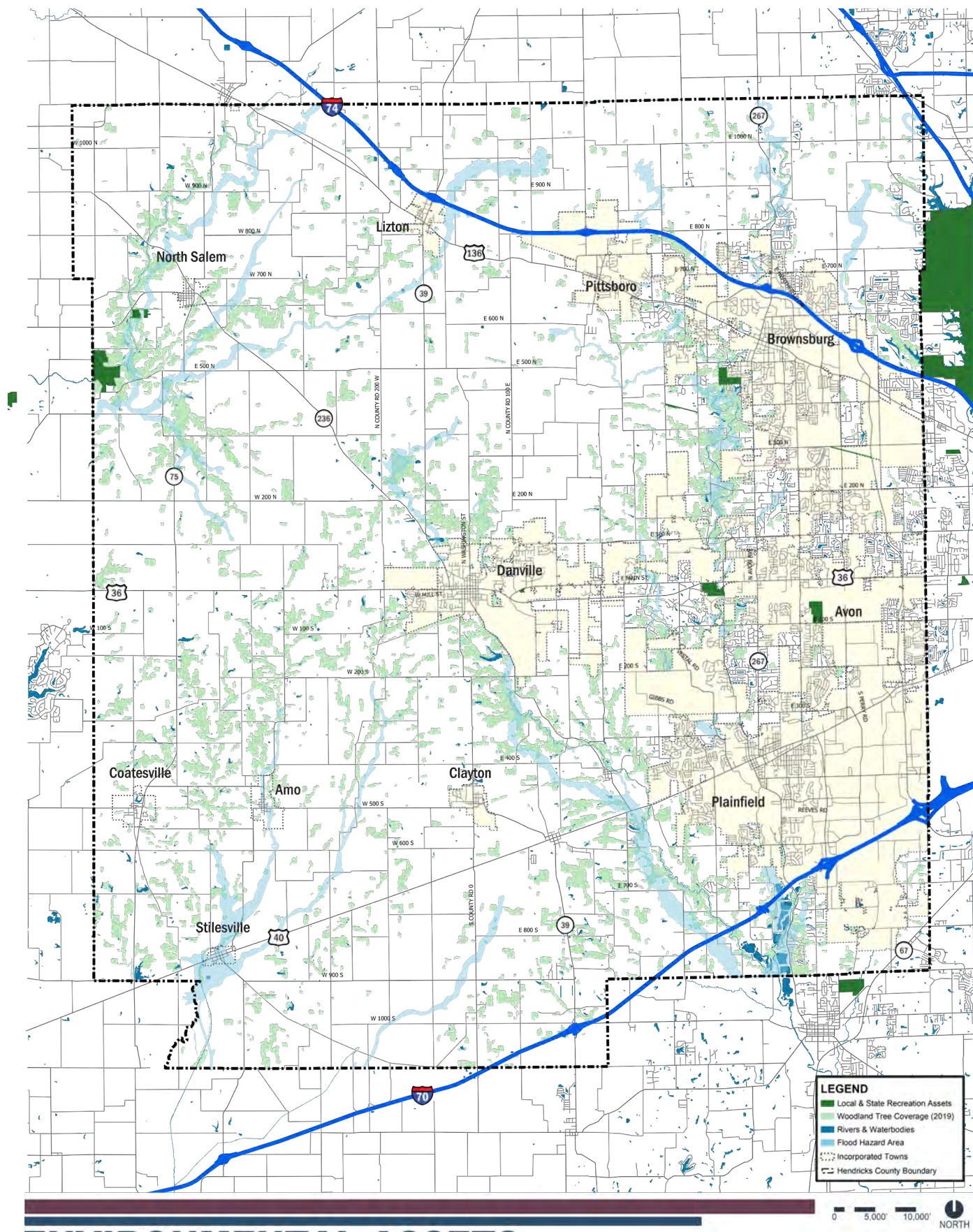
Key Findings

- Hendricks County currently protects natural areas through parks and rural housing zoning regulations; however, local protection of riparian areas and forests could be bolstered.
 - McCloud Nature Park serves as a regional attraction and means to protect the county's pristine natural environment. This model could be used to protect other areas within the community.
 - Waterways in eastern Hendricks County should continue to be used as areas to expand trail networks and creek access.
 - There has been interest from property owners in donating land for preservation or recreation purposes.
 - The protection of Hendricks County's natural landscapes and aesthetics are critical to those living in more rural areas of the county.
-

During community engagement a reoccurring theme was the need to preserve the county's natural resources such as forests, waterways, and natural landscapes. Although Hendricks County has been successful in preserving land through parks and preserves in recent years, residents felt officials could be more proactive in acquiring land for these purposes. The Environmental Assets map on the following page identifies woodlands and other natural features where this could occur.



Big Walnut Crossing in McCloud Nature Park.



Goal 1

Increase the amount of permanently protected open space in Hendricks County.

Objective 1: Preserve forest and riparian areas along waterways to enhance access and improve water quality.

Preserving forest and riparian areas along waterways is crucial for maintaining and improving water quality. Big Walnut Creek, White Lick Creek, and West Fork of White Lick Creek are prized community assets. Their tree-lined banks offer vital aesthetic and environmental benefits to the county. These areas serve as natural buffers to help filter pollutants, reduce soil erosion, and stabilize stream banks. Healthy riparian zones provide habitat for wildlife and the shade from trees can regulate water temperatures, benefiting aquatic life. By protecting these areas, Hendricks County can ensure cleaner, safer water for both human and animal health.

Objective 2: Connect property owners with land trusts and other public or private agencies that may buy or accept donation of a conservation easement.

With the exception of buying land directly from property owners or requiring right-of-way dedication, donations are often the primary way municipalities are able to acquire land dedicated to preservation and passive recreation. In rural areas, donations of farmland or forested areas are often the foundation for parks and preserves, and provide for underserved populations who don't have as easy access to recreational amenities like their urban counterparts.



WS Gibbs Memorial Park's creation can be attributed to collaboration between Hendricks County government and willing sellers.

NATURAL RESOURCES ACTION PLAN

	Project & Strategies	Timeframe	Responsible Party
GOAL 1	<p>Create an overlay identifying areas where preservation and passive recreation should be incentivized in place of development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the county's floodplain and floodway map as the base layer when identifying potential areas. • Integrate the overlay into the county's UDO. 	Short-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Building Department <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Plan Commission • Engineering Department (GIS)
GOAL 1	<p>Create a database of properties with the potential land preservation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add the contact information for property owners who have expressed interest in donating land for public use to the database. • Identify what public, private, or non-profit entities would be best suited for preservation and management for each property. 	Medium-Term	<p>Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks & Recreation Department <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Building Department • Engineering Department (GIS) • Records Office



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CONCLUSION



OUR FUTURE

Hendricks County has a number of strengths that have made it a desirable place for residents and businesses. This includes a welcoming community atmosphere, quality schools, diverse recreational opportunities, attractive and affordable neighborhoods, a vibrant economy, and easy access to amenities and job opportunities across the region. This plan was created to celebrate and preserve these strengths in the face of inevitable change. We believe that through thoughtful planning, change will result in an even better Hendricks County for existing residents and the many more that will call our community home in the future.