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HUNTINGTON COUNTY

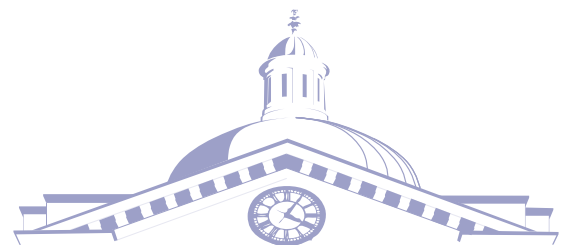
# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

# 2040

PREPARED FOR:

Huntington County

PREPARED BY:



Huntington Countywide  
Dept. of Community Development



# Acknowledgments

Huntington County would like to thank all residents, community stakeholders, organizations and other participants who contributed their time and ideas throughout the planning process to complete the *Huntington County Comprehensive Plan 2040*.

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County GIS Department  
County Highway Department  
Emergency Management  
Huntington County Department of Health  
Huntington County Soil and Water District  
Huntington County Solid Waste Management  
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Huntington Area Recreational Trails Association  
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Indiana Department of Environmental Management  
Indiana Department of Transportation  
Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership  
Region 3A

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# CHAPTER 1: **INTRODUCTION**





# Introduction

## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a tool used to plan the future growth of a community – in this case, the unincorporated areas of Huntington County. A comprehensive plan should detail the overall community vision and include goals, objectives, and strategies – usually a mix of short-range and long-range. Per Indiana Code (IC 36-7-4-502), the plan must contain at least:

- 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.

Often, the plan contains much more than these minimum requirements, including surveys, studies, demographics, maps, plats, charts, etc. pertaining to various topics of concern within the community. The plan is a living document, meant to be updated as a community’s vision evolves or as goals change.

The Plan Commission (typically the staff) of the jurisdiction is tasked with preparing the plan, but often consultants are hired to assist with the process. Local elected officials, community stakeholders, local citizen groups or boards, businesses, and residents may all participate in the process. The comprehensive plan should be reflective of the community as a whole, so more community involvement will help create a more complete plan. At least one public meeting must be held during this process, and the entire plan must be accessible/viewable to the public at least ten days before the hearing. Once the plan is adopted by resolution by the legislative body – in this case, the Board of Commissioners of Huntington County – it is used to guide various facets of public policy decisions, including transportation, utilities, recreation, land use, housing, etc.

## ABOUT THIS PLAN

In 2017, the Board of Commissioners of Huntington County tasked the Huntington Countywide Department of Community Development (DCD) and Region 3A with updating the County’s comprehensive plan. The previous plan was adopted on October 11, 2005 and was comprised of sections pertaining to:

- Environment;
- Parks and Recreation;
- Aesthetics and Identity;
- Alternative Transportation;
- Transportation;
- Community Facilities;
- Economic Development;
- Growth Management; and
- Land Use.

The 2018 plan, *Huntington County Comprehensive Plan 2040*, provides an update to these sections, reaffirming and setting new goals, objectives, and strategies for each topic.

## HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

Chapters 2 through 8 of this Plan begin with a current analysis of the section topic and end with a future proposal containing overarching topic goals and objectives along with specific strategies to accomplish those goals and objectives. For quick reference, Chapter 9: Action Plan contains a chart of all strategies, separated by section, with corresponding timelines and participants required to fulfill each strategy. The Appendix contains vital information about Huntington County at the time of plan adoption and also details the public participation process throughout the plan update.





# CHAPTER 2: **ENVIRONMENT**



# Environment

## CURRENT ANALYSIS

During the 1994 *Huntington County Tomorrow Strategic Plan Report* (Figure 2-1) process, committee members assembled a list of “players,” “strengths,” “weaknesses,” “opportunities,” and “threats” to the environment and environmental issues. These lists were reevaluated during the 2005 comprehensive plan process and have been revisited a second time for the 2018 update. These items become the basis for determining environmental goals for Huntington County. The revised lists are as follows:

### PLAYERS

- Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Huntington County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Environmental groups, such as the Izaak Walton League
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM)
- Huntington Countywide Department of Community Development (DCD)
- Huntington County Health Department
- Huntington County Drainage Board
- Future generations
- Wildlife
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Farmers
- Builders and developers

### STRENGTHS

- Huntington and Salamonie Reservoirs and the associated open space
- Wabash River
- Salamonie River
- Identified wetlands
- Waste management programs in place

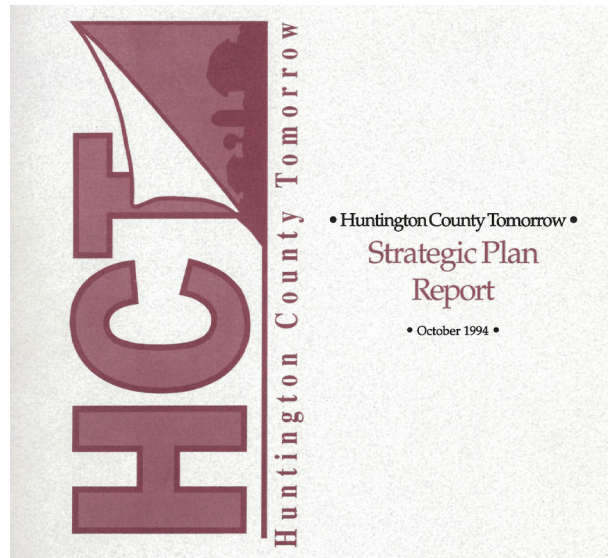


Figure 2-1: Huntington County Tomorrow. Source: DCD

- Abundant open land (reservoir land and farms)
- Good farmers in the community
- Smart farming practices

### WEAKNESSES

- Careless hunters
- Limited citizen watch groups

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Department of Natural Resources involvement with the communities
- Education programs (schools and 4-H)
- Development of a county park system
- Development of additional green areas
- State projects - Wabash River
- Satellite programs - soil tests
- Encourage conscientious landowners

### THREATS

- Rural development
- Limited access to recycling opportunities
- Too much government control
- Soil erosion
- Industrial growth
- Population growth
- Landfill reaching capacity and closure
- Abusive landowners towards the environment

## FUTURE PROPOSAL

### GOAL

Promote an ecologically sound community through the protection and enhancement of environmental resources, balancing the value of human, plant, and animal life forms and their need to coexist together, while continuing to recognize, protect, and enhance those natural systems and the intricacies of their interrelationships.

### OBJECTIVES

- Protect the local groundwater supply.
- Protect the quality and quantity of water in Huntington County's streams, rivers, and reservoirs.
- Conserve natural areas such as forestland, wetlands, and prairies.
- Protect and enhance the character of the natural environment present in Huntington County.
- Protect and enhance the streams and riverbanks throughout the county.
- Minimize conflicts between growth and the natural environment.
- Protect and preserve natural drainage areas and the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA).
- Reserve open space for future development of parks and recreation amenities and to provide habitats for plants and animals.
- Reduce damage to life and property from flood and other natural hazards by discouraging development in the SFHA and 500-year flood zone.

### ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

- 1. Establish development buffers around waterways that run throughout Huntington County.**
- 2. Establish a Huntington County land trust program to protect forestlands, wetlands, prairies and valuable farm ground.**
- 3. Limit development and uses near wellhead sites.**
- 4. Use cluster development techniques for new developments to create pockets of open space.**
- 5. Limit development and uses within the Special Flood Hazard Area.**
- 6. Limit development and uses within the 500-year flood zone.**
- 7. Expand DNR's involvement throughout the county.**
- 8. Create education experiences (K-12) with respect to environmental issues.**
- 9. Develop green areas (planned open space).**
- 10. Establish educational opportunities dealing with environmental issues for nontraditional students and adults.**
- 11. Research and establish alternative green energy solutions.**

- 1. Establish development buffers around waterways that run throughout Huntington County.**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, DNR, IDEM, Huntington County Drainage Board

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

Waterways are highly regarded because people enjoy living and playing near sources of water (see Figure 2-2). Waterways are also generally seen as public property and should not be used in ways that compromise the recreational values they can provide. However, development and other heavy demands placed on our waterways are beginning to lead to degradation, loss of native vegetation, and poorer

water qualities. By managing waterways and establishing development buffers throughout Huntington County in a coordinated manner that balances conflicting needs, these same waterways will be available for future generations.



Figure 2-2: Salamonie River, a recreational waterway in Huntington County. Source: *The Journal Gazette*.

Since waterways are a complex and diverse system, management must include a wide range of disciplines. The following statements serve as the building blocks for creating a basis for waterway management:

- Waterways provide a unique habitat for a wide variety of terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna.
- Waterways provide an important scenic feature and serve as a focus for leisure activities that can and should be available for the public.
- Some waterways are important parts of Huntington County’s cultural identity and are considered to be somewhat of a unique regional resource.
- Waterways are important outlets for storm water drainage.
- Many waterways in Huntington County are an untapped resource with regards to recreational activities.

The capacity of a river/stream environment to meet the growing needs of recreational opportunities with relationship to a growing population is limited. Policies should help guide the public, consultants, developers and governing bodies

towards appropriate land use and development along Huntington County’s waterways within buffer or management areas.

**2. Establish a Huntington County land trust program to protect forestlands, wetlands, prairies and valuable farm ground.**

**Participants:** Purdue Extension, Plan Commissions, DCD, County Commissioners

**Timeline:** 5 to 10 years

A land trust is a local, regional, or statewide nonprofit conservation organization that is directly involved in protecting natural, scenic, recreational, agricultural, and/or historical properties. A land trust works to conserve and preserve lands that communities and regions have deemed to be important. Land trusts can work in all types of environments, ranging from rural areas to major metropolitan areas. Some of the best known and most successful land trusts operate on the California coast at Big Sur, along the Appalachian Trail, and in New York’s Adirondacks.

Land trusts perform the following functions:

- Purchase land;
- Acquire land through donations;
- Secure conservation easements on lands and monitor the terms of these easements; and
- Work in partnership with other private and governmental conservation agencies.

Many land trust programs operate strictly by volunteer work, while others have a director and possibly one or more part-time staff members. A land trust organization operated by volunteers probably best suits Huntington County in the early stages. As time progresses and more land is acquired and monitored, then the next stage would involve creating large memberships or offices that have an annual budget. A volunteer-based land trust program is quite plausible because most land trusts accept land donations and set up conservation easements. In both cases, donors to the land trust can receive significant

tax benefits based on the value of the land that has been donated. When a land trust sets out to purchase land, a large portion of the funds for these purchases originate from contributions and donations from the community.

### 3. Limit development and uses near wellhead sites.

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, Health Department

**Timeline:** Ongoing

Local government is responsible for management of land uses within the wellhead protection area. This responsibility is an opportunity to preserve a resource that is critical to future community growth and development. Wellhead protection area management can be divided into two broad categories: regulatory and nonregulatory controls.

Regulatory tools involve the regulation of private property by the local government. Local governments must have the statutory authority to adopt specific laws for groundwater protection. These typically include zoning ordinances, subdivision control, and health laws that are all considered extensions to a government's "police power." Examples of these tools and a few of their functions are as follows:

- *Zoning ordinances:* overlay zoning ordinances, prohibition of various groundwater-threatening uses, special permits/conditional use permits for certain ground water threats, transfer of development rights, registration of toxic and hazardous materials, cluster or planned unit development, or performance or assimilative capacity standards;
- *Subdivision control:* drainage requirements or impervious surface limitations; and
- *Health regulations:* underground fuel storage systems, septic system upgrade requirements, toxic and hazardous materials handling, or private well protection.

Nonregulatory tools do not involve the regulation of private property. These tools are available to all local governments regardless of state enabling legislation and include:

- Land acquisitions through purchase, donations, and conservation easements within wellhead protection areas;
- Public education programs on wellhead protection;
- "Best management practices" for forestry and agricultural activities;
- Joint agreements with abutting communities or government installations;
- Groundwater management devices;
- Management of pumping rates and water withdraws; and
- Stormwater management and artificial recharge.

Every city, town, and county wellhead protection program will be unique and reflect the diverse environmental, social, and political agendas of the local government in charge of its wellhead protection area. Regardless of this diversity, all successful wellhead and groundwater protection programs will likely have two elements in common with one another. First, the program will be the result of community consensus, sound science, and achievable goals. Second, the program will include practical actions to protect groundwater resources. These actions, whether regulatory or nonregulatory, will serve as the cornerstones of a successful effort.

It is important to note that effective and efficient wellhead protection programs encompass a number of techniques and just not a single tool to achieve the local government goals. It is also important to update the wellhead protection program continuously as changes occur and resources become available.



**4. Use cluster development techniques for new developments to create pockets of open space.**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, Subdivision Plat Committee

**Timeline:** 10 to 20 years

Cluster development, or cluster subdivision, typically creates smaller lots for homes while the land that would have been allocated to individual lots is converted to open space that is shared by subdivision residents (see Figure 2-3). It is common to redefine traditional subdivision regulations (road frontage, lot size, setbacks, etc.) to permit the developer to preserve ecologically sensitive areas, historical sites, and/or other unique features of the land being subdivided. One way the zoning ordinance currently allows such flexibility is through the planned unit development (PUD) option, a special exception request allowed in all zoning districts.

Once a cluster development has been created, it is important to assign the open space as part of a conservation easement. Assignees typically include the homeowners' association and the local government agency or land trust (if in place). It is equally important that the conservation easement

address permitted activities (agricultural, recreational, ecological, buffering, etc.).

The clustering of homes in rural areas can help maintain a rural characteristic while protecting or preserving farmland. This form of development can also provide open space for the homeowners and preserve land qualities that are critical to the development. Having homes closer together tends to create a feeling of "community" and "neighborliness" that tends to be lost in traditional rural subdivisions. A cluster development also benefits the developer, as costs involving construction of infrastructure tend to be lessened. These reduced costs to the developer can either allow the properties to be more affordable, or the developer may consider placing amenities that are closely related to the open space uses (i.e. trails).

The most notable challenge associated with cluster development is the need for sewer access. If the proposed subdivision is not adjacent to a regional sewer district or an incorporated city or town, then each dwelling will almost certainly require a septic system. For truly rural subdivisions, cluster development is not appropriate, as septic systems require acreage that clustered lots could not accommodate.



Figure 2-3: Traditional vs. cluster development. Both plans have the same total acreage and number of lots, but cluster development allows for smaller lot sizes and more common open space. Source: City of Greensboro, NC Land Development Ordinance, §30-7-3-3.3 (via enCodePlus.com).

Another issue is maintenance of common open spaces. Typically this is the responsibility of the homeowners' association or the developer until a homeowners' association has been formed. The cost associated with the upkeep of the common areas is dependent on the purpose of the open space. Open space designated for agricultural uses will typically cost less than an open grass field. One can be leased to a local farmer while the other has to be mowed by the homeowners.

#### **5. Limit development and uses within the Special Flood Hazard Area.**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, Subdivision Plat Committee, County Surveyor, Highway Department

**Timeline:** Ongoing

##### *Buildable Area*

Occasionally, subdivisions of land are approved that do not contain enough buildable land area outside of the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA, one percent annual chance flood, or informally called the 100-year floodplain). Reviewing the floodplain on a potential subdivision is standard procedure, but no language exists prohibiting the creation of the lot if not enough buildable area exists. Huntington County should give consideration to changing the language within the subdivision control ordinance to reflect this concern of inadequate buildable area on parcels at least partially within the SFHA. A policy could be added to the existing subdivision control ordinance that would deny the creation of parcels that do not have the necessary buildable area outside the SFHA. Buildable area would need to be defined clearly. This option is quite restrictive but could, over time, reduce the number of homes or structures constructed in the SFHA.

It is important to note that Subdivision Plat Committee applicants do not always intend to build on future splits. Also, it is possible to build within the SFHA, provided all local (and, where there is floodway, state) floodplain restrictions are

met. In some instances, the actual natural ground elevations within the mapped floodplain are higher than the base flood elevation (BFE), thus eliminating the need for floodplain standards in that particular instance. An alternative approach would be to stress the importance of reviewing the SFHA on parcels undergoing subdivision. For proposed parcels containing SFHA, standard language could be added to the conditions on the findings of fact determined prior to approval. This language would explain that there is floodplain on the parcel and disclose all challenges associated with building within the SFHA versus more desirable land above BFE.

##### *Access*

Accessing a property should not require a boat during a heavy rain. To help prevent this, the County should establish standards that avoid the creation of "islands" during normal flooding. The idea is to establish "reasonable" access. Some communities use the ten percent annual chance flood (10-year flood) as the threshold for creating drive approaches. Creating lots that require watercourse crossings should be discouraged or prohibited. Policy regarding drive cut approach requests within low-lying areas and/or mapped floodplains should be reviewed and potentially modified by County Highway and each town. Lot access should remain a point of discussion during the Subdivision Plat Committee review process.

##### *Open Watercourse Easements*

Some counties request fee title easements to be dedicated over certain types of sites with SFHA. These easements would prevent any development within the floodplain that could impact flooding, including post-development fencing, grading, importation of fill, and construction of accessory structures. The easements provide some measure of assurance that the floodplain will not be significantly altered. This technique should be considered for future major subdivisions requests within Huntington County.

### *Fencing*

Certain types of fencing within the floodplain can increase the flood elevation. This is caused by debris getting caught in the fence and blocking the flow of water. To prevent this from happening, language could be added to Section 917 of the local zoning ordinances such as:

- Fencing will be prohibited within the floodway of a watercourse. Open fencing parallel to the flow direction may be allowed within the floodway on a case-by-case basis, so long as appropriate floodway permits are obtained from DNR.
- Fencing within the SFHA, but outside the floodway, will be restricted to the least flow-restrictive types of fencing.



Figure 2-4: An example of fencing suitable for floodplains.  
Source: [www.weadapt.org](http://www.weadapt.org)

Currently, DCD advises fence permit applicants to construct their fence so as not to restrict water flow (see Figure 2-4). However, no language has been added to Section 917 or the building codes to address this policy.

### **6. Limit development and uses within the 500-year flood zone.**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, Subdivision Plat Committee, County Surveyor

**Timeline:** Ongoing

The current floodplain ordinance in Huntington County exceeds the minimum requirements established by DNR. The state provides a model ordinance, but communities are encouraged to establish additional, more restrictive standards beyond the minimums. When the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for Huntington County were updated in 2015, Section 917 of the zoning ordinance was revised to include additional restrictions such as a three-foot freeboard requirement. When Section 917 was revised again in 2016, language was modified to prohibit the construction of critical facilities within the SFHA. Critical facilities (such as schools, nursing homes, hospitals, police, fire and emergency response stations) are only allowed in the 500-year flood zone if elevated an additional two feet above freeboard requirements. No other restrictions are in place for the 500-year flood zone, but additional restrictions should be considered during future revisions of Section 917 or during subdivision control ordinance updates.

### **7. Expand DNR's involvement throughout the county.**

**Participants:** DNR, County Commissioners

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

Huntington County's reservoir land (owned by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, while facilities are operated by DNR) is a unique resource and should be utilized more to benefit residents and to attract visitors. Huntington County should work with DNR to:

- Create new passive recreational programs;
- Create new active recreational programs;
- Create a broader educational resource; and

- Establish focal points, or points of interest, to improve local residents' usage and establish a base for future tourism.

Many of these programs can be accomplished with little or no expenditures. The initial stages of brainstorming to address these needs can and should occur through public meetings, volunteer groups, or even a school project.

**8. Create education experiences (K-12) with respect to environmental issues.**

**Participants:** DNR, Huntington County Community School Corporation (HCCSC), Purdue Extension, 4-H

**Timeline:** 5 to 10 years

Educating today's youth - tomorrow's decision makers - on environmental issues remains a valuable societal goal. Huntington County has many opportunities that youth can utilize to learn about environmental issues. Huntington County has a vibrant 4-H program, two reservoirs that are regulated by DNR, and a local university. Not all Indiana communities have these resources, so it is important to establish a working relationship between the county's major environmental and educational players.

**9. Develop green areas (planned open space).**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, County Commissioners, Town Councils

**Timeline:** 5 to 10 years

The creation of scenic green areas, buffer areas, and strips involves planning for the protection of land adjacent to both natural and man-made sites that can be later utilized for the enjoyment of future Huntington County residents. When planning and developing green areas, it is important to begin with functions that involve local citizens and organizations. These early stages of the process should include establishing goals and objectives, examining criteria used to determine the locations of future green areas, and establishing a hierarchy

that considers costs versus benefits of future green areas.

Next, it is important to involve local officials and citizens to develop a regional effort as part of a larger overall plan, perhaps countywide or even larger. Green areas tend to be more beneficial when they are interconnected by some means, either by easy access or trail systems. Many popular green area destinations are those that are connected by trail systems created from abandoned railroad right-of-way. It is also important to have basic standards for any green belts or trails that interconnect the green areas from one community to the next to avoid confusing potential users.



Figure 2-5: Educational leaders in Huntington County. Sources (top left to bottom right): [huntingtoncountyleadership.org](http://huntingtoncountyleadership.org), [4-h.org](http://4-h.org), [hccsc.k12.in.us](http://hccsc.k12.in.us), and [forbes.com](http://forbes.com)

**10. Establish educational opportunities dealing with environmental issues for nontraditional students and adults.**

**Participants:** Purdue Extension, 4-H, HCCSC, Huntington County Community Learning Center, Huntington University, DCD

**Timeline:** 5 to 10 years

Many strategies found within this section require a foundation of public education to result in successful implementation (see Figure 2-5). Education can come in many different mediums, ranging from news bulletins stuffed in grocery bags at local stores to news announcements on local radio and television stations. Another format

is to invite the public to attend a public meeting to discuss environmental hot topics that may be of concern to specific individuals because of their proximity to a proposed site. Regardless of the format chosen, it is important to keep the public informed.

#### **11. Research and establish alternative green energy solutions.**

**Participants:** Plan Commissions, DCD

**Timeline:** 20 to 25 years

Green technology continues to progress over time. The production of more efficient and inexpensive equipment provides the opportunity to establish an alternative to supplement existing energy production. Alternative energy can reduce the overall cost of utility bills for residents, help the environment, and provide countless long-term benefits, but generally at a large cost in the forefront of implementation. The County may wish to pursue obtaining information on providing incentives for individuals who implement small-scale alternative energy generators or the potential of creating County operated large-scale alternative energy plants.

There are several federal and state incentives as well as programs and incentives by private companies that can be used to leverage the cost of implementing a green energy system. These incentives may benefit the County in developing their own systems or add to incentives the County can provide those who wish to develop their own smaller systems. An easy resource available to check is [www.dsireusa.org](http://www.dsireusa.org). Some incentives are financial, in the form of loans, grants, or tax exemptions, and some provide a technical resource, such as training or information.

Research in green energy systems should consider the benefits and concerns of each type to determine which is best. For example, the development of a concentrated solar energy plant can produce a large amount of energy and lower the amount of emissions by traditional power plants, but it is costly because it would require a large amount of open land and an equal amount of technology to be precise in its daily usage. Green energy sources should also be considered in future development within the county, such as planning the implementation of a geothermal energy system during the early stages of a building process to lower future costs. The County should also research possible issues that past communities have faced in developing green energy systems, such as public opposition, and find the most appropriate ways to address and explain the intentions of the County and what the alternative system will provide.





CHAPTER 3:

# PARKS & RECREATION





# Parks & Recreation

## CURRENT ANALYSIS

An outdoor recreation system extends beyond a single park or a network of parks and recreation areas within a community. Many different entities are involved in the development and management of recreational areas for a community or region. The most recognized park systems are those operated by municipalities, townships, and county, state, and federal entities. However, private ventures such as golf courses, campgrounds, hunting and fishing groups, etc. are an integral part of the overall recreation system. The facilities and services that these various entities provide should be complementary and serve particular geographic areas or recreational needs. As funding for recreation continues to be sparse, it is important to avoid duplication and make sure a variety of recreational needs are met.

Trail and greenway networks provide a unique element to the overall park system. They provide defined and unhindered access to nature and link parks and communities, creating a cohesive system. Trails and greenways provide safe pedestrian movement, and in some communities, man-made corridors and trail systems provide much needed access to recreational opportunities that otherwise would not exist.

## RESERVOIRS

Huntington County is unique from other counties in that there are two reservoirs within the county boundaries. The Huntington Reservoir, located just north of Mount Etna, and the Salamonie Reservoir just east of Huntington offer a whole host of recreational opportunities for county residents and the greater region.

*J. Edward Roush Lake (Huntington Reservoir)*  
J. Edward Roush Lake (formerly known as Huntington Reservoir) has a number of activities to offer that are common throughout government-owned open space and a few unique opportunities available to this area:

- Rich in Miami Indian history, Roush Lake and the surrounding area have a lot to offer. Walk the same trails that Little Turtle (war chief of the Miami) once roamed, or visit the gravesite of Little Turtle's granddaughter Kil-So-Quah.
- DNR sponsors Winterfest each year featuring children's activities, crafts, food and entertainment.
- Located just outside Huntington city limits, Roush Lake is easily accessible from I-69 and US 224.

### *Salamonie Reservoir*

The Salamonie Reservoir has a number of activities to offer that are common throughout government-owned open space, as well as a few unique opportunities available to this area:

- Salamonie Reservoir and Salamonie River State Forest comprise a total of 12,433 acres, operated and maintained by the DNR under a lease agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- The property boasts 60 ponds, marshes and wetlands.
- Salamonie Reservoir and Forest is located in Huntington and Wabash Counties and is accessible from 524 on the west and S.R. 124 to the south. Highways 9 and 105 also cross the property.
- Each year, Salamonie hosts the Crappie USA tournament (see Figure 3-1).



Figure 3-1: Crappie USA 2018 pro division first place winners, Mississinewa & Salamonie Reservoir. Source: www.crappieusa.com

## PARKS

Parks and open space play a vital role in quality of life issues for the citizens of Huntington County. Towns and cities set aside publicly owned lands for park purposes, and these areas see a great deal of use year-round. Listed below is a brief narrative of some of the parks that are located throughout Huntington County.

### *Town of Andrews*

The Town of Andrews has approximately 3.5 acres of ground currently zoned for open space activities within its corporate limits. This designated area is made available for the residents to use for various outdoor recreational activities. It offers basketball/tennis courts, playground equipment, and a covered pavilion with picnic tables. The town is in the planning stages of installing frisbee golf.

### *Clear Creek School Park*

The Clear Creek School Park is located at the intersection of 300W and 900N. Featured at the park are the following items: a baseball diamond, batting cage, full basketball court, and playground equipment.

### *Drovertown Park*

Drovertown Park is located between Gardendale Avenue and Maple Street. The park is .34 acres and features a large stone archway. This park was recently donated to the Southside Fire Station who will maintain the park.

### *Elmwood Park*

Elmwood Park is a public park located at 1110 William Street, Huntington. This park is open year-round for the community's use during the hours of 7:00 am to 11:00 pm. The facility offers a lighted ball diamond, basketball courts, tennis courts, playground equipment, picnic areas, outdoor pavilions, restrooms, and sand volleyball courts. Elmwood Park consists of approximately 10.6 acres of ground and provides water activities such as limited boating and fishing opportunities. Pets are welcome as well.

### *Erie Park*

Erie Park is located at 936 Second Street, Huntington, Indiana. Erie Park offers its guests a ball diamond, basketball court, playground equipment, grill, picnic area, and an outdoor pavilion all located on approximately one acre. Pets are welcome. Erie Park is open year-round to guests from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm.

### *Evergreen Park*

Evergreen Park, located on Evergreen Road, consists of 85 acres and has two softball facilities. Also at the park is a picnic shelter. The setting includes Homier Ball Park for Huntington Baseball Inc. Other features include: ball diamonds, grills, picnic areas, and an outdoor pavilion.

### *Forks of the Wabash Historic Park*

Located just west of Huntington, the Forks of the Wabash Historic Park is a tribute to the history of Huntington and offers recreational and educational opportunities. The Forks features an Interpretive Center with several rooms that portray specific historical scenes. The Forks also has numerous authentic buildings dating to the 1800s for touring and a covered pavilion.

### *General Slack Park*

General Slack Park is a two-acre park sitting between Bryon and Guilford in a large neighborhood at 929 Guilford Street. Slack Park, named after General James R. Slack, features playground equipment, a full-sized basketball court, large gazebo, picnic tables, benches, water fountain and restrooms. A Civil War memorial engraved with the names of local soldiers was constructed in June 2005.

### *Hayes Lemmerz Skate Park*

The Hayes Lemmerz Skate Park is located in Yeoman Park and was dedicated on May 5, 2001. The City of Huntington constructed the park which consists of a 100 feet by 100 feet concrete pad featuring quarter pipes, fun boxes, slide rails, half pyramid with ledge, fly box, low box and full pyramid.

### *Hiers Park*

Located at 5470 South Briant in Huntington, Hiers Park is open from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm year-round, Hiers Park offers the citizens of Huntington a place to enjoy picnic areas with grills, playground equipment, ball diamond, basketball court, an outdoor auditorium and band stand for entertainment activities, and two enclosed buildings for events. Hiers Park contains approximately 19 acres of ground and allows guests to bring pets.

### *Lake Clare Fitness Park*

Lake Clare Fitness Park (see Figure 3-2), located northeast of Huntington along Old US 24, has more than 20 different obstacles with two levels of difficulty in an oval shape 314 feet end-to-end. There are various challenges designed for children between the ages of four and eight.

### *Laurie Park*

Laurie Park, 524 Swan Street, Huntington, offers guests a ball diamond, basketball court, grill and picnic area, playground equipment, and use of outdoor pavilions and gazebo. This facility is available year-round within the hours of operation from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm. This facility is open to guests with pets.

### *Markle Fish and Game Club Park*

The Town of Markle has approximately 50 acres zoned for open space activities within its corporate limits, which includes the Markle Pool. This acreage, along with additional land zoned for open space activities owned by the federal government, provides space for citizens to enjoy various outdoor recreational activities. It features a playground equipment, basketball and tennis courts, a softball diamond, a picnic area, and a pavilion, which can be reserved by residents. Near the park, there is a swimming area with slides, concessions and a beach.



Figure 3-2: Lake Clare Fitness Park. Source: thesportdigest.com

### *Memorial Park and Sunken Gardens*

The 48-acre Memorial Park and Sunken Gardens, located at 1200 West Park Drive, offers many recreational opportunities to the citizens of Huntington: a lighted ball diamond, lighted basketball court, horseshoe courts, tennis courts, new playground equipment, and trails. For those seeking a more passive recreation adventure, the park facility offers two ponds, flower gardens, grills and picnic area, outdoor pavilion, and trails for walking. This facility also offers a few winter activities such as skating and sledding.

### *Town of Mount Etna*

The Town of Mt. Etna does not have a publicly-owned park, but the nearby Salamonie Reservoir provides enjoy outdoor recreation opportunities for the town.

### *Neighborhood Center*

The Neighborhood Center located at 745 Condit Street, Huntington, offers users a basketball court, tennis courts, picnic area, playground equipment, and an enclosed building. The Recreation Center sits on less than one acre of ground, is open year-round from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm, and allows pets to be on the premises.

### *River Greenway*

The River Greenway in Huntington is located along the Little Wabash River and contains approximately five acres of ground. The facility offers limited picnic areas, bike paths, and walkways. The Greenway also provides for limited boating and fishing activities to occur. The River Greenway operates year round from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm and allows users to bring pets.

### *Roanoke Park*

The Town of Roanoke has approximately 22 acres zoned for open space activities within corporate limits. The park contains two ball diamonds, basketball and tennis courts, picnic areas, and playground equipment (see Figure 3-3).

### *Stanton E. Cope M.D. Memorial Playground Park*

The Stanton E. Cope M.D. Memorial Playground Park is on Elm Street. This park is 5.34 acres and has playground equipment, basketball court, benches, and picnic tables. The Summer Parks and Recreation for Kids program use this park as one of its many summer camps for six weeks. The Bendix-Hiner Spray Park is located here as well. This gives families the opportunity to cool off on hot summer days.

### *Town of Warren*

The Town of Warren has approximately 15 acres zoned for open space activities within its corporate limits that provides the citizens of Warren recreational opportunities to enjoy throughout the year. It features two baseball diamonds, one softball diamond, playground equipment, basketball and tennis courts, a picnic area, two covered pavilions, and the Sportsman's Club, which can be rented by residents.

### *Yeoman Park*

Yeoman Park, located on Market Street in Huntington, offers citizens use of softball facilities, a soccer field, skateboard facilities, playground equipment, and a picnic area. A recent addition to this park is a BMX course. Yeoman Park is located on approximately nine acres of ground and is open year-round from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm.



Figure 3-3: Roanoke Park. Source: Roanoke Public Library.

## GOLF COURSES

Golf has seen a drastic decline across the country. Huntington County has seen the effects of this as two courses have closed in recent years. While there is a decline in the popularity of the game, there are still four golf courses in the county to meet the needs of golfers in the area. Since it is a recreational activity, it is important to mention it in the parks and recreation section of the comprehensive plan. As a side note, should there be future course closures, those obsolete courses could be considered for housing development as has been done in a neighboring county. The following courses remain open:

- Clear Creek Golf Course
- Dogwood Glen Golf Course
- Etna Acres Golf Course
- Norwood Golf Club

## FESTIVALS

Throughout Huntington County there are a number of festivals that are held annually by local communities. These festivals are well visited by numerous residents on not only Huntington County, but visitors from the greater region as well. The county should take advantage of these festivals in order to build upon the existing recreational opportunities, improvements to the overall quality of life, featured amenities that may entice future economic development, and most importantly to keep the citizens proud of what they have. A short list of a few festivals held throughout Huntington County include, but not limited to, the following:

- Andrews Summer Festival
- Christmas at the Forks
- Christmas in the Village
- Crappie USA
- Flashback to the 60s Car Show
- Forks of the Wabash Pioneer Festival
- HUFF 50K Trail Run
- Huntington Heritage Days
- Lime City Cruisers Annual Car Show
- Markle Wildcat Days
- Old Fashioned Fourth of July

- Patriotic Pops Concert
- Roanoke Fall Festival
- Salamonie Summer Festival

## MUSEUMS

Huntington County has a host of unique museums that can be used as destination points of attraction. The following list includes those museums, locations, Internet addresses and phone numbers.

1. The Quayle Vice Presidential Learning Center  
815 Warren Street, Huntington  
[www.quaylemuseum.org](http://www.quaylemuseum.org)  
260-356-6356
2. The Huntington County Historical Museum  
315 Court Street, Huntington  
[www.huntingtonhistoricalmuseum.com](http://www.huntingtonhistoricalmuseum.com)  
260-356-7264
3. The Historic Forks of the Wabash Park  
At the intersection of US 24 and IN 9  
[forksofthewabash.org](http://forksofthewabash.org)  
260-356-1903
4. The Sheets Wildlife Museum  
200 Safari Trail  
[www.sheetswildlifemuseum.com](http://www.sheetswildlifemuseum.com)  
260-356-9453
5. Roanoke Area Heritage Center  
102 W. First Street, Roanoke  
[www.roanokeareaheritagecenter.weebly.com](http://www.roanokeareaheritagecenter.weebly.com)  
260-672-2773
6. The Salamonie Valley Historical Museum  
132 Nancy Street, Warren  
260-375-3711
7. The Indiana Room of the Huntington City-Township Public Library  
200 W. Market Street, Huntington  
[www.huntingtonpub.lib.in.us](http://www.huntingtonpub.lib.in.us)  
260-356-0824

## FUTURE PROPOSAL

### GOAL

To develop, maintain, and promote recreational opportunities and/or facilities to meet the current and future needs of Huntington County; and to preserve greenspaces between towns by development of preserves throughout the County.

### OBJECTIVES

- Develop the park system in a coordinated manner such that expenditures are effective and match the community's growth.
- Protect parklands and recreational areas from undesirable, conflicting, and potentially hazardous land uses and developments.
- Maintain the parks and recreational amenities at a level that attracts frequent and returning users from communities within and around Huntington County.
- Establish and maintain a variety of size and locations of public parks and open spaces that provide opportunities for passive and active recreation.
- Interconnect the parks, recreation land, public natural areas and public facilities with a network of trails suitable for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Utilize abandoned railways and roads for a countywide trail system.
- Develop historic tour using existing county roads connecting each community.
- Keep the community informed of recreational opportunities available.
- Weave pedestrian greenways into town fabric to connect residential areas with local commercial areas, schools, etc.

### PARK TYPES

The following are descriptions of varying park types by size and general recreation that may help guide the future development of existing parks or establishment of future park land in Huntington County.

#### *Regional Park*

**Purpose:** To provide outdoor recreational opportunities with strong emphasis on the natural environment.

**Character:** Vegetation and topographic variety, spaciousness, and uniqueness are the important qualities of this park classification. Variety takes the form of wooded areas and meadows, steep terrain and level land, panoramic views and screened vistas. Spaciousness is exhibited in the form of visual and sound separation of facilities and activities and the retention of extensive areas of undeveloped lands. Uniqueness is defined in terms of the special geologic, biologic, historic and visual features.

**Undeveloped Land:** 50 to 80 percent of total park area, including support acreage

**Service Area:** A regional park within one hour driving time of each Indiana resident

**Size:** Minimum of 1,000 acres

**Special Features:** A lake, reservoir or stream for water-based activities

#### **Facilities and Activities:**

- |                  |   |  |
|------------------|---|--|
| 1. Picnic area   | 5. Playfields   | 8. Nature center                                       |
| 2. Campgrounds   | 6. Trails for hiking, bridle, bicycling, or vehicular use | 9. Food and lodging                                    |
| 3. Golfing       | 7. Nature study area                                      | 10. Water recreation (swimming, boating, skiing, etc.) |
| 4. Winter sports |   |  |

**Comments:** Two general park types fit into the Regional Park classification. They are activity-oriented parks, such as state recreation areas and some joint county parks, and state parks (see Figure 3-4). The essential difference between these two park types is that the recreation areas have more developed recreation activities and are less oriented towards natural features.



Figure 3-4: Trail at Ouabache State Park, an example of a regional park.  
Source: davidelmore.com

*District Park*

**Purpose:** To provide easily accessible and more intensive recreation activity for a region within a natural environment, that is less extensive and dramatic than a regional park environment.

**Character:** Variety and openness are the important qualities of this park classification. Variety is defined in the regional park but with less dramatic terrain and vegetation features. Openness is expressed in the form of undeveloped land, wooded areas, and scenic views.

**Undeveloped Land:** 40 to 60 percent of total park area, including support acreage

**Service Area:** One-half hour driving time radius

**Size:** 400 to 800 acres

**Special Features:** Should include water for swimming

**Facilities and Activities:**

- |                  |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|
| 1. Picnic area   | 5. Playfields   | 8. Nature center                                      |
| 2. Campgrounds   | 6. Trails for hiking, bridle, bicycling, or vehicular use | 9. Water recreation (swimming, boating, skiing, etc.) |
| 3. Golfing       | 7. Nature study area                                      |   |
| 4. Winter sports |   |   |

*Community Park*

**Purpose:** To provide an activity-dominated recreation area with a moderate amount of managed undeveloped land that can sustain continued, heavy use.

**Character:** Variety and high use capacity are important qualities of this park classification. Variety is in the form of moderate slopes, rolling land forms, partial tree cover. High use capacity is in the form of good drainage, stable soil conditions, and relatively level land. Many community parks, especially those in rural settings, include sports complexes for activities such as softball, baseball, and soccer.

**Undeveloped Land:** 20 to 40 percent of total park area, including support acreage

**Service Area:** Fifteen minute driving time radius

**Size:** 100 to 400 acres

**Special Features:** Should include water for swimming

**Facilities and Activities:**

- |                      |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| 1. Picnicking        | 5. Playfields                              | 8. Nature center                                 |
| 2. Golf              | 6. Trails for hiking, bridle, or bicycling | 9. Water recreation (swimming, fishing, boating) |
| 3. Winter activities | 7. Nature study area                       |  |
| 4. Playgrounds       |  |  |

### *Neighborhood Park*

**Purpose:** To provide active and passive recreation facilities for all age groups within walking distance to urban neighborhood residents.

**Character:** High use capacity and access are the important qualities of this park classification. High use capacity means the site has good drainage, open areas and rolling to level land. Access means there are minimal road, terrain and structural barriers between the park and residents.

**Undeveloped Land:** 15 to 30 percent of total park area, including support acreage

**Service Area:** Twenty minute walking time radius

**Size:** 5 to 50 acres

**Special Features:** Develop in conjunction with school grounds whenever feasible.

**Facilities and Activities:**

- |                  |                               |   |
|------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Playgrounds   | 4. Swimming or water features | 6. Recreation building/<br>community center |
| 2. Playfields    | (see Figure 3-5)              | 7. Skateboard area                          |
| 3. Walking paths | 5. Greenspace/wooded areas    |   |

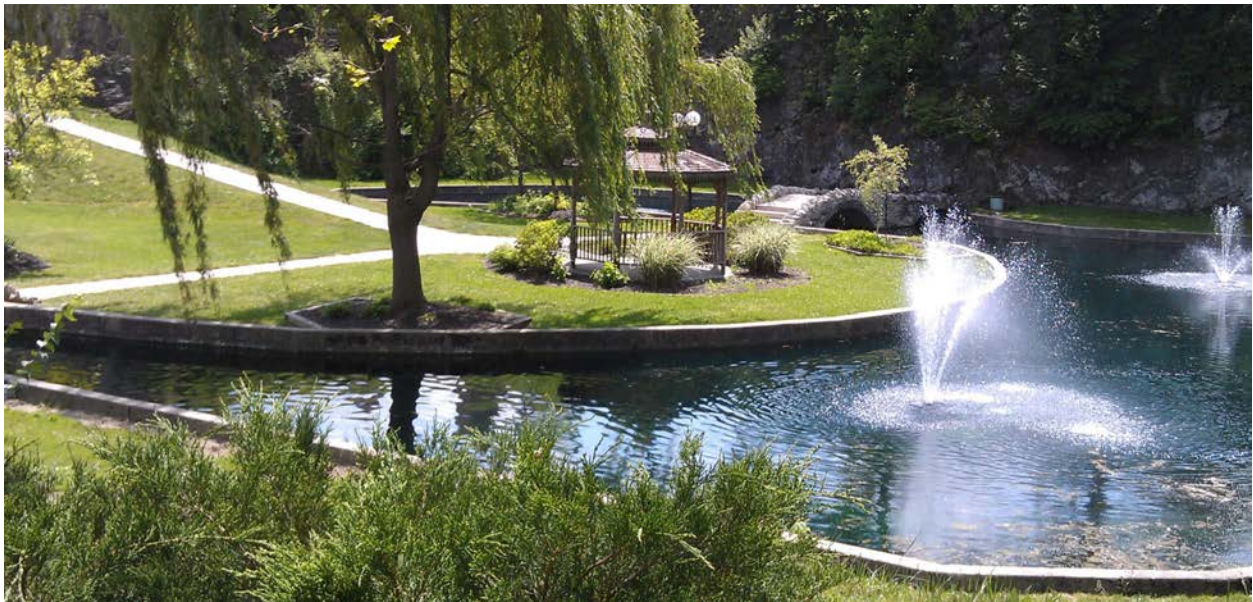


Figure 3-5: Sunken Gardens at Memorial Park, an example of a neighborhood park in Huntington County.  
Source: Huntington County Visitor's Bureau.

### *Block Park/Tot Lot*

**Purpose:** To provide protected areas for young children in residential areas and space activities for families and the elderly.

**Character:** High use capacity and access are the important qualities of this park classification. High use capacity takes form in good drainage and level land. Access is provided by designing no road or other physical barriers between residents and the park.

**Undeveloped Land:** 10 to 20 percent of total park area, including support acreage

**Service Area:** Five minute walking time radius

**Size:** 1/4 to 5 acres

**Facilities and Activities:**

- |               |                            |                  |
|---------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Playground | 3. Sitting/picnicking area | 5. Greenspace    |
| 2. Shelter(s) | 4. Court area              | 6. Walking paths |



### Natural Resource Areas

**Purpose:** Protect, conserve and perpetuate outstanding natural resources. It should be noted that as communities become more successful and development continues to expand, in many cases open space becomes the outstanding natural resource to be protected. Greenways provide movement corridors for wildlife and connections between habitats.

**Character:** The character of the natural resources area is determined by the type(s) of natural resource to be managed.

**Undeveloped Land:** 100 percent, not including support facilities

**Service Area:** Sites are selected more on the basis of the location of the resource rather than on the proximity to population centers.

**Size:** Generally large, up to 4,000 acres or more, with the exception of Nature Preserves, which may be small to protect unique features

**Special Features:** Natural resources areas can be divided into four categories: Forests, Fish and Wildlife Areas, Nature Preserves, and Greenways.

#### Facilities and Activities:

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Picnicking                                       | 5. Hunting                                 | 8. Research                                      |
| 2. Camping  | 6. Launching areas                         | 9. Environmental education                       |
| 3. Trails for hiking, walking, bridle, or bicycling | 7. Wildlife observation and/or photography | 10. Transportation (motorized and non-motorized) |
| 4. Water recreation                                 |  |  |

### Trail Systems

**Purpose:** Trails within a park setting provide access to the natural environment. Connector trails emphasize safe travel for users. Trails may be a link to a destination or a destination themselves. Multi-use and single use trails accommodate activities such as hiking, jogging, walking, in-line skating, horseback riding, bicycling, and off-road vehicle riding. Water trails provide destination activities for traveling by canoe, kayak, or boat.

**Character:** The character of the trail is determined by the type(s) of setting in which it is located and by the intended purpose of the trail. Accessibility is inherent in terms of relative ease of movement along the trail.

**Undeveloped Land:** All areas except access points, support areas (i.e. parking, restrooms), and the trail.

**Service Area:** Proximity is based on the intended purpose(s) of the trail. Park trails support service areas recommended by the type of park. Generally, trails should be located within walking distance for a community-based trail (see Figure 3-6) and within a twenty minute driving radius for long distance trails.

**Size:** Where possible, one mile or more, depending on intended use and location

**Special Features:** Trails located outside parks and organized recreation areas should lead to or past points of interest. These points of interest may be scenic, social, historical, cultural, or activity-oriented recreation areas. The width of the trail varies according to natural conditions, but the surface must safely accommodate the intended use.

#### Facilities and Activities:

- |                          |   |   |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Camping               | 5. Bridle trails                              | 8. Nature study                                 |
| 2. Hiking/walking Trails | 6. Water trails (motorized and non-motorized) | 9. Transportation (motorized and non-motorized) |
| 3. Jogging trails        | 7. Launching areas                            |   |
| 4. Bicycle trails        |   |   |

Extreme care must be taken when implementing multi-use trails. Compatibility of activities and impact on user experience must be considered.

**Note:** The cost of developing a trail is generally high, but can vary between surface type, width, and maintenance. Many successful trails in other communities have been funded through supplemental grant programs (both through government programs and private programs), timed to be developed alongside the repaving or updating of roads, fundraising events in communities (from auctions to raise trail funds to the purchasing of benches or other amenities in memory or honor), and working with regional trails groups to split costs of connecting trails to surrounding counties. Some communities have had great success in proposing that communities develop trails and trailheads within their own boundaries and then the County connects what has been made, helping to solidify and develop a route to garner support and possible funds in small sections. While the timeline in the following section for trails is set for five to ten years, it is important to remember to prioritize interested and invested communities but to also be aware of opportunities to build trails as they become available.



Figure 3-6: Development of a section of the Little River Trail in Huntington. Source: HCUED.

## PARKS & RECREATION STRATEGIES

1. **Develop trails connecting all communities in Huntington County.**
2. **Connect Huntington County's trail network to neighboring counties.**
3. **Create a countywide parks and recreation board.**
4. **Expand reservoir programs.**
5. **Expand hunting and fishing opportunities.**
6. **Establish joint programs through the YMCA, PAL Club, and Huntington University.**
7. **Hold joint meetings with all community park boards.**
8. **Designate potential areas for future sports fields.**
9. **Major housing developments should provide open space for recreation purposes.**
10. **Re-establish a "Historic Tour" for the county.**
11. **Create links between various destinations.**
12. **Build upon existing youth programs.**
13. **Provide recreational opportunities that allow for handicap accessibility.**
14. **Expand fine art festivals.**
15. **Promote camping opportunities.**

### 1. **Develop trails connecting all communities in Huntington County.**

**Participants:** Park Boards, City Council, Town Councils, County Commissioners, Mayor, DNR, Huntington Area Recreational Trails Association (HARTA), INDOT, Highway Department

**Timeline:** 5 to 10 years

The City of Huntington has led the trails initiative in Huntington County by completing several interconnected routes within city limits within the last several years. While the City continues their efforts, HARTA is in the process of spearheading a trail project connecting Huntington to Andrews which will eventually meet at the Wabash County line, connecting to the town of Lagro. This particular trail will incorporate the scenic Wabash River and the Forks of the Wabash Historic Park. Of the trails connecting each of the communities in Huntington County, this project should be given highest priority as the prep work – forming a project committee, securing funding and/or grants, land acquisition and/or options, state road crossings, etc. – has already begun.

Other phases of an interconnected county trail system should include developing:

- A trail from Huntington to Roanoke, potentially following the Little Wabash River;
- A trail from Huntington to Warren, which must creatively utilize destination or focus points, as there are no bodies of water along this route;
- A trail from Huntington to Mt. Etna, which should utilize the adjacent Wabash River and Salamonie Reservoir;
- A trail from Huntington to Markle, which should utilize the adjacent Roush Lake; and
- Trails connecting each of the smaller towns, which may utilize existing county right-of-way rather than dedicated, paved multipurpose trails.

At this time, County Highway has already identified "bike routes" and accompanying signage throughout the county. Figure 3-7 shows the existing network of bike paths connecting each of the communities in Huntington County. These paths are not paved or dedicated multipurpose trails, but they are a step in the right direction. For some proposed trail routes, this network may be all that is feasible or desired.

# Huntington County, Indiana

Signs should be at every road change and every 3 miles on straight aways. Signs could have name of town that route is headed to

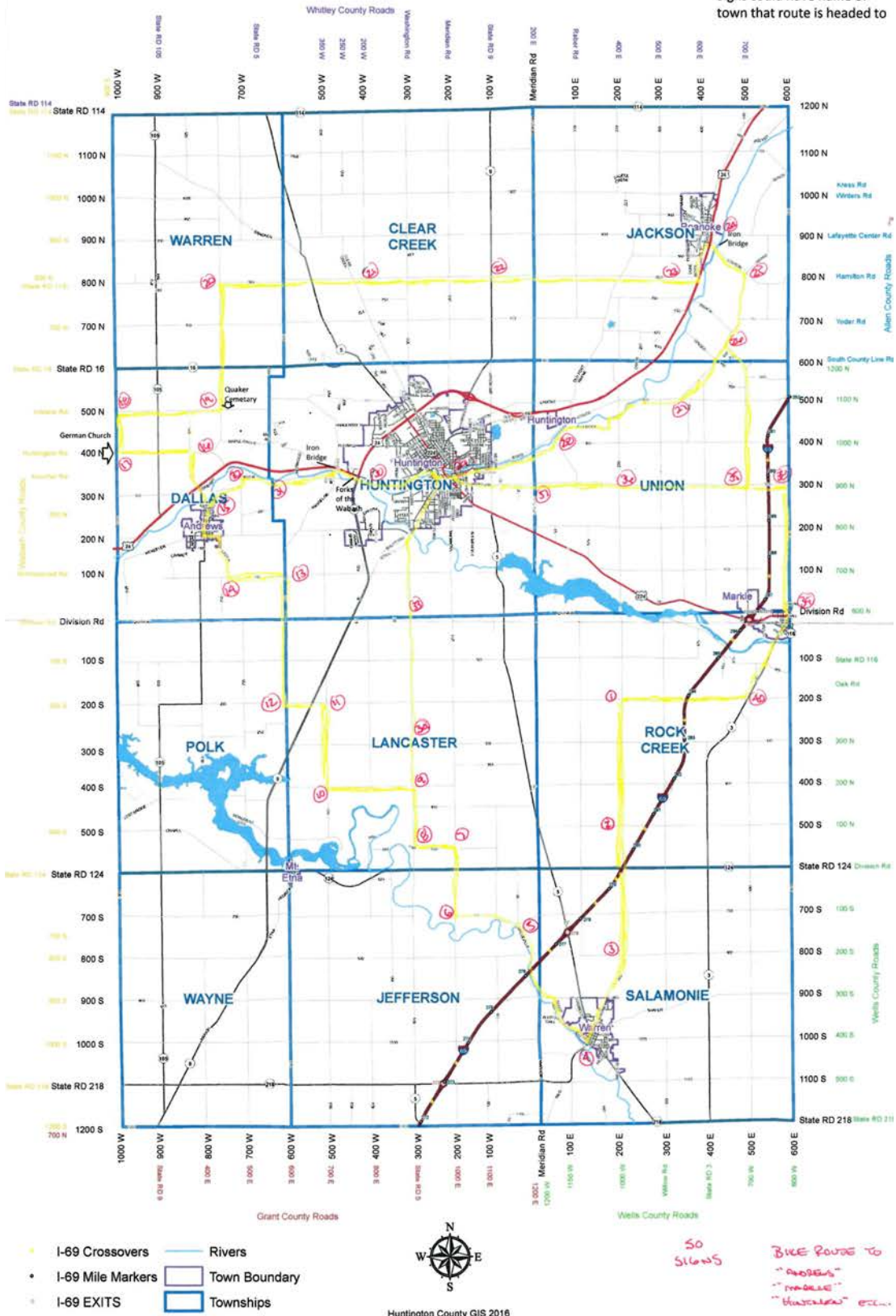


Figure 3-7: Identified bike routes and signage throughout Huntington County. Source: County Highway.

Maintenance and repair of dedicated, paved, multipurpose trails must be considered and may become the responsibility of HARTA, community park boards, and other volunteer organizations.

## **2. Connect Huntington County's trail network to neighboring counties.**

**Participants:** Park Boards, Town Councils, County Commissioners, DNR, HARTA, INDOT, County Highway, Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC)

**Timeline:** 10 to 20 years

Beginning in 2015, the Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) led the creation of the Northeast Indiana Trail Plan through a series of planning events. This led to the development of a Regional Trails Map (see Figure 3-8) which identifies opportunities for connecting communities throughout Northeast Indiana through proposed trails. In 2016, NIRCC also led a regional branding initiative with consultant and public input, ultimately resulting in the creation of the "Northeast Indiana United Trails" brand which all communities are encouraged to utilize. Future trail efforts should consider adopting this brand to create a stronger tie with Northeast Indiana.

As previously mentioned in the first strategy of this section, HARTA is working to develop a trail from Huntington to Andrews that eventually will connect to Lagro in Wabash County. In addition, the town of Markle has previously discussed connecting to Bluffton in Wells County. As funding opportunities and community partnerships arise, other regional trail routes should be pursued in accordance with the Northeast Indiana Trail Plan.

## **3. Create a countywide parks and recreation board.**

**Participants:** County Commissioners

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

A countywide parks and recreation board would help Huntington County address large scale

projects such as a countywide trails system. This board would also establish an adopted countywide parks plan, which is often required for securing project funding. A countywide parks board can help ensure the upkeep of parks and recreational facilities by promoting volunteer activities. The board structure can be simple: representatives from each community park board or governing body and a representative from DNR.

## **4. Expand reservoir programs.**

**Participants:** DNR, Park Boards

**Timeline:** 5 to 10 years

When determining what programs to expand, the DNR and the countywide parks board should work together to determine what potential activities local citizens enjoy most. Once the newly expanded programs have been established and local involvement has grown, the DNR and countywide parks board can work on drawing people from outside Huntington County's boundaries with new programs.

To aid in this process, a matrix should be created to show what the DNR currently provides and allows on its facilities and to what extent those facilities and opportunities are used. One recurring concern is the difficult time local citizens have putting their watercraft into the water via the boat-ramps. If the local citizens do not like to use these facilities, or are afraid to, it will be difficult to expect visitors to make any attempt when they can go elsewhere where the facilities seem more user-friendly.

Once that task has been completed, a priority list should be composed. Within this list, the proposed expansions or modifications should be illustrated based on public input. Going back to the example of the boat-ramps: if the priority list included the reconfigurations of these ramps to become more user-friendly, then funding sources can be sought more easily since there is a specific goal attached to the monetary request.

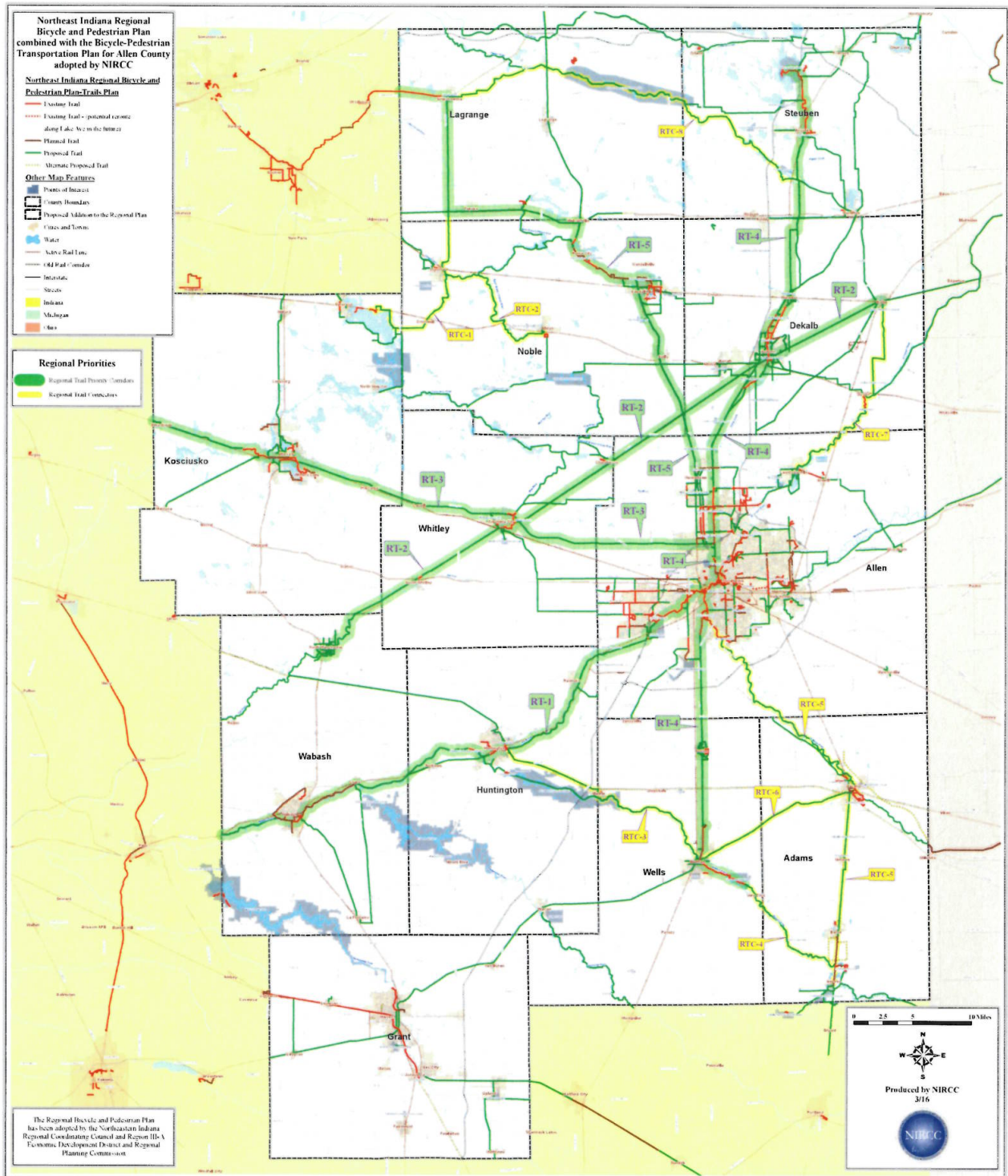


Figure 3-8: Northeast Indiana Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, adopted by NIRCC. Source: NIRCC.

**5. Expand hunting and fishing opportunities.**

**Participants:** DNR, Salamonie Lake, J. Edward Roush Lake, Park Boards

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

The DNR and the countywide parks board should consider expanding both hunting and fishing opportunities throughout the county, including, but not limited to:

- Holding fishing and hunting tournaments;
- Holding safety and educational programs related to fishing and hunting;
- Increasing areas designated and used for fishing and hunting;
- Improving access areas for fishing and hunting activities; and
- Promoting the existing opportunities that Huntington County offers fishers and hunters.

**6. Establish joint programs through the YMCA, PAL Club, and Huntington University.**

**Participants:** YMCA, PAL Club, Huntington University

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

Creating joint programs through these organizations will allow them to operate more efficiently and provide towards the recreational infrastructure in place. It should be in their best interest to work together to provide Huntington County with a number of efficient and effective programs that will improve the quality of life and health for all while eliminating duplication of services. Success will be measured in number of programs offered and number of people participating.

**7. Hold joint meetings with all community park boards.**

**Participants:** Park Boards

**Timeline:** Ongoing

The purpose of having a joint meeting with all community park boards is to determine what functions or activities need to be added to the community without creating an unnecessary redundancy or duplication of services. At these meetings, the boards should discuss future needs and desires and determine which stages of the parks and recreation plan to implement based upon data collected (population trends, budget, funding sources available, etc.). A joint meeting should be held at least annually, since most requirements for funding opportunities ask for a five-year park plan. This will allow for amendments to be made to accommodate the changes of the communities. Having a countywide parks board is not necessary for this to take place, but it can be quite beneficial in data collection and resource acquisition. If there is no countywide parks board in place, some form of governing body should be created to gather and analyze data, find funding sources and prepare grants, and help implement various components of the parks and recreation plans as well as the countywide comprehensive plan.

**8. Designate potential areas for future sports fields.**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, Park Boards

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

Abundant public sports fields are important to the future overall quality of life within Huntington County. The various park boards can utilize population data and analyze future trends to determine what forms of fields are needed and then create a plan that will address the needs and desires of the community. The processes in which land can be designated and/or acquired will be discussed in further detail within the Growth Management section of this comprehensive plan.

**9. Major housing developments should provide open space for recreation purposes.**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, Subdivision Plat Committee

**Timeline:** Ongoing

One way to ensure citizens have parks access is to require that future developments provide green areas for use as park areas for subdivision residents. This area can be cared for by the local homeowners' association or, if a large enough green area is established, it could be dedicated to the local park board as a public park for its perpetual maintenance. If land is scarce to the developer, another option is to implement impact fees to provide a community the ability to make sure that citizens will have a place for outdoor activity in the future. More on impact fees will be discussed within the Growth Management section of this comprehensive plan.

**10. Re-establish a "Historic Tour" for the county.**

**Participants:** Huntington County Visitor and Convention Bureau, City of Huntington Historic Review Board in collaboration with the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, Huntington Alert, Park Boards

**Timeline:** Ongoing

The Huntington County Visitor and Convention Bureau formerly offered a historic tour for interested people to learn about the history of the community. This tour should be re-established so citizens can learn about the county's rich history. All museums, historic buildings, and all significant sites within the county should be considered for this tour. This will allow for the history of the county to be preserved and for growth in tourism. One resource to utilize in creating a historic tour is the *Huntington County Interim Report, Second Edition, Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory*. This report provides addresses of buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture in Huntington County.

**11. Create links between various destinations.**

**Participants:** DCD, Huntington County Visitor and Convention Bureau, Park Boards, County Commissioners, City Council, Town Councils

**Timeline:** 10 to 20 years

Establishing destinations within the communities creates a sense of space and place. A number of locations throughout Huntington County are currently underutilized, but with a little work, these locations could be turned into places that citizens will want to visit, and over time, become destinations for tourism as well. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Downtown areas
- Historic districts, buildings, and sites
- Museums
- Parks
- Food and dining services
- Rivers and streams
- Reservoirs

**12. Build upon existing youth programs.**

**Participants:** Park Boards, County Commissioners, City Council, Town Councils

**Timeline:** Ongoing

Huntington County offers many amenities pertaining to recreation for area youths, including the PAL Club, YMCA, Youth Services Bureau, Boys and Girls Club, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts. These programs should be evaluated to ensure that there is not an unnecessary overlap of activities provided and available resources are utilized to obtain the highest level of recreational opportunities. With the local park boards serving as a facilitator for the current and future organizations providing recreational activities, Huntington County will ensure that community wants and needs have a greater chance of being provided.



### **13. Provide recreational opportunities that allow for handicap accessibility.**

**Participants:** DCD, Park Boards, County Commissioners, City Council, Town Councils

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

Recreational activities are sometimes taken for granted, yet a number of people are unable to utilize or enjoy these same recreational opportunities due to age or disability. Huntington County has an aging population which increases the need for handicap accessible recreational opportunities. Many of these recreational activities are inaccessible to those that have some form of physical disability, which in turn is depriving a group an amenity that helps to improve quality of life. To address these concerns, the park boards need to research providing handicap accessible activities. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Create/establish fishing piers that allow easy access for wheelchairs;
- Utilize paved surfaces for trail systems with gradual inclinations to accommodate elevation changes;
- Provide handicap parking at recreational facilities;
- Provide recreational activities for those with disabilities (swimming, archery, sporting events, etc.);
- Upgrade of restroom facilities to meet ADA requirements;
- Provide rest areas along trail systems; and
- Curbs and sidewalks should have handicap accessible quadrants.

### **14. Expand fine art festivals.**

**Participants:** Park Boards, County Commissioners, City Council, Town Councils, Huntington University, Huntington County Community School Corporation, Chambers of Commerce, LaFontaine Arts Council

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

The City of Huntington and the Town of Roanoke host fine arts festivals annually. These festivals can be expanded by leveraging resources such as local educational institutions. By partnering and bringing resources together, the arts within the county can receive increased exposure. These events are a source of community pride and will allow for greater synergy to take place amongst the residents. Events like this will bring in people from outside of the county and allow for the promotion of what Huntington County has to offer.

### **15. Promote camping opportunities.**

**Participants:** Park Boards, DNR, Chambers of Commerce

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

With recent funding cuts to many state and federal parks, camping opportunities have been on a decline over the years. Local governments should invest a bit of time and energy into researching benefits of having camping facilities available to not only local citizens but also to the region. Since Huntington County is blessed to have two reservoirs, outdoor recreation opportunities such as camping should be considered an asset that could provide additional revenues to the county.





CHAPTER 4:  
**COMMUNITY  
FACILITIES**



# Community Facilities

## CURRENT ANALYSIS

In every community throughout the United States, certain services are provided for citizens every day. These services are often overlooked or not prominent in everyday life, but are essential to the community's health, safety, and ability to function. These public services and the facilities that deliver those services are ultimately the foundation on which a community is built. Industries rate communities based on quality of public services and facilities when deciding where to locate a new business or expand an existing business. Families rate communities on the quality of public services and facilities when deciding where they will move or build a home to raise their family. Commercial enterprises rate communities based on quality of public services and facilities when deciding where to enter a new market. The same is true for existing businesses, commercial entities, and families when determining whether or not they stay in a community and expand or leave for "greener pastures."

Likewise, the location of public facilities can affect and control the location of future development and should be a focal point of future land use planning. To provide efficient and effective public facilities and services, it is essential to take into account the effect public facilities have on surrounding land uses and the development of the surrounding area. Often new schools and commercial and industrial developments have a significant impact on surrounding land uses because they receive public utilities and services that did not exist in the surrounding area prior to their development. Once public utilities cross over, or are located on nearby vacant land, the surrounding lands' ability and cost of development is significantly altered. This trend is most often associated with large commercial developments (strip malls, box stores, office parks) or large public facilities (schools, colleges, fire or police stations) that take up a substantial amount of land that could not be amassed within the city. When these types of developments occur,

it is important to take into consideration their effect on the new surrounding land uses, as well as the type of land uses that typically surround new developments.

Therefore, this section of the comprehensive plan will focus on the departments and facilities that deliver those services within Huntington County. This section will examine the ten community services outlined below:

- Medical Services
- Fire Protection
- Police Protection
- Primary Education Services
- Secondary Education Services
- Library Services
- Water Supply Services
- Sewer Disposal Services
- Solid Waste Services

## FIRE PROTECTION

Like most public services, the ability to provide fire protection to a community is essential for the public's safety and welfare. Likewise, it is for the public good that we plan for the most efficient and effective delivery of that fire protection service in conjunction with the comprehensive plan. Huntington County is divided into the following fire districts (see Figure 4-1):

- Andrews - Dallas Township
- Bippus - Warren and Clear Creek Townships
- Huntington city (divided into north and south stations)
- Huntington Township
- Markle - Rock Creek and most of Union Townships
- Mt Etna - Polk, Lancaster, Wayne, and Jefferson Townships
- Roanoke - Jackson and part of Union Townships
- Warren - Salamonie Township

All fire districts, except the city of Huntington, are manned and operated by volunteer firefighters. Furthermore, most of the seven districts work

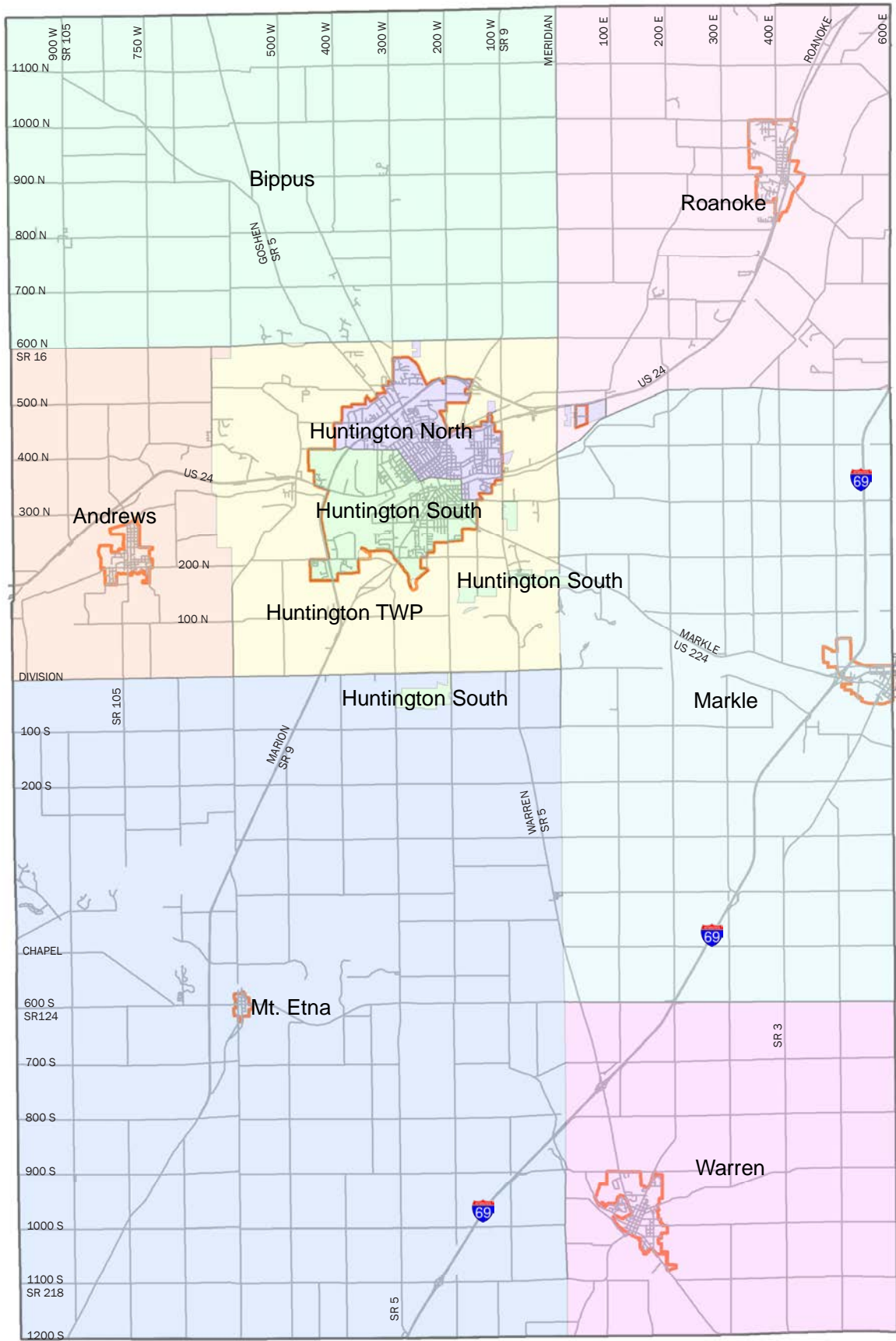


Figure 4-1: Huntington County fire districts. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on March 27, 2018.

together in areas along the borders adjoining each fire district, referred to as “Duel Response Areas,” to increase man power and decrease response time in those areas.

To ensure Huntington County’s fire protection services are sufficiently maintained, four strategic objectives should be focused on over the next twenty years (to be discussed further in the future proposal of this section):

- Communication upgrades
- Funding
- Training facilities and procedures
- Retention of volunteers and staff

## **POLICE PROTECTION**

Huntington County’s police protection is provided by the local Sheriff's Department. Currently, the department is staffed by 15 full-time officers, 16 reserve officers, and one matron. The county’s police protection includes a number of services besides the obvious, including jail facilities, rescue and extraction, and communication dispatch.

Huntington County’s jail facilities were designed to hold up to a maximum of 96 inmates, but routinely hold approximately 100 to 120 inmates. The facilities also include a nutrition center that prepares meals for inmates, as well as an in-house medical facility that provides medical care for inmates. The jail and medical facilities are staffed by 47 full or part-time employees including 19 full-time jailers, 16 part-time jailers, and 12 others in various administrative and support functions. The state of Indiana is putting pressure on counties to address jail overcrowding. The county is in the process of addressing this issue.

The Sheriff’s Department also operates a rescue and extraction crew for all of Huntington County. The crew provides rescue service for all kinds of accidents that require extraction operations, and the crew is completely staffed by ten volunteers with a variety of medical skills and training. Furthermore, the rescue squad is funded by donations from businesses and citizens within the county and is not funded by any tax money.

The communication dispatch for all of the emergency services for Huntington County also operates out of the Sheriff’s Department. The communication center has seven lines, five non-emergency lines and two emergency (911) lines. The dispatch center takes calls for all of the county’s fire services, police services, emergency services, and a number of other nonemergency services. The center averages over 1300 calls per a month, and of those 1300 calls, the Sheriff’s department assists on an average of 600.

In order for the Sheriff’s Department to continue to function efficiently and effectively over the next twenty years, certain strategic objectives must be considered to provide adequate services to the community (to be discussed further in the future proposal of this section):

- Communication and technology upgrades
- Facility maintenance
- Personnel planning and allocation.
- Funding and budgeting needs

## **COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES**

The County's Health Department provides a number of services related to the health and safety of the community, including protecting the county's water supply by creating and enforcing policies on private wells and septic systems, as well as public water and septic systems. The department also issues permits and performs inspections on all water and septic systems constructed for all residential developments within the county. Along with insuring the public water supply is safe, the department offers other community health services such as immunizations, health education, food protection, and other health programs.

Currently, the department has two health inspectors to perform food protection program inspections and environmental health inspections (this includes inspections on wells and septic systems). The child immunizations are handled by one full-time nurse that runs and administers numerous health programs for Huntington County. The department also keeps the vital statistics records for the county and issues birth and death certificates. Overall, the department administers a number of health services for the community and should continue to expand and adapt existing programs to meet future demand and concerns.

Throughout the county, the number of residential subdivisions has increased over the last ten years and will likely continue to increase over the next couple of decades. It will become increasingly important to protect the county's water supply and provide adequate water and sewage services throughout the county. Furthermore, technology will play an important role in the continual maintenance of existing and future water and sewage systems and related policies. These trends and concerns will be the focal point for establishing goals and strategies to ensure adequate water and sewage systems over the next few decades. Goals and strategies should also be created for maintaining and advancing the county's health programs to promote better community health and health education.

## **SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL SERVICES**

Historically Huntington County's solid waste has been disposed of in the city landfill located on 300 West. Huntington County was unique in that it had one of the last municipal-owned landfills in the state. However, the landfill has experienced challenges in recent years due to a complex history of environmental regulation violations. In 2016, IDEM and the city of Huntington agreed on remedies to all violations and created a plan to close the landfill. As of 2018, closure of the landfill is imminent. Trash services have been outsourced to a private company.

## **MEDICAL SERVICES**

Access to quality health care is essential to the future growth of Huntington County. If healthcare providers are lacking (poor facilities with out-of-date equipment, under-employed staff, etc.), future business and industry may overlook the community for one that has these necessities in place, and existing business and industry may leave.

The Huntington County community is supported by a regional and local healthcare structure that includes the two largest health care providers in the region, Parkview and Lutheran. The local healthcare structure consists mainly of the Parkview Huntington Hospital (PHH), and roughly 30 physicians and surgeons that work within the Huntington County area. The local structure includes medical services such as dental, optometry, chiropractic, gynecology and obstetrics, orthopedics, family physicians, and many



other medical services. The structure also consists of the previously mentioned public facilities, PHH, and private practices located within the county.

The county is further supported by a regional health care structure that includes the Parkview (see Figure 4-2) and Lutheran Health Networks, as well as the Veterans hospital located within Allen County. The region’s medical services include all of the common medical procedures as well as a number of advanced procedures and services, supported by a well-known cast of physicians and surgeons.

While Huntington County has an adequate healthcare infrastructure for a community of its size, it is important for a community to continue to support and advance the current healthcare procedures and services as the community grows. Although the healthcare industry is not typically considered an “economic base” industry, it should be approached much like any other industry by protecting the existing, drawing in new, and expanding the existing healthcare infrastructure. This can be done by supporting and advancing the existing healthcare infrastructure and implementing techniques to ensure adequate facilities and services are provided within the county.



Figure 4-2: Parkview Huntington Hospital. Source: [www.parkview.com](http://www.parkview.com)

## FUTURE PROPOSAL

### GOAL

Provide responsive, high quality, effective, and efficient public facilities and services for the current and future citizens of Huntington County.

### OBJECTIVES

- Develop and maintain a program for community facilities and services to expand with the growth of Huntington County.
- Encourage new development to locate where it can be most effectively served by emergency services.
- Enhance public facilities and services for children, young adults, and the elderly.
- Enhance the library system to serve all citizens of Huntington County.
- Provide high quality educational facilities and opportunities for citizens of Huntington County.
- Add, change or consolidate services when appropriate.
- Recognize what types of facilities work locally and which work regionally and act upon these appropriately.
- Create centrally located citizen recreation facilities that can accommodate large and small groups.

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES STRATEGIES

- 1. Ensure adequate fire protection for future developments while maintaining high standards for existing uses.**
- 2. Ensure adequate police protection for future developments while maintaining high standards for existing uses.**
- 3. Ensure adequate water and sewage system quality and availability for all existing and future developments within Huntington County.**
- 4. Ensure continual support and advancements in community health programs in order to promote better community health and health education.**
- 5. Ensure adequate solid waste disposal, management, and availability for all existing and future developments within Huntington County.**
- 6. Attract medical and dental personnel to the community.**

- 1. Ensure adequate fire protection for future developments while maintaining high standards for existing uses.**

**Participants:** Fire Departments, County Commissioners, City Council, Town Councils

**Timeline:** Ongoing

Like most rural communities, the majority of Huntington County's fire protection services offered are staffed and provided by volunteers within the community, due to the high cost associated with running and maintaining fire stations and equipment.

#### *Funding Objectives*

One of the many strengths of Huntington County's fire protection services are the close ties and ability to work with all of the fire districts to serve the county's needs for protection. One of the funding objectives

will be the ability to network grant applications for all of the fire districts throughout the county. Networking grant applications will offer the fire districts more grant opportunities, and the ability to more efficiently and effectively fund the county's needs for fire protection.

The second funding objective is networking equipment purchases with all of the fire districts. Some fire equipment may be discounted based on the quantity purchased at one time. By coordinating equipment purchases with all of the fire districts, the purchasing power and efficiency level for Huntington County's fire protection services will ultimately increase. Other benefits can be derived from networking equipment purchases including upgrading or exchanging equipment between fire districts as new equipment is purchased to replace existing equipment.

The final funding objective focuses on the community's ability to provide efficient funding for its fire protection services through fundraising events. The majority of the funding for volunteer fire protection services come from grants and fundraising events held by the fire districts. A networked fundraising event or festival involving all of the fire districts within the county would further bolster the unity and strengths of the county's fire protection services.

#### *Communications Objectives*

Technological advancements have far out-paced the ability for community service industries to keep updated on new communication technology. This trend currently affects the communication connections between all of the fire districts within Huntington County, which are woefully inadequate in current communication technology.

The first communication objective will focus on Internet access and network connections for the county's fire services. The Internet has become an easily accessible way for many public services to network, communicate, and provide

valuable information to the public. By providing the fire districts access to Internet connections, each district will be able to share information, communicate, and be networked with the public as well as the other fire districts throughout the county. Internet access can potentially provide numerous ways to retrieve, share, and network valuable information in a relatively effective and inexpensive manner. There should be ongoing efforts to improve both the speed of internet connectivity and reliability.

The second and final communication objective will concentrate on providing continual advancements in communication technology as the need for those advancements arises within the county's fire protection services. As the technology continues to advance into areas of mobile communication and information systems, the county's fire services should upgrade their communication technology to provide more effective and efficient services.

#### *Training Objectives*

The first training objective should look at the need for a central training facility for all of Huntington County's fire protection services. Currently, one shared facility exists at County Highway's property. Still, firefighters seek training at facilities outside of the county. With the ever-changing training procedures and the importance of training for new threats, the county's firefighters must be adequately prepared to protect the citizens of Huntington County. This objective should include acquiring land in a central location that will be accessible for all of the fire districts in the county, as well as construction of the necessary facilities to train the county's firefighters, if need be.

In conjunction with the first objective, the second training objective should focus on providing adequate training for all firefighters. As firefighting procedures change, new threats develop, or new techniques are created, it is necessary to provide the firefighters with proper training and knowledge.

The final training objective concentrates on the need for retaining and attracting new volunteers, while planning for new and updated facilities within the fire districts. As population, number of housing units, commercial, and industrial units continue to fluctuate, the need for volunteer firefighters and adequately planned facilities must keep pace.

#### *Volunteers/Facilities Objectives*

The first staffing objective should focus on retaining current volunteers and attracting new volunteers as they are needed within the districts. While each district will have different staffing needs, all of the districts can work together on retaining and attracting new volunteers as they are needed within each district. By networking with each district some staffing problems may be solved by volunteers offering their services in multiple districts, or by filling positions from other districts. Furthermore, each district should implement a plan to address staffing needs on a yearly basis, which is correlated with the increase in population, structural units (residential, commercial, and industrial), and the number of calls (runs) committed by the district each year. Creating a plan that will systematically evaluate the county's fire districts staffing needs each year will allow for the fire districts to calculate their needs for future staffing in each district.

The second part of the strategic objective should allocate resources to plan for new or update facilities throughout the fire districts. This objective should be included with the plan to monitor staffing needs within the fire districts. As the population continues to increase through new developments (including residential, commercial, and industrial) so will the need for more effective coverage throughout the districts. With that more effective coverage comes the need to plan for future fire stations, new or updated, in order to provide the most effective and efficient fire protection throughout Huntington County.

## **2. Ensure adequate police protection for future developments while maintaining high standards for existing uses.**

**Participants:** Police Departments, Sheriff's Department, County Commissioners, City Council, Town Councils

**Timeline:** Ongoing

#### *Communications/Technology Objectives*

The first communication objective focuses on providing continual advancements in communication technology as the need for those advancements arise within the county's police protection services. As technology continues to advance into areas of mobile communication and information systems, so should the county's police services upgrade their communication technology to provide more effective and efficient services.

The second and final communication and technology objective should plan for upgrading equipment. This objective should include all equipment used by officers in the field and the office. It is essential that the officers in the field are adequately equipped to protect the community and themselves.

#### *Facility Objectives*

The first objective should look at the county's current jail facilities, condition and capacity in order to provide resources for new additions or upgrades. To provide efficient services, the jail facilities

and equipment must continually be maintained and replaced. The county's current jail facilities are overpopulated and under-maintained, but the county is in the process of addressing this issue. Building a new jail or adding on to the existing jail would be expensive but would adequately address the issue. All alternatives should be explored so that overcrowding is alleviated.

The second and final objective should focus on the department facility's current condition and capacity. As the facility ages and the department adjusts for increase in demand, maintenance to keep the facility functional should be completed. Routine maintenance and additions should be planned for in conjunction with the jail facility maintenance plan. Both facilities should be included in an overall facilities management plan that allocates resources for their continual upkeep.

#### *Staffing Objectives*

The first objective should look at the current and projected staffing needs for the county jail over the next decade. These projections should be based on a number of factors, including the county's population change, increases in the jail capacity, and fiscal capabilities, but should ultimately focus on the ability to provide safe, effective, and efficient service to the Huntington County community. Furthermore, these projections should be in conjunction with jail facility projects that would increase the demand for more staff.

The second and final objective will plan for the current and projected staffing needs for the Sheriff's Department. This objective should be based on population change, demand or service calls, and fiscal capability. By effectively planning for the projected staffing needs the department will be able to provide the most effective and efficient police protection for the community.

#### *Funding/Budgeting Objectives*

The first objective should explore alternatives for funding services provided by the jail. A number of alternative sentencing practices, such as house arrest and work release programs, are still effective but are more efficient and cost-effective for communities. Other programs or alternatives that exist for handling misdemeanor violations and juvenile offenders should also be considered when planning for more cost-effective services. These techniques may require joint cooperation from other departments or organizations. For example, alternative sentencing policies may involve law enforcement, prosecutor's office, and public judges.

The second and final objective should focus on budget cycling and competitive pay scales for the employees. The budget for many community service departments can be a continual problem because they are based on the amount of money taken from taxes, which are not always guaranteed funds. In many cases, alternatives to the timeline currently operating the budget cycle may be more efficient or effective depending on the concerns that are being mitigated. Furthermore, the department employs a number of highly trained law enforcement officers, of which the county spends a significant amount of money on training and educating those officers. Therefore, it is important to provide competitive pay rates to the existing and new officers to realize the value of time and training the county has invested in its employees.

**3. Ensure adequate water and sewage system quality and availability for all existing and future developments within Huntington County.**

**Participants:** Health Department, County Commissioners, City Council, Town Councils

**Timeline:** Ongoing

*Community-Focused Water and Sewer Maintenance*

The first objective is maintaining the existing water and sewage systems throughout the county. In Huntington County, there are currently six existing sewer districts. These districts play an important role in providing the county with adequate sewage disposal and should continually be maintained and upgraded as the districts age and expand. These sewer districts may also benefit from consolidation in the future. This could potentially allow for greater efficiencies to be obtained, better monthly rates for residents, and a higher level of service than what is already in place.

The second objective is providing adequate water

and sewage systems to new development within the county. As new development continues to occur, it will become increasingly important to provide adequate water and sewage systems to ensure the protection of the community and the water supply. This objective should include a plan that outlines all of the areas within the county on the suitability and availability of water and sewage within that area.

The third objective should focus on advancing the existing water and sewage systems and the policies that control the placement of these systems (see Figure 4-3). The county currently has an abundance of existing water and sewage systems already in place that may be outdated or ineffective in providing and protecting the community with adequate water and sewage service. These existing systems need to be updated or eliminated in order to protect the community and its water supply. Furthermore, as new technological and educational advancements are made concerning these systems, local policies should be updated accordingly.

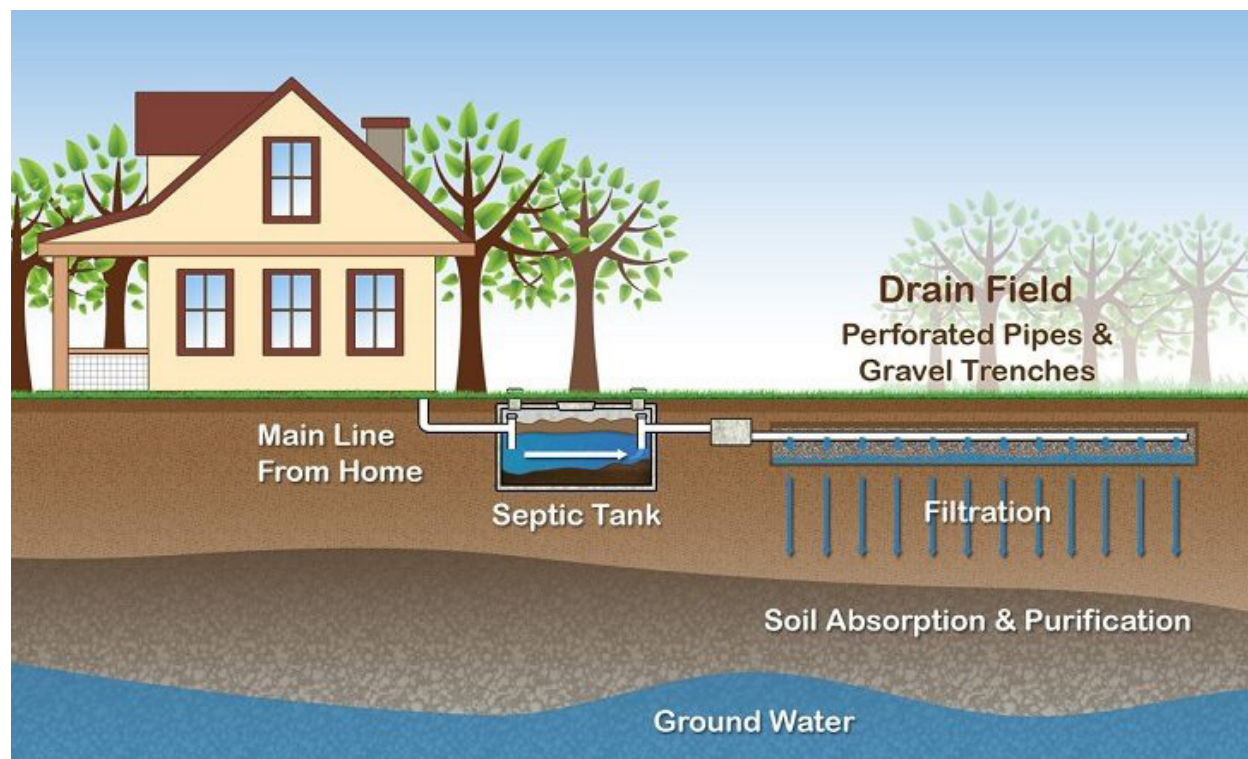


Figure 4-3: Diagram of a convention septic system. These systems are regulated by Health Department policies. Source: deavita.net

### *Wellhead Protection*

The state-mandated Wellhead Protection Rule requires that a contingency plan be created to provide safe drinking water during emergency conditions. The plan must address the response to incidents that might pose a contamination hazard to the public or private water supply and the identification of alternate sources of water as part of the contingency planning. The plan must identify procedures and develop lists to be used for responding to incidents that might contaminate the public water supply. This plan would allocate resources for the identification and protection of the county's wellheads, and would be an important part in the plan for providing adequate water and sewage systems for Huntington County.

### *Staffing*

As new developments occur within the county, the demand for water and sewage systems will ultimately increase over the next 10 to 15 years. This growth and development will define the department's need for new inspectors and staffing assistance to provide effective water and sewage systems within the county.

#### **4. Ensure continual support and advancements in community health programs in order to promote better community health and health education.**

**Participants:** Health Department, County Commissioners, City Council, Town Councils

**Timeline:** Ongoing

The County Health Department offers a number of health services to educate and protect the community. These programs go a long way to promote a healthy community and environment which play a key role in community perception. New technology and scientific advancements will continue to revolutionize the health industry and old health threats will be replaced by new health threats. New threats will require new studies, which must be communicated to citizens, and cures, which require administration to communities. While a community cannot predict the health threats of the future, they can have educated and well-trained staff in place to combat and educate the community on health matters.

It is imperative to continue supporting and advancing the current health programs offered to the Huntington County community. The department currently operates a number of programs used to protect the community from existing health threats, as well as educate the community on how to avoid or protect themselves from those health threats. These programs are invaluable to the community and should be financially and popularly supported throughout the government structure. Not only is it important to maintain a healthy community and environment, it is also important to maintain a structurally sound infrastructure of medical facilities and services with the community. This infrastructure should consist of public and private medical institutions that specialize in different medical fields.

In addition, staffing needs for the department should be evaluated on an ongoing basis. Staffing should be based on the department's demand level, county's structural and population growth, and fiscal capabilities.

#### **5. Ensure adequate solid waste disposal, management, and availability for all existing and future developments within Huntington County.**

**Participants:** Solid Waste Management District, County Commissioners, City Council, Town Councils

**Timeline:** Ongoing

The landfill in Huntington is about to close, due to the facility being at capacity. The city of Huntington has transitioned to a contract with a private operator for the disposal and maintenance of solid waste. Efforts should be made from all communities to minimize the amount of trash going to landfills. Communities should also assess the feasibility of recycling programs.

#### **6. Attract medical and dental personnel to the community.**

**Participants:** Parkview Huntington Board of Directors, American Medical Association, American Dental Association, professional medical organizations, County Commissioners, City Council, Town Councils

**Timeline:** Ongoing

Many rural communities tend to see a shortage of needed medical staff, which can cause some concern for future development and growth. Without adequate medical facilities and services, new business might not decide to locate in Huntington County, and some existing businesses may decide to leave. By emphasizing the importance of medical practitioners as well as medical facilities within the comprehensive plan, communities can justify implementing future growth techniques that will ensure that there will be adequate services and facilities in the future.

The primary objective is to continue supporting and advancing the current healthcare infrastructure within Huntington County by advertising and making the public aware of the various services offered by the medical practitioners within Huntington County. In addition, efforts should be made to attract new healthcare facilities and practitioners to Huntington County. Healthcare facilities and personnel are often incentivized by communities by establishing medical parks. While Huntington County is not likely to attract any additional major medical facilities, it can focus on providing opportunities for smaller private practices to locate within the county. Furthermore, it can focus on expanding the existing infrastructure by providing areas for those facilities to be located.





CHAPTER 5:  
**ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**



# Economic Development

Economic development at the county or local level is best described as a collaborative, systematic process used to make a county and its associated communities a better place to live and work. In short, it is an effort to nurture, enhance and preserve the economic vitality for our citizens. Economic development is not however, a politically partisan system, nor an effort to simply create news headlines in order to promote partisan political goals. Economic development systems also cannot successfully be used as a replacement for fiscal integrity either for private businesses or local units of government.

The primary revenue sources for County and local units of government are derived from the economic activity and vitality of the private sector; in other words, private economic decisions determine the degree of public budgetary resources. The stronger and more prosperous the private sector, the stronger the municipal tax base will be.

To quote former Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels, "Government doesn't create jobs; it only creates the conditions which make jobs more or less likely. New businesses are not coming to Indiana to fix any bad public policy decisions we've made. They're coming here to make a profit. If we provide an environment in which they can prosper, good things will happen in the Hoosier State." The private sector, however, relies on municipal resources for infrastructure and other assets which contribute to their success. As a result, it is in everyone's best interests to work together as a team to create a sustainable, sound and diverse long-term economy.

There are common themes associated with economic development plans and marketing strategies, such as job creation and retention, the creation of wealth, employment statistics, tax base dynamics, incentive opportunities, regulatory requirements and quality of life.

## HUNTINGTON COUNTY UNITED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Formed in 1997 as a private, non-profit entity under IRS Code Section 501(c)(3), the Huntington County United Economic Development Corporation (HCUED) exists to promote opportunities for job creation and retention and to conduct business development marketing, and offer consulting services, primarily in the industrial sector, in order to help Huntington County industries be successful in order to ultimately help Huntington County be an even better place to live, work, and raise a family.



HCUED is neither a taxing entity nor a governmental unit, but is a private non-profit business with a 17 member board of directors overseeing the legal obligations of the business. The agency functions as a vendor or consultant via fee for service contracts with the various entities of government in Huntington County. The agency also represents private sector clients as a governmental relations consultant.

HCUED is recognized by the State of Indiana and its Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) and Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) as the official local economic development organization (LEDO) for Huntington County. HCUED is also a member of the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership's LEDO Council.

HCUED re-organized its operations in 2008, establishing a much more collaborative approach to the economic development process, and to actually implement the agency's strategic plan in cooperation

with the various units of government throughout Huntington County. The re-organization was needed as a result of the decline of the industrial sector, beginning in the early 2000s. By the time of the reorganization in 2008, nearly 50 percent of the existing industrial space in the county was vacant. Unemployment rates topped 14 percent. Municipal revenues and tax base were in decline. It was clear the agency's "deliverables" had to focus less on planning and awareness and more on performance metrics. Since the re-organization, the industrial vacancy rate has dropped to less than two percent. The unemployment rate is at four percent. CEDIT revenues have consistently grown and according to the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, per capita income in Huntington County has risen nearly 30 percent.

The collaborative approach for economic development through HCUED has resulted in 117 industrial projects, creating over 2,300 new jobs while retaining over 9,700 existing jobs. The process was supported by combined private sector investments totaling over \$312 million. This success created a strong enough job market to survive the 2016 announcement by UTEC of their intention to relocate their manufacturing operations to Mexico, while re-developing the Huntington facility as a research and development, customer service, and corporate center. Nearly 700 jobs were affected, however, given commuter trends, 35 percent of those workers reside in Huntington County.

HCUED's objectives continue to be to:

- Serve as the LEDO with the IEDC and OCRA to manage incentive and regulatory opportunities for industrial clients.
- Promote orderly economic growth and stability.
- Encourage business and industrial activity.
- Promote our community in the corporate offices of industries in Huntington County.
- Promote growth compatible with community and workforce goals and objectives.
- Promote locally-owned and operated businesses.
- Provide opportunities for suitable locations for growth.
- Promote infill and redevelopment of vacant buildings.
- Collaborate with regional economic development partners.
- Encourage community collaborations which reduce obstacles to a pro-business environment.

HCUED's more specific goals are to:

- Conduct outreach visits to the corporate offices of companies currently operating in Huntington County.
- Conduct a minimum of 30 business and retention program visits with Huntington County employers on an annual basis.
- Secure development site opportunities accounting for 200 acres. Conduct due diligence to earn "shovel ready" certifications to the extent possible.
- Secure opportunities for rail-served industrial sites.
- Continue to support workforce development strategies.
- Encourage the County Commissioners' new Redevelopment Commission to create tax increment financing districts in locations which could not otherwise develop without such districts.
- Encourage collaboration among the various communities and the County in order to support industrial growth and expansion.
- Continue to conduct marketing efforts within the various targeted industry clusters existing in Huntington County.

- Continue to collaborate with Huntington County units of government to assist with the implementation of their various strategic plans.
- Continue efforts to support growth at the Huntington Municipal Airport.
- Continue efforts to support growth in the agri-business community, especially in alignment with Huntington University's Hauptert Institute for Agricultural Studies.
- Continue efforts to improve the effectiveness of HCUED's marketing and business development programming in compliance with the standards established by the Indiana State Board of Accounts and Department of Local Government Finance.
- Continue membership in the Indiana Economic Development Association for professional development and interaction with site selection consultants nationally and elected officials from the State of Indiana.
- Continue membership in the International Economic Development Council for professional development and interaction with site selection consultants internationally.



Figure 5-1: Commercial Road Industrial Park has privately-owned acreage available for industrial expansion. Source: HCUED.

**NORTHEAST INDIANA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP**

Huntington County continues to be a member of the 11 county Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership. The organization has adopted several initiatives which impact local economic development efforts:

- Vision 2020
- Big Goal Collaborative
- The Road to One Million
- Regional Cities Initiative
- Regional Development Authority
- Streamlined Permitting Process through the creation of the Permitting Excellence Coalition
- Commissioners & Mayors Caucus
- LEDO Council
- Regional Opportunities Council

Each effort involves regional resources and collaborative efforts to better align regional and local resources to accomplish goals over the 11 county market in Northeast Indiana.

## CURRENT ANALYSIS

Huntington County is typical of northeast Indiana in that the economy is heavily reliant upon the manufacturing sector. The most recent available data (2016) from Stats Indiana shows that 21 percent of employment and 31 percent of earnings in the county come from manufacturing. The Economics and Statistics Administration within the United States Department of Commerce shows that, as a state, Indiana ranks number one in both employment and total earnings in manufacturing. As a whole, Indiana has 13 percent of total employment and 22 percent of earnings in manufacturing. Huntington County outpaces the state as a whole when it comes to the significance of manufacturing within the economy. The unemployment rate is directly tied to the success of the manufacturing sector. The unemployment rate for Huntington County at the start of 2018 was 3.5 percent. During the great recession unemployment in the County peaked at 14.6 percent in June 2009. The economic recovery in manufacturing has greatly helped with employment in the County.

While manufacturing is the biggest sector in Huntington County, other major sectors are health care and retail. The health care sector accounts for ten percent of employment and nine percent of earnings. The retail sector accounts ten percent of employment and five percent of earnings. It should be noted that the other private (not classified) sector makes up 22 percent of employment and 14 percent of earnings.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Currently low unemployment rates have the unintended consequence of creating a shortage of workforce talent. Numerous efforts are underway to encourage workforce development. The regional shortage of workforce numbers has negatively affected employer recruitment and expansion activities. The new Huntington County Learning Center is a tremendous resource in addressing this concern. Significant resources will continue to be required to even come close to meeting existing workforce demands. The national "Opioid Crisis of 2017" has also created severe challenges to workforce development as more and more people become unable to function in the workforce as a result of drug use. The October 2017 Unemployment Report from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development indicated there were 736 unemployed residents of Huntington County while at the same time, over 2,100 job openings of all types are posted as available within a 25 mile radius of downtown Huntington (per Indeed.com).

## SCHOOL CLOSURES

The county is currently facing a challenge involving abandoned schools. Schools are closing to accommodate the movement of families and their students toward more populated urban areas of the region. The abandoned facilities are costly to maintain without any occupants, and new usage options should be considered for these buildings. Many precedents can be considered, such as the transformation from a school to a multi-family residential building, a light-industrial building, office building, or even to repurpose to a higher education satellite location. Retrofitting a school will be costly and surely come with issues of location for some businesses. When researching possible options and interested individuals, it may be crucial to work with the Chamber of Commerce and HCUED to find reasonable ways to ease the cost of businesses repurposing the abandoned spaces.

Goals or policies addressing abandoned schools should also consider what can be done to prevent further school closures and to retain students and attract families into areas with capacity for additional students. The future of the education facilities seems to be concentrated in the Northeastern portion of the County.

Finding ways to make communities in other parts of the county more attractive to young families will involve a balancing act between residential, business, and supporting public schools.

## INDUSTRIAL BUILDING AND SITE INVENTORY

Recent success in attraction and expansion efforts have nearly consumed all existing locations for industrial growth which were shown as priorities in the 2005 comprehensive plan. Amenities currently in market demand for growth include:

- rail service;
- immediate access to interstate highways; and
- immediate access to four-lane, non-interstate corridors.

## INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND REGULATORY ISSUES

Significant growth, regardless of whether it is residential, commercial, or industrial, cannot occur on sites served only with independent wells and septic systems. Municipal or other major independent facilities are required to manage water and wastewater demands in any area where significant growth is desired. Recent changes to laws regarding property tax caps, forced annexation, bond financing, public health and safety, planning, and permitting significantly impact growth opportunities. Collaboration must become routine in a comprehensive way if growth of any significant type is to occur. Given the regional goals associated with participation in the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, Huntington County must proactively encourage a collaborative regulatory environment in order to facilitate our share of regional growth as advocated by the regional partners. But more directly, macro-economic trends suggest the nation's economy is on pace to have aggressive growth beginning in 2018. Huntington County will need continued teamwork and cooperation at all levels in order to not be left out of macro-economic growth opportunities. We need additional public infrastructure in order to compete.

## MAJOR INDUSTRIAL PARK INVENTORY (2018)

### City of Huntington

- Riverfork Industrial Park (Figure 5-3)
- Park 24 Industrial Park (Figure 5-4)
- Commercial Road Industrial Park (Figures 5-1 and 5-5)
- Erie Neighborhood Industrial Park (Figure 5-6)

### Andrews

- No modern industrial sites are available.

### Markle

- Markle Industrial Park, 1-69 Exit 286 (Figure 5-7)

### Mount Etna

- No modern industrial sites are available.

### Roanoke

- Historically, Roanoke's economic development strategy has been based on the theme of destination tourism. No industrial sites are available at this time in Roanoke.

### Warren

- Brickley 1 PRIME Site, 1-69 Exit 278. HCUED conducted due diligence on the property and received PRIME Certification (shovel-ready) from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (see Figure 5-2 and 5-8).



Figure 5-2: Brickley 1 PRIME Site dedication. Source: HCUED.



Figure 5-3: Riverfork Industrial Park. Source: Schneider Beacon, created on October 26, 2018.

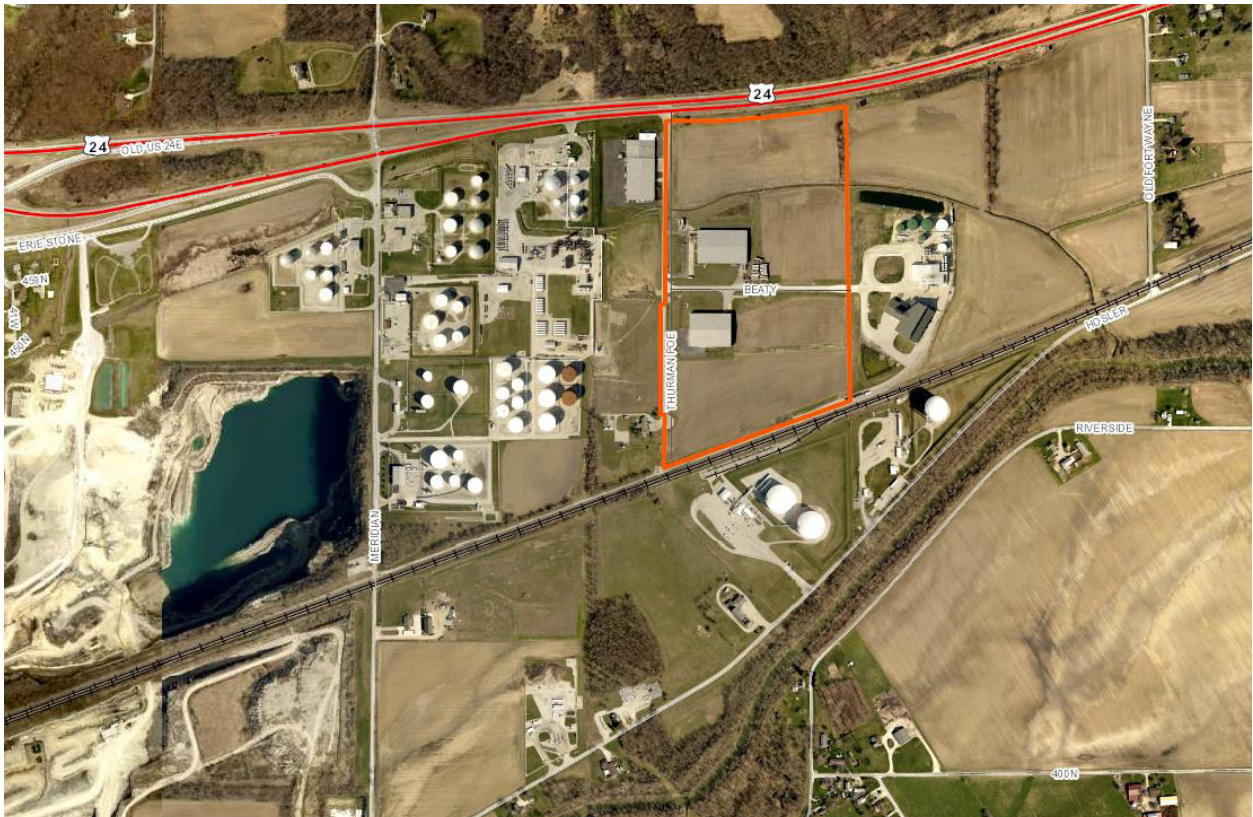


Figure 5-4: Park 24 Industrial Park. Source: Schneider Beacon, created on October 26, 2018.





Figure 5-5: Commercial Road Industrial Park. Source: Schneider Beacon, created on October 26, 2018.



Figure 5-6: Erie Neighborhood Industrial Park. Source: Schneider Beacon, created on October 26, 2018.



Figure 5-7: Markle Industrial Park. Source: Schneider Beacon, created on October 26, 2018.

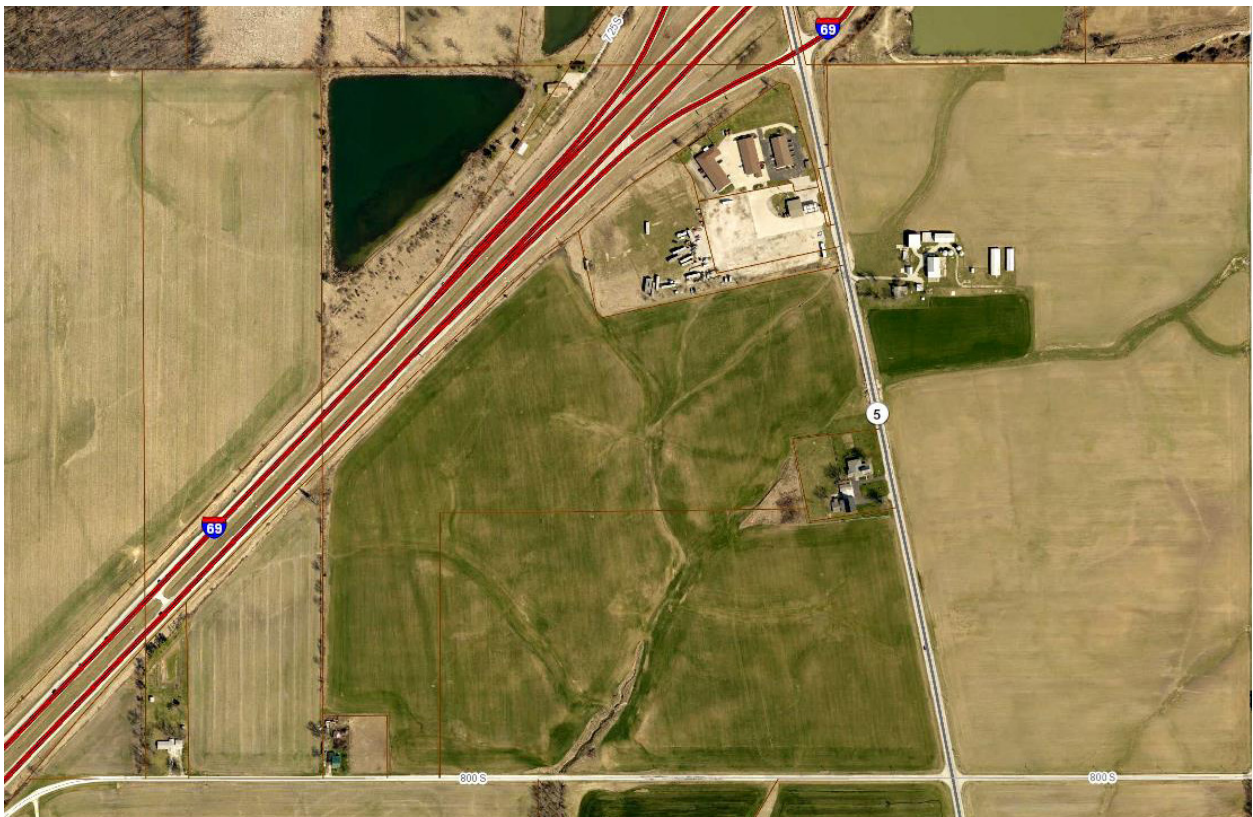


Figure 5-8: Brickley PRIME Industrial Development Site. Source: Schneider Beacon, created on October 26, 2018.

## FUTURE PROPOSAL

### GOAL

Strengthen and diversity the local economy and enhance the standard of living for all citizens of Huntington County.

### OBJECTIVES

- Promote orderly economic growth and stability.
- Encourage business and industry growth, which will together strengthen the tax base and enhance the community's vitality.
- Promote and support locally owned and operated businesses.
- Provide space and exposure for smaller businesses to thrive.
- Promote redevelopment of vacant buildings and lots.
- Encourage educational opportunities so that citizens can meet the needs of a 21st century workforce.
- Promote quality of place initiatives to retain current residents and attract new residents.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

- 1. Collaborate with various agencies to ensure Huntington County is a part of regional growth.**
- 2. Designate areas for industrial development.**
- 3. Designate areas for commercial development.**
- 4. Continue to establish educational opportunities for residents so that they have the skills necessary for the modern workplace.**
- 5. Identify ways to improve quality of place in Huntington County and look for funding opportunities outside of local tax dollars.**
- 6. Identify new uses for abandoned schools.**

- 1. Collaborate with various agencies to ensure Huntington County is a part of regional growth.**

**Participants:** Regional organizations, Chambers of Commerce, HCUED

**Timeline:** Ongoing

Huntington County's economy is similar to other counties across the region. Given the focus of the state of Indiana on regionalism, and companies looking at a broader footprint when expanding, a focus on regional collaboration is needed. Huntington County will need to be a good partner when seeking growth opportunities.

- 2. Designate areas for industrial development.**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, HCUED

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

Huntington County is an attractive location for industrial businesses due to the general business environment and the low cost of living for potential workers. Having shovel-ready sites for businesses looking to relocate or expand are needed in order to be competitive. It is important that land is ready for acquisition by interested businesses. This land needs to have the proper zoning, utilities with adequate capacity, and other needed infrastructure available.

### 3. Designate areas for commercial development.

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, HCUED

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

Much like industrial development, there must be a similar focus on commercial development. However, the location of commercial development must be given additional consideration. It is important that accessibility be a high priority so that the general public can have easy ingress and egress from these locations. Proper zoning, utilities, and infrastructure should also be in place for these sites to be shovel-ready.

### 4. Continue to establish educational opportunities for residents so that they have the skills necessary for the modern workplace.

**Participants:** HCUED, Huntington University, Ivy Tech, Huntington County Community School Corporation, Huntington County Community Learning Center

**Timeline:** Ongoing

Technology has drastically changed the modern workplace resulting in a skills gap between what is needed and the skills that workers have. Agencies must partner with both secondary and post-secondary institutions to get workers the education they need so that employers can have an adequate workforce that allows them to compete in the global marketplace (see Figure 5-9).



Figure 5-9: A welding student at the Learning Center learns skills to prepare for the workforce. Source: [huntingtonlearning.org](http://huntingtonlearning.org)

**5. Identify ways to improve quality of place in Huntington County and look for funding opportunities outside of local tax dollars.**

**Participants:** DCD, state and federal agencies, public-private partnerships

**Timeline:** Ongoing

While job creation and retention are integral to economic growth, Huntington County must be viewed favorably by current residents if they are going to stay, or if new residents are going to migrate to the county. Opportunities in the way of entertainment and leisure should be explored and promoted. Providing additional opportunities for young families will make Huntington County a more attractive place to live for potential new residents.

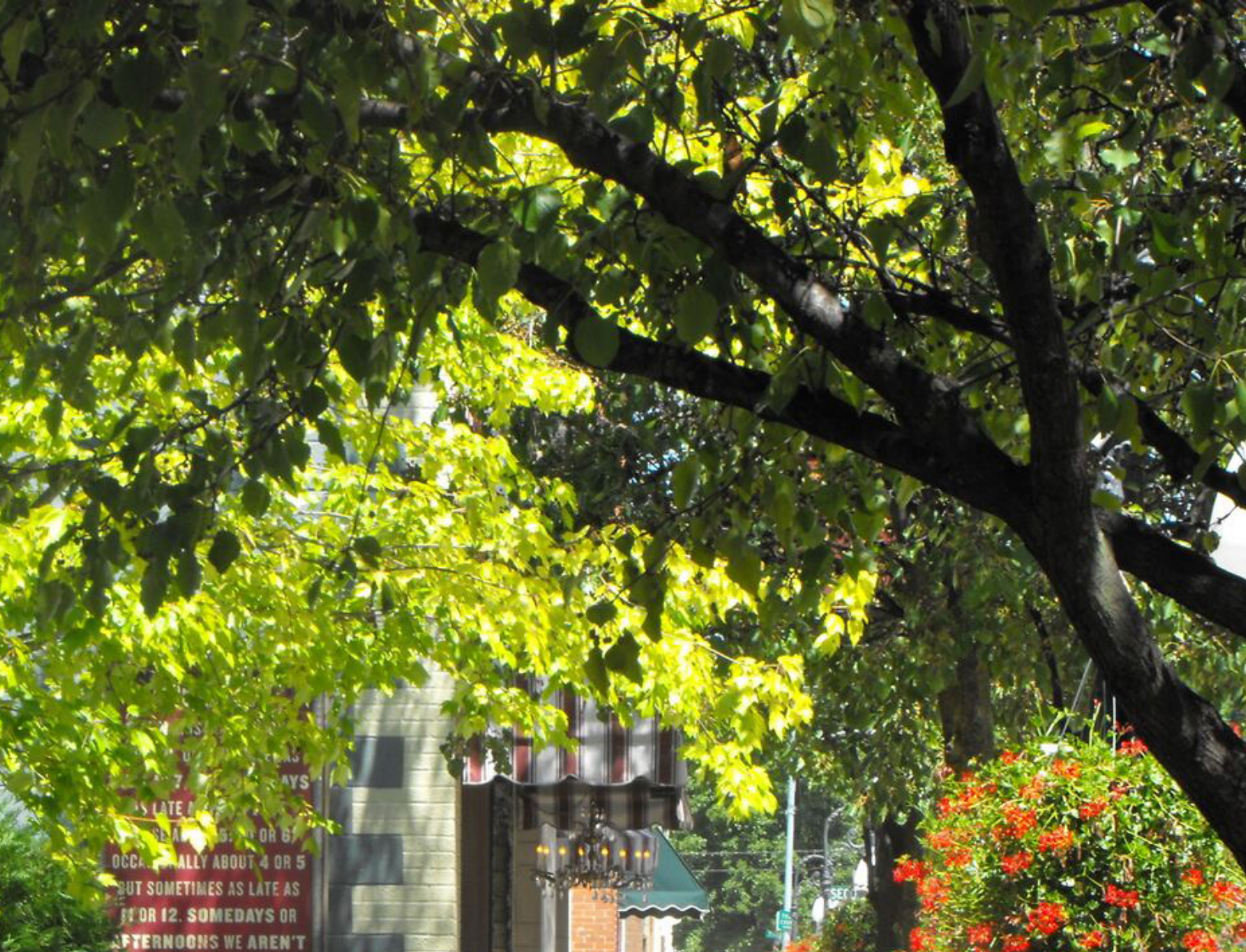
**6. Identify new uses for abandoned schools.**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, Huntington County Community School Corporation

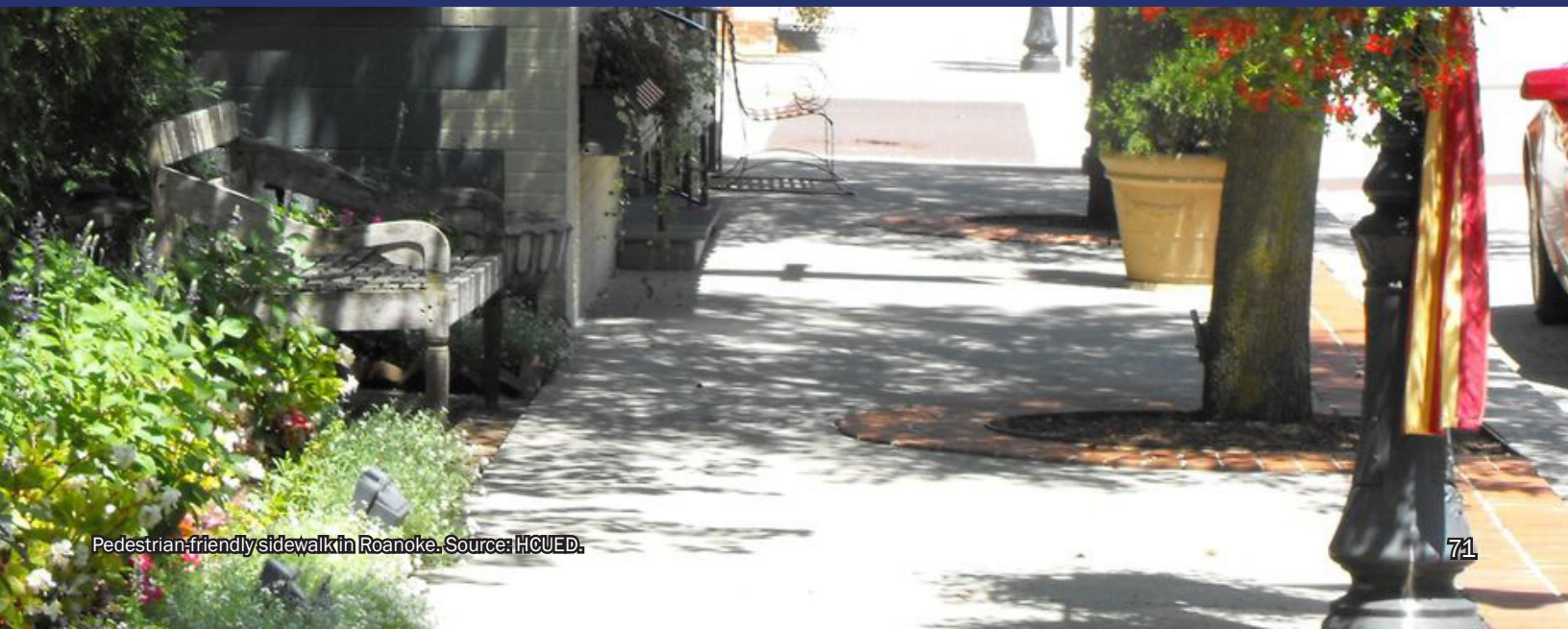
**Timeline:** Ongoing

Population relocation has had an impact on Huntington County, resulting in school closures. School building repurposing is difficult, but it can be done in several ways. They can be turned into multi-family housing facilities. Facilities like this can utilize tax credits that are allowable per the federal tax code. Schools can also be used as continuing education facilities. Repurposing challenges would be lessened in this case, and this would assist in closing the aforementioned skills gap. Balance is required in these efforts to ensure the needs of residents, businesses, and schools are met.





# CHAPTER 6: **TRANSPORTATION**







# Transportation

## CURRENT ANALYSIS

Huntington County does not have a major transportation industry, and the majority of commuters travel by car, truck, or van alone. All other modes of transportation make up about 17 percent of the total modes of transportation, either by lack of accessibility or residents' personal preferences. Four percent work from home and don't commute to work, and almost equal are those that walk to work. Workers that walk to work are primarily within the service and office businesses, which could clue into improving the inner-city walkability throughout the towns and cities of Huntington County.

By the American Census' 2015 estimates, less than one percent of individuals use public transportation in the county. As the county's industrial base grows, it may be wise to consider expanding current public transportation options either through public sourcing or private companies, allowing alternatives for workers and business owners to access job sites.

## FUTURE PROPOSAL

### GOAL

Provide a safe, appropriate and efficient transportation network for all common modes of motor-driven vehicles.

### OBJECTIVES

- Promote safe circulation for bicycles and pedestrians within and between communities.
- Provide and maintain automobile access for all citizens of Huntington County.
- Maintain the existing roadways at their existing condition or better.
- Develop and maintain a roadway funding program with dedicated funds to best utilize grants, low interest loans, local resources, and bonding capacity.
- Minimize dangerous intersections and roadways.
- Limit private access points along arterials.
- Ensure that adequate right of way is preserved for future expansion or improvement to roads.
- Establish a roadway classification system.
- Assure accessibility for police, emergency, and fire vehicles to properties in their jurisdiction.
- Consider traffic calming where through traffic is unwarranted and hinders residential character.
- Develop above and below grade crossings.

## TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

- 1. Improve dangerous intersections.**
- 2. Use traffic calming techniques in areas with pedestrian traffic (residential and commercial developments).**
- 3. Establish and enforce truck traffic routes.**
- 4. Establish right-of-ways large enough to accommodate future expansions.**
- 5. Continue to limit drive cut permits on basis of safety (visual), separation from existing drives, and number of drives along an arterial road.**
- 6. Upgrade (repair and improve) existing county road system.**

## 1. Improve dangerous intersections.

**Participants:** Highway Department, INDOT, County Commissioners

**Timeline:** Ongoing

All jurisdictions, particularly the County, should examine intersections so future transportation plans will use available funding to correct and alleviate risks. The following types of intersections may be deemed “dangerous” or at high risk for an accident:

- Railroad crossings;
- Blind intersections;
- Intersections that are not perpendicular (90 degrees);
- Police accident reports;
- Areas with minimal distance from bridges, drive cuts, proximity to elevation changes; and
- Areas that have an increase with seasonal changes (rain and snow).

Once a list of dangerous intersections is compiled, the list should be broken down into categories that represent various levels of accident probabilities. This hierarchy can, and should be, incorporated into future transportation plans as mentioned above in order to begin the improvement process.

The next step is to correct or minimize the impact that those intersections have. One of the more efficient ways to accomplish this task is to set up a matrix that deals with all the possible causes of conflict at the point of intersection. This may require establishing a hierarchy that looks at the overall level of risk. An example is an intersection that is only dangerous during certain weather seasons, which may be lower on the hierarchical scale than an intersection that involves a frequently used railroad line. It would be slightly more important to fix or minimize the conflicts of the latter example since there is a greater chance that an accident could occur on a daily basis.

Once the matrix and priority list has been created, the local governing body must put the plan into action and find funding sources. When it comes to improving the safety of an intersection, the governing body should be creative in terms of the parties to lobby for aid. Occasionally a railroad company may help by providing funding and/or finding or lobbying for funding if the intersection sees a high number of accidents per year. Approaching various groups and organizations could be advantageous in accomplishing intersection improvements throughout Huntington County.

It is important to note that the Highway Department has made great progress in improving dangerous intersections since 2005 and especially in recent years. One of their techniques is installing flashing stop signs (Figure 6-1) at problematic intersections. The Highway Department strives to improve at least one intersection per year .



Figure 6-1: Flashing stop sign. Source: [www.tapconet.com](http://www.tapconet.com)

## 2. Use traffic calming techniques in areas with pedestrian traffic (residential and commercial developments).

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, Highway Department

**Timeline:** Ongoing

Our residential streets, especially those constructed after World War II, have been engineered to be straighter, wider, and smoother than ever before. This was done based on the theory that this type of construction would facilitate safer travel; however, this car-centric focus on design encourages higher speeds. Narrower streets, in contrast, calm traffic. When various traffic calming techniques are used, vehicle speeds tend to decline. These techniques also encourage drivers to behave less aggressively and to obey traffic signs and signals. In turn, pedestrians feel more comfortable and travel safer with the traffic around them.

Traffic calming techniques are typically used in residential areas to try and reduce speeding and “cut-through traffic” that uses the neighborhood as a short cut to by-pass any clogged major roads. Traffic calming devices have also been used successfully in commercial districts geared toward more pedestrian traffic. Not only can traffic calming techniques make pedestrians feel more comfortable, they can also be seen as a form of landscaping that raises the overall aesthetic of the space.

The following subsections discuss specific traffic calming techniques that could be implemented throughout the county. However, it should be noted that most county roads and subdivisions are not currently accommodating to pedestrians, as they lack sidewalks. In fact, the unincorporated town of Bippus contains the only sidewalks that are regulated by the Highway Department.

### *Speed Bumps, Humps, and Tables*

This technique consists of raising the pavement three to four inches. Although the terms are all

used interchangeably, engineers refer to speed “bumps” as narrow and abrupt and are best confined to parking lots. Speed “humps” and speed “tables” are more gradual and are often 22 feet start-to-finish with a flat top. This technique is relatively inexpensive and very effective in cutting down traffic speed, but is also noisy and tough on emergency vehicles.

Speed bumps, humps, and tables can be used effectively to signify points of caution for drivers. When used in crosswalks, the pedestrian crossing is signified in extended visual cues beyond just paint, requiring drivers to pay attention by slowing down for the speed bump. Raised crosswalks also present an opportunity to encourage unique visuals for communities through special concrete patterns, local artists painting/designing the crosswalk, etc.

### *Roundabouts*

In residential areas, roundabouts or traffic circles may be designed to be as small as 16 to 25 feet in diameter, or just enough to cause motorists to slow and alter their path (see Figure 6-2). Rotaries are larger versions and are typically found at major intersections. This technique has been shown to improve traffic flow and the center can often be attractively decorated or landscaped. Roundabouts have also been a point of issue for larger vehicles like semi-trucks, farm equipment, or emergency vehicles if not engineered to accommodate for their size and turning radius. The development of a roundabout in an area with significant traffic from larger vehicles that doesn't appropriately size its lanes is sure to become a point of multiple accidents and need constant road repair. This design can be problematic to pedestrians and cyclists as vehicles do not stop. When considering establishing a roundabout, be sure to take into consideration the size needed for the average vehicle, general speed in the area, and accommodations needed for pedestrians.

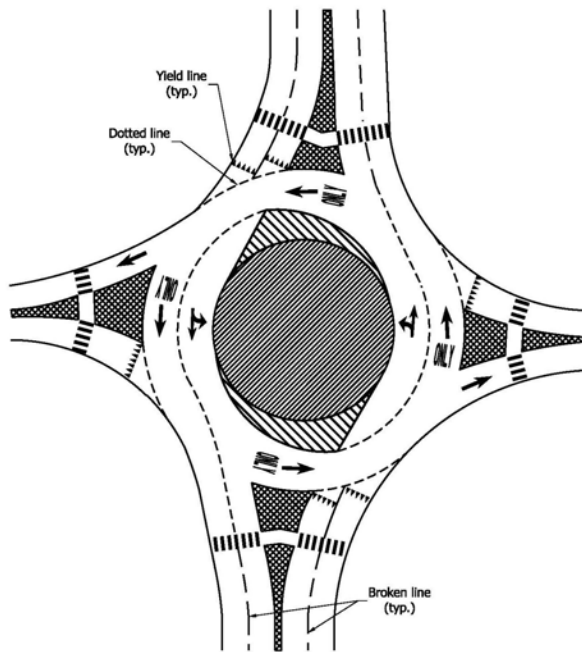


Figure 6-2: Typical design of a multi-lane roundabout. Source: USDOT.

### Chicanes, Bends, and Deviations

This technique is a redesign that makes motorists drive around fixed objects, typically curbs that extend from opposite sides to form a serpentine path (see Figure 6-3). This technique is visually pleasing and better for emergency vehicles compared to other techniques discussed. A drawback to this technique is the cost involved with the redesign process.

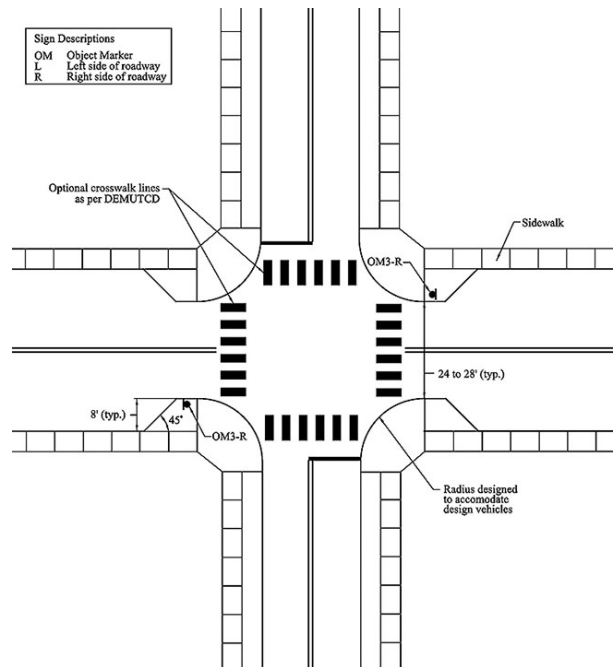


Figure 6-4: Neckdown diagram. Source: USDOT.

### Neckdowns, Chokers, and Bulbs

This technique forms a narrowing of the road at midroad or intersections, usually by bringing sidewalks into the street from one or more sides (see Figure 6-4). This technique can be visually pleasing, is an opportunity to designate on-street parking, and can be beneficial to pedestrians. By decreasing the size of lanes, this technique encourages decreased speed of vehicles, and by closing the distance between sidewalks, this

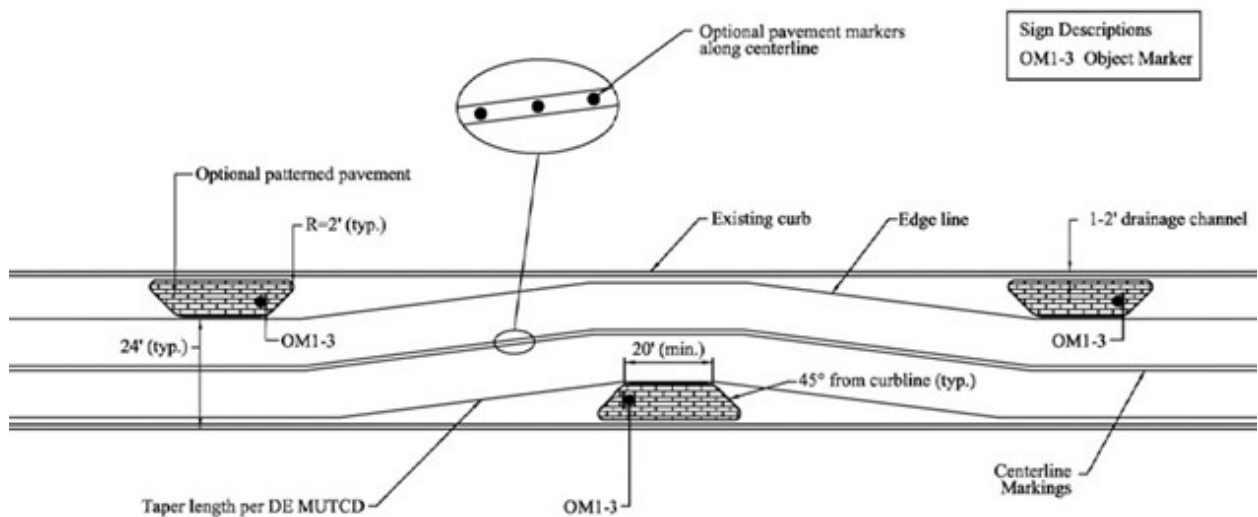


Figure 6-3: Chicane diagram. Source: USDOT.

design is beneficial to pedestrians. Generally, this is best practiced in commercial areas (like a downtown district) where crossing the street is common. This technique can sometimes be troublesome to bicycles, especially when designated bike lanes are moved in order to accommodate the extension in the sidewalk. Carefully labeling and ensuring that both vehicles and cyclists are aware of where cyclists must ride can reduce confusion and accidents at intersections using neckdowns, chokers, and bulbs. Another common issue is the use of service vehicles, particularly for snow removal.

#### *Narrow Roads*

By using sidewalks, landscaping, or striping to narrow lanes to about ten feet, drivers will instinctively slow down. This technique is pedestrian-friendly and creates a neighborhood environment. This technique may lead to confusion to bicyclists and eliminates on-street parking.

#### *Raised Intersections and Changes in Road Texture*

This technique can use grooved asphalt, colored paving stones, brick, or cobblestones to change the texture of the driving surface. This technique gets the drivers' attention through the difference in texture and visuals, which can be used to benefit pedestrians. Depending on the surface type, this technique may create additional noise by drivers and be unpleasant for use by cyclists. Alternatively, this method can be used to differentiate vehicle traffic lanes from bicycle lanes and add to the aesthetics of the area.

#### *Directional Changes*

This technique is accomplished by adding "diverters" that diagonally bisect an intersection. These traffic barriers force a car to turn one direction, which causes drivers to travel out of straight-line routes. This technique is effective in stopping short-cut and cut-through traffic, but is costly and confusing to strangers. This technique also adds to emergency response times and to commutes.

### **3. Establish and enforce truck traffic routes.**

**Participants:** County Commissioners, Highway Department, Law Enforcement

**Timeline:** Ongoing

Truck traffic is a common concern with all communities in Huntington County. If no designated truck routes exist, it is common practice for trucks to travel the shortest distance from point "A" to point "B," which sometimes runs right through a residential district. If there are truck routes in place, and these routes are enforced locally, they alleviate congestion in areas where truck traffic is inappropriate and undesired. It will also help to ensure the safety of pedestrians that may be walking along the road right-of-ways or even along future pedestrian pathways and trails.

Another advantage of enforced truck routes is that most residential streets and other non-business streets are typically not designed for the weight of larger vehicles associated with transport services. If a community sets specific routes for this class of vehicle, less wear and tear will occur on streets not associated with heavier traffic loads. This helps eliminate any undue costs for repairs to infrastructure that was not originally designed to handle the additional truck traffic.

It should be noted that several truck routes have been established in the last few years, including Broadway Street from U.S. Route 224 to U.S. Route 24. The Highway Department continues to prioritize this strategy.

#### **4. Establish right-of-ways large enough to accommodate future expansions.**

**Participants:** Highway Department, INDOT

**Timeline:** Ongoing

Roads may need additional turn lanes or the road itself expanded to handle the increase in traffic caused by future development. If the road right-of-way is not large enough to accommodate these future needs, the land acquisition process is lengthy and expensive. Not only does the extra space within the easement help for future road construction and expansion, it can also be utilized as a utility easement and an area dedicated for a future pedestrian walkway. The acquisition of additional right-of-way area should be based upon the current and future classification of the roadway. The classification system of roadways is a strategy that has been completed since the 2005 comprehensive plan.

#### **5. Continue to limit drive cut permits on basis of safety (visual), separation from existing drives, and number of drives along an arterial road.**

**Participants:** County Commissioners, Highway Department

**Timeline:** Ongoing

Each drive cut is a potential conflict point along the road. Although the current minor subdivision process limits the number of land splits allowed per parent parcel, thus reducing the likelihood of new lots and splits, it is important to establish clear policy to reduce drive cut conflict points. There are a number of ways that drive cuts can be limited along a roadway, but for any of these techniques to be successful, a few basic principles should be in place.

- Establish a road classification system (already completed).
- Establish a sliding scale in terms of number of cuts permitted along a road based upon safety issues (visual clearance, speed limits, road width, passing lanes, turn lanes, traffic control mechanisms, etc.).
- Establish development standards, such as requirements for acceleration/deceleration lanes.
- Instatement of impact fees with regards to future developments, with a portion of the fee going towards upgrading the affected road systems.

These principals incorporated along with other growth management techniques will help insure proper development to occur while still providing a safe and efficient traffic system.

Currently, the Highway Department uses a chart established by the Federal Highway to determine speed limits and site distances required for drive cut approvals. Highway has an established permit process that considers various things such as hills, other natural features, adjacent drive cuts, etc. Sometimes, approval is granted more on a case-by-case basis to ensure the highest level of safety.

#### **6. Upgrade (repair and improve) existing county road system.**

**Participants:** Highway Department

**Timeline:** Ongoing

Making regular repairs to the road infrastructure allows the flow of traffic throughout Huntington County to continue at a smooth, uninterrupted rate. A common complaint from citizens all over the state of Indiana is that potholes go unfixed in the springtime. Another benefit of making necessary road repairs is that local citizens can consider alternative routes in order to bypass heavier traffic caused by commercial

and industrial developments. This reduces travel time for citizens and relieves excess traffic on major thoroughfares which could potentially lead to increased traffic accidents.

The Highway Department uses a five-year asset management plan to prioritize funding and plan roadway improvements and repairs. A roadway improvement plan, accompanied with steady ongoing roadway improvements, makes Huntington County a more desirable place for new businesses and industries to locate. A new development may also aid in the costs of the improvements knowing that the local governing body has the intention to maintain the new system, eliminating future costs to the business or industry.

It is also important for Huntington County to upgrade existing dirt and gravel roads to a standard that is more appropriate to handle future traffic counts related to ongoing residential development patterns.

## ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

Alternative transportation is defined as “any mode of commute transportation other than the single-occupancy motor vehicle”. This broad definition includes every type of transportation ranging from simple pedestrian and bicycle traffic to the more complex system of mass transit. Some communities also include less typical transportation means within this category, such as water and air modes if and when these modes are available through the occurring resources and infrastructure. Noteworthy examples of existing alternative transportation in the county include the Huntington Municipal Airport, the Norfolk Southern rail, and the Wabash River. The Huntington Municipal Airport continues to be a major hub of aviation transportation and continues to expand. The Wabash River has great potential to be a means of alternative transportation both in public use water transport and the site of potential future trail systems.

### GOAL

The goal of alternative transportation in Huntington county is to expand the current means of travel and opportunities for recreation in the county and to provide a safe, appropriate and when possible, an aesthetic transportation network for alternative modes of transportation throughout Huntington County.

### OBJECTIVES

- Provide and maintain pedestrian access for all citizens of Huntington County.
- Maintain the existing paths/sidewalks at their current condition or better.
- Develop and maintain a funding program for alternative transportation to best utilize grants, low interest loans, local resources, bonding capacity, and miscellaneous funding sources.
- Develop and actively encourage the use of the widest possible range of transportation alternatives.
- Promote adequate right-of-way for future expansion or improvements to roads within and between communities.
- Encourage alternative transportation linkages to schools, parks, and other public resources.

## ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

1. Establish a connected trails system.
2. Research the need for a bike share program.
3. Require new residential developments to have sidewalks.
4. Require traffic calming techniques for areas with pedestrian traffic.
5. Improve the existing county rail system.
6. Improve water access for boating purposes.
7. Provide incentives for car-pooling.
8. Identify the need for and consider improving public transit systems.

### 1. Establish a connected trails system.

**Participants:** County Commissioners, Mayor, City Council, Town Councils

**Timeline:** 5 to 10 years

Trail systems, which are discussed in greater detail within the Parks and Recreation section of this Comprehensive Plan, can be used to connect communities and amenities together to create a network of activities for citizens to enjoy. If done properly, a trail system can even help alleviate vehicular traffic congestion in the downtown areas. For example, if a trail system is located along a waterway with areas along the trail designated for parking, and the trail branches off into a local downtown that offers service-oriented businesses, a number of patrons will be willing to walk along the trail to the business. This eases some of the impact of limited parking in the downtown area and also reduces vehicular congestion while still providing those that are just passing by the opportunity to see the businesses and maybe even offer their patronage. This reinforces the sense of a strong community and feeling of community pride with the citizens.

Trail systems can and should be connected to the sidewalk network within communities. Those individuals will have the opportunity to walk to the trail instead of having to drive to a designated parking area. Planners and government officials should keep in mind that any plan that deals with trail systems should take into consideration the safety concerns that arise – keeping a safe

separation between pedestrian traffic and vehicular traffic. A number of resources are readily available with regards to trail systems that can be easily obtained for all phases of the process from design to implementation.

As part of the overall Northeast Indiana Trail Plan, there is the possibility of having a fully connected trails system throughout the county that will connect into surrounding counties. The idea has been discussed for quite some time, but issues have arisen on changing the previous railbeds into trails due to the change of ownership between the railroad companies and the farmers around the tracks. The plan has been changed to switch between the railbed trails and improved county roads as appropriate and develop a strategy to prioritize implementing them. The county roads could be developed along the set plan to repave by adding additional width to the stretches of roads that will incorporate the trail paths.

From each of the public hearings, a consistent concern from citizens was the implementation of a connected trails system between the towns and cities. A majority are in favor of establishing and using these trails, while a minority are concerned with the safety issues associated with trails. There is interest within towns to create the necessary connections and trails within their limits to make a trail system possible, in the belief that uniting the county with trails would benefit each incorporated town and city in tourism and possible business development.



## 2. Research the need for a bike share program.

**Participants:** DCD, County Commissioners, Town Councils

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

The County should conduct research into the possibility of implementing a bike share program into the major cities and towns either by a government funded or a privatized bike program. Possible bike shares to view as case studies are the Pacer's Bike Share program in Indianapolis or the South Bend privatized bike share. Both have been astounding successes even though both entities were unsure how many citizens would be interested prior to implementation. The City of Huntington also launched a bike share program in 2016 (see Figure 6-5). The establishment of a bike share along new trails can encourage more individuals to spend time along the trails and encourage the use of the parks various amenities.



Figure 6-5: City of Huntington currently has a Zagster bike share program. Source: [bike.zagster.com/huntington/](http://bike.zagster.com/huntington/)

## 3. Require new residential developments to have sidewalks.

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

Currently the Huntington County Subdivision Ordinance requires sidewalks to be constructed only if the subdivision has three (3) or more lots per acre, is close to pedestrian generators like schools, is to continue an existing sidewalk along a street, to link together areas of development, or to provide pedestrian access to future developments. These requirements, however, do not address the growing residential development that is occurring along pre-established roads, such as the current county highway system. Our local governing agencies need to take into account what these areas will be like for future generations. A potential technique that should be considered for future residential development may include designating additional right-of-way to the Highway Department to have room for the future placement of sidewalks and pedestrian friendly paths. By taking simple steps now, the county will be implementing the mechanics necessary to ease the effects of sprawl.

## 4. Require traffic calming techniques for areas with pedestrian traffic.

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, Highway Department

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

A number of traffic calming techniques can be implemented that can protect pedestrian traffic from the negative impacts dealt by automotive traffic throughout areas of greater density. These techniques are discussed in greater detail earlier in this section. These techniques will help improve alternative transportation experiences by slowing vehicular traffic down in highly dense residential areas and in commercial districts that enjoy high levels of foot traffic, while still providing those that choose to drive a positive experience. When looking at implementing traffic calming techniques, one needs to try to match the technique to the goals of the area. Each technique carries with it a unique set of strengths and weaknesses that could potentially 'make or break' the effectiveness and desirability of the development.

### 5. Improve the existing county rail system.

**Participants:** County Commissioners, Rail Road Companies

**Timeline:** 10 to 20 years

Rail systems are still a valuable asset to communities when it comes to the shipment of goods. However, in Huntington County, very few trains stop to load and unload cargo. This has the potential to change with the addition of designated industrial sites throughout Huntington County. The main hurdle will be to work out an agreement between Norfolk Southern and either a private entity or the Huntington County United Economic Development Corporation. Working out an agreement for potential improvements to the rail line will help attract larger industrial employers to the area. The county already offers adequate truck transportation with state and federal highways, but rail system improvements need to be considered.

### 6. Improve water access for boating purposes.

**Participants:** Park Boards, DNR

**Timeline:** 5 to 10 years

The two reservoirs within Huntington County creates potential for many water-related recreational activities to take place during the summer season. However, in their current state, some of the boat ramps are sometimes considered less than user-friendly. There have been complaints that the existing ramps are too steep, or they are not easily navigable which discourages users from taking full advantage of the reservoirs. Simple, but potentially costly, improvements can be made to these existing ramps to make them more user-friendly, while less costly improvements can be made in terms of improved upkeep through volunteer work. Providing additional opportunities to enter a waterway, such as the Wabash River, for canoeing and paddleboat travel should also be given some consideration (see Figure 6-6). Though this type of activity is geared more towards recreational purposes than a means to commute to and from work, it is still considered to be a part of alternative transportation by definition.

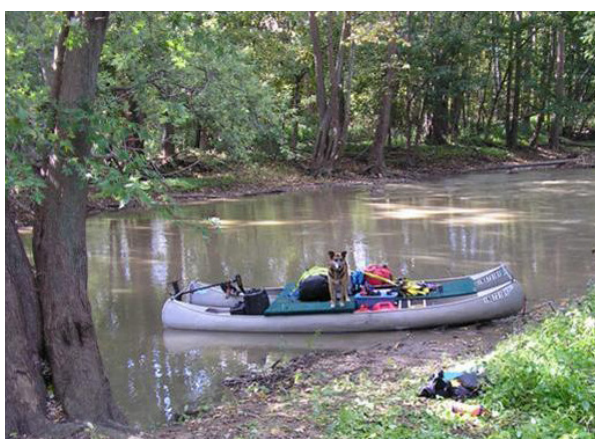


Figure 6-6: Wabash River access at the Forks of the Wabash.  
Source: wabashriver.us

### 7. Provide incentives for car-pooling.

**Participants:** Local Employers

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

Local businesses and industries, with the aid of government help, should give some consideration to car-pooling techniques. This simple task reduces the number of vehicles on the road, which improves environmental impacts and reduces safety concerns. If an industry or business is willing to implement and enforce such a program, then the local planning agency and other government agencies may allow less infrastructure to be required. An example of this would be to reduce the overall parking requirements, which lowers the development's infrastructure cost just in paving alone. It also has the potential of reducing storm water runoff and all associated stormwater infrastructure costs due to less impervious surface.

This strategy looks very pleasing on paper, but the details required to make this work can lead to many concerns. The prime concern would be what to do when the business/industry decides to not enforce the car-pooling techniques but have put in a parking area that does not meet the needs or the standards. A number of details will need to be worked out before this strategy can be implemented.

**8. Identify the need for and consider improving public transit systems.**

**Participants:** County Commissioners, City Council, Town Councils

**Timeline:** 20 to 25 years

The steering committee of this plan update process mentioned on occasion the idea of having a public transportation or transit system that would connect the towns with one another. At this point in time, the benefits do not outweigh the costs of such a proposal. That is not to say that such a system should never exist. If growth trends and patterns change, such as more development occurring in a centralized location (such as around an existing city/town), then there may eventually be a greater need for such an endeavor. However, if the current trend of residential sprawl continues, then there will be little reason to invest the necessary resources to establish a countywide transportation/transit system in Huntington County. Currently, residents can use the Huntington Area Transportation (also known as HAT), which functions more as a scheduled taxi service and can be costly depending on the length of the trip.





## CHAPTER 7:

# GROWTH MANAGEMENT



# Growth Management

## CURRENT ANALYSIS

This section discusses how future development should and can occur within Huntington County as part of an effort to plan for reasonable community growth. In reviewing the goals, objectives, and strategies of this section, it must be kept in mind that these efforts stem from a growing concern that poorly managed or unplanned growth is occurring. While all growth can't be planned or managed, it is important to consider all needs of the county as there are attempts to attract new businesses and residents. The County must keep the needs of the agricultural community in mind as bare land is considered for new residential, commercial, or industrial development.

## COMMUNITY DESIGN

Community design is an important factor in the growth management process. Design allows for the creation of environments that are socially, economically, and physically sustainable. To a certain extent, our spatial environment is directed by market preferences and demands that has pre-defined our current quality of life standards. Community design creates not only desirable spatial environments, but also aids economic growth and allows for social diversity to address these issues. The following community design principals are central in achieving goals of growth management:

1. Promoting compact development patterns that integrate residential, commercial, office/industrial and recreational uses to promote self-sufficiency in everyday requirements within pedestrian friendly communities. Practices include mixed-use developments, new urbanism/traditional neighborhood developments, and cluster development.
2. Directing growth back into urban areas, through downtown revitalization, brownfields, and infill redevelopment.
3. Reducing auto traffic and promoting alternative modes of transit that are sustainable both environmentally and economically. Practices include primarily new urbanism and transit-oriented developments.
4. Preserving the cultural heritage of a community through practices such as historic preservation.
5. Balancing economic growth with the quality of life. This requires that localities through community design address issues pertaining to the development of larger commercial establishments.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Faced with a growing population and an ever-increasing need for services, our local governments are increasingly confronted with the need to balance economic development opportunities with actions to protect the environment and natural resources. Poorly planned development is threatening environment, health, and quality of life. The current rate of sprawl has threatened our local resources, is destroying our open space, and is taking a serious toll on our valued landscape. However, sprawl development is not inevitable. Many communities are choosing to manage sprawl from poorly coordinated economic development with growth management solutions. When weighing the consequences of development, the question is how can economic growth be promoted while minimizing the negative effects to the environment, health, and quality of life?

Achieving both of these goals (economic development and environmental protection) requires an aggressive and coordinated planning effort, which combines two different policy approaches. First, public policy should direct new economic growth only to existing urban areas or areas designated for

growth. Huntington County is likely to find that such focused growth, if planned appropriately, will not only deflect growth from undeveloped areas but also will strengthen existing neighborhoods and businesses. Secondly, policy tools must also be enacted that support and perpetuate the rural economy as much as possible in order to discourage the temptations that lead to development outside the pre-established growth areas.

## ENVIRONMENT

Growth management asks that citizens of Huntington County look at their natural environment and recognize the limited carrying capacity of the ecosystem. As the population continues to grow, the ecosystem must be maintained so that it can sufficiently support life. Citizens must have clean water to drink, clean air to breathe, land on which to grow food and fiber, and places to enjoy. Tools of growth management that preserve open space and valuable agricultural lands will improve air and water quality, provide the wildlife a habitat, and improve the health of citizens. At the same time, these preserved areas will provide opportunities for recreation and tourism and will also improve the quality of life.

Growth threatens many areas across Huntington County. While the clearest effects of growth can be seen in the sprawling urban development that consumes large amounts of landscape, these developments also have troubling environmental consequences because unplanned and unmanaged development can destroy the natural environment. In urban areas, pollution of air, water, and soil reveal declining environmental quality, and the loss and deterioration of natural areas reveals not only an aesthetic loss, but also indicates severe threats to biodiversity and ecological systems.

“Growth management” implies that growth should be managed to promote an orderly use of land and resources, and sound development practices that conform to the natural carrying capacity of an area. One principle of growth management is sustainability, which encourages growing towns and cities to consider their impact on the larger area, and perhaps even look at the impacts to the greater region. Growth management also encourages compact development within or near existing urban infrastructure, rather than sprawling development onto virgin land. This development goal encompasses many objectives and includes the following basic principles:

1. Conserve critical and sensitive environmental resources: wetlands, agricultural lands, floodplains, bodies of water, and slopes;
2. Protect and improve air and water quality;
3. Conserve contiguous parcels of land to protect habitat and biodiversity;
4. Conserve agricultural and forest lands;
5. Recognize the limited carrying capacity of areas by encouraging compact development and limiting development on virgin land;
6. Promote principles of sustainability, including energy efficiency, effective and efficient use of water, and creative incorporation of natural elements in the urban landscape;
7. Promote comprehensive watershed protection by limiting impervious surfaces and manmade pollutants;
8. Encourage organization at a regional scale, recognizing that natural resource areas and watersheds are not bound by political boundaries;
9. Promote and preserve safe and clean natural recreation areas on land and water for the enjoyment of citizens.



## HOUSING

Housing is often given the least consideration in comparison with growth management issues. Because housing is a necessity for every individual in our society, it should be a significant component of any effective growth management plan. A common topic when dealing with growth management is sprawl, and a major contributor to sprawl is the location of housing (see Figure 7-1). Housing location can strain public facilities and drain the tax base. Since residential housing is the major user of land in any city or town, housing subdivisions should utilize community design practices that efficiently use the land and public facilities available from the local municipalities.

Establishing enabling legislation for housing, and housing concerns, is the chief motivator for many communities to move forward with a balanced growth management plan. Another key issue is affordable housing. Establishing guidelines to encourage and provide housing for a variety of income levels is important. Vibrant communities tend to incorporate housing for all economic levels. Diversity reduces isolation and exclusion and contributes to a healthy economic base. In addition, housing located in urban areas and provided for all economic levels provides workers with a variety of employment opportunities and reduces the need for long commutes.

To ensure a balance of housing types, affordable housing programs must be incorporated through adopted enabling legislation. Properties for rent and ownership should be provided in any affordable housing program as this will allow additional opportunities for lower income citizens. One key to establishing effective enabling legislation and affordable housing programs is a strong, effective public awareness campaign on housing. Education about housing issues is important to understanding, which will lead to acceptance and desire while dispelling fears and ignorance.



Figure 7-1: Suburban sprawl.  
Source: montclairfilm.org

## TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is the key that unlocks the door to irresponsible growth. Without the emergence of transportation, sprawl and suburban development would not exist today. Additional transportation, if not planned and placed in an equitable context, leads to additional ad-hoc sprawl. Although transportation creates sprawl, it can be an important growth management tool. The design of transportation infrastructure and patterns can be manipulated to create transportation systems that assist in the management of growth. Designing pedestrian friendly developments around transportation as opposed to auto-oriented development is also a reasonable approach to manage growth. Planners should aspire to the following objectives in facilitating healthier and safer communities:

1. Manipulation of the road network, particularly placement and additions;
2. Diligent research and development regarding transportation alternatives including light rail and bus systems; and
3. Alter Americans' current perception about transportation alternative through educational programs.

## FUTURE PROPOSAL

### GOAL

Manage and direct growth and development in Huntington County by encouraging compact urban form within the corporate limits of each municipality, discouraging sprawl, and preserving the integrity of prime agricultural land while maintaining the highest quality of life for current and future residents.

### OBJECTIVES

- Preserve the rural and “small town” character throughout Huntington County.
- Encourage growth only when it falls within the service capabilities of a municipality.
- Preserve and enhance the farming industry throughout Huntington County by discouraging urban sprawl and spot zoning.
- Ensure that new development fits in with the character of its surroundings.
- Focus business and industrial development within the corporate limits of municipalities and at the I-69 interchanges.
- Identify and preserve gateway corridors, especially U.S. 24, and emphasize controlled growth.
- Develop greenspaces/buffers between development zones.
- Encourage growth and development sensitive to pedestrian needs.
- Encourage large parks/land set aside for future county parks.

### GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- 1. Maintain “small town” character by using revitalization techniques.**
- 2. Encourage “large scale” developments to take place within the service capabilities of the municipalities.**
- 3. Establish “gateways” into communities.**
- 4. Protect and enhance the corridors that run throughout Huntington County.**
- 5. Establish a TDR/PDR program for the county.**
- 6. Create a Huntington County land trust program.**
- 7. Take more consideration in development and rezoning requests.**
- 8. Make necessary revisions to zoning ordinances.**
- 9. Make necessary revisions to subdivision ordinances.**
- 10. Make necessary revisions to storm water control ordinances.**
- 11. Encourage brownfield redevelopment.**
- 12. Limit the number of curb cuts in non-urbanized areas.**

#### **1. Maintain “small town” character by using revitalization techniques.**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, County Commissioners, Town Councils

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

Revitalization typically tries to create character and bring people back into the town or city limits. In the Midwest, this typically means trying to create and build upon the “small town” character (see Figure 7-2). There are many different ideas on what constitutes “small town” character, but some central themes include:

- Downtown revitalization
- Community places and spaces
- Destinations
- Pedestrian friendly
- Linking via trails and walkways

Downtown revitalization is frequently discussed throughout the Midwest, including Huntington County. A portion of the local budget process is put toward downtown revitalization. Some communities have formed task forces (including downtown “Main Street” groups). The downtown revitalization process is an effort to bring people back to the heart of the community.



Figure 7-2: Downtown Roanoke is full of "small town" character. Source: HCUED.

The creation of places, spaces, and destinations throughout the communities is nearly as important as downtown revitalization, and in some cases, this is exactly what the downtown revitalization process is trying to accomplish. Communities need to use these same ideologies to bring life back to neighborhoods. At the neighborhood level, this creation of place, space, and destination can be accomplished in a number of ways. The neighborhood can hold an annual block party or garage/yard sale to get to know others that live nearby. Establishing a common green area or park for community members to enjoy recreational opportunities helps create a sense of pride.

Another important factor in “small town” character is pedestrian-friendly design. Being pedestrian-friendly demonstrates that a community wants people to be more closely connected, which leads to a sense of pride in one’s community. Creating an atmosphere where a pedestrian feels safe and more important than the car is sometimes difficult and costly, but it is rewarding in the long run.

**2. Encourage “large scale” developments to take place within the service capabilities of the municipalities.**

**Participants:** DCD, City Board of Works, County Commissioners, City Council, Town Councils  
**Timeline:** Ongoing

A number of large-scale residential developments have occurred in recent years, and many have taken been outside a reasonable reach of municipal sewer and water. In the future, a majority of these residential developments may face septic and well problems that will require somewhat drastic measures, including connecting to the municipality’s sewer and water. This afterthought is extremely costly for those who must pay the additional cost to run the infrastructure to the subdivision, and to taxpayers in the form of long-term maintenance costs.

Commercial development typically occurs within a municipality, but in some cases, there is a strong push to locate at a major intersection where the town or city has yet to locate utilities. When the commercial development takes place and utilities are ran to the site, the utilities are typically sized to meet the needs of the development. However, when there are signs of infrastructure, additional growth is likely to occur, leading to greater burdens on the infrastructure than what was initially planned.

Industrial development is like commercial development in that it frequently occurs outside corporate limits because very few people want industry as a neighbor. Because industry is viewed as a “bad neighbor,” industries locate away from the city or town and request that services be made available at reasonable costs.

To eliminate some of these future concerns, the following should be considered:

- Residential development be hooked to town or city sewer and water.
- Commercial developments must have access to a municipality’s utilities, and if not, there should be a plan and funding options to oversize the infrastructure to accommodate future development.
- Industrial development should occur within a short distance of a municipality’s utilities in order to reduce costs.

### 3. Establish “gateways” into communities.

Participants: DCD, City Council, Town Councils

Timeline: Within 5 years

A “gateway” is some form of a symbolic monument that allows those not familiar with a particular area to “discover” a city, town, or community that can carry a multitude of functions:

- Creates a future destination for visitors to the community;
- Acknowledges the entrance to a city, town, or community by commuters;
- Helps to build upon community pride and identity;
- May provide information about the available amenities that the community has to offer;
- Illustrates what is important to the community and what the community is proud to be part of; and
- Helps create a sense of place that will lead into establishing a destination that future travelers will want to frequent.

The use of symbolic monuments can be a sign (see Figure 7-3) that welcomes travelers, or multifunctional devices such as a bridge. Whatever a community decides to use should be unique and provide some form of representation of the community’s identity.



Figure 7-3: Gateway signage into the County's small towns. Source: HCUED.

#### 4. Protect and enhance the corridors that run throughout Huntington County.

**Participants:** DCD, INDOT, Highway Department, Plan Commissions, County Commissioners

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

Huntington County's transportation corridors need to be protected and enhanced. Future development should be accommodated while protecting the scenic qualities and ecologically sensitive areas along these routes. Protecting and enhancing corridors will also:

- Help to create a destination for future visitors to the community;
- Let people know when they have entered a community or city/town;
- Provide and build community identity; and
- Help provide Huntington County with a different identity from surrounding counties.

Huntington County can protect and enhance the corridor systems by creating an overlay district that requires additional review process prior to development along the corridor. A revised landscaped ordinance can be adopted that will soften the urbanization that takes place along these routes. Off-premise signs can be addressed to make them seem less abrasive to travelers.

#### 5. Establish a TDR/PDR program for the county.

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, Purdue Extension, County Commissioners

**Timeline:** 10 to 20 years

Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) have been implemented in various communities across the United States to help preserve farmland and open space while combating sprawl. The program has also shown additional benefits beyond what it was initially intended to do, such as promoting more efficient development practices on less land.

A TDR program must have a "sending" area and a "receiving" area. The "sending" area is the area

that the community feels needs to be protected from urbanization, such as valuable farmland or open space. The "receiving" area is typically the land near a municipality that has been identified as a growth zone, or an area that is suitable for development based on criteria set forth by the Plan Commission. Development rights, or a value system in terms of suitability for preservation versus development, could then be transferred from the "sending" area to the "receiving" area, which would allow a developer to establish greater density developments. For example, additional units per acre could be established rather than what is typically allowed by ordinance as long as the development rights of an area to be protected have been transferred.

Because the TDR system is sometimes difficult to begin, Huntington County should consider implementing other preservation techniques prior to the use of the TDR system. The greatest hurdle to overcome is the education process associated with it. Communities considering the TDR program may want to consider establishing other programs to build upon and work in conjunction with TDR, such a land trust program (discussed in further detail in this section) or various levels of agricultural zoning districts.

#### 6. Create a Huntington County land trust program.

**Participants:** Purdue Extension, Plan Commissions, DCD, County Commissioners

**Timeline:** 5 to 10 years

Land trusts are local, regional, or even statewide nonprofit organizations that are directly involved with the preservation and protection of natural, recreational, scenic, agricultural, cultural properties, and/or historic lands. Typically, the land trust is set to preserve open land that is considered to be important to the communities and regions in which they operate. Land trusts can be found in rural, urban, and suburban areas.

Land trusts work in four basic ways. They purchase land, acquire land through donations, secure conservation easements on land and monitor the terms of the easements, and work in partnership with private and governmental conservation easements. For a land trust to be effective, land needs to be acquired by the organization set to monitor the trust. Most of the money used in making the purchases comes in the form of monetary donations, although some parties will donate their land to a trust as a protection method. Many are surprised to find that the provisions contained within a will may not be sufficient protection for the future of one's property. By donating land to a trust, a governing body will ensure that the land remains protected.

Conservation easements are like other recorded easements: they give a right of use over the property of another. This legal document lists a number of restrictions a landowner wishes to place on the land. For example, one can restrict subdividing the property or not permit various uses, like clear-cutting a wooded area. Once recorded, the easement becomes part of the deed. This allows the land to be transferred to new owners but keeps them bound to the terms of the easement, which allows the wishes of the original landowner to be respected. The easement may offer federal and state income tax advantages. If the property were to appreciate greatly, then heirs may not be able to pay the taxes and be forced to sell the property. Conservation easements on land can reduce a property's value and taxes.

Before Huntington County adopts and implements a land trust program, an organization must be established that can oversee the progress, administration, and development of the program. The organization can be comprised of current members of various departments with some knowledge of land trusts, or a newly created organization with its own staff can be formed. In the early phases of the program, individuals from existing offices should play a role in helping form

the foundation of the program if and when a new organizational office is created.

Having a land trust program plan that lists goals and objectives is important to the success of preservation. The plan will enable the organization to seek specific grants and outside funding sources more easily, and in turn will illustrate to potential funding sources and those outside organizations that by allocating funds to Huntington County, they are helping to make strides to achieve larger long-term goals. In establishing a plan, groups like the DCD, Huntington County Surveyor's Office, the Purdue Extension Office, the County Commissioners, and various public interest groups should be involved to educate citizens on the process.

#### **7. Take more consideration in development and rezoning requests.**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, Development Plan Committee

**Timeline:** Ongoing

DCD should consider amending the Development Plan Review process to include the input of fire, police, transportation, Health Department, and utilities, when applicable to the project in question. At this time, Department staff often communicates with these groups as needed, but these groups are not part of the formal process and thus their expertise may not be sought until the permitting stage.

When a proposed rezoning is within close proximity to a city, town, or district that has additional sewer and water capacity, those entities should be made aware of the rezoning proposal to discuss any potential means to connect to utilities. Currently, this occurs more during the Development Plan Review process (informally). This should be addressed up front during the rezoning process with Plan Commission so that all necessary information can be provided to make reasonable Findings of Fact.

**8. Make necessary revisions to zoning ordinances.**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions  
**Timeline:** Ongoing

Technology changes can alter the way development occurs throughout Huntington County, so it will be important to update the zoning ordinances continuously. Current trends to updating the zoning ordinances (not only in Huntington County) are based on a reaction to change. Very few proactive changes are made to zoning ordinances, which could potentially slow and discourage growth to the community. To strive for a more proactive approach, DCD staff and board members should continue to seek educational opportunities in the planning field to stay current on trends (see Figure 7-4).

A logical exercise or activity following the adoption of a comprehensive plan is an evaluation of the existing tools that complement the plan. Historically, one of the primary tools for implementing the comprehensive plan is the community's zoning ordinance as there is a statutory link between the two. The comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance should be reviewed to ensure consistency. They should also be forward thinking and account for anticipated changes.



Figure 7-4: Tiny homes - a topic that may need to be addressed in future zoning ordinance updates. Source: [www.sonomawest.com](http://www.sonomawest.com)

**9. Make necessary revisions to subdivision ordinances.**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, Subdivision Plat Committee  
**Timeline:** Ongoing

The Subdivision Code was adopted in November 2012 and updated in July 2015. While it can be considered mostly up-to-date at this time, it is important to be aware of new and emerging trends that may require the Subdivision Code to be revised in the future.

**10. Make necessary revisions to storm water control ordinances.**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, Towns, County Surveyor  
**Timeline:** Ongoing

State and federal guidelines change regarding the handling of storm water runoff from the urbanization of land. Huntington County must take advantage of outside resources and future educational opportunities related to storm water management to make necessary revisions to the Storm Water Control Ordinance as they are needed.

**11. Encourage brownfield redevelopment.**

**Participants:** HCUED, DCD, County Commissioners, Town Councils  
**Timeline:** Ongoing

“Brownfield” is a catch-all term for a number of former industrial and commercial sites across the United States that are contaminated, unused, and often abandoned. Unless these sites can be remediated, they will continue to be a burden to the surrounding area’s economies that can lead to blight and discourage local growth. Over the years, governments have begun to realize the economic development opportunities associated with brownfield redevelopment and therefore have made great strides to create programs to return these idle properties to a productive use.

Creating a localized program to deal with brownfield redevelopment can speed up the process of revitalizing the communities and businesses around these brownfields. Huntington County should consider applying for various grants made available to communities to clean up sites. Brownfield grants are highly competitive, and applications that involve multiple jurisdictions typically have a higher likelihood of receiving funding. Possible grants may cover the preparation of listed brownfield sites, establishing programs to aid in the training process, and the actual remediation process.

**12. Limit the number of curb cuts in non-urbanized areas.**

**Participants:** DCD, Plan Commissions, Highway Department, County Commissioners

**Timeline:** Within 5 years

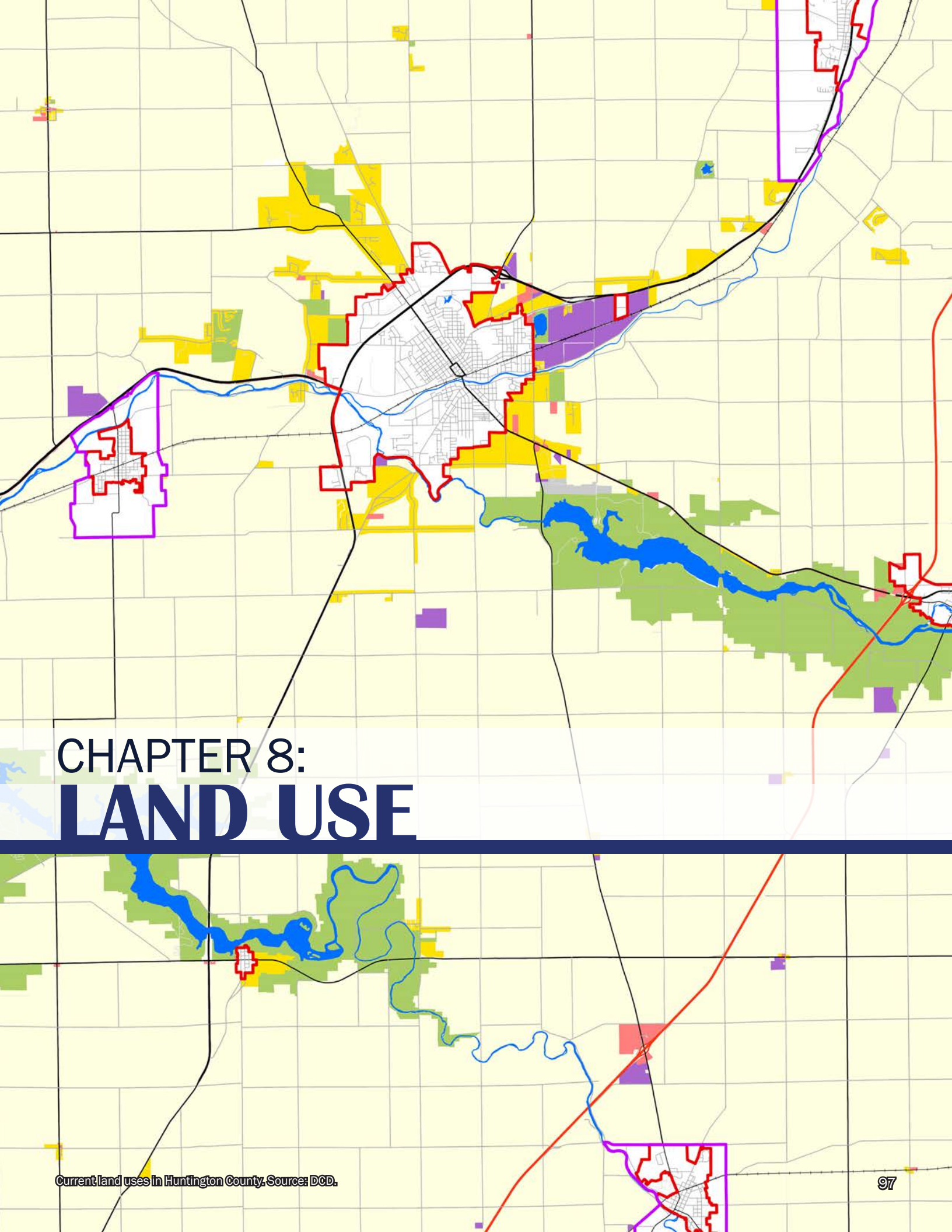
Current linear residential growth patterns are taxing natural resources, increasing wear on infrastructure, and adding to the amount of time it takes public safety to respond. Allowing this development to continue at its current pace needs to be addressed. One way is to look at limiting the number of curb cuts within the non-urbanized areas of the county – much like the state does with respect to development along the state and federal road systems.

Benefits of reducing curb cuts include:

- Reduction of sprawl
- Improvement to fire/police protection
- Improvement to traffic safety
- Help to create pedestrian friendly areas
- Reduction to wear and tear on county road systems - saves money

There are a few possible ways that local governments can limit curb cuts. Option one would be to set a maximum limit of permitted cuts along a given stretch of roadway given a particular zoning classification. Option two would be to establish a form of impact fees to help offset the additional cost to maintain the roadway as well as compensate the additional costs to fire/police protection.





# CHAPTER 8: LAND USE



# Land Use

The land use analysis of this Plan shows the general distribution, location, and characteristics of current and future land uses. It is a culmination of other plan components illustrating how the community currently fits together and potential future growth patterns.

To this end, the land use section provides a guideline for the community planning commissions and governing officials when reviewing development plans and determining the location of future infrastructure and public facilities. The land use section is also the foundation for which zoning and subdivision regulations, capital improvement programs, and other growth management techniques are applied. The land use plan can serve as a catalyst to put the goals and objectives of this Plan into action.

## CURRENT ANALYSIS

### EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS

Figure 8-1 is an illustration of the current land use patterns of the county, not including the areas within the corporate limits of Huntington, Andrews, Markle, Mount Etna, Roanoke, and Warren, or the extra-territorial areas of Andrews, Roanoke, and Warren. Areas within the county have been designated under a broader land use category, either based on the current use of the property, or in select cases of vacant land, the proposed or intended use of the property. The existing land use categories include:

- Agricultural – land used primarily for agricultural purposes such as crops and livestock production.
- Industrial/Manufacturing – land used for the production of goods or land used for mining of natural resources.
- Commercial – land used primarily for retail sales of goods and services such as department stores, restaurants, car service centers, hardware stores, and grocery stores.
- Residential – all forms of residential development are contained in this category.

- Airport – area designated for Huntington Municipal Airport.

### CURRENT LAND USE ANALYSIS

Agriculture is the dominant land use in the county, followed by open space and then residential. Most of the areas designated for industrial uses are in close proximity to the incorporated areas of the county, along major corridors, or near I-69 interchanges. The commercial areas of the county likewise are concentrated around the incorporated areas, U.S. 24, and I-69. Although not noted on the county's current land use map, the bulk of the county's commercial and industrial properties are concentrated within incorporated areas. Current adopted zoning maps for each jurisdiction and applicable extra-territorial areas are included on the following pages in Figures 8-2 through 8-13. These zoning maps give some indication as to the diversity of districts and uses within each incorporated area.

Open space and recreational areas in the county are primarily contained in the areas surrounding the reservoirs and individual golf courses scattered throughout the county. The only noted area designated for "airport" usage is the Huntington Municipal Airport on State Road 5/N Warren Road. It should be noted that, while the Huntington Municipal Airport has gone through significant expansions within the last two decades, there is limited land area for future expansions surrounding the airport.

Residential growth in the county has continued within the last decade, in spite of the recent recession. The average new home value in the county (not including homes within the city limits of Huntington) was \$207,154 in 2007, compared to \$239,130 in 2017. New home starts took a bit of dip from 2008 to 2015, but have been on the rise in recent years. For more detailed residential statistics, please see the *Appendix: County Demographics – Housing Profile*.

As noted in the 2005 comprehensive plan, the reduction in land for agricultural production remains a concern, although steps have been taken to mitigate this impact. Figure 8-14 illustrates an extreme residential pattern that commonly developed when minor subdivisions of land per parent parcel were relatively unchecked by the Subdivision Ordinance. This pattern resulted in encroachment into agricultural land, created conflict points along county roadways due to frequent drive cuts, and overall, represented poor planning for residential growth.

In November 2004, shortly before the 2005 comprehensive plan was adopted, the Subdivision Code was modified, instating a limit of two minor subdivisions per parent parcel of land (a distinct parcel as of January 1, 2005). All other requests, with the exception of tracts exceeding twenty acres in size, must go through the major subdivision process, allowing for a more detailed review process. This has decreased the occurrence of subdivision patterns shown in Figure 8-14. Nevertheless, the transfer of agricultural land to residential land represents one of the county's most significant land use trends. Perhaps the biggest future land use planning challenge is how to accommodate additional residential development without compromising the county's agricultural land base.

## **FUTURE LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS**

In addition to other principles identified within this Plan, the following topics helped guide the development of and identify potential growth areas on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 8-18).

### *Smart Growth*

The concept of "smart growth" has evolved out of the American Planning Association's attempt to refocus on the importance of the planning process in meeting the critical challenges of future growth in all kinds of community environments. Simply put, smart growth directs growth to those areas of the community that already have

the infrastructure to support growth, resulting in more cost-efficient development. This approach also encourages a mix of buildings types and uses, development within existing neighborhoods, and embraces land as a fixed resource of the community.

### *Extra-territorial Jurisdiction*

Indiana state law provides an opportunity for the incorporated jurisdictions of the county to exercise zoning and subdivision control over those areas immediately adjacent to the jurisdiction boundaries. The police power of the jurisdiction may be exercised up to a two mile radius of the corporate boundary. For the majority of municipalities within Huntington County, the extra-territorial areas are where future growth will occur, or would occur if the jurisdiction chose to exercise this police power by establishing an extra-territorial area. Currently, only the towns of Andrews, Roanoke, and Warren exercise extra-territorial police power. These areas are shown on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 8-18). Specific attention to these areas should be given by each of these jurisdictions when each jurisdiction updates its individual comprehensive plan. Specific proposals for the extra-territorial areas are not included in this Plan.

### *Areas Not Suitable for Future Development*

Areas within the county that, due to physical constraints on the property, are likely not suitable for development or placement of permanent structures include, but are not limited to:

- Existing developed parcels of land;
- Property in regulatory floodplains or floodways;
- Parcels with a slope greater than 10%; and
- Government-owned and protected lands.

Figure 8-15 depicts the existing patterns of development in the county (building outlines). Figure 8-16 depicts the floodplain and floodway areas in the county, per FEMA digital FIRM data. Figure 8-17 depicts government-owned and

protected lands in the county - primarily reservoir land and forest reserve land.

### *Population and Growth Projections*

Of all areas in the county, the northeastern portion (Roanoke and the surrounding area) is experiencing the most development and population growth and is projected to continue to grow faster than the rest of the county. Future land use planning should consider current and projected growth trends and account for residential expansion to accommodate increased population. See the *Appendix: County Demographics* for information about growth patterns in the county.

## FUTURE PROPOSAL

### GOAL

Encourage orderly and responsible development of land in order to promote the health, safety and welfare of residents within Huntington County, while simultaneously promoting opportunities for community growth and development that result in enhanced quality of life, resulting in diverse housing, economic vitality, enhanced recreation, and nurtured environmental integrity.

### OBJECTIVES

- Provide for a compatible coexistence between land use categories.
- Meet future growth needs of the community.
- Preserve and protect the agricultural character and function of the county.

### LAND USE STRATEGIES

The timeline for each strategy is "ongoing." Primary participants will be DCD and Plan Commissions.

- 1. Provide adequate housing for all levels of income within the community.**
- 2. Ensure that residential land uses are designed to be safe, accessible, sanitary, decent and aesthetically appealing.**
- 3. Allow residential, commercial, industrial, farming, parks, and open space to occur in areas planned for such uses, while restricting the same uses from occurring where they are not planned.**
- 4. Protect prime agricultural land from unrelated development.**
- 5. Require that uses of land are sensitive to adjacent environmental features.**
- 6. Strongly discourage incompatible and conflicting land uses from being adjacent or in close proximity to one another.**

### HOW TO READ THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use Map (Figure 8-18) uses the Current Land Use Map (Figure 8-1) as a base and identifies potential growth areas for each land use type in a diagonal "hatching" pattern. The same land use colors are used for the potential growth areas as the underlying base land use areas. In some areas of the map, more than one land use is identified as a potential future use, indicated with multiples colors of hatching. These are often areas with a diverse surrounding of land uses; thus, it is too restrictive to state that the adjacent area will develop in a singular way compared to a multitude of possibilities.

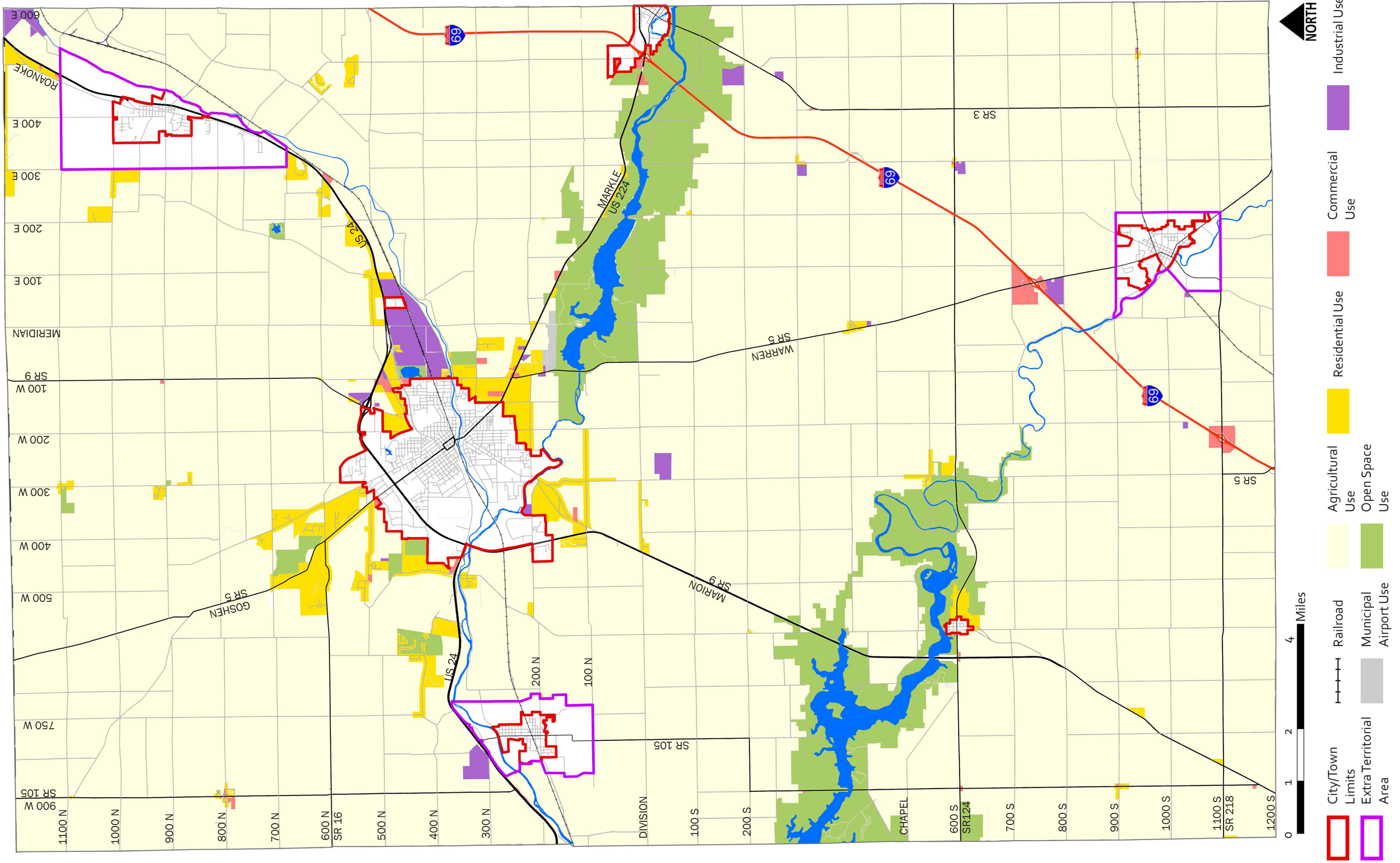
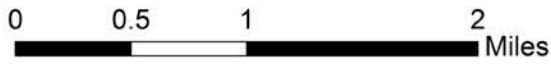
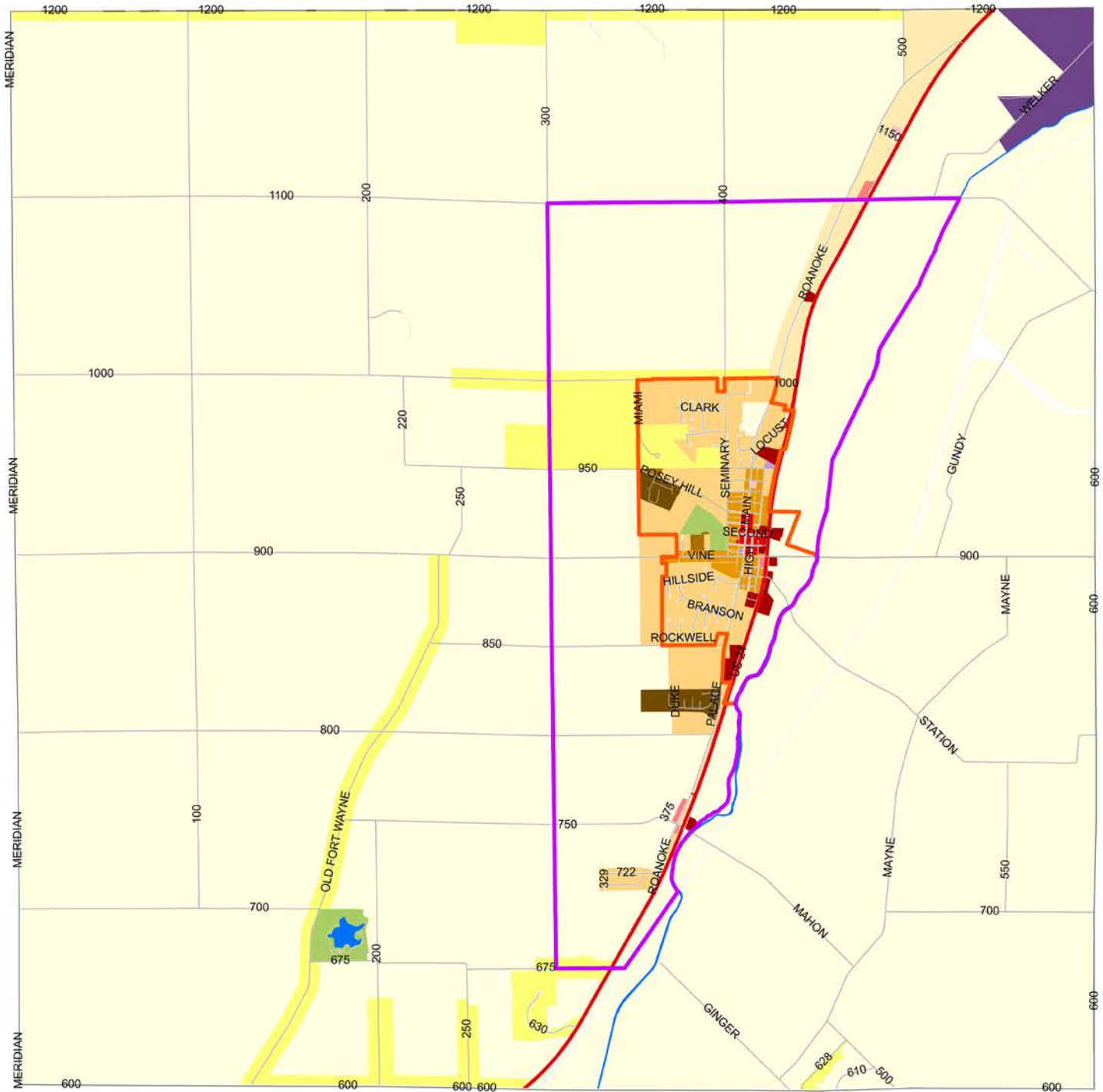


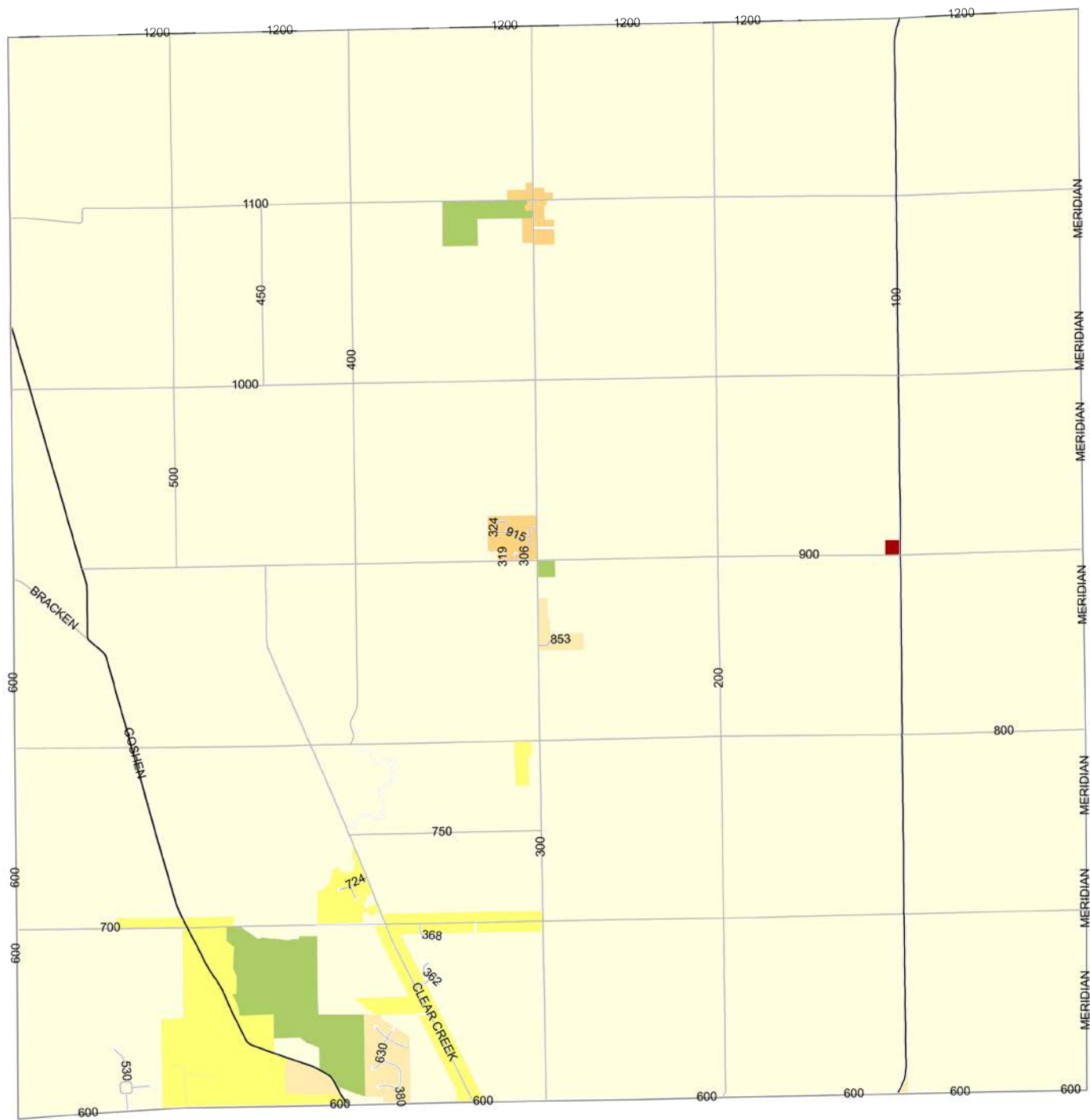
Figure 8-1: Huntington County Current Land Use Map. Source: DCD.



**Legend**

- |                              |                                  |                                    |                                |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Extra Territorial Boundaries | A - Agricultural                 | R-8 - Residential High Density     | CB - Central Business          |
| Town Limits                  | SR - Suburban Residential        | R-20 - Residential Apartment       | GB - General Business          |
| Lakes                        | R-2 - Residential Low Density    | RMH - Residential Mobile Home Park | M-1 - Light Manufacturing      |
| Rivers                       | R-4 - Residential Medium Density | LB - Local Business                | M-3 - Extractive Manufacturing |
|                              |                                  | AB - Accommodation Business        | OS - Open Space                |

Figure 8-2: Zoning, Jackson Township/Roanoke. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on October 23, 2017.

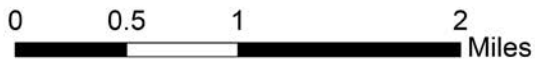
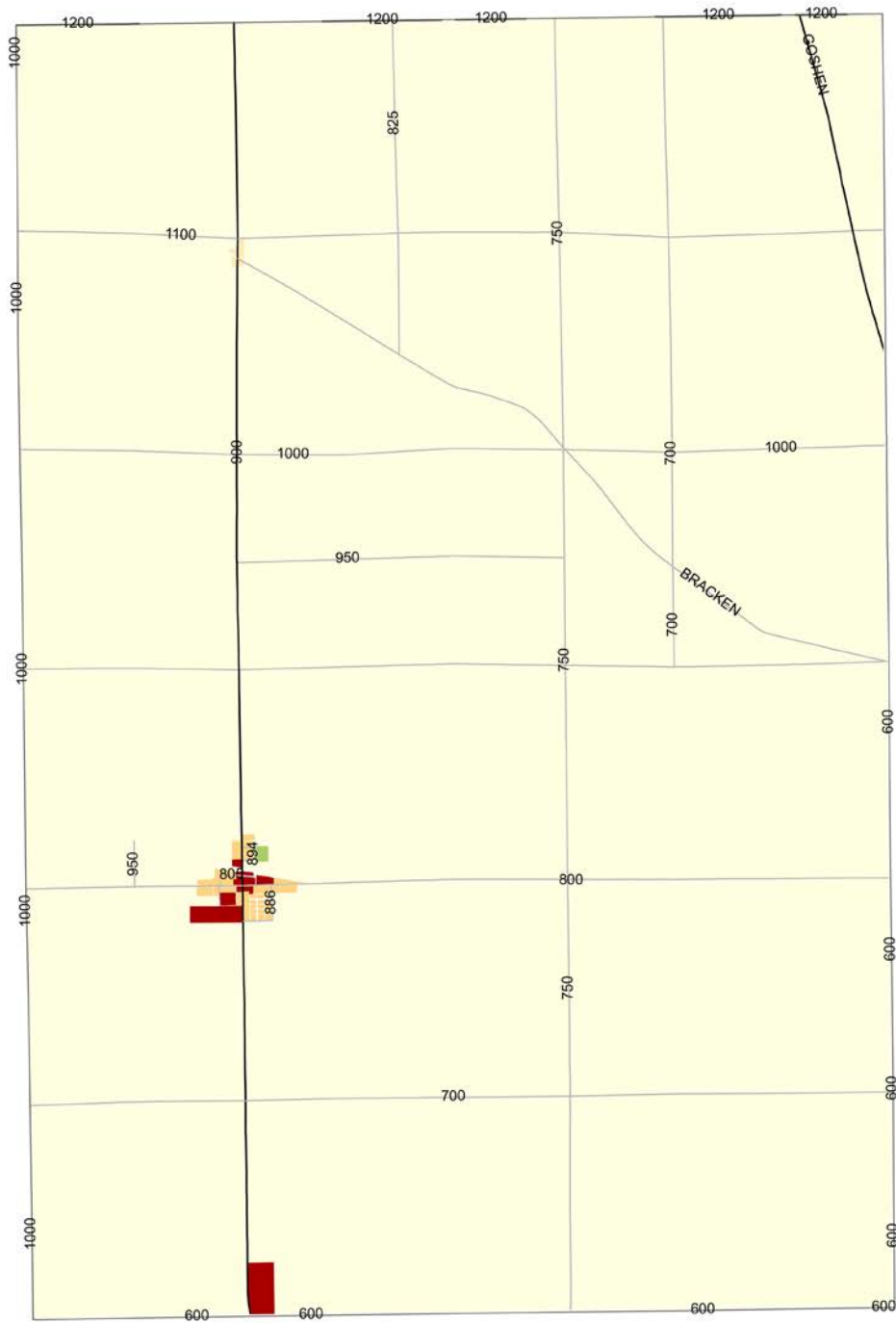


**Legend**

- Town Limits
- A - Agricultural
- R-2 - Residential Low Density
- GB - General Business
- SR - Suburban Residential
- R-4 - Residential Medium Density
- OS - Open Space

Figure 8-3: Zoning, Clear Creek Township. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on October 27, 2017.

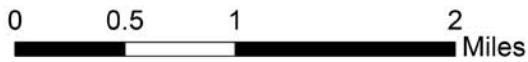
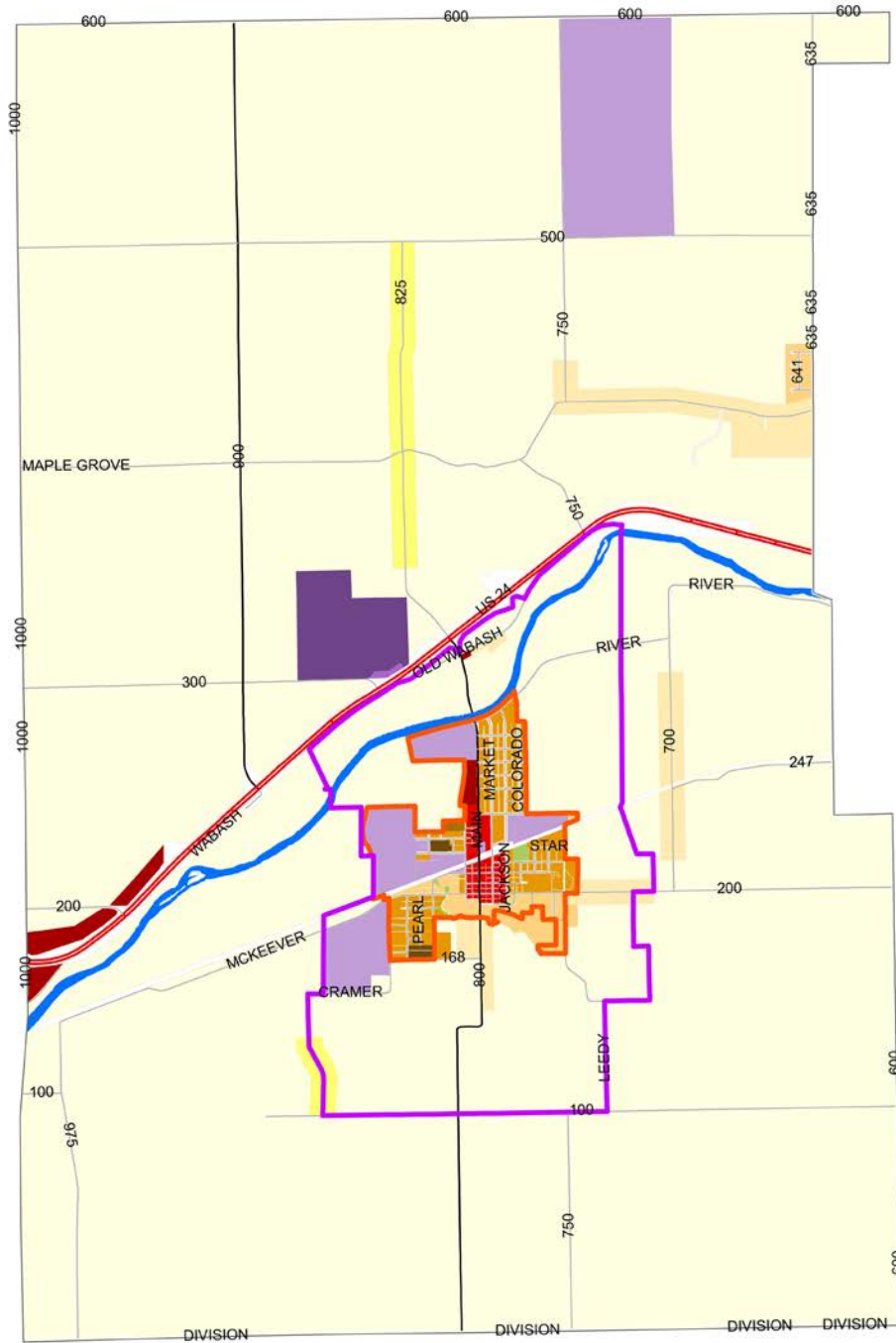




**Legend**

- A - Agricultural
  - SR - Suburban Residential
- R-2 - Residential Low Density
  - R-4 - Residential Medium Density
- GB - General Business
  - M-1 - Light Manufacturing
  - OS - Open Space

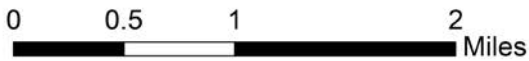
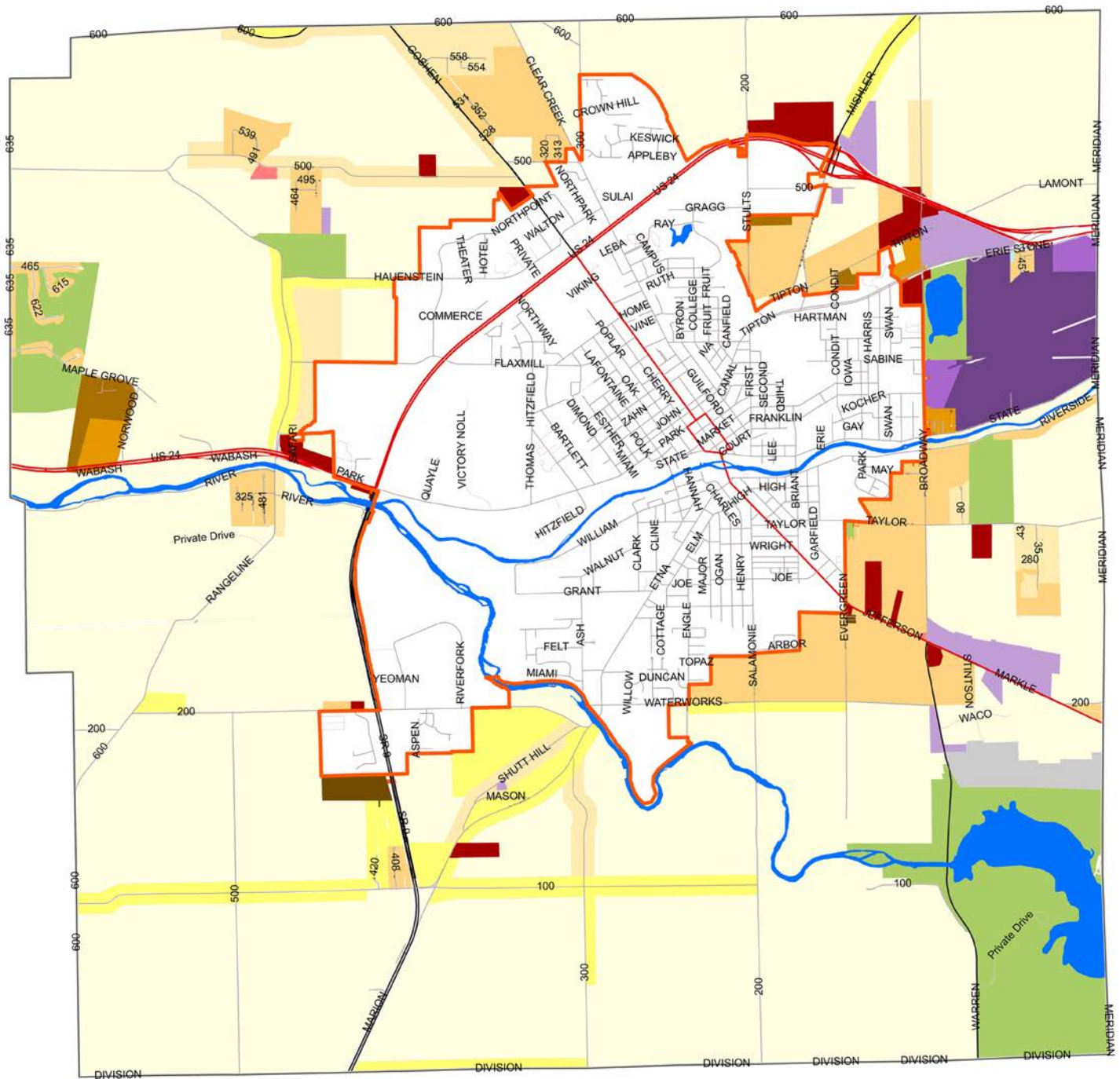
Figure 8-4: Zoning, Warren Township. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on October 27, 2017.



**Legend**

- |                              |                                  |                                    |                                |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Extra Territorial Boundaries | A - Agricultural                 | R-20 - Residential Apartment       | M-1 - Light Manufacturing      |
| Town Limits                  | SR - Suburban Residential        | RMH - Residential Mobile Home Park | M-2 - Heavy Manufacturing      |
| Rivers                       | R-2 - Residential Low Density    | AB - Accomodation Business         | M-3 - Extractive Manufacturing |
|                              | R-4 - Residential Medium Density | CB - Central Business              | OS - Open Space                |
|                              | R-8 - Residential High Density   | GB - General Business              |                                |

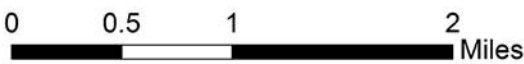
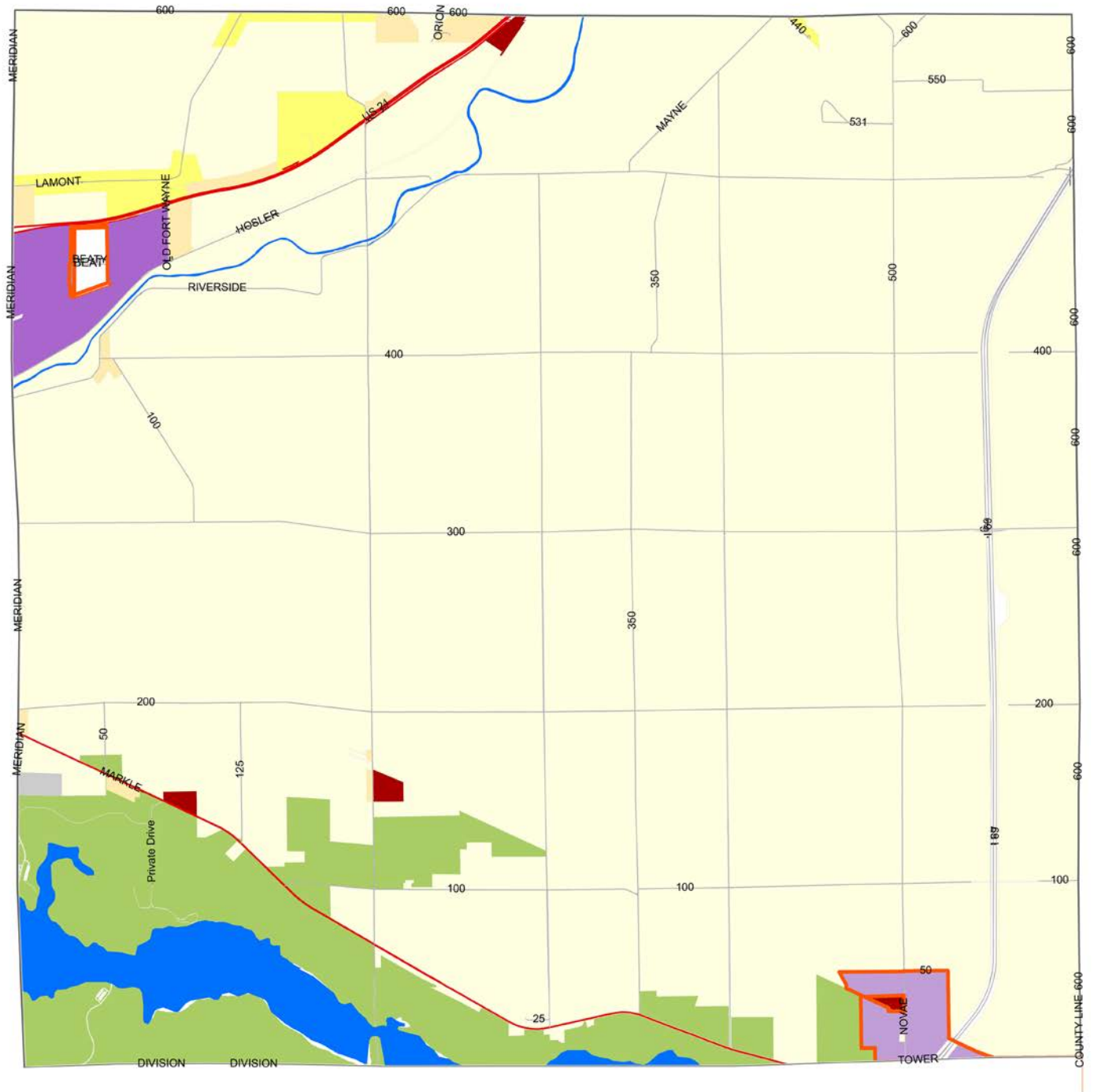
Figure 8-5: Zoning, Dallas Township/Andrews. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on October 27, 2017.



**Legend**

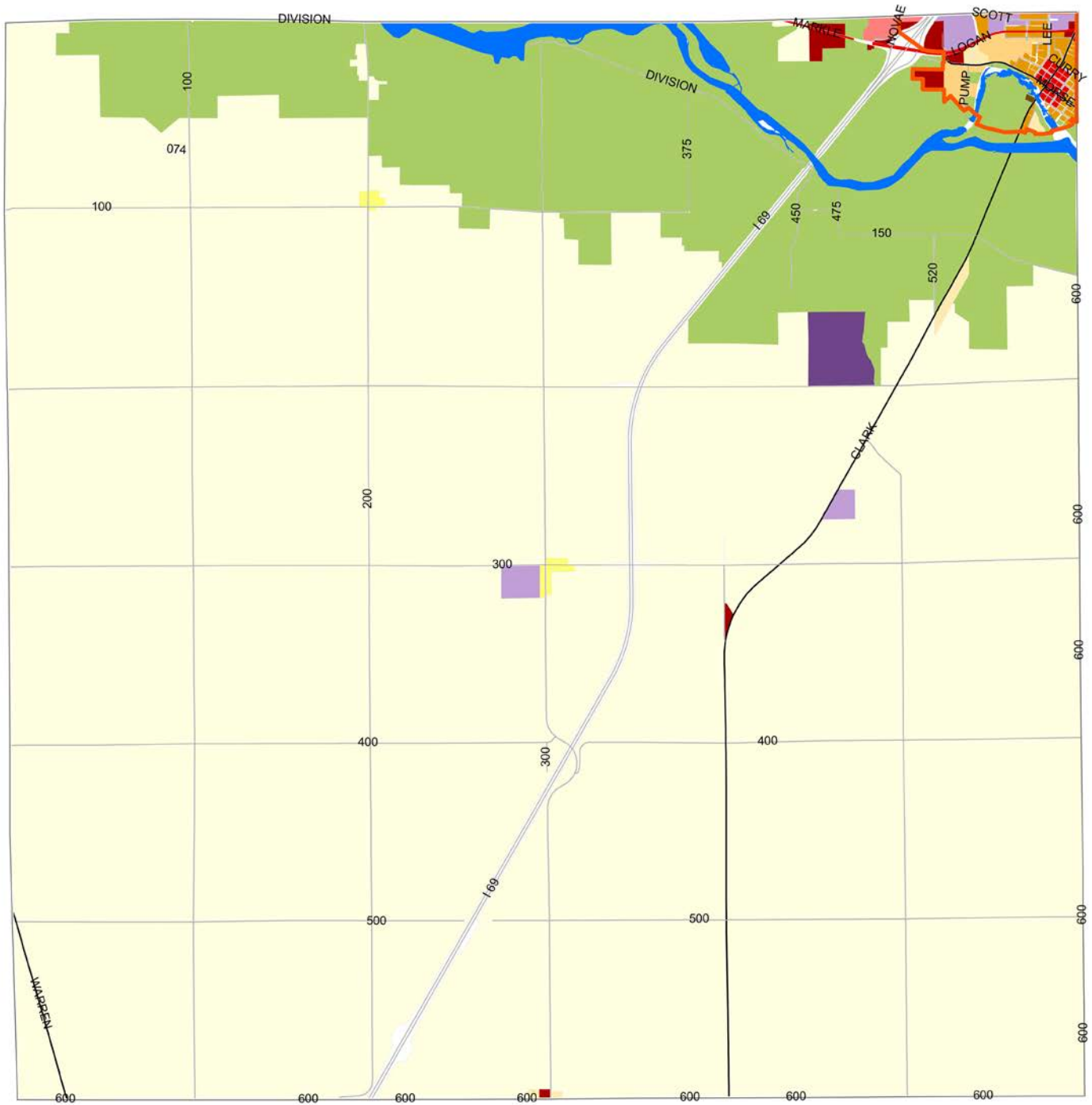
- |                                  |                                |                                    |                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Town Limits                      | EZ - Employment Zoning Overlay | R-20 - Residential Apartment       | M-3 - Extractive Manufacturing |
| Lakes                            | A - Agricultural               | RMH - Residential Mobile Home Park | AZ - Airport Zoning            |
| Rivers                           | SR - Suburban Residential      | AB - Accomodation Business         | OS - Open Space                |
| R-2 - Residential Low Density    | GB - General Business          | POD - Professional Office District |                                |
| R-4 - Residential Medium Density | M-1 - Light Manufacturing      |                                    |                                |
| R-8 - Residential High Density   | M-2 - Heavy Manufacturing      |                                    |                                |

Figure 8-6: Zoning, Huntington Township. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on November 5, 2018.



- Legend**
- |             |                                  |                                |                                |
|-------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Town Limits | EZ - Employment Zoning Overlay   | R-8 - Residential High Density | M-2 - Heavy Manufacturing      |
| Lakes       | A - Agricultural                 | AB - Accommodation Business    | M-3 - Extractive Manufacturing |
| Rivers      | SR - Suburban Residential        | CB - Central Business          | AZ - Airport Zoning            |
|             | R-2 - Residential Low Density    | GB - General Business          | OS - Open Space                |
|             | R-4 - Residential Medium Density | M-1 - Light Manufacturing      |                                |

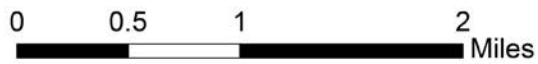
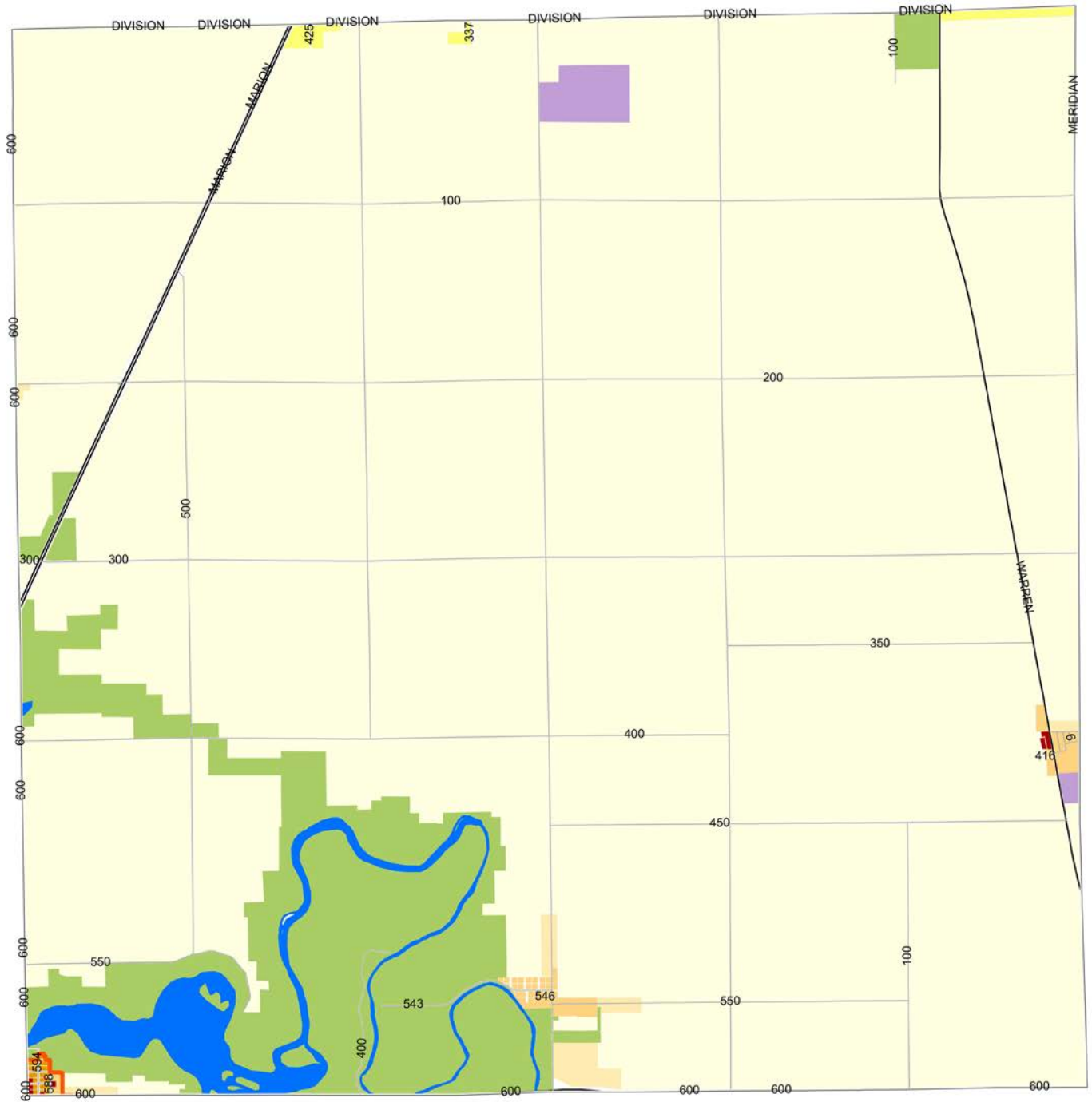
Figure 8-7: Zoning, Union Township/Markle. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on November 5, 2018.



**Legend**

- |             |                                  |                                    |                                |
|-------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Town Limits | A - Agricultural                 | R-8 - Residential High Density     | GB - General Business          |
| Lakes       | SR - Suburban Residential        | RMH - Residential Mobile Home Park | M-1 - Light Manufacturing      |
| Rivers      | R-2 - Residential Low Density    | AB - Accommodation Business        | M-3 - Extractive Manufacturing |
|             | R-4 - Residential Medium Density | CB - Central Business              | OS - Open Space                |

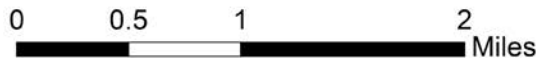
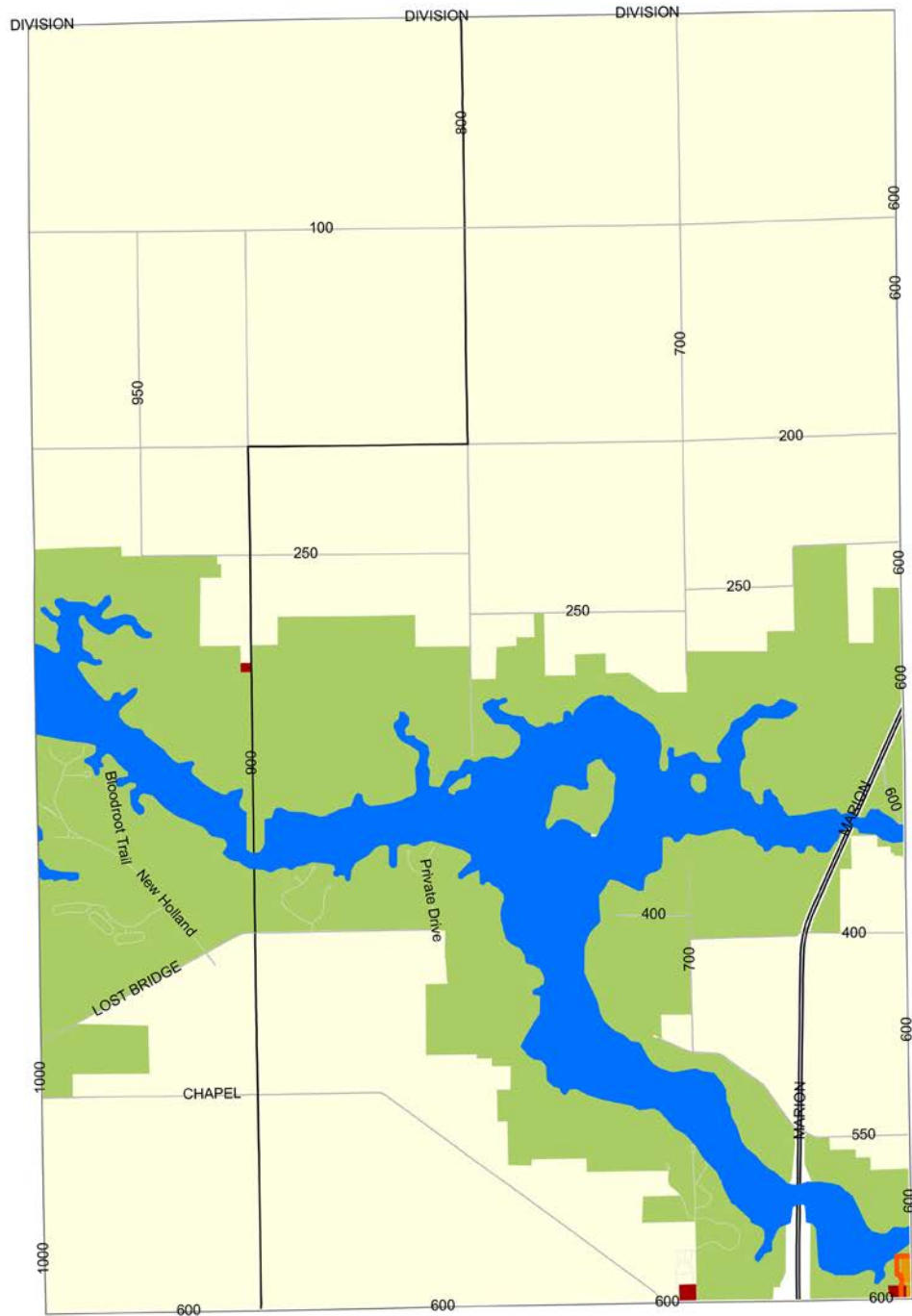
Figure 8-8: Zoning, Rock Creek Township/Markle. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on October 27, 2017.



**Legend**

- |             |                               |                                  |                           |
|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Town Limits | A - Agricultural              | R-4 - Residential Medium Density | M-1 - Light Manufacturing |
| Lakes       | SR - Suburban Residential     | R-8 - Residential High Density   | OS - Open Space           |
| Rivers      | R-2 - Residential Low Density | GB - General Business            |                           |

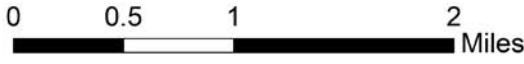
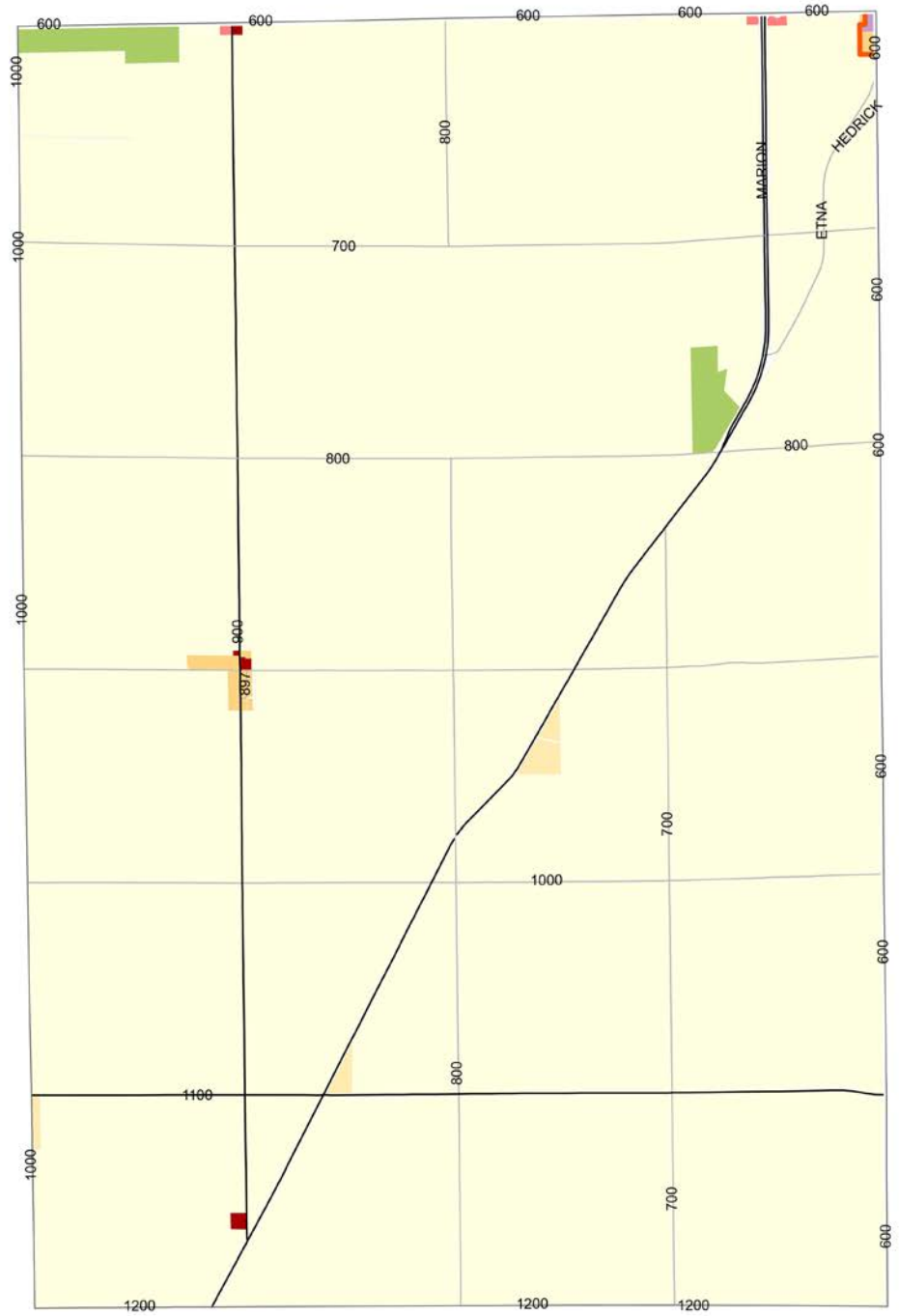
Figure 8-9: Zoning, Lancaster Township/Mt. Etna. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on October 27, 2017.



**Legend**

- |             |                                  |                                |                           |
|-------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Town Limits | A - Agricultural                 | R-8 - Residential High Density | M-1 - Light Manufacturing |
| Lakes       | R-2 - Residential Low Density    | AB - Accomodation Business     | OS - Open Space           |
| Rivers      | R-4 - Residential Medium Density | GB - General Business          |                           |

Figure 8-10: Zoning, Polk Township/Mt. Etna. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on October 27, 2017.

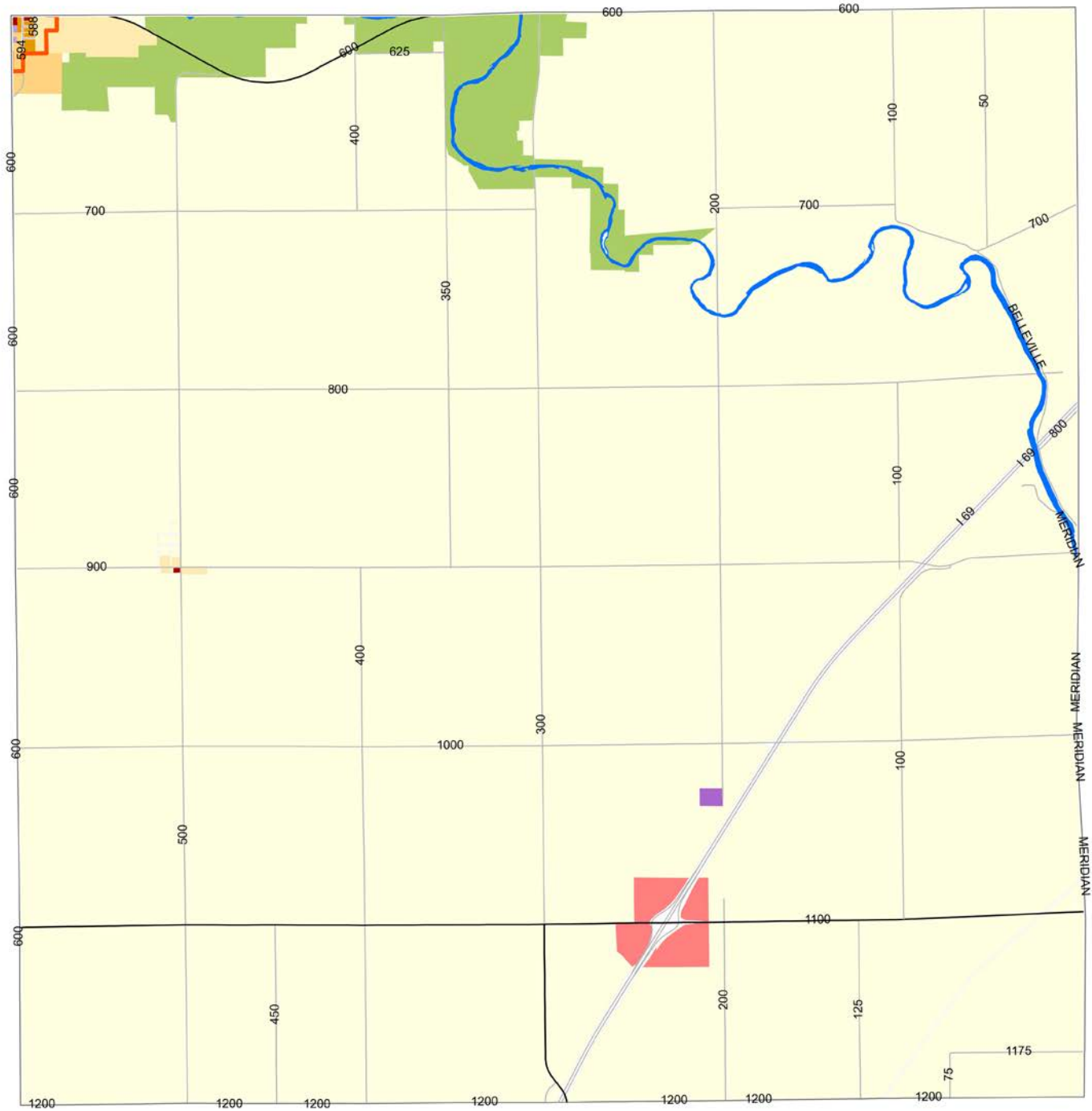


**Legend**

- Town Limits
- A - Agricultural
- R-8 - Residential High Density
- M-1 - Light Manufacturing
- Lakes
- R-2 - Residential Low Density
- AB - Accomodation Business
- OS - Open Space
- Rivers
- R-4 - Residential Medium Density
- GB - General Business

Figure 8-11: Zoning, Wayne Township/Mt. Etna. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on October 30, 2017.

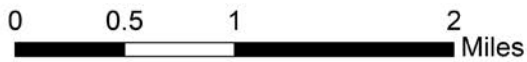
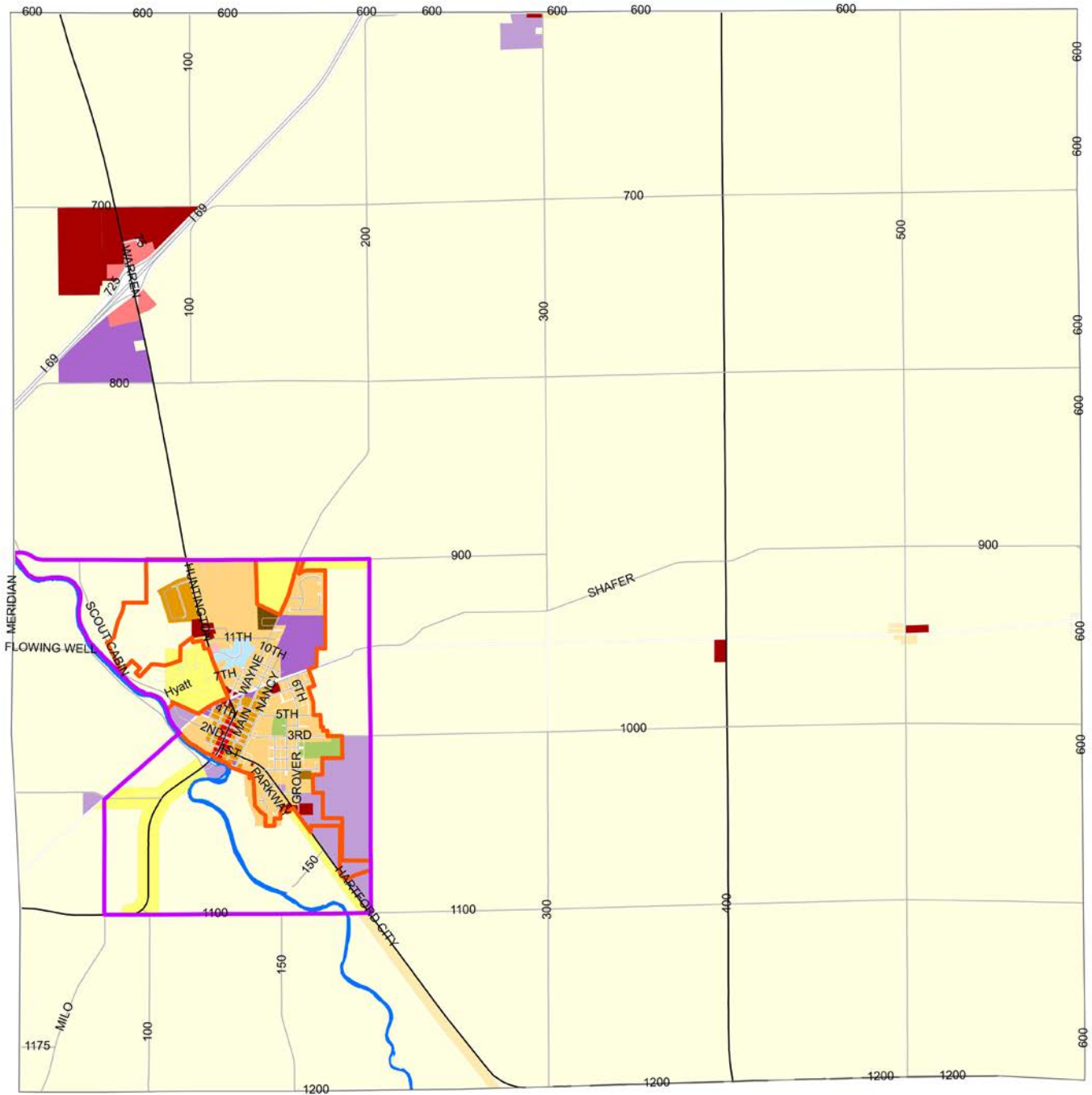




**Legend**

- Extra Territorial Boundaries
- Town Limits
- Lakes
- Rivers
- A - Agricultural
- R-2 - Residential Low Density
- R-4 - Residential Medium Density
- R-8 - Residential High Density
- AB - Accommodation Business
- GB - General Business
- M-1 - Light Manufacturing
- M-2 - Heavy Manufacturing
- OS - Open Space

Figure 8-12: Zoning, Jefferson Township/Mt. Etna. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on October 30, 2017.



**Legend**

- |                              |                                  |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Extra Territorial Boundaries | A - Agricultural                 | R-20 - Residential Apartment       | GB - General Business              |
| Town Limits                  | SR - Suburban Residential        | RMH - Residential Mobile Home Park | M-1 - Light Manufacturing          |
| Rivers                       | R-2 - Residential Low Density    | LB - Local Business                | M-2 - Heavy Manufacturing          |
|                              | R-4 - Residential Medium Density | AB - Accommodation Business        | OS - Open Space                    |
|                              | R-8 - Residential High Density   | CB - Central Business              | POD - Professional Office District |

Figure 8-13: Zoning, Salamonie Township/Warren. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on October 30, 2017.

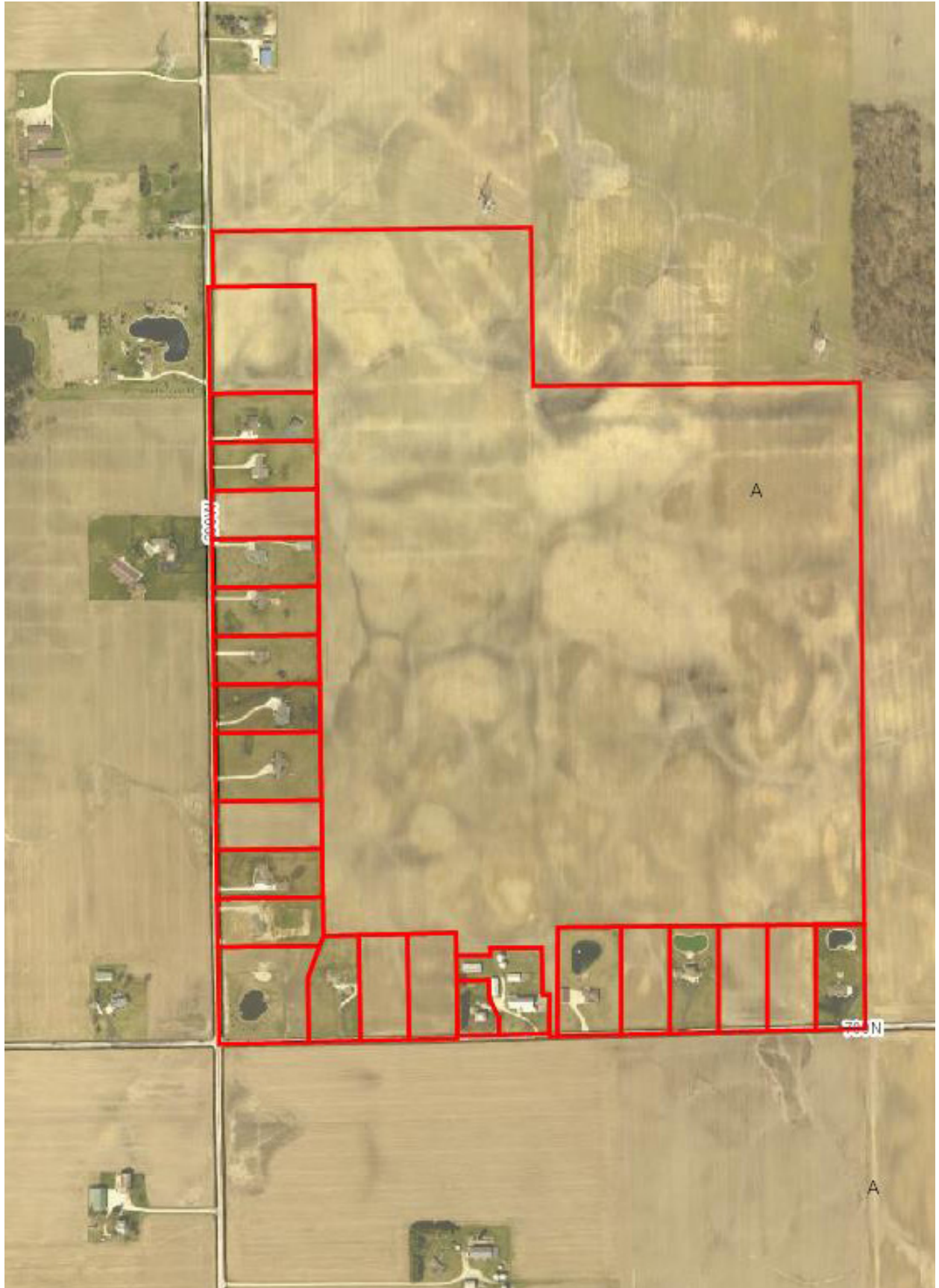


Figure 8-14: Minor subdivision pattern (prior to 2004). Source: Schneider Beacon, created on November 2, 2018.

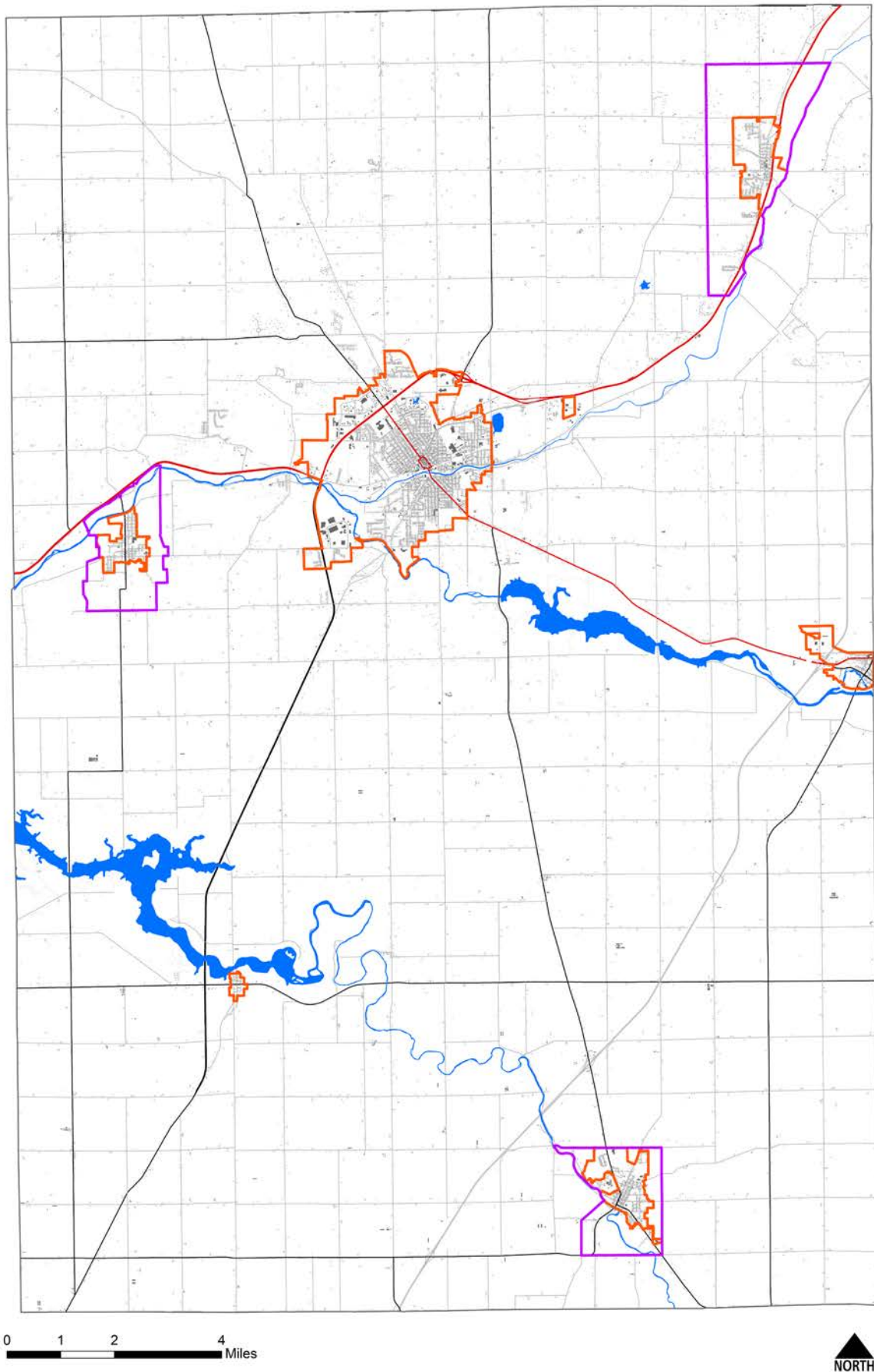


Figure 8-15: Existing structures as of 2016. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on November 5, 2018.

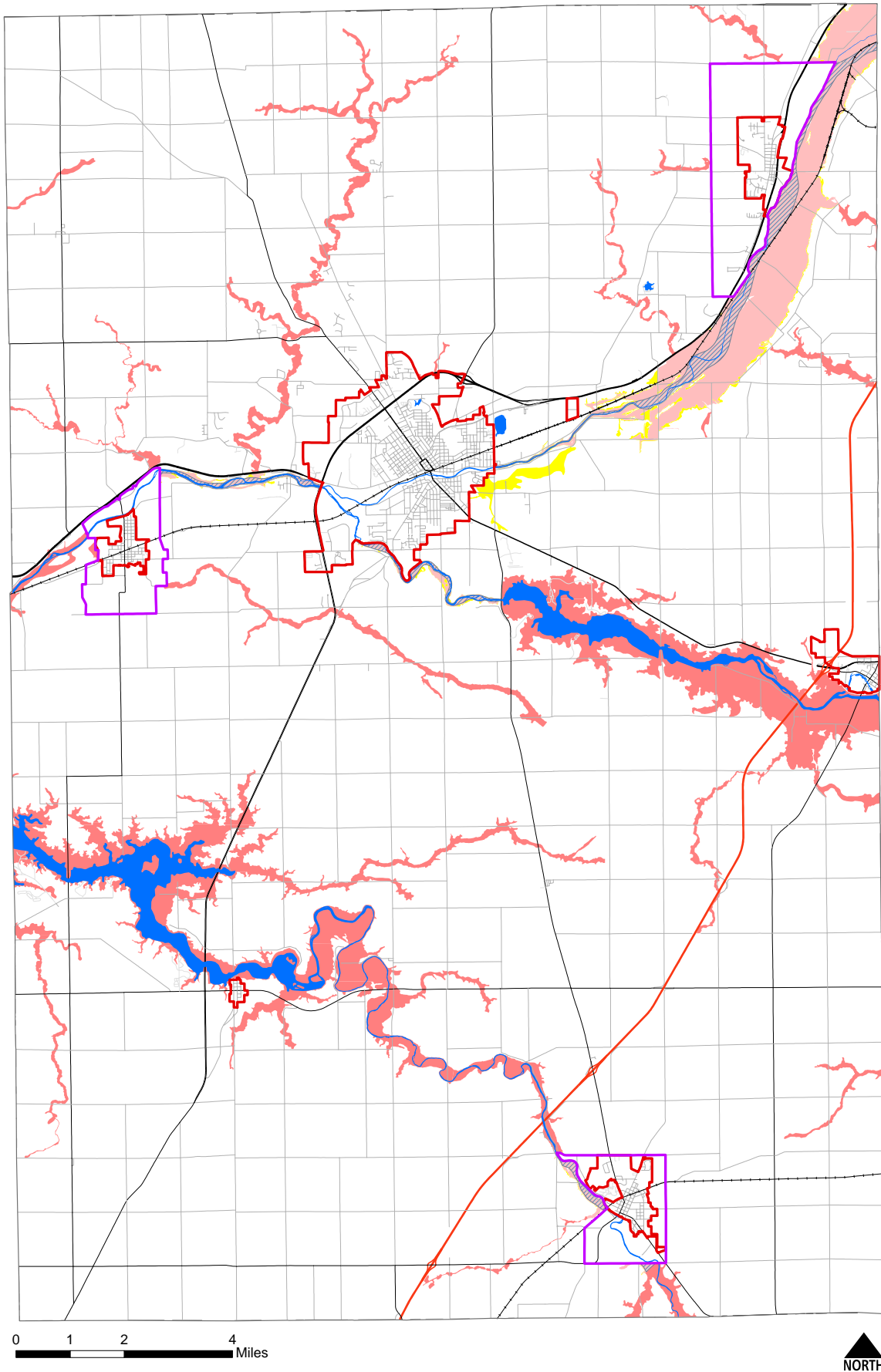


Figure 8-16: Special Flood Hazard Areas. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on November 5, 2018.

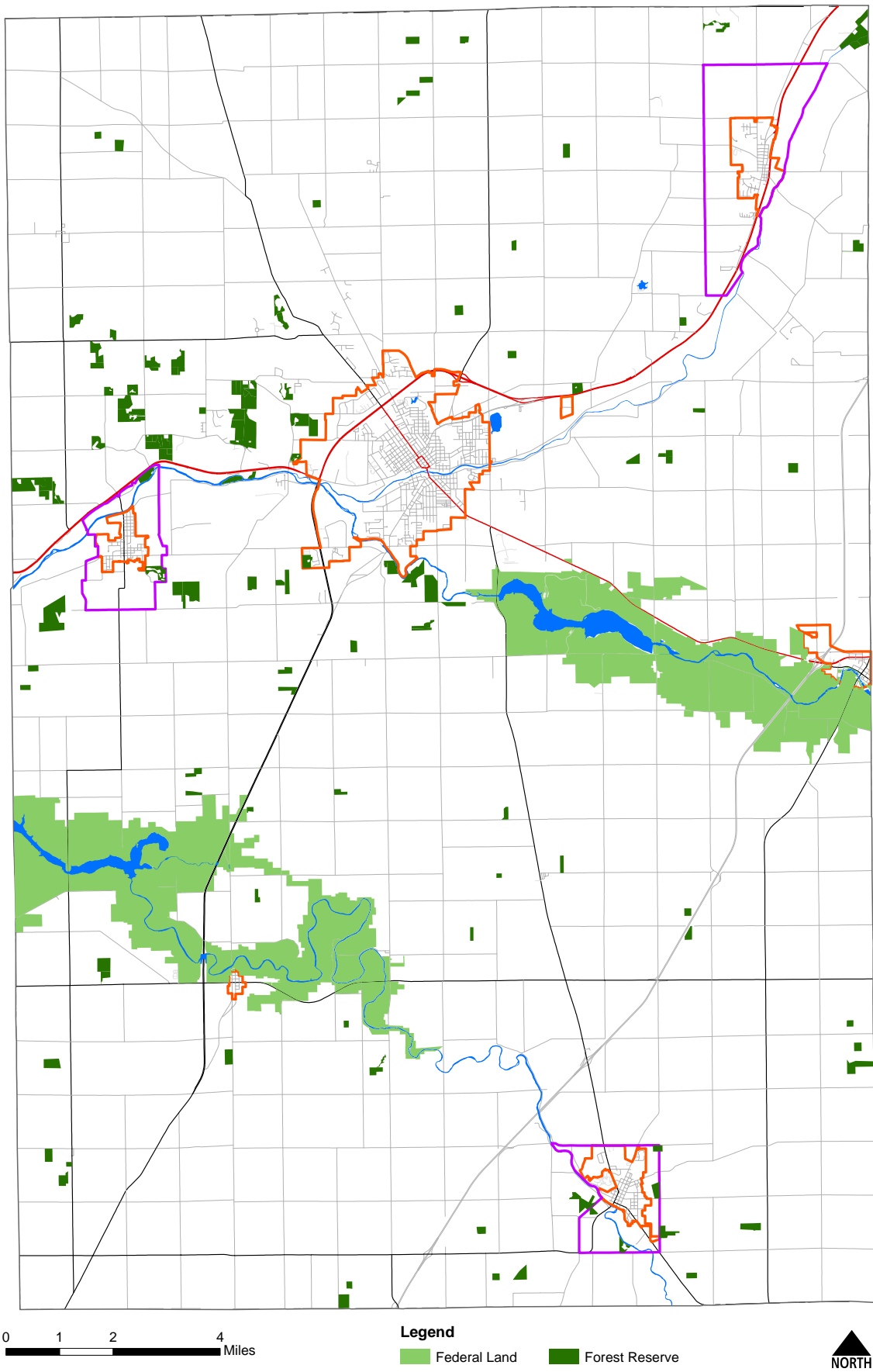


Figure 8-17: Government-owned or protected lands. Source: ESRI ArcMap, created on November 5, 2018.

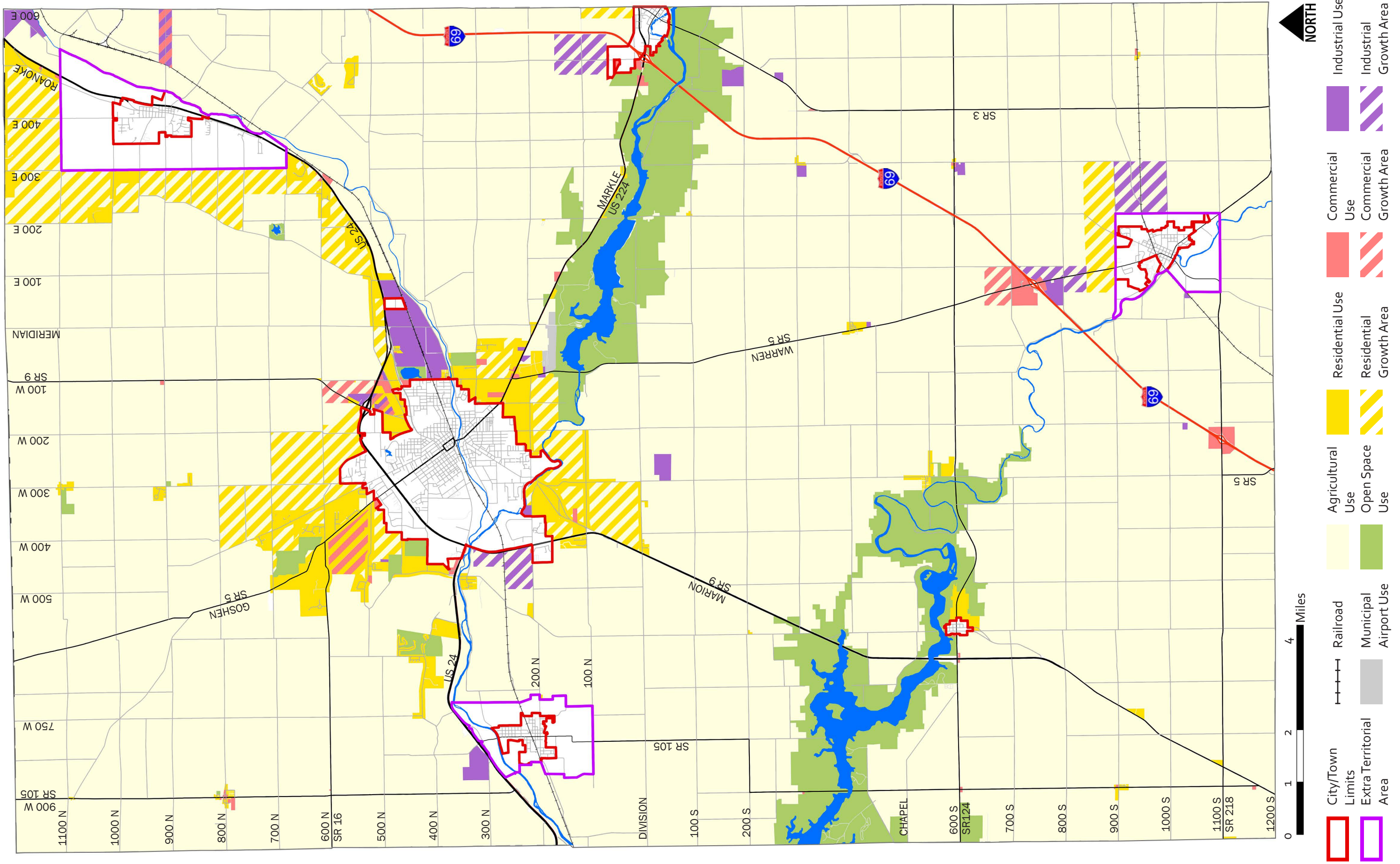


Figure 8-18: Huntington County Future Land Use Map. Source: DCD.







CHAPTER 9:  
**ACTION PLAN**





# Action Plan

This section is designed to be used as a quick reference guide to the strategies of this plan. Strategies identified in Chapters 2 through 8 are listed below, with corresponding timelines and participants.

STRATEGY	TIMELINE					PARTICIPANTS
	Ongoing	Within 5 Years	5-10 Years	10-20 Years	20-25 Years	
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES</b>						
1. Establish development buffers around waterways that run throughout Huntington County.						DCD, Plan Commissions, DNR, IDEM, Drainage Board
2. Establish a Huntington County land trust program to protect forestlands, wetlands, prairies and valuable farm ground.						Purdue Extension, Plan Commissions, DCD, Commissioners
3. Limit development and uses near wellhead sites.						DCD, Plan Commissions, Health Department
4. Use cluster development techniques for new developments to create pockets of open space.						DCD, Plan Commissions, Subdivision Plat Committee
5. Limit development and uses within the Special Flood Hazard Area.						DCD, Plan Commissions, Subdivision Plat Committee, Surveyor, Highway
6. Limit development and uses within the 500-year flood zone.						DCD, Plan Commissions, Subdivision Plat Committee, Surveyor
7. Expand DNR's involvement throughout the county.						DNR, Commissioners
8. Create education experiences (K-12) with respect to environmental issues.						DNR, HCCSC, Purdue Extension, 4-H
9. Develop green areas (planned open space).						DCD, Plan Commissions, Commissioners, Town Councils
10. Establish educational opportunities dealing with environmental issues for nontraditional students and adults.						Purdue Extension, 4-H, HCCSC, Learning Center, Huntington University, DCD
11. Research and establish alternative green energy solutions.						Plan Commissions, DCD
<b>PARKS &amp; RECREATION STRATEGIES</b>						
1. Develop trails connecting all communities in Huntington County.						Park Boards, City/Town Councils, Commissioners, Mayor, DNR, HARTA, INDOT, Highway
2. Connect Huntington County's trail network to neighboring counties.						Park Boards, Town Councils, Commissioners, DNR, HARTA, INDOT, Highway, NIRCC
3. Create a countywide parks and recreation board.						Commissioners
4. Expand reservoir programs.						DNR, Park Boards

STRATEGY	TIMELINE					PARTICIPANTS
	Ongoing	Within 5 Years	5-10 Years	10-20 Years	20-25 Years	
<b>PARKS AND RECREATION STRATEGIES</b>						
5. Expand hunting and fishing opportunities.						DNR, Salamonie Lake, Roush Lake, Park Boards
6. Establish joint programs through the YMCA, PAL Club, and Huntington University.						YMCA, PAL Club, Huntington University
7. Hold joint meetings with all community park boards.						Park Boards
8. Designate potential areas for future sports fields.						DCD, Plan Commissions, Park Boards
9. Major housing developments should provide open space for recreation purposes.						DCD, Plan Commissions, Subdivision Plat Committee
10. Re-establish a "Historic Tour" for the county.						Visitor's Bureau, Historic Review Board, Indiana Landmarks, Huntington Alert, Park Boards
11. Create links between various destinations.						DCD, Visitor's Bureau, Park Boards, Commissioners, City/Town Councils
12. Build upon existing youth programs.						Park Boards, Commissioners, City/Town Councils
13. Provide recreational opportunities that allow for handicap accessibility.						DCD, Park Boards, Commissioners, City/Town Councils
14. Expand fine art festivals.						Park Boards, Commissioners, City/Town Councils, Huntington University, HCCSC, Chambers of Commerce, LaFontaine Arts Council
15. Promote camping opportunities.						Park Boards, DNR, Chambers of Commerce
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES STRATEGIES</b>						
1. Ensure adequate fire protection for future developments while maintaining high standards for existing uses.						Fire, Commissioners, City/Town Councils
2. Ensure adequate police protection for future developments while maintaining high standards for existing uses.						Police, Sheriff, Commissioners, City/Town Councils
3. Ensure adequate water and sewage system quality and availability for all existing and future developments within Huntington County.						Health, Commissioners, City/Town Councils
4. Ensure continual support and advancements in community health programs in order to promote better community health and health education.						Health, Commissioners, City/Town Councils

STRATEGY	TIMELINE					PARTICIPANTS
	Ongoing	Within 5 Years	5-10 Years	10-20 Years	20-25 Years	
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES STRATEGIES</b>						
5. Ensure adequate solid waste disposal, management, and availability for all existing and future developments within Huntington County.						Solid Waste Management District, Commissioners, City/Town Councils
6. Attract medical and dental personnel to the community.						Parkview Huntington Board of Directors, American Medical Association, American Dental Association, professional medical organizations, Commissioners, City/Town Councils
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES</b>						
1. Collaborate with various agencies to ensure Huntington County is a part of regional growth.						Regional organizations, Chambers of Commerce, HCUED
2. Designate areas for industrial development.						DCD, Plan Commissions, HCUED
3. Designate areas for commercial development.						DCD, Plan Commissions, HCUED
4. Continue to establish educational opportunities for residents so that they have the skills necessary for the modern workplace.						HCUED, Huntington University, Ivy Tech, HCCSC, Learning Center
5. Identify ways to improve quality of place in Huntington County and look for funding opportunities outside of local tax dollars.						DCD, state and federal agencies, public-private partnerships
6. Identify new uses for abandoned schools.						DCD, Plan Commissions, HCCSC
<b>TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES</b>						
1. Improve dangerous intersections.						Highway, INDOT, Commissioners
2. Use traffic calming techniques in areas with pedestrian traffic (residential and commercial developments).						DCD, Plan Commissions, Highway
3. Establish and enforce truck traffic routes.						Commissioners, Highway, Law Enforcement
4. Establish right-of-ways large enough to accommodate future expansions.						Highway, INDOT
5. Continue to limit drive cut permits on basis of safety (visual), separation from existing drives, and number of drives along an arterial road.						Commissioners, Highway
6. Upgrade (repair and improve) existing county road system.						Highway

STRATEGY	TIMELINE					PARTICIPANTS
	Ongoing	Within 5 Years	5-10 Years	10-20 Years	20-25 Years	
<b>ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES</b>						
1. Establish a connected trails system.						Commissioners, Mayor, City/Town Councils
2. Research the need for a bike share program.						DCD, Commissioners, Town Councils
3. Require new residential developments to have sidewalks.						DCD, Plan Commissions
4. Require traffic calming techniques for areas with pedestrian traffic.						DCD, Plan Commissions, Highway
5. Improve the existing county rail system.						Commissioners, Rail Road Companies
6. Improve water access for boating purposes.						Park Boards, DNR
7. Provide incentives for car-pooling.						Local Employers
8. Identify the need for and consider improving public transit systems.						Commissioners, City/Town Councils
<b>GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES</b>						
1. Maintain “small town” character by using revitalization techniques.						DCD, Plan Commissions, Commissioners, Town Councils
2. Encourage “large scale” developments to take place within the service capabilities of the municipalities.						DCD, Board of Works, Commissioners, City/Town Councils
3. Establish “gateways” into communities.						DCD, City/Town Councils
4. Protect and enhance the corridors that run throughout Huntington County.						DCD, INDOT, Highway, Plan Commissions, Commissioners
5. Establish a TDR/PDR program for the county.						DCD, Plan Commissions, Purdue Extension, Commissioners
6. Create a Huntington County land trust program.						Purdue Extension, Plan Commissions, DCD, Commissioners
7. Take more consideration in development and rezoning requests.						DCD, Plan Commissions, Development Plan Committee
8. Make necessary revisions to zoning ordinances.						DCD, Plan Commissions
9. Make necessary revisions to subdivision ordinances.						DCD, Plan Commissions, Subdivision Plat Committee
10. Make necessary revisions to storm water control ordinances.						DCD, Plan Commissions, Towns, Surveyor
11. Encourage brownfield redevelopment.						HCUED, DCD, Commissioners, Town Councils
12. Limit the number of curb cuts in non-urbanized areas.						DCD, Plan Commissions, Highway, Commissioners

STRATEGY	TIMELINE					PARTICIPANTS
	Ongoing	Within 5 Years	5-10 Years	10-20 Years	20-25 Years	
<b>LAND USE STRATEGIES</b>						
<b>1. Provide adequate housing for all levels of income within the community.</b>						DCD, Plan Commissions
<b>2. Ensure that residential land uses are designed to be safe, accessible, sanitary, decent and aesthetically appealing.</b>						DCD, Plan Commissions
<b>3. Allow residential, commercial, industrial, farming, parks, and open space to occur in areas planned for such uses, while restricting the same uses from occurring where they are not planned.</b>						DCD, Plan Commissions
<b>4. Protect prime agricultural land from unrelated development.</b>						DCD, Plan Commissions
<b>5. Require that uses of land are sensitive to adjacent environmental features.</b>						DCD, Plan Commissions
<b>6. Strongly discourage incompatible and conflicting land uses from being adjacent or in close proximity to one another.</b>						DCD, Plan Commissions







# CHAPTER 10: **APPENDICES**





# Appendix: County Demographics

The following is a compilation of recent demographics and statistics for Huntington County. Each topic covers a span of five to ten years (or more) to better illustrate trends. Three groups of data were selected: population characteristics, workforce profile, and agricultural industry. Selected information from a specialized demographic report produced for the Huntington County School Board concludes this appendix.

Statistics for Huntington County and the city of Huntington were used for comparison on most topics. This is because County data generally includes city data, often significantly impacting County results. By considering the city’s impact on the data, it helps us to understand the unincorporated County better, especially when data for the unincorporated County isn’t available.

## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

### TOTAL POPULATION

According to the Census Bureau, Huntington County’s population reached 37,124 in 2010, compared to 38,075, a population loss of approximately 2.5 percent. More recent population estimates from the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates suggests that the population count is closer to 36,696, further indicating a slightly downward trend. From 2000 to 2010, the city of Huntington also experienced a slight population loss of 1.6 percent, while the state of Indiana grew by 6.6 percent. This contrasts the period from 1990 to 2000, during which Huntington County, the city of Huntington, and the state of Indiana all grew (8.6, 6.5, and 9.7 percent respectively).

Each of the incorporated towns in Huntington County has experienced varying patterns of population growth and loss from 1990 to 2010. As seen in both Table 10-1 and Figure 10-1, the only town consistently experiencing growth is Roanoke, which grew 46.9 percent from 1990 to 2000 and 15.2 percent from 2000 to 2010.

	1990 Population	2000 Population	2010 Population	% Change 1990-2000	% Change 2000-2010
Indiana	5,544,159	6,080,485	6,483,802	9.7%	6.6%
Huntington County	35,069	38,075	37,124	8.6%	-2.5%
Huntington City	16,389	17,450	17,176	6.5%	-1.6%
Andrews	1118	1290	1149	15.4%	-10.9%
Markle	1208	1102	1095	-8.8%	-0.6%
Mt. Etna	111	110	94	-0.9%	-14.5%
Roanoke	1018	1495	1722	46.9%	15.2%
Warren	1185	1272	1239	7.3%	-2.6%

Table 10-1: Population data for all Huntington County jurisdictions. Source: Census Bureau.

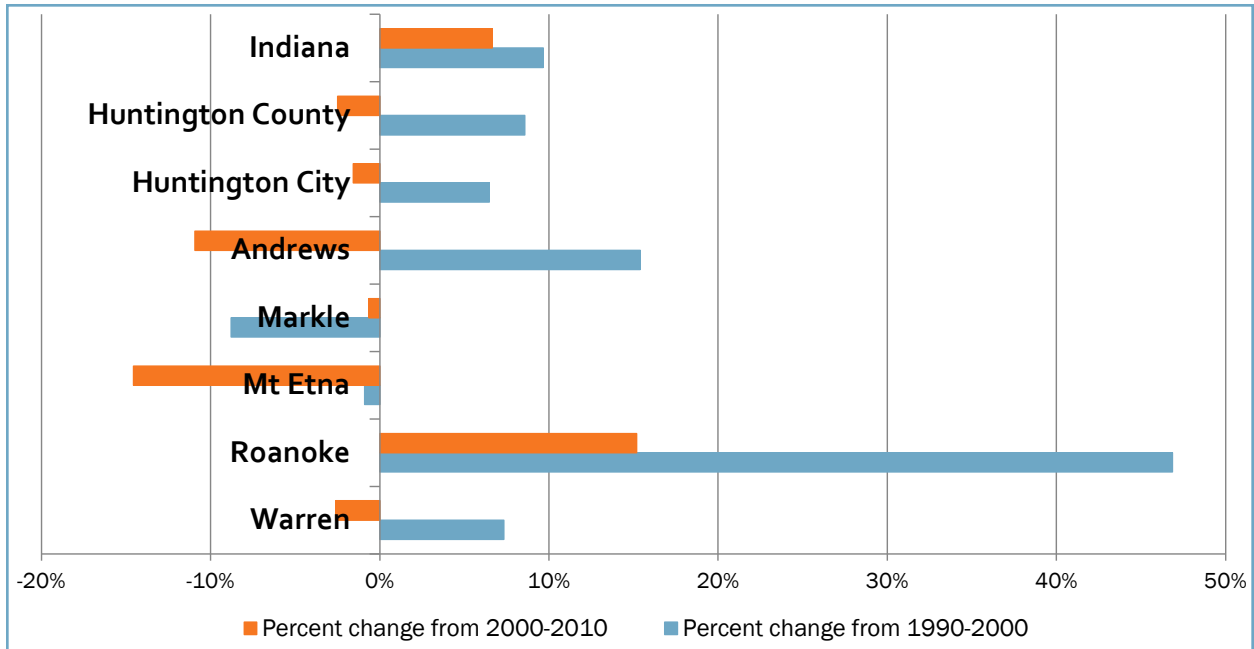


Figure 10-1: Population change comparison, 1990-2010. Source: Census Bureau.

### POPULATION DIVERSITY: GENDER, AGE, AND RACE/ETHNICITY

Figure 10-2 indicates that the gender distribution for Huntington County is similar to the state of Indiana, in that the proportion of males to females is nearly equal. The proportion of males to females in the city of Huntington is very slightly less equal, with females accounting for 52.3 percent of the population.

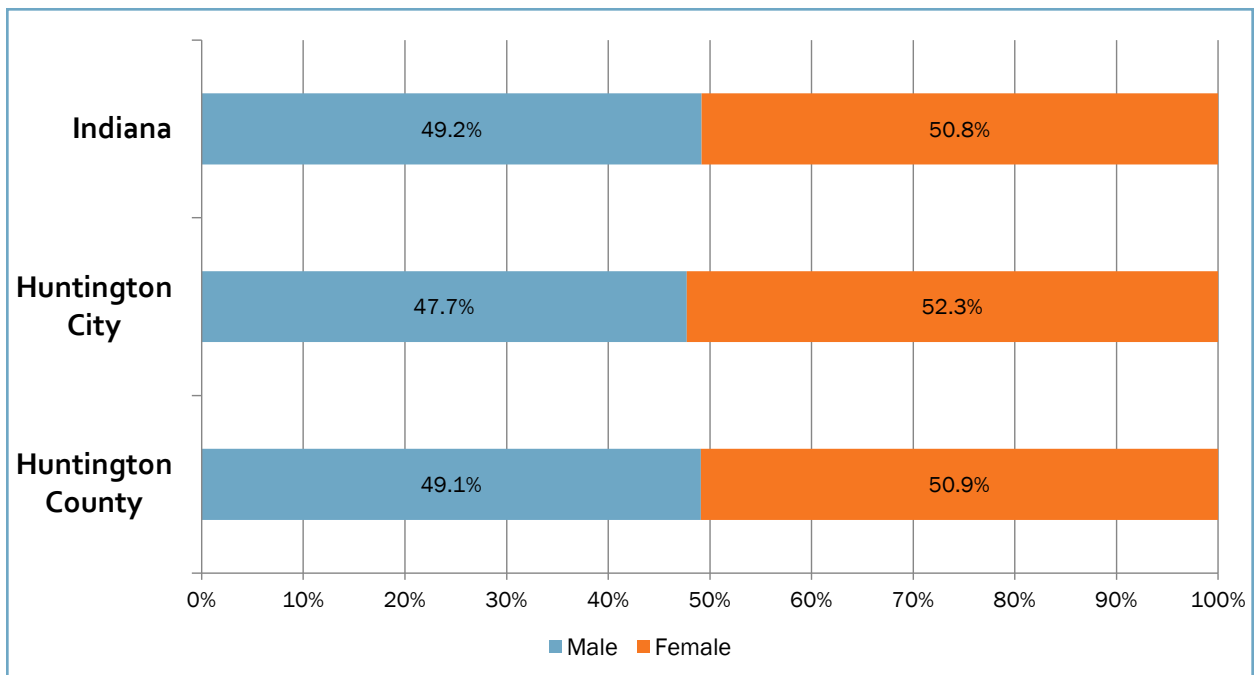


Figure 10-2: Gender distribution, 2010. Source: Census Bureau.

Figure 10-3 is a comparison of the age distribution in Huntington County from 2000 and 2010 Census data. In 2010, the population below age 20 declined slightly, while population between the ages of 45 and 74 saw an increase, suggesting a slightly aging population. The median age also increased: 36.2 years of age in 2000 compared to 39.0 years of age in 2010.

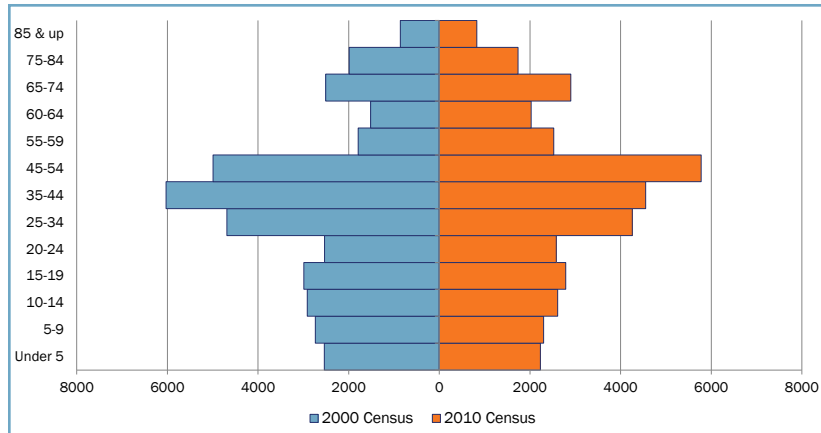


Figure 10-3: County age distribution, 2000-2010. Source: Census Bureau.

This “aging population” trend is further supported by the

*Huntington County Community Schools, IN Population and Enrollment Forecasts* study completed by McKibben Demographic Research in May 2017. This study predicts that the median age of the population for Huntington County will increase from 39.0 in 2010 to 42.3 in 2025. School enrollment is expected to continue to decline until the 2026-27 school year, due to the decline in school age children.

Figures 10-4 and 10-5 illustrate the general lack of racial diversity in Huntington County, even compared to the relatively homogeneous Indiana population. While over 84 percent of Indiana’s population identifies as white, over 97 percent of Huntington County falls into the same category. The second most prevalent racial category in Huntington County is “two or more races,” while the second most common category for Indiana is “black/African American.” In terms of ethnic diversity, only 1.7 percent of Huntington County is Hispanic or Latino, compared to six percent at the state level. Figure 10-6 illustrates the diversity of the United States, which is significantly more varied than Huntington County and Indiana.

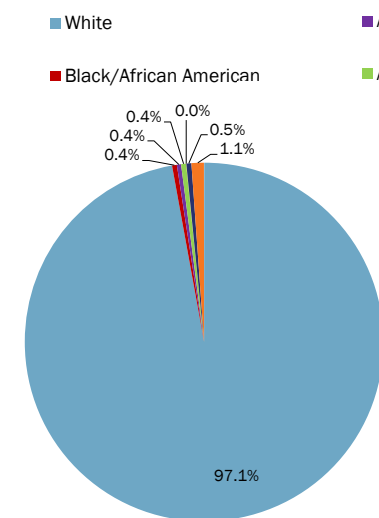


Figure 10-4: County population diversity, 2010. Source: Census Bureau.

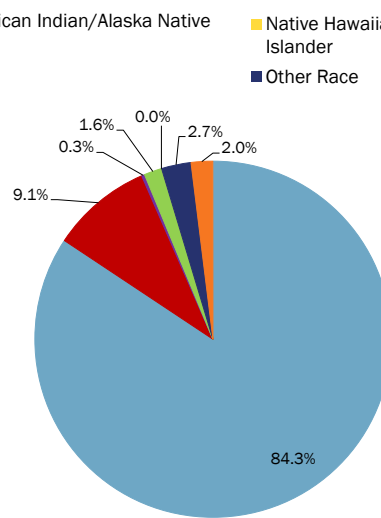


Figure 10-5: Indiana population diversity, 2010. Source: Census Bureau.

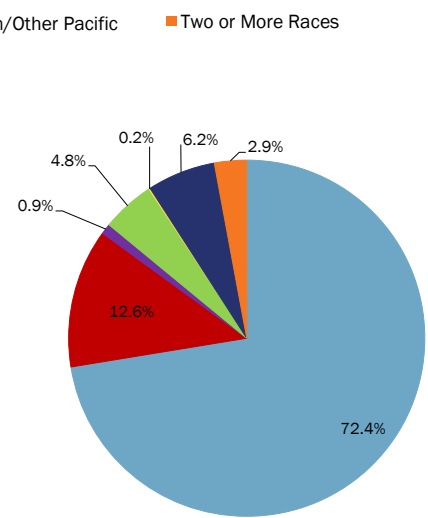


Figure 10-6: United States population diversity, 2010. Source: Census Bureau.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Figure 10-7 illustrates the educational attainment of Huntington County's population in 2016 (per the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) compared to the city of Huntington, the state of Indiana, and the United States. While the County has a higher percentage of high school graduates, it is lagging behind Indiana and the United States in terms of population with bachelor's degrees or higher.

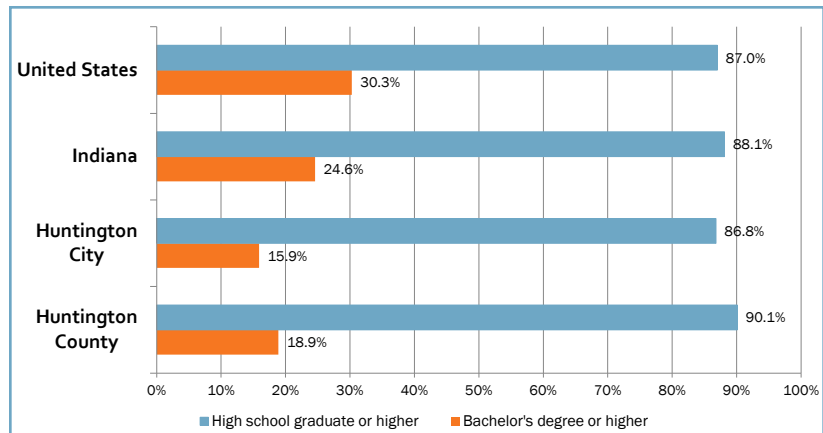


Figure 10-7: Educational attainment. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

This data does not necessarily mean that Huntington County's high school graduates are not pursuing college education. In fact, the McKibben study explains that the 18 to 24 population group accounts for the largest segment of the school district's out migration flow, suggesting that many of Huntington County's college graduates end up leaving the County. This pattern is commonly referred to as "brain drain." A positive trend to note is that there are more high school graduates and individuals holding at least a bachelor's degree in 2016 compared to 2010 (per the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). This trend holds true for Huntington County, the city of Huntington, and Indiana.

## INCOME

While 1997 data reported in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan indicated that Huntington County exceeded Indiana in terms of median household income, this is no longer the case. In 2016 (per the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates), the median household income for the County was \$47,042, compared to \$50,433 for Indiana. Median family income for the County was also slightly lower compared to the state, as shown in Figure 10-8.

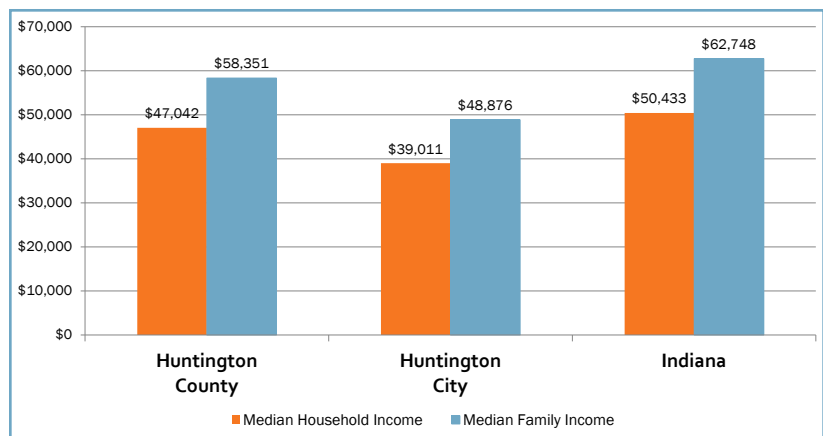


Figure 10-8: Median income. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

Please note that household income and family income are calculated differently. As defined by the Census Bureau, household income includes income of all people 15 years and older living in the household; this includes related family members and unrelated people, if any. Family income is the sum of the income of all related family members 15 years and older living in the household. As indicated in the next subsection, *Households*, the average family size in Huntington County is greater than the average household size, which may partially explain why median family income exceeds the median household income.

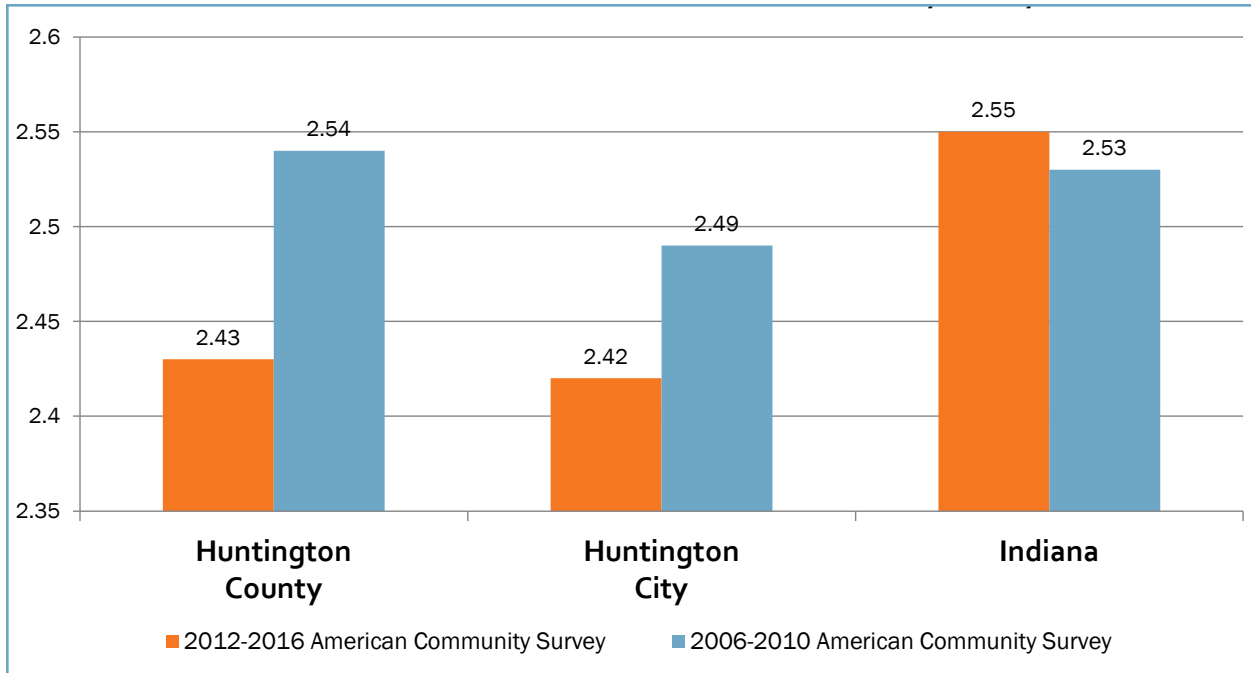


Figure 10-9: Persons per household. Source: American Community Survey.

## HOUSEHOLDS

Figures 10-9 through 10-11 show the slight change in household size, family size, and households with persons under 18 from 2010 (2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) to 2016 (2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). For the County and city of Huntington, average household size and average family size have decreased slightly in the past six years. The number of households with persons under age 18 has decreased slightly for the County and Indiana.

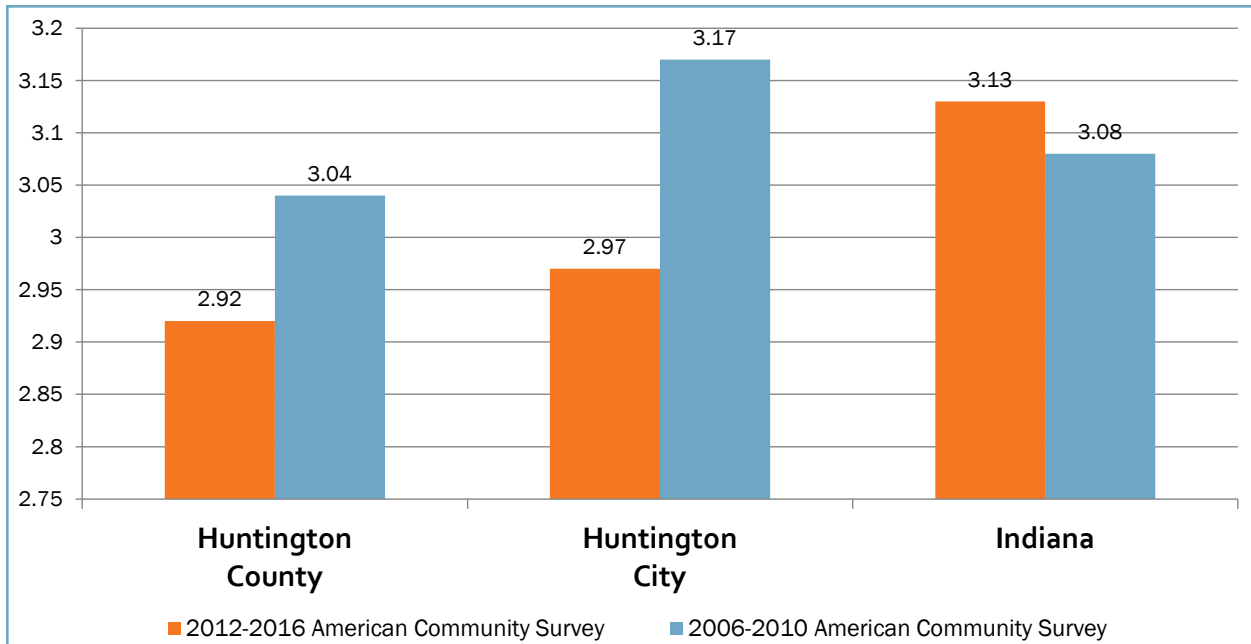


Figure 10-10: Average family size. Source: American Community Survey.

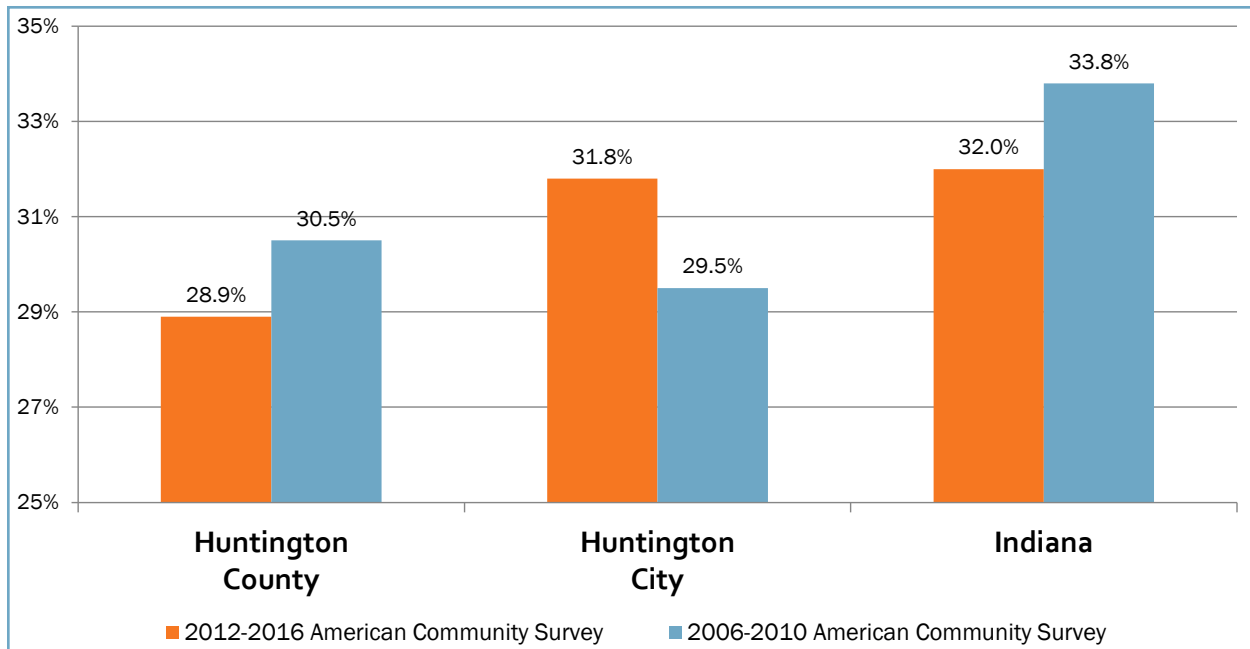


Figure 10-11: Households with persons under 18. Source: American Community Survey.

Between 2010 and 2016 (per American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates), the total number of households in the County increased by 308, but the number of families decreased by 84, suggesting an overall increase in nonfamily households. This follows a similar trend noted in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. From 1990 to 2000, there was a 24 percent increase in nonfamily households.

Figure 10-12 shows the distribution of household types in the County, city of Huntington, and Indiana. For all jurisdictions, married-couple families remain the largest household type, while single-person (nonfamily: householder living alone) households are the second largest type. All data is based on the percentage of owner- and renter-occupied housing units.

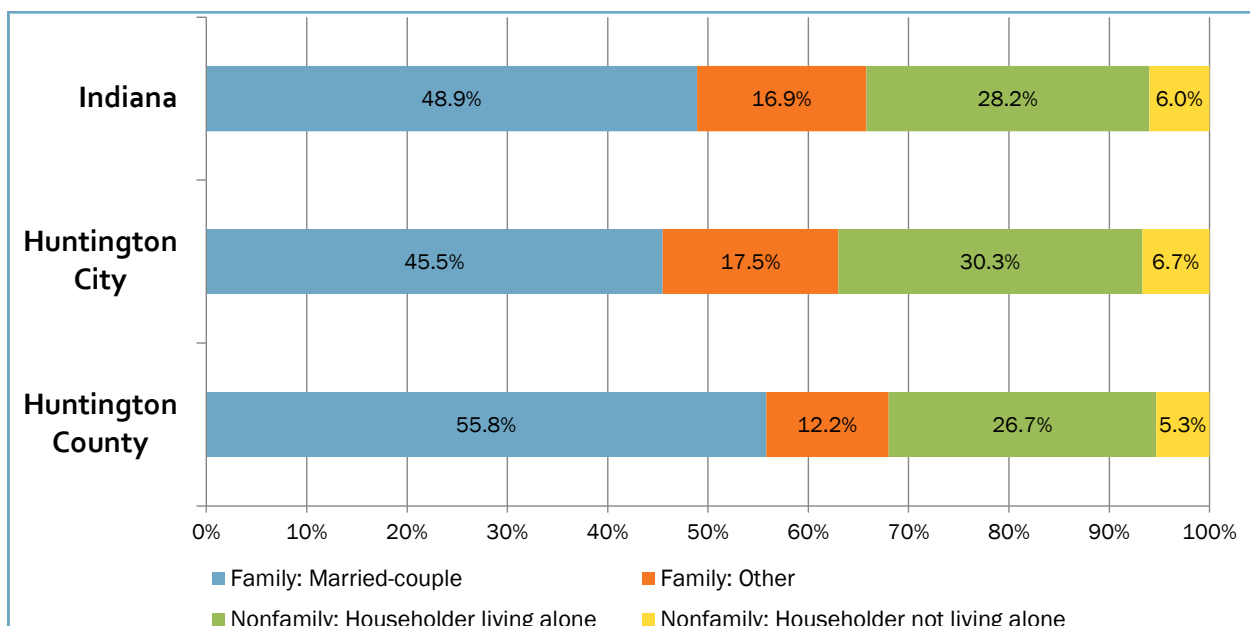


Figure 10-12: Household types comparison. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.



## HOUSING PROFILE

### HOUSING UNIT TYPES

As seen in Figure 10-13, over 84 percent of all housing unit types in the County are single units, or a typical single-family dwelling. The second most common housing unit type in the County is the mobile home. Only 11 percent of housing unit types in the County are multi-family type units, which is less diverse than the incorporated city or the state as a whole (19 percent and 18.7 percent, respectively).

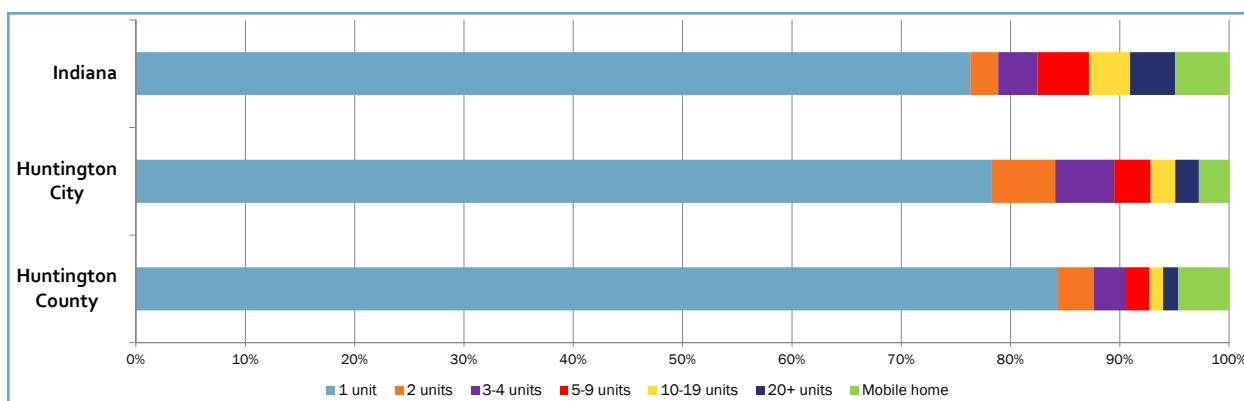


Figure 10-13: Housing unit types. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

### YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT

The age of housing stock in Huntington County as a whole versus the city of Huntington and the state of Indiana is quite varied. Nearly 40 percent of the housing units in the County were built in 1939 or earlier, per the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Approximately 60 percent were constructed prior to 1970. The city of Huntington has older housing stock, as over 71 percent of housing units were built before 1970. Indiana housing stock overall is newer and more evenly distributed in terms of year built. Figures 10-14 through 10-16 show the breakdown of housing stock age.

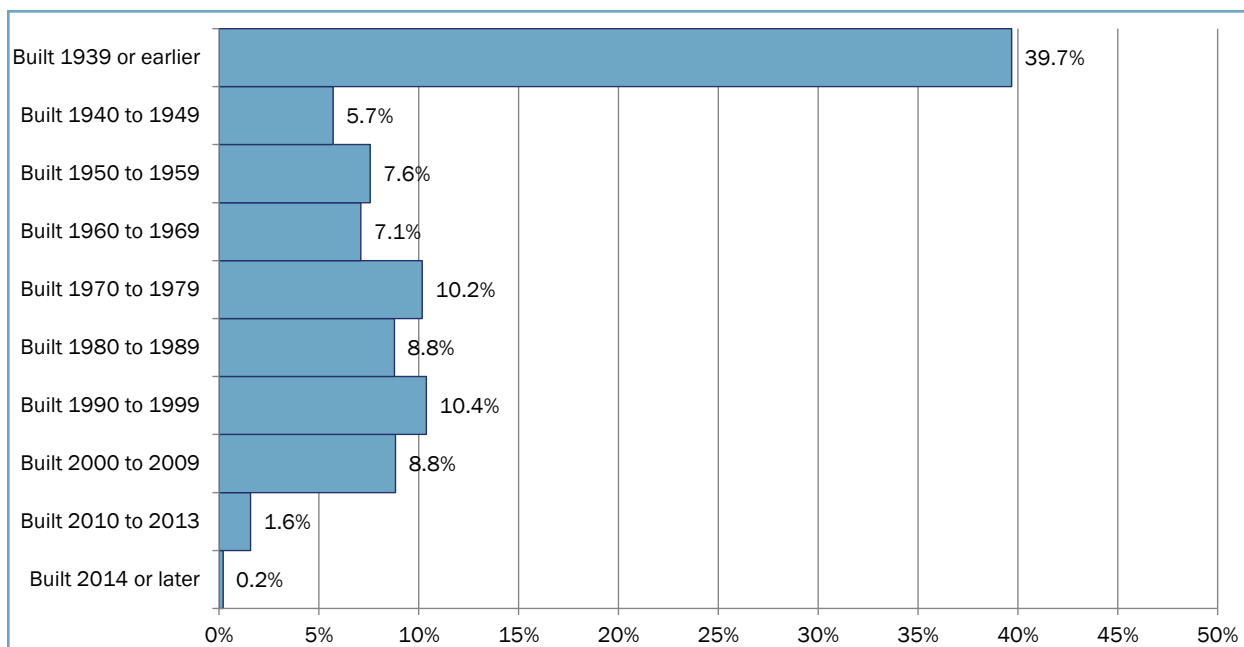


Figure 10-14: Year structure built, Huntington County. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

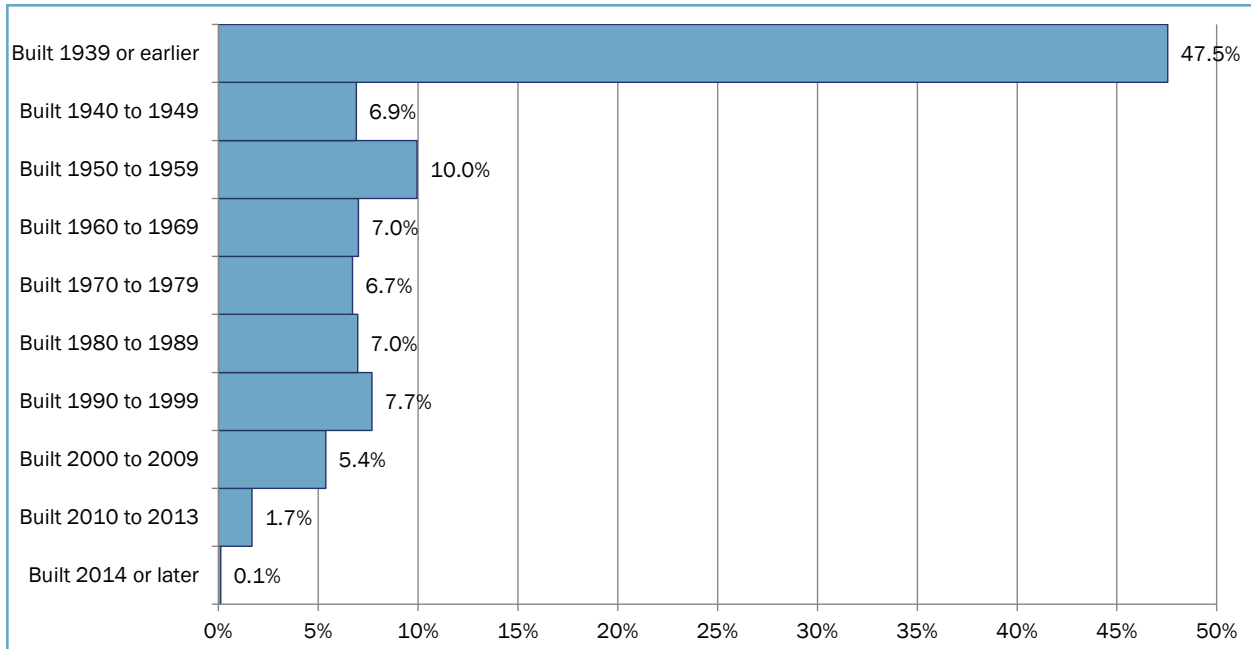


Figure 10-15: Year structure built, city of Huntington. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

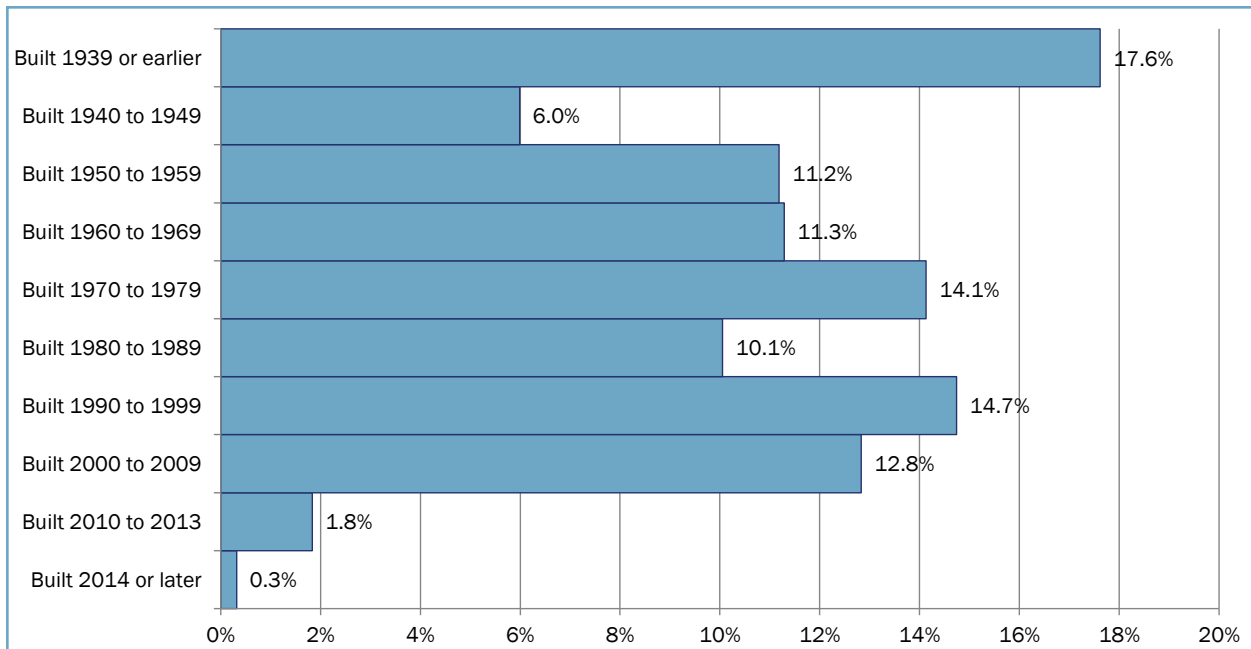


Figure 10-16: Year structure built, Indiana. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

## HOUSING OCCUPANCY

As seen in Figure 10-17, housing occupancy does not vary much between Huntington County, the city of Huntington, and Indiana. Data from the Census Bureau suggests that occupancy declined slightly from 2000 to 2010 (about 3 to 5 percent) for all three jurisdictions. As of the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the occupancy rate for the County was approximately 91.5 percent, slightly higher than the rate for the city of Huntington and Indiana (87.9 percent and 88.8 percent respectively).

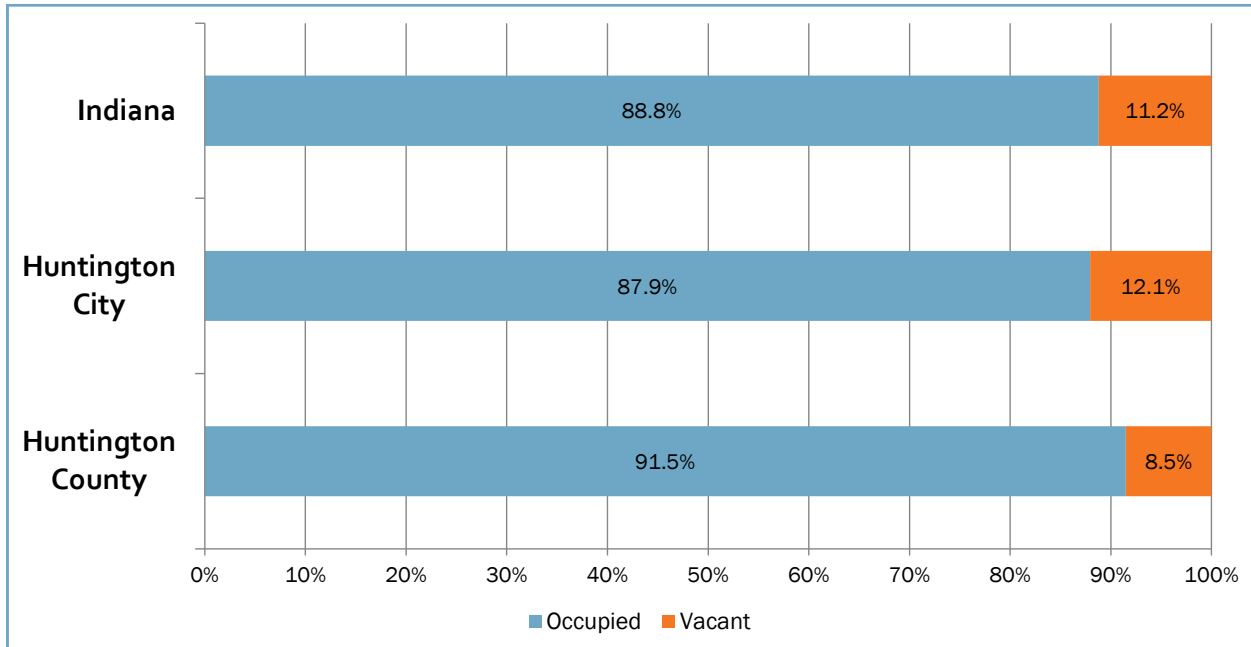


Figure 10-17: Housing occupancy. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

### MEDIAN HOME VALUE AND RENT

Figure 10-18 illustrates how median home values have changed within the last six years or so, using 2012-2016 and 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. The median home value for the County is slightly higher than the city of Huntington, though lower than Indiana’s median value. This is understandable, as many rural homes are larger and subsequently more valuable than urban homes, but Huntington County is not among the most newly developed Indiana counties in terms of housing stock. For the city only, the median home value has declined slightly.

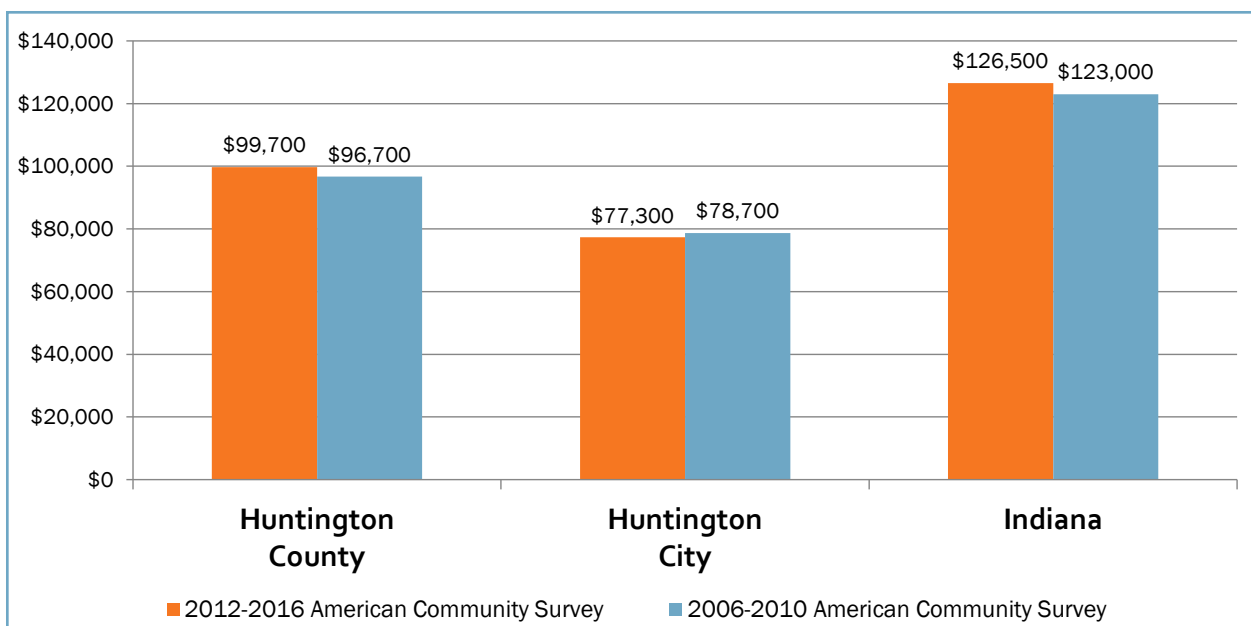


Figure 10-18: Median home value. Source: American Community Survey.

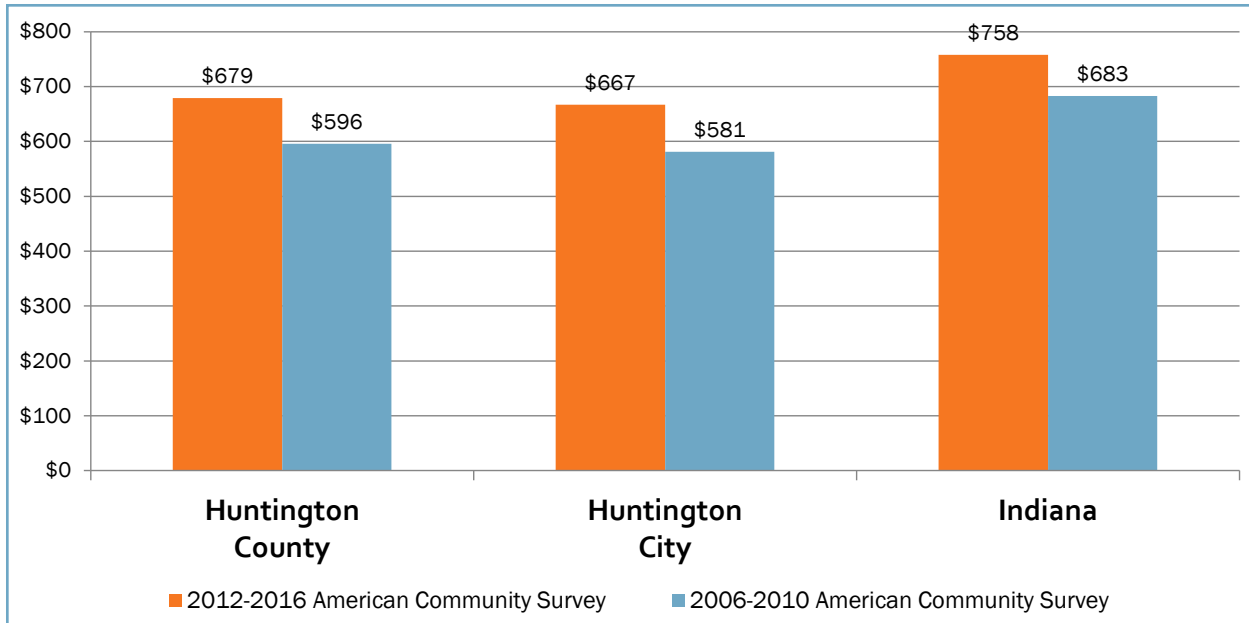


Figure 10-19: Median rent. Source: American Community Survey.

As seen in Figure 10-19, median monthly rent is slightly less varied, ranging from \$667 in the city to \$758 in Indiana (per 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). Median rent seems to be climbing at approximately the same rate among all three jurisdictions.

### NEW HOMES: NUMBER OF STARTS AND AVERAGE VALUE

To better illustrate the new housing stock profile in Huntington County, the Huntington Countywide Department of Community Development compiled data on new home starts and average new home values from approximately the past decade (2007 through 2017). Please note that data from the city of Huntington was not included in this analysis.

As seen in Figure 10-20, new home starts vary from year to year, and especially between each jurisdiction. For every year since 2007, there were more new homes in the County than all other incorporated towns. The County (excluding the city of Huntington) has averaged about 34 new homes per year since 2007. Table 10-2 includes the number of new homes for each jurisdiction. The town of Mount Etna was not listed, as there have been no new home starts in town limits since 2007.

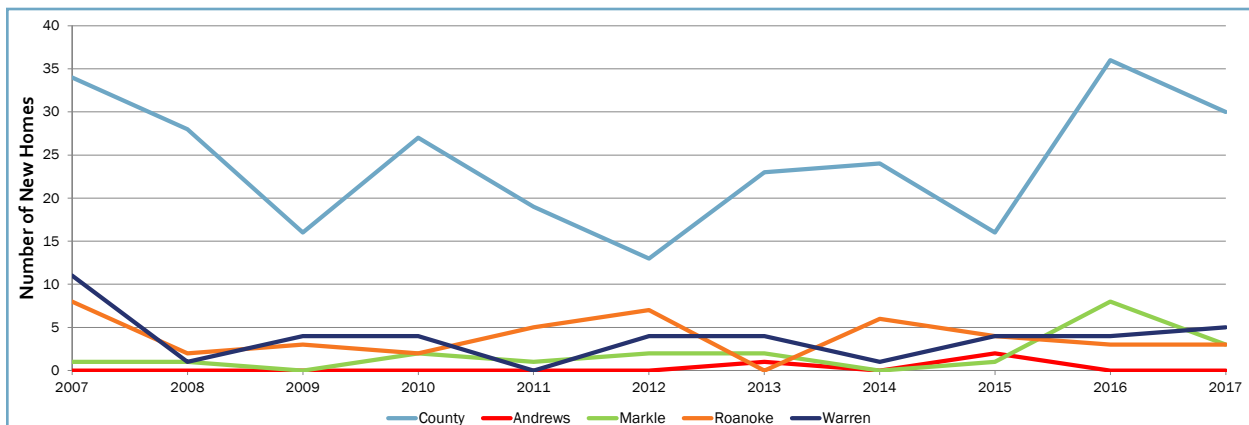


Figure 10-20: New home starts, by jurisdiction. Source: DCD.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
County	34	28	16	27	19	13	23	24	16	36	30
Andrews	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0
Markle	1	1	0	2	1	2	2	0	1	8	3
Roanoke	8	2	3	2	5	7	0	6	4	3	3
Warren	11	1	4	4	0	4	4	1	4	4	5
<b>Countywide total**</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>41</b>

Table 10-2: New home starts. Source: DCD.

\*\*Does not include data from the city of Huntington

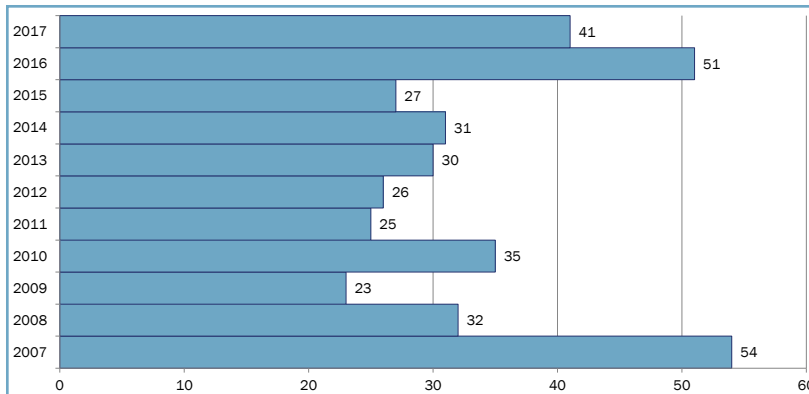


Figure 10-21: New home starts, County total. Source: DCD.

Figure 10-21 also illustrates the total number of new homes per year built in the County (again, excluding data from the city of Huntington).

As part of the permitting process, DCD keeps a record of the value of each new construction project. Our records indicate a slightly upward trend in new home average value from 2007 to 2017 (see Figure 10-22). Table

10-3 gives the average value for new homes by jurisdiction each year, plus an overall annual new home average value for the County (excluding the city). From year to year, the new homes with the highest average value are typically constructed in either the County or Roanoke, per DCD records.

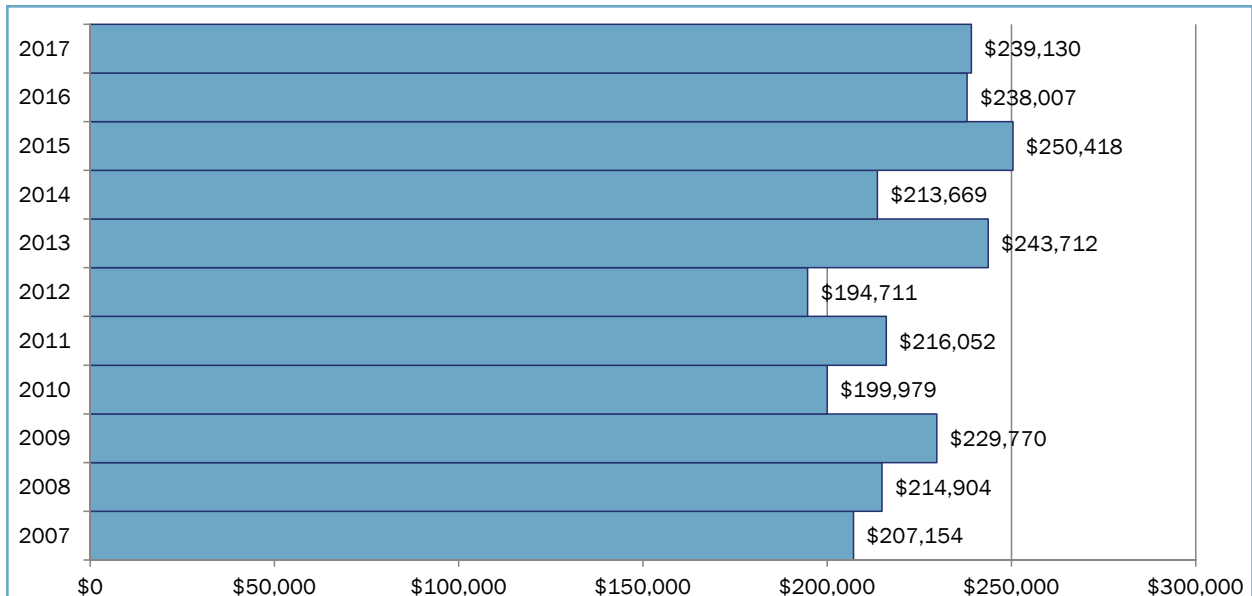


Figure 10-22: New home average value. Source: DCD.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
County	\$234,329	\$208,421	\$286,306	\$216,843	\$238,826
Andrews	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Markle	\$166,000	\$135,000	N/A	\$154,250	\$141,700
Roanoke	\$257,878	\$392,568	\$93,003	\$134,500	\$144,380
Warren	\$90,011	\$121,000	\$106,200	\$141,750	N/A
<b>Countywide average*</b>	<b>\$207,154</b>	<b>\$214,904</b>	<b>\$229,770</b>	<b>\$199,979</b>	<b>\$216,052</b>

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
County	\$240,884	\$261,152	\$233,802	\$311,261	\$264,231	\$257,456
Andrews	N/A	\$83,206	N/A	\$147,500	N/A	N/A
Markle	\$144,000	\$149,500	N/A	\$163,905	\$142,874	\$199,778
Roanoke	\$161,071	N/A	\$147,083	\$192,333	\$309,232	\$233,610
Warren	\$128,875	\$230,665	\$130,000	\$138,216	\$138,844	\$156,100
<b>Countywide Average*</b>	<b>\$194,711</b>	<b>\$243,712</b>	<b>\$213,669</b>	<b>\$250,418</b>	<b>\$238,007</b>	<b>\$239,130</b>

Table 10-3: New home average value. Source: DCD.  
\*Does not include data from the city of Huntington

## WORKFORCE PROFILE

### EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Figure 10-23 shows the employment status for Huntington County, the city of Huntington, and Indiana, based on the data from the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016). These figures suggest that the County's employment rate is slightly better than the city's and Indiana's rates. These numbers are based on a civilian labor force of 19,097 (County), 8844 (city), and 3,314,108 (Indiana).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics calculates unemployment data slightly differently than the American Community Survey. Figure 10-24 shows a comparison from 2006 to 2017 of the annual unemployment rates for Huntington County, Indiana, and the United States. While Huntington County had the highest unemployment rate from 2006 to 2012, the rates began to level out and

converge in 2013. For the last four years, Huntington County and Indiana have had lower annual unemployment rates than the United States.

Figure 10-25 shows a comparison of all Northeast Indiana counties, including Huntington County, and their respective annual unemployment rates in 2006 and 2017. All counties had higher rates in 2006, with Huntington County falling somewhere near the middle. In 2017, Huntington County's annual unemployment rate was slightly higher than all other Northeast Indiana counties, although all of Northeast Indiana was below the United States average unemployment rate. Overall, employment rates have been good for the region in recent years, but Huntington County may be lagging slightly behind adjacent counties.

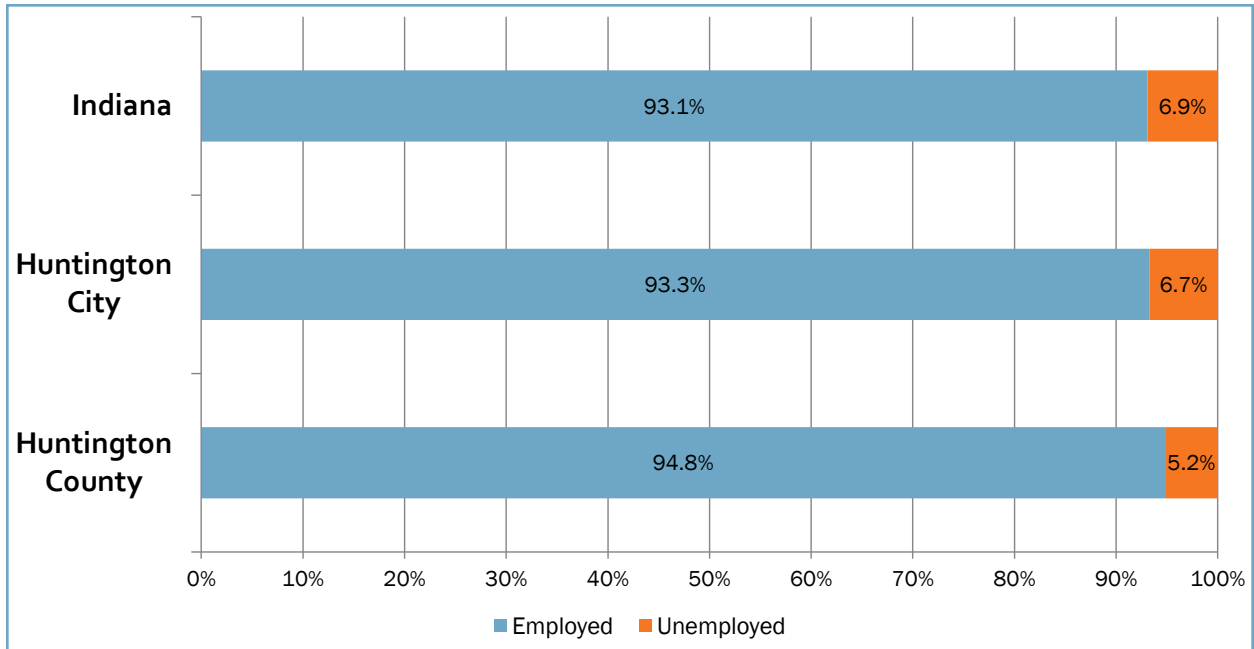


Figure 10-23: Employment status. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

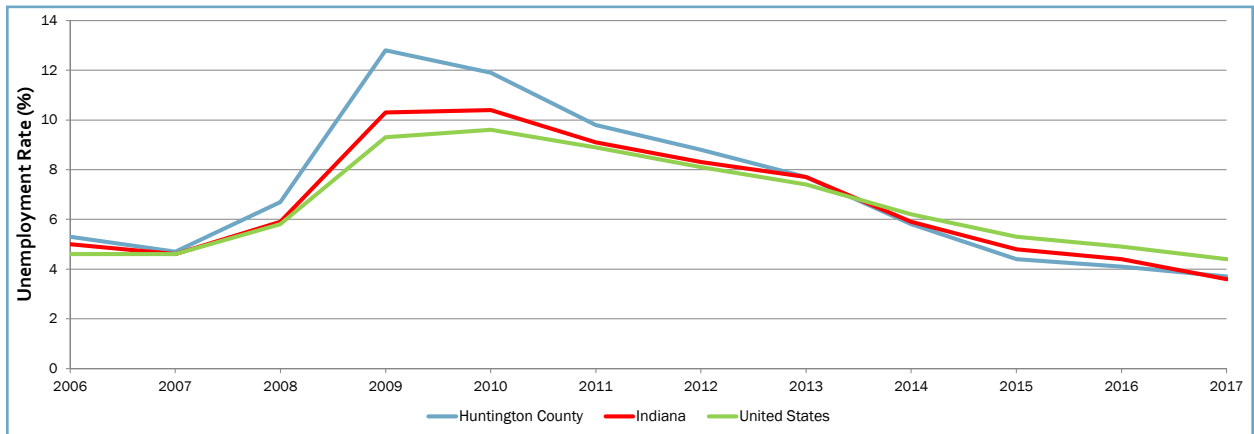


Figure 10-24: Unemployment, County v. Indiana v. United States. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

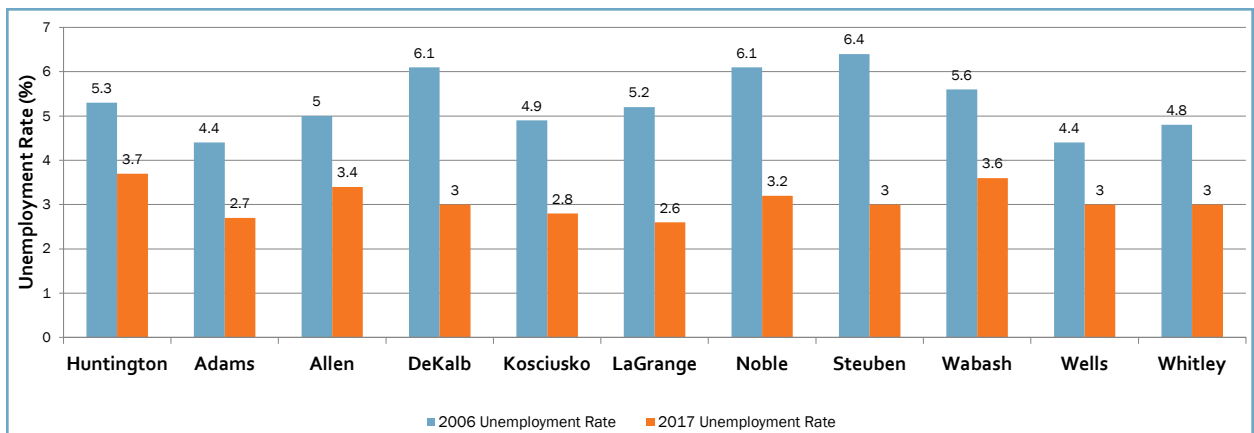


Figure 10-25: Unemployment, Northeast Indiana counties. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## POVERTY LEVEL

According to the most recent American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016), Huntington County's percentage of population below poverty level is 12 percent, compared to 17.1 percent (city of Huntington) and 15 percent (Indiana). This equates to approximately 4,227 individuals in the County living below poverty level out of a total of 35,106 people (the population for whom poverty status is determined, per the American Community Survey).

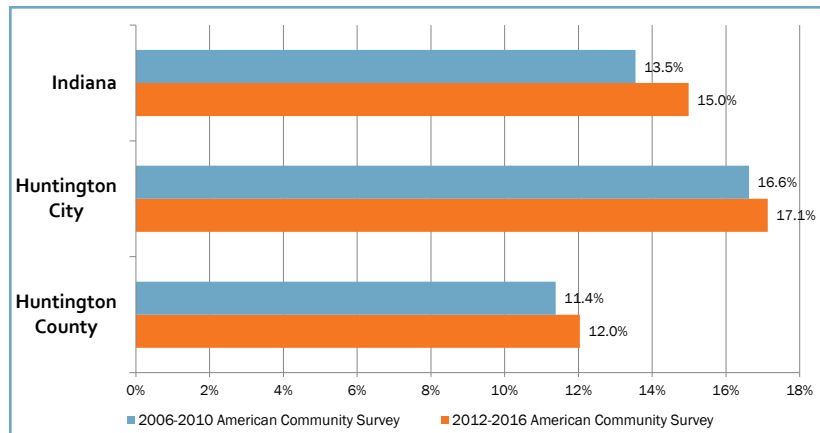


Figure 10-26: Percent below poverty level. Source: American Community Survey.

As seen in Figure 10-26, the percent below poverty level has increased slightly for all three jurisdictions since the 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates were configured.

## CHANGE IN LABOR FORCE

According to American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates and Census Bureau data, the civilian labor force in Huntington County has been declining slightly. The 2005 Comprehensive Plan described an upward trend leading up to 1999, when the County had a labor force of 20,270 workers. In 2000 (per the Census Bureau), the labor force was comprised of 20,471 workers, which dropped to 19,793 in 2010 (American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2006-2010) and further lowered to 19,097 in 2016 (American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2012-2016). While all of these datasets vary slightly and calculation methods vary, the downward trend is clear in the American Community Survey data alone.

## COMMUTING PATTERNS

Figure 10-27 shows a county of work comparison for Huntington County, the city of Huntington, and Indiana (per the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2012-2016). Compared to the city and the state, more Huntington County residents work outside of their county of residence. In fact, at least one in three workers commutes to another county for work. This suggests that there may not be enough employers in Huntington County, or one-third of the County workforce is not suited for the jobs available in the County (perhaps over- or underqualified).

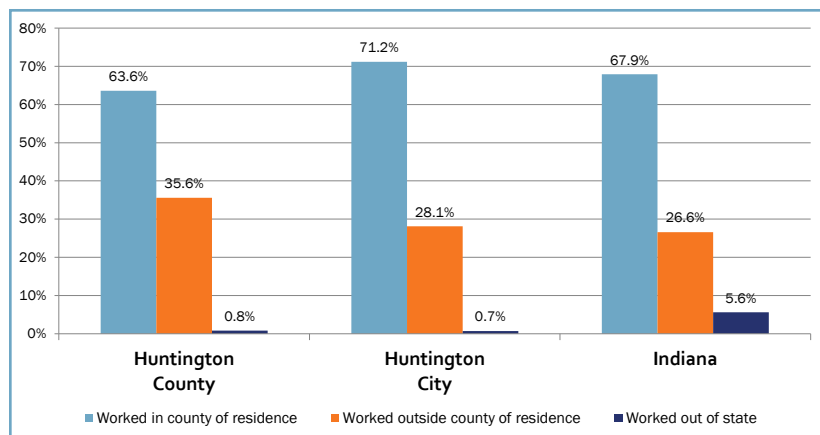


Figure 10-27: County of work. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

Further information on worker commuting flows into and out of Huntington is listed in Table 10-4, taken from the most recent detailed commuting data available from the American Community Survey (2009-



2013). This information further suggests a lack of employment opportunity in Huntington County, as more Huntington County residents commute to other counties for work (6287) than outside workers commute into Huntington County (4078). This is similar to the commuting pattern noted in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, which noted how heavily Huntington County relies on surrounding counties to employ its workforce. Of the workers that commute outside of the County for work, over half (53.3 percent) work in Allen County. Grant County, Wabash County, Wells County, and Whitley County also employ a great deal of Huntington County residents (32.4 percent of those commuting out, or 11.9 percent of all workers originating in Huntington County). Not surprisingly, Allen County workers also account for the largest group of workers commuting into Huntington County for work.

Commuting in from or to:	Number Commuting into Huntington County	Percentage* Commuting into Huntington County	Number Commuting out of Huntington County	Percentage** Commuting out of Huntington County
Allen County	1404	34.4%	3354	19.5%
Grant County	438	10.7%	677	3.9%
Wabash County	610	15.0%	435	2.5%
Wells County	498	12.2%	545	3.2%
Whitley County	433	10.6%	383	2.2%
Other Indiana counties	547	13.4%	715	4.2%
Other states	148	3.6%	178	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4078</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6287</b>	<b>36.5%</b>

Table 10-4: Commuting flows into and out of Huntington County. Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey.

\*Percentage of total workers commuting into Huntington County (4078 workers)

\*\*Percentage of total workers originating from Huntington County (17,204 workers)

The large number of people commuting out of Huntington County for work is somewhat reflected by the mean travel time to work shown in Figure 10-28. It takes the average worker approximately 20 minutes to get to work, which is relatively on par with city of Huntington and Indiana average commute times. Without knowing more information (such as minimum or maximum commute times, etc.), it's hard to say whether these numbers are an accurate cross-section of the commute times or are skewed by extreme values in the data.

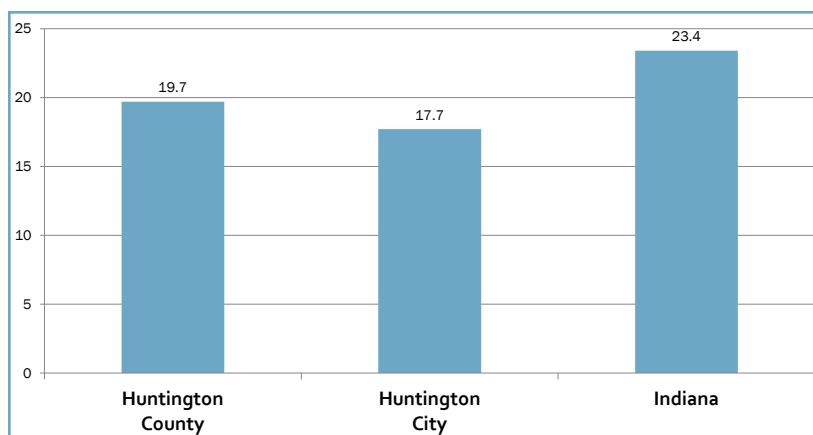


Figure 10-28: Mean travel time to work (minutes). Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

## OCCUPATION

Figure 10-29 divides all occupations for County workers into five main categories: management, business, science, and arts; service; sales and office; natural resources, construction, and maintenance; and production, transportation, and material moving. These are relatively broad categories, and the results for the County and city of Huntington are similar: the top two occupation categories are the same. Indiana has a greater proportion of management, business, science, and arts occupations, but a comparatively smaller proportion of production, transportation, and material moving occupations. For both occupation and industry analysis, the percentages are based on the civilian employed population over 16 years of age.

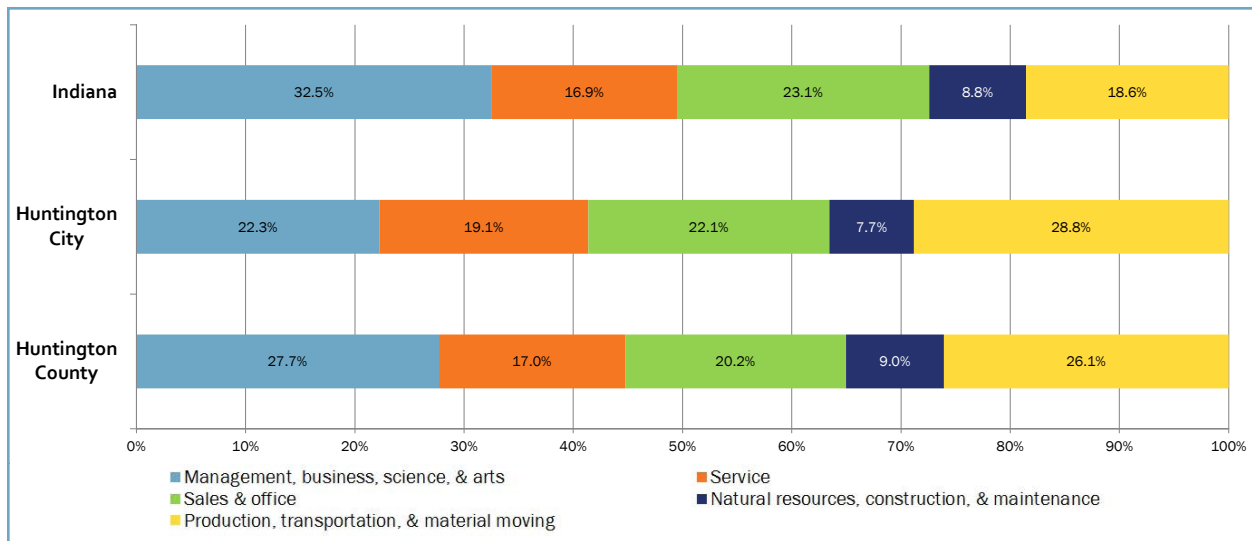


Figure 10-29: Occupation. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

## INDUSTRY

Perhaps more telling is the industry breakdown for each jurisdiction, shown in Figures 10-30, 10-31, and 10-32. These graphs divide the civilian population into more specific categories based on the industry in which they work. For both the County and city of Huntington, the largest industry in terms of employment is manufacturing. The category of education services, health care and social assistance is a relatively close second. By comparison, a smaller percentage of all Indiana workers are employed in manufacturing, but more

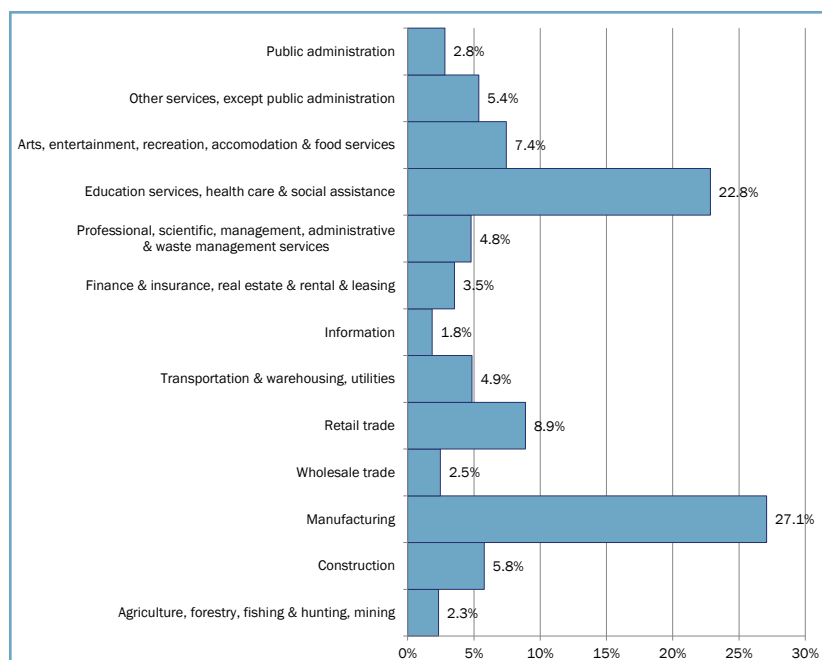


Figure 10-30: County industries. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

Indiana workers are employed in professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services than the County and the city (approximately 41 and 52 percent more, respectively). Overall, the distribution of employees in each industry is similar at each jurisdiction level.

## AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

For the purpose of measuring the agricultural industry in Huntington County, statistics from the most recently available Census of Agriculture from the United States Department of Agriculture were used. Statistics from 2012 were compared to 2007 to show how agriculture has changed in the County in the approximate timeframe since the previous Comprehensive Plan update in 2005.

## FARMING ACREAGE AND VALUE

Table 10-5 gives general statistics about the number and acreage of farms in Huntington County. While the overall number of farms has decreased by 9.3 percent since 2007, both the average and median farm size has increased. See Figure 10-33 for a closer look at the breakdown of farms by

size. Figures 10-34 and 10-35 analyze cropland in terms of number of farms and total acreage. Overall, farmland is decreasing, following the same trend noted in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. However, that does not mean individual farms are not experiencing growth, especially larger farms. In addition, the average market value per farm rose almost 65 percent per farm, or 57 percent per acre, between 2007 and 2012. Agriculture remains a critical component of Huntington County's economy.

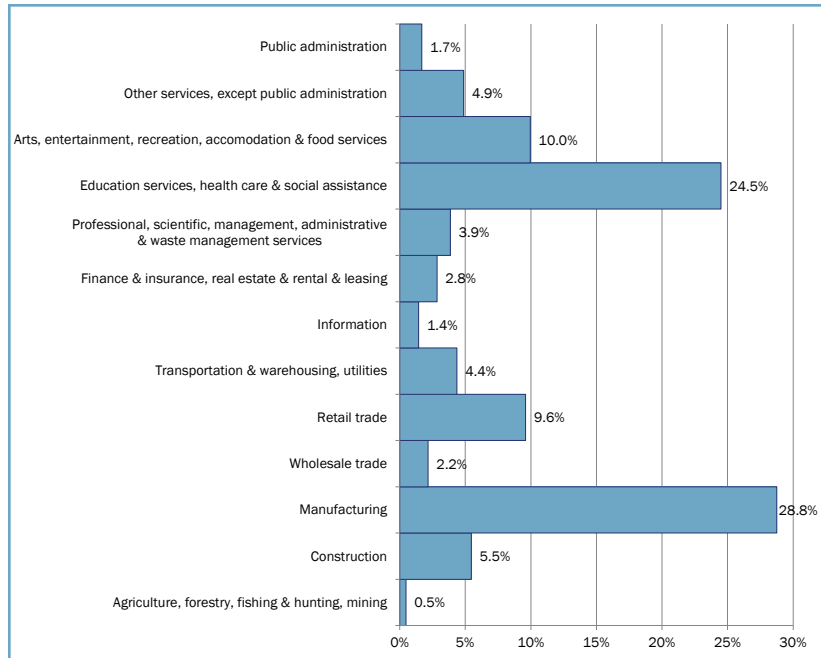


Figure 10-31: City of Huntington industries. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

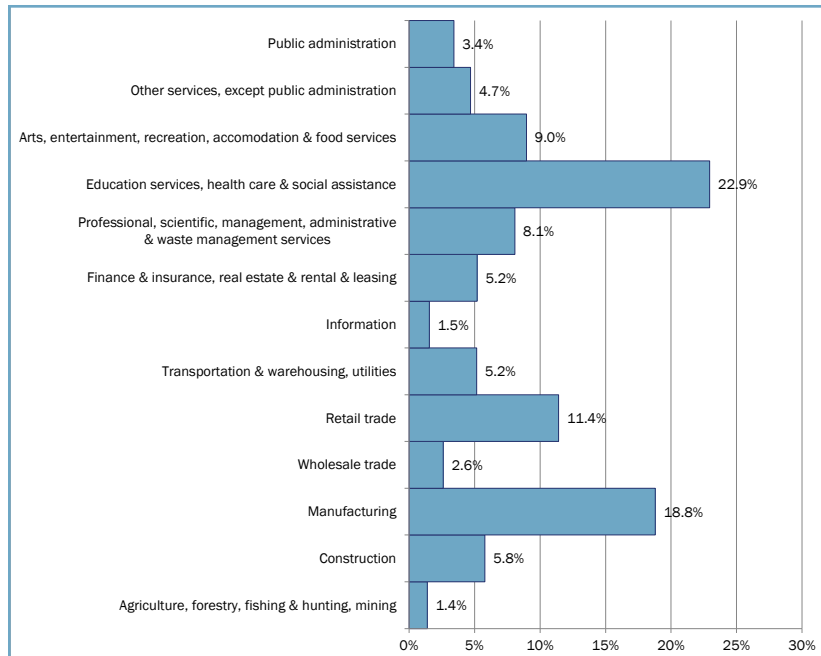


Figure 10-32: Indiana industries. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

	2012	2007	% Change
Number of Farms	695	766	-9.3%
Acres of Farm Land	188,848	199,070	-5.1%
Average Size in Acres	272	260	4.6%
Median Size in Acres	57	40	42.5%

Table 10-5: County farm size in 2007 and 2012. Source: USDA Census of Agriculture.

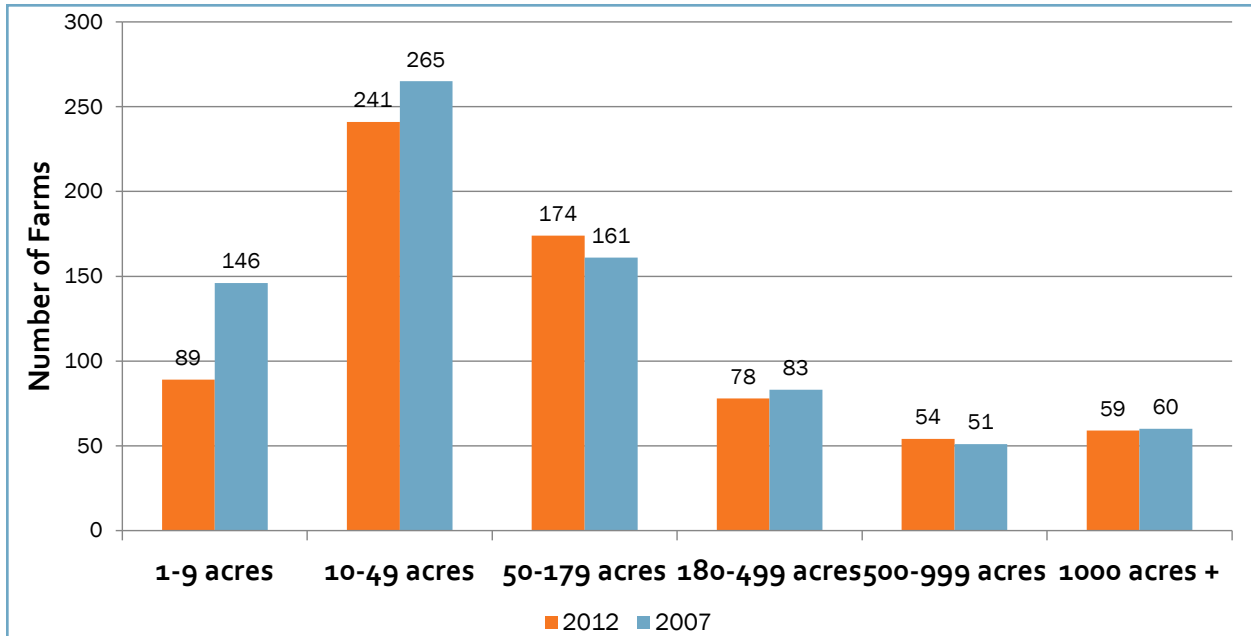


Figure 10-33: County farms by size. Source: USDA Census of Agriculture.

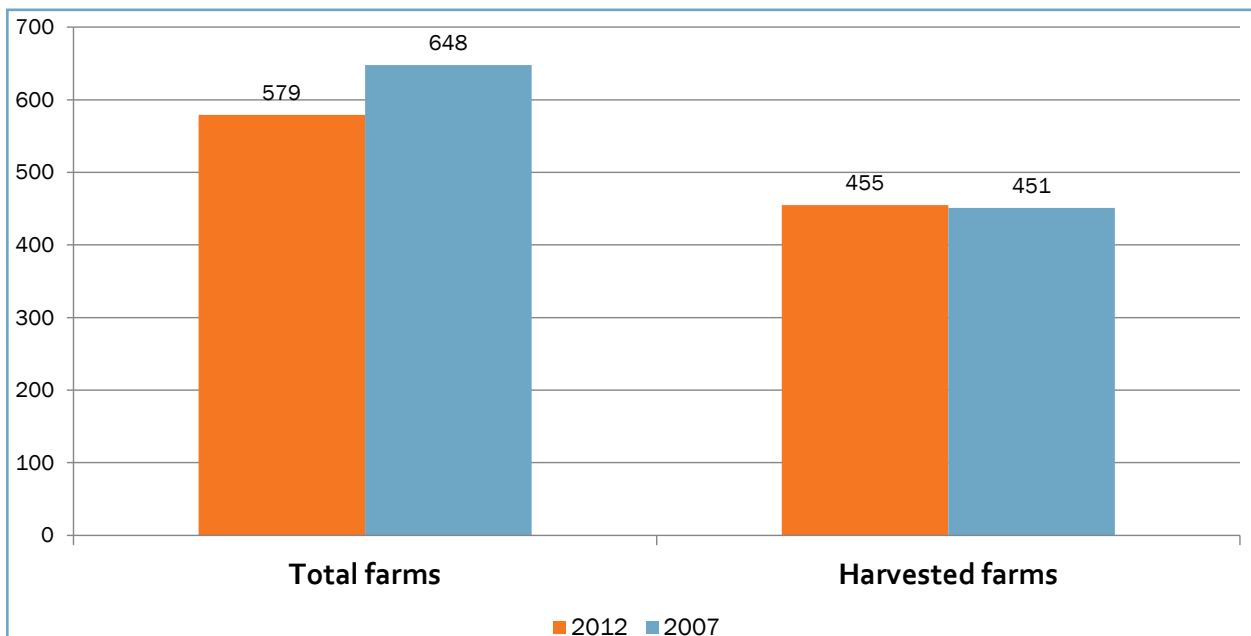


Figure 10-34: County cropland by farms. Source: USDA Census of Agriculture.

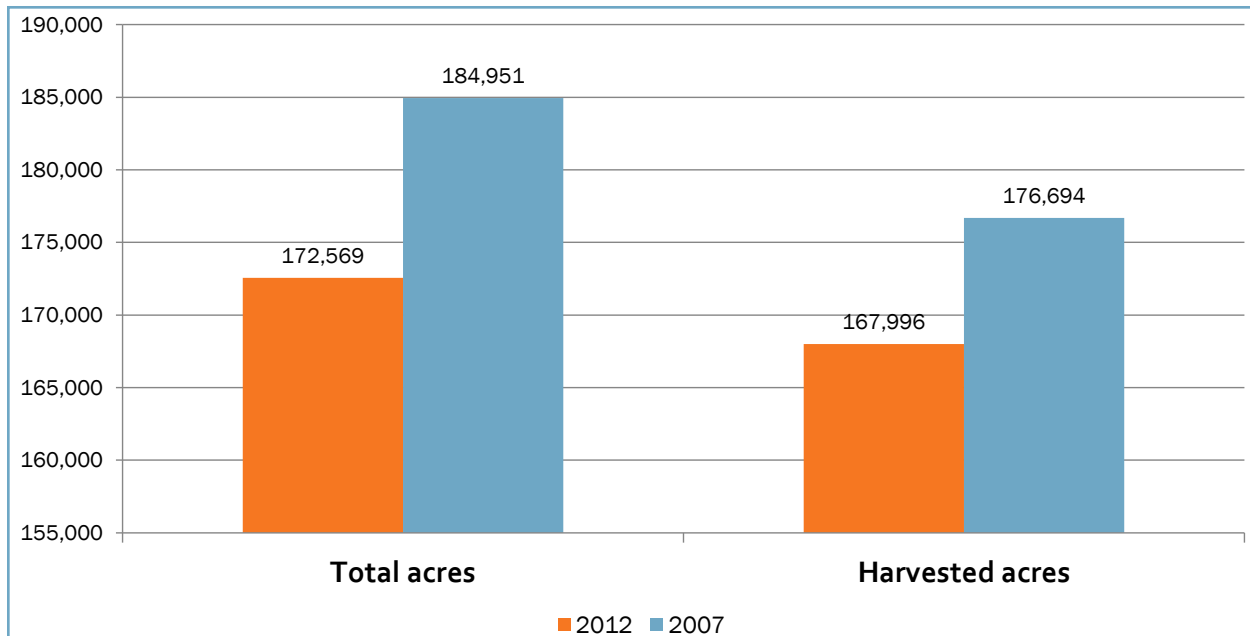


Figure 10-35: County cropland by acres. Source: USDA Census of Agriculture.

## FARMING LABOR

The number of farms with hired labor increased by over 19 percent between 2007 and 2012, but the number of total farm workers stayed nearly the same. As shown in Figure 10-36, there has been an increase in the number of farms with up to four workers, but quite a decrease in the number of farms with five or more workers, especially those with ten workers or more. More farms are utilizing hired labor

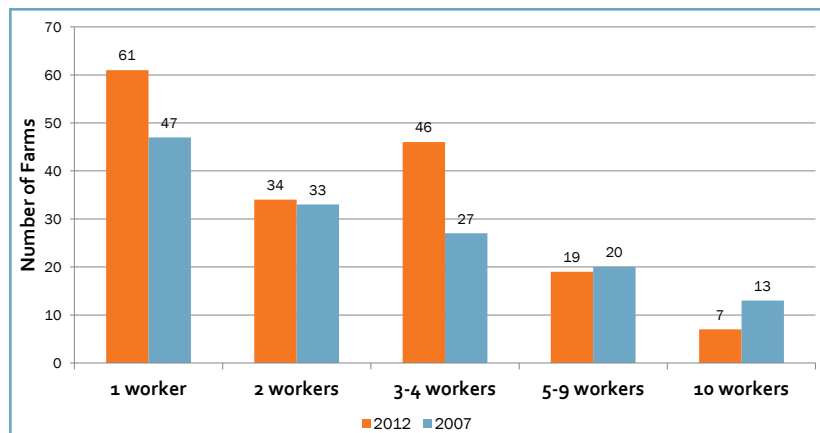


Figure 10-36: County farms by workers. Source: USDA Census of Agriculture.

but keeping their worker totals down, perhaps as a result of increased farming efficiency or in attempts to increase profits. The number of principal farm operators whose primary occupation is farming actually increased by 15 percent between 2007 and 2012, suggesting that more operators are making farming their sole line of work, which perhaps allows them to decrease the number of additional hired workers.

## LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY

Figures 10-37 and 10-38 illustrate the change from 2007 to 2012 in the number of farms by livestock or poultry raised as well as the overall change in number of each type of livestock or poultry. In terms of farms, the number of farms by animal type decreased for every category except layers and broilers (both types of chicken). The overall numbers for each animal type tells a slightly different story. The actual number of layers increased by nearly 31 percent, and the number of cattle and calves sold increased by over 47 percent.

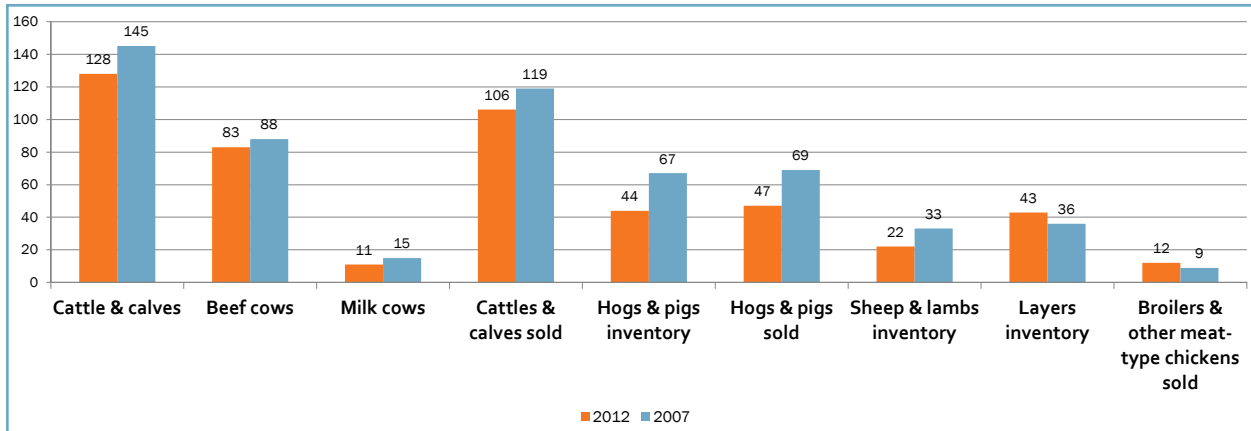


Figure 10-37: County livestock/poultry: number of farms. Source: USDA Census of Agriculture.

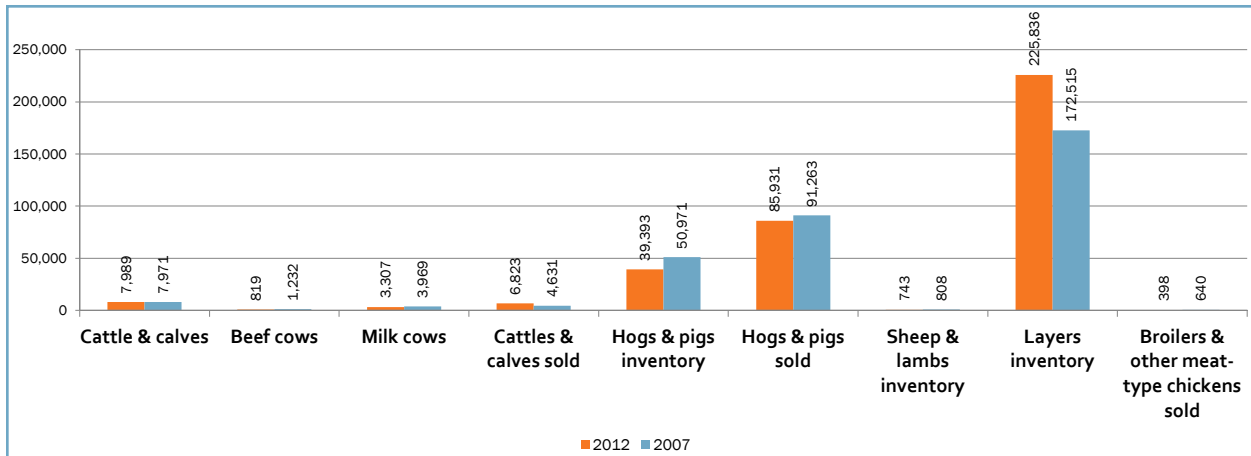


Figure 10-38: County livestock/poultry: number of animals. Source: USDA Census of Agriculture.

## HARVESTED CROPS

Figures 10-39 through 10-41 detail the amount of crops harvested (three specific crop types are shown) by farms, total acres harvested, and total bushels harvested. In terms of farms and harvested acres, only corn for silage or greenchop experienced an increase (20 percent and 8.6 percent, respectively) in 2012. The number of bushels harvested for each crop type selected decreased between 2007 and 2012.

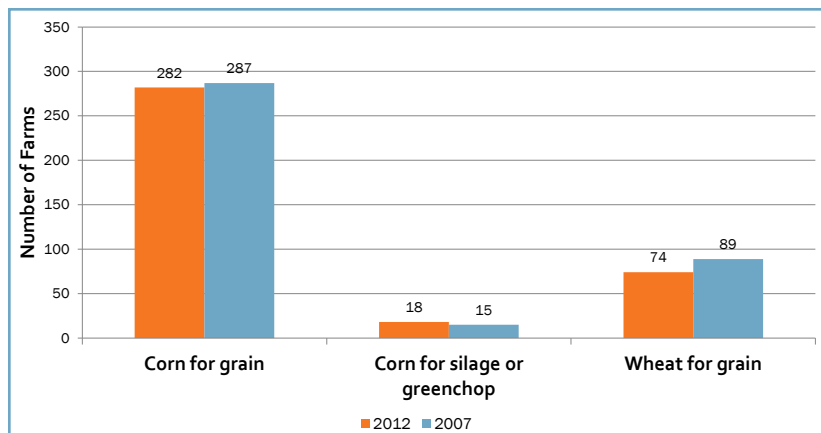


Figure 10-39: County selected crops harvested: number of farms. Source: USDA Census of Agriculture.

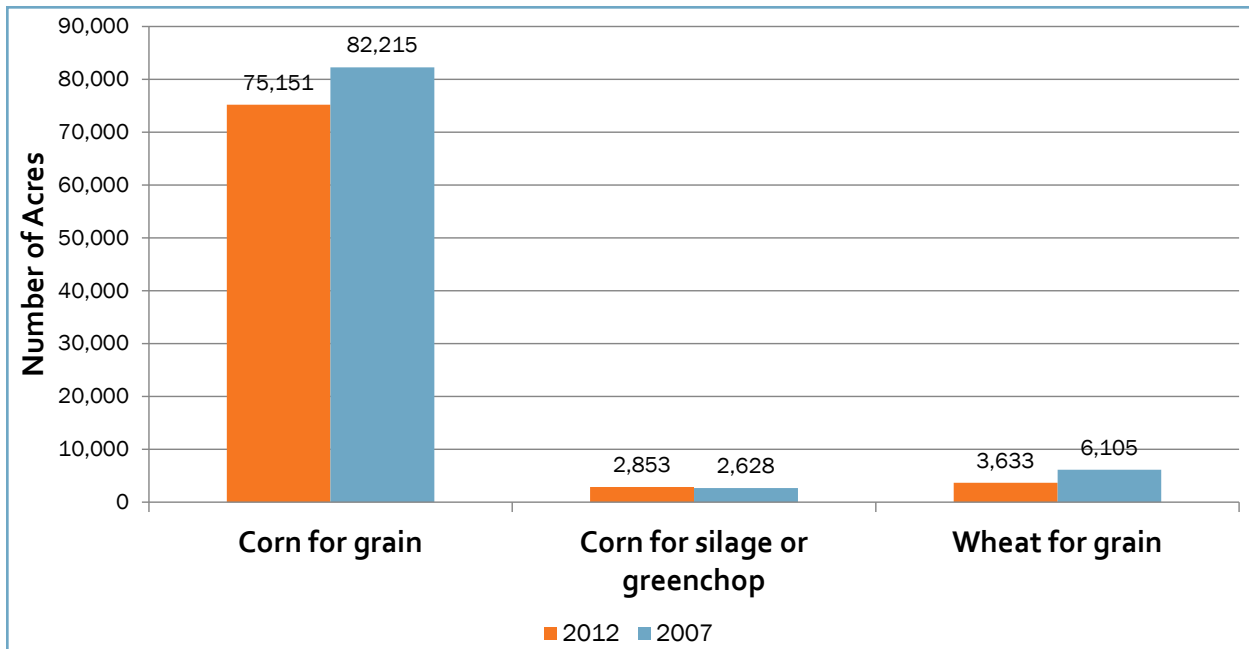


Figure 10-40: County selected crops harvested: number of acres. Source: USDA Census of Agriculture.

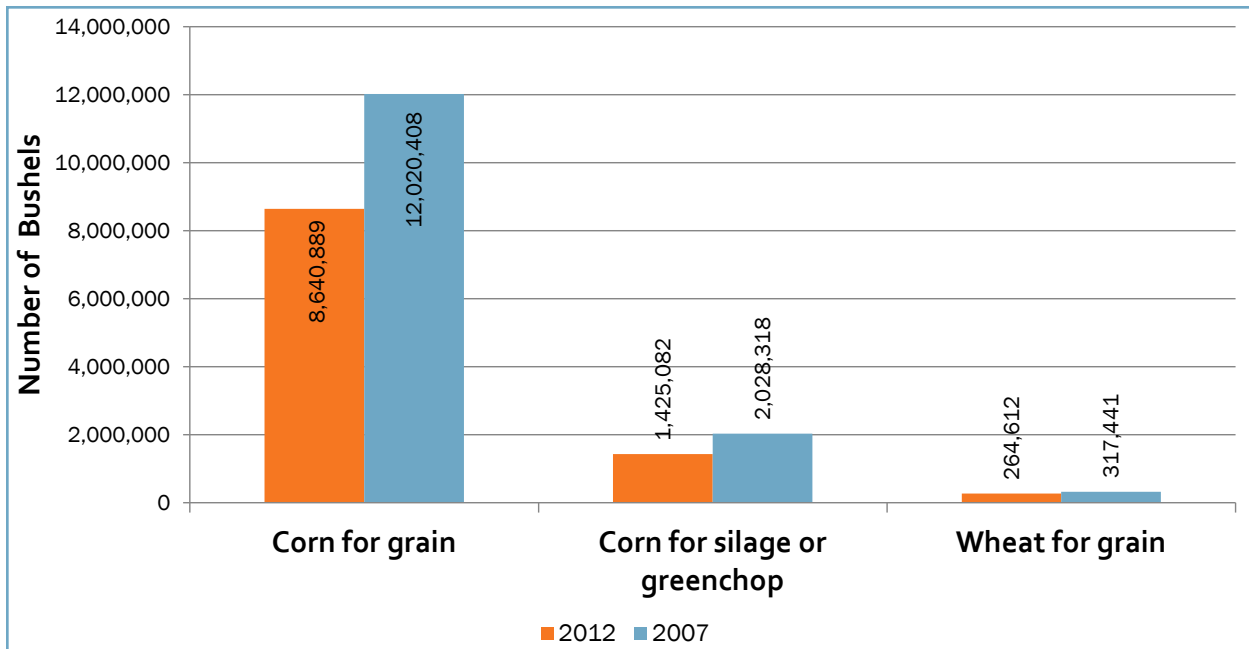


Figure 10-41: County selected crops harvested: number of bushels. Source: USDA Census of Agriculture.

Not included in Figures 10-39 through 10-41 is Huntington County's top crop item by acres, soybeans. According to the USDA Census of Agriculture, in 2012, there were 80,728 acres of soybeans harvested on 308 farms, compared to 80,083 acres and 307 farms in 2007.

## ADDITIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS: MCKIBBEN REPORT

On May 8, 2017, McKibben Demographic Research in Rock Hill, South Carolina prepared a report for the School Board for Huntington County Community Schools to help them forecast population changes and enrollment trends, ultimately used to help guide decisions regarding school consolidation or redistricting. This report (*Huntington County Community Schools, IN Population and Enrollment Forecasts*) focuses primarily on the individual school districts and projected enrollment changes. However, key findings identified in the Executive Summary of the report are extremely relevant to the County's Comprehensive Plan. The Executive Summary findings are listed below:

1. The resident total fertility rate for Huntington County Community Schools over the life of the forecasts is below replacement level (1.81 versus the replacement level of 2.1).
2. Most in-migration to the district continues to occur in the 0-to-9 and 25-to-44 year old age groups.
3. The local (non-college) 18-to-24 year old population continues to leave the district, going to college or moving to other urbanized areas. This population group accounts for the largest segment of the district's out migration flow.
4. The primary factors causing the district's enrollment to decrease after 2018 are: the decline of the non-college population in child bearing ages, a limited existing homes sales market in the district, and a rapidly increasing number of "empty nest" households.
5. Changes in year-to-year enrollment over the next ten years will primarily be due to smaller cohorts entering and moving through the school system in conjunction with larger cohorts leaving the system.
6. The elementary enrollment will begin a slow, but persistent decline after the 2016-17 school year. This will be due primarily to the fact that the rising 5th grade cohorts most years will be greater than 370 students in size.
7. The median age of the population will increase from 39.0 in 2010 to 42.3 in 2025.
8. Even if the district continues to have a significant level of annual new home construction, the rate, magnitude and price of existing home sales will become the increasingly dominant factor affecting the amount of population and enrollment change.
9. Total district enrollment is forecasted to decrease by 299 students, or -5.8 percent, between 2016-17 and 2021-22. Total enrollment will decline by 222 students, or -4.6 percent, from 2021-22 to 2026-27.

Many of the findings above allude to an aging population in Huntington County and the effects of "brain drain" (younger population leaving the County). A closer look at the typical age of the population can be seen in Table 10-6.

Although Huntington County's median age by race or ethnic group is relatively on par with the state and national data, it is important to remember that Huntington County's population diversity is very minimal comparatively, with 97.1 percent of the population being white (as of the 2010 Census). Only 1.7 percent of Huntington County's population is Hispanic. Given that "non-Hispanic white" is the oldest of the categories listed above (the exception being American Indian and Alaska Native for Huntington County), and that the typical person in Huntington County is non-Hispanic white, this further reinforces the concern of an aging population.



Race or Ethnic Group	Median Age		
	United States	Indiana	Huntington County
Non-Hispanic white	43.0	40.4	41.0
White	40.4	39.5	40.6
Black or African American	33.4	31.6	25.8
American Indian and Alaska Native	32.2	40.0	54.3
Asian	36.5	30.3	39.0
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	30.8	26.5	N/A
Other race	28.9	26.1	27.8
Two or more races	19.8	16.3	27.3
Hispanic	28.4	24.7	23.4

Table 10-6: Median age by race or ethnic group. Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey



# Appendix: Public Input

## HUNTINGTON COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION

### OCTOBER 11, 2017 - 6:30 PM (KICK-OFF MEETING)

Jonathan Dorsey asked the council members to comment on what updates they would like to see and what areas of the plan they would like to have focused on. The priority is simply updating the past comprehensive plan, with a focus on the growth in population and the seen economic growth.

Topics discussed by Plan Commission members:

- Industry within county is focused on finding locations for growth. Possibilities in expanding agriculture within the County, this may include hydroponics and just agriculture buildings. Increase livestock within the county, idea for a while but not seen through yet. PRIMARY is finding the locations for development that meets the county's standards.
- Tourism is important to the county. Particularly the reservoirs.
- Housing vs. Agri. Lands is major fight. Utility growth is unfit for major expansions and deserves consideration in deciding any new development. Desire to keep youth in the county.
- No plans for new parks or new expansions. Bike trails (rail-to-trails) have been discussion for a very long time however the right-of-way has been given to farmers and the County will have to switch between railbed and county roads. Maps are available.
- No TIF currently set, but everything is in place to create a TIF district should the need arise. The idea is to use development within the agricultural communities to fix the roads.
- Housing increase, there is a demand for apartments, worker level housing, need to create apartments that aren't catered to specifics of government-housing or assisted-living.
- Towns will likely expand the boundaries for the developments on the borders.

### NOVEMBER 8, 2017 - 6:30 PM (PUBLIC HEARING)

Jonathan Dorsey brought more questions for discussion for the board members. The subject focused on the strengths and pride within Huntington County.

Plan Commission sees diversity in county through its five incorporated towns/cities.

Strength in the community can be credited to its excellent road system and interstates that have 20,000 guests making trips daily.

Challenges lie in the county roads that are not designed for heavy traffic or some farm equipment, there is plans and discussions in place to improve these roads.

The agriculture business is the biggest in the county and often becomes the backbone to sustaining other industries (for example the automotive sales businesses often work with farmers throughout most of the year).

The strength which the Commission was the most willing to talk about or had the most to say regarding was the existence of motivated and hard-working members of the communities. Leading to the biggest strength in the County, being pride and care of those living in small communities who want the best future for their own town and the County as a whole. This may stem from the joy that life in the county has brought them and the future that they wish to share a similar or better experience with following

generations. This contrasts the issue of brain drain and the inability to retain younger generations within the County after a certain age or pursuing a higher education, most likely in seeking an affordable home or a well-paying job.

The Commission would like the main goal of the 20-year plan to be a blueprint for the County's expansion that they want to see without restricting the limits of whatever may be wanting to develop outside of the plan's views. "Plan should not hem too tight," but "should act as a blueprint moving forward."

Mandy Woods led an activity for adjusting the future land use maps. This activity highlighted that most of the development potential in the county exists on the Eastern and Northeastern parts of the county according to availability of land and research conducted by the school districts in tracking the growth of the County. These aforementioned research docs also concluded that much like most of the region, population in Huntington County is slowly dwindling and the lack in real estate development compliments this research by underperforming by half of its needed amount to sustain an equal replacement rate. The areas showing the most prominent negative growth is Andrews and Mt. Etna. The Plan Commission made a decision to work on the maps outside of the meetings through email and committee work.

There was talk that new development in increasing jobs would steadily increase the population and give more reason to increase the number of schools in the area which would provide a potential incentive for parents and family considering moving into the area. To this point, school board representative Brian Warpup presented the estimation that a new housing edition can only add a max of 60 students which is nowhere near the numbers needed to justify the construction or revitalization of schools within the Huntington County School Districts especially when competing with Allen County School and other surrounding Counties.

A point was raised in the meeting that perhaps expecting results by January is too soon to conduct an appropriate plan for the county and it was discussed that should the deadline be extended than it will when the time comes. They hope to reach a more solid decision on this post-viewing the first draft submitted during early-mid December.

# Huntington County Plan Commission Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing Sign-In

November 8, 2017 – 6:30 p.m.

Name & Organization	Address	Email Address or Phone #
Tyson Ford	3626 E 400S MARKLE	260-450-8220
Jennifer Ford	3626 E 400S MARKLE	260-450-7578
Steve Underwood	1359W-200S HIGHT	260-519-2350
Brian Waynes	3344E-700S WORKER	260-375-4200
JONATHAN DORSEY (LEGION 3A)		317-750-3469

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Huntington County Plan Commission will hold a public hearing on the following application:

---

DOCKET NUMBER:	PC-17-005
APPLICANT:	Huntington Countywide Department of Community Development
REQUEST:	The Huntington Countywide Department of Community Development will conduct a public hearing for the Comprehensive Plan update.
DOCKET NUMBER:	PC-17-006
APPLICANT:	Tyson D. & Jennifer E. Ford
OWNER:	Tyson D. & Jennifer E. Ford
LOCATION:	300E, just north of State Road 124 (Parcel #35-07-34-300-040.101-014)
ZONING:	A (Agricultural)
REQUEST:	Primary plat approval for a subdivision of land.

---

This hearing will begin at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at the GAR Room, County Courthouse, Room 207, 201 N. Jefferson Street, Huntington, Indiana.

All interested persons are invited to attend. Written objections to the application filed with the Department of Community Development will be considered at the hearing along with oral comments from interested persons at the hearing. The hearing may be continued from time to time as may be found necessary.

A copy of the application is on file for examination prior to the hearing in the office of the Department of Community Development, County Courthouse Room 204, 201 North Jefferson Street, Huntington, Indiana, (260) 358-4840.

Any individual who requests accommodation as the result of a disability, please contact:

Department of Community Development  
201 North Jefferson Street, Room 204  
Huntington, Indiana 46750  
(260) 358-4840

sufficiently in advance of the meeting so that reasonable accommodation can be arranged.

HUNTINGTON COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION  
Kim Hostetler  
DCD

Publish by the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, 2017

## DECEMBER 13, 2017 - 6:30 PM (PUBLIC HEARING)

Excerpted from County Plan Commission meeting minutes:

Woods stated this meeting was advertised as a public hearing hoping again to get more public input. She stated they can go over the draft prepared by Dorsey. She explained what the DCD staff has done so far. She noted that she sent the proposed land use map via email a few weeks ago.

Jonathan Dorsey, Region III-A, stated he is not quite up to the time table as he had hoped. He stated his office was having some technology issues and that is why he was not able to finish and email the draft. He stated they can go over particular sections if they would like. He stated that one of his biggest points was trying to find ways to fund trail connection.

T. Miller stated it is kind of hard when they don't have anything to look at.

Dorsey apologized for not being able to provide the rough draft.

Woods stated the appendix section can allow notes to be added from the meetings they had with the Towns. She noted the land use map has been worked on and a lot of data has been compiled. She stated the data has been passed along to Dorsey to be included in the draft. Woods stated the graphics have been worked on and are ready to be input.

T. Miller stated it is really hard for him to comment without having a draft.

Dorsey stated that once the problem is fixed, it can be sent out early next week.

Mark Wickersham, Executive Director of HCUED, thanked the Board members for all their hard work. He discussed his draft of the Economic Development Section. Wickersham stated that he believes there are better ways of wording certain things. He handed out 4-5 copies of his draft. He explained the differences between his draft and what is in the existing plan. He discussed OCRA certification for the 80-acre parcel off of I-69 near Warren. He stated that some of the property references needed updated. He noted that back when the plan was last updated, his office was in its infancy and they were showing 50-percent of Industrial space being vacant. He stated that number is now 2-percent. Because of those low vacancy numbers, he stated they need to aggressively plan where they want to see growth next. He stated they need to look at where infrastructure development will occur for future growth areas.

T. Miller asked Wickersham if he had seen the future land use map.

Wickersham stated yes, but he hadn't studied it in detail.

T. Miller stated his (Wickersham's) input would be important because there doesn't seem to be enough industrial/commercial areas proposed.

Wickersham stated that people want property along rail corridors and there is not enough of that in their tool box.

Buzzard asked if railways could be added to the map.

Woods stated she could do that.

Wickersham stated their challenge with the Interstate is how they deal with waste water. He discussed CEDIT revenue and TIF districts with the Board members.

Park stated it would be nice to see an inventory of available space and the size, age and capabilities of those properties.

Wickersham stated he does Industrial and not commercial. He says he's happy to help but it isn't his area.

Park stated it would be helpful to identify areas they are missing in regards to the sizes of the spaces, etc. He asked if there are any sectors they should target, besides industrial.

Wickersham stated orthopedics is an area that should be looked at.

Park stated they will need to show they can provide the resources to support a particular sector that they target.

Wickersham stated the agri-business area needs more growth and the doors are wide open to that.

Park asked how they can advance the agricultural market of our community out of the stone age and to make it more sustainable.

Wickersham stated that Agriculture and Industry can be together.

Farris asked Park what he meant when he was talking about making agriculture more sustainable.

Park explained and stated you don't hear too much positive about agriculture.

Sprowl stated they need to keep doing what they are doing. He stated he is surprised they haven't made agriculture just as important as occupied industrial buildings.

Poe stated they are getting off topic and they need to get back to what they are there for.

Park asked how they can make agriculture a more positive thing.

Poe discussed specific areas of proposed potential industrial growth. He discussed the map and stated they need to show on the map where sewer and water can be provided within a  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile.

Buzzard stated sewer and water is important along with traffic patterns, roads and rail. He stated these are all things to consider.

T. Miller stated that access to rail would be important.



Wickersham stated his draft needs to reference the County's Redevelopment Commission.

Poe stated he would like to see areas of sewer and water on the map.

Sprowl and Poe discussed locations on the map.

Wickersham stated that housing should be looked at as well.

T. Miller stated that if they are looking for growth, it will require housing. He also stated that rail should be included on the map.

Poe stated that maybe certain areas should be reconsidered for residential and not commercial. An example given was the property at the corner of U.S. 24 East and Stults Road.

The Board discussed specific areas to look at on the map.

Poe stated that floodplain eliminates a lot of property along the rail between Huntington and Allen County.

Woods stated that she thinks it would be best to have a sub-committee to look at some of these concerns.

T. Miller asked Woods if she can still email new revisions.

Woods stated she would do that. She asked if the style of the map is good.

The Board stated it worked.

Farris asked if it should be a specific committee.

Woods stated no, she just needs a group of people.

Buzzard stated that Poe should be on the committee because he has a lot of knowledge about the County.

T. Miller stated that Poe brought up a lot of specific areas that need to be looked at.

Buzzard stated they need to play on their strengths. He stated they need to try not to use spaces that someone really doesn't need that could be used by others. He used the rail as an example.

Dorsey stated he could attend meetings as long as there is not a conflict with his calendar.

# Huntington County Plan Commission

## Public Hearing Sign-in Sheet

December 13, 2017 – 6:30 p.m.

Name	Address
Jennifer Ford	3626 E 400 S Markle IN 46770
Tyson Ford	3626 E 400 S Markle IN 46770
Mark Waters	HCVED
JENNIFER PORSEY	REGION 3A
Sueby Snyder	2860 Northpark Huntington

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Huntington County Plan Commission will hold a public hearing on the following application:

---

DOCKET NUMBER:	PC-17-005
APPLICANT:	Huntington Countywide Department of Community Development
REQUEST:	The Huntington Countywide Department of Community Development will conduct a public hearing for the Comprehensive Plan update.

---

This hearing will begin at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 8, 2017, at the GAR Room, County Courthouse, Room 207, 201 N. Jefferson Street, Huntington, Indiana.

All interested persons are invited to attend. Written objections to the application filed with the Department of Community Development will be considered at the hearing along with oral comments from interested persons at the hearing. The hearing may be continued from time to time as may be found necessary.

A copy of the application is on file for examination prior to the hearing in the office of the Department of Community Development, County Courthouse Room 204, 201 North Jefferson Street, Huntington, Indiana, (260) 358-4840.

Any individual who requests accommodation as the result of a disability, please contact:

Department of Community Development  
201 North Jefferson Street, Room 204  
Huntington, Indiana 46750  
(260) 358-4840

sufficiently in advance of the meeting so that reasonable accommodation can be arranged.

HUNTINGTON COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION  
Kim Hostetler  
DCD

Publish by the 25<sup>th</sup> of October, 2017

## ROANOKE TOWN COUNCIL

### NOVEMBER 7, 2017 - 7 PM

Jonathan Dorsey and Mandy Woods invited members of the public and council members to comment on what they would like to see in the county. The conversation was guided along the major topics covered by the County Plan, but the discussion was open to concerns both applying to the County and the town specifically.

Topics of concern identified by citizens/council:

- ADA compliance in sidewalks. There is an issue of planters, overgrown plants, and sidewalk amenities blocking the walking paths within Roanoke.
- Street-lighting within Roanoke village needs improvement.
- Council President, Dave Tucker mentioned the prospects of a future water park in Roanoke.
- Council member John Stoeckley commented that he wants to see well-paying jobs come to Huntington County and the re-use of abandoned buildings for new businesses.
- The workforce is here, but money is needed to attract or start up certain businesses – tax incentives, for example.
- Regarding satisfaction with existing businesses and shops – a citizen commented that Roanoke needs a pharmacy like Walgreens, etc. or a grocery with pharmacy.
- A citizen commented that the county needs a second high school.
- Floodplain to the east of town inhibits growth opportunities. It would seem Roanoke is suited to be a residential community primarily. Corner of US 24 and Vine Street/900 N (owned by the Town) is an opportunity property, but floodplain causes challenges for development. DCD staff advised that there were options, but the floodplain ordinance would need to be followed.
- Land along US 24 could be commercial in the future.
- Frontage roads off of the current EZ corridor (900 N) help prevent too many drive cuts – but this will be up to County Highway. Extending water and sewer to the other side, past the railroad on 900 N, is too difficult right now.

## WARREN TOWN COUNCIL

### NOVEMBER 13, 2017 - 5 PM

Jonathan Dorsey and Mandy Woods invited members of the public and council members to comment on what they would like to see in the county. Jonathan guided the discussion with questions and suggested topics. Ideas specific to Warren were not discouraged, but it was made clear that this is an update to the county's comprehensive plan.

Topics of concern identified by citizens/council:

- I-69 interchange area just north of Warren was identified as a growth area, especially with the new "Prime Certified" industrial site. Proper turn lanes and/or traffic management is needed as area continues to grow – would probably be done by the state, but should coincide with local plans as well. The "Michigan left turn" concept was suggested by Jonathan. Lights may be needed in the future.
- More trees and flowers throughout the county were suggested by Council President, Julia Glessner.
- A nice playground (perhaps ADA accessible, like the one in Matter Park in Marion) was suggested.

- The idea of a parking garage (big or small) was discussed for downtown Warren.
- Downtown Warren has a business park/amphitheater in the works.
- Citizens and council showed pride in their current festivals, but did indicate there is need for more public restrooms and ADA improvements (always needed). Overall, Council felt “pretty good” about the state of handicap accessibility in Warren.
- Council member Tracey Brown commented that he was disappointed when Roush Lake changed hands and became non-recreational.
- Trails in and around Warren were discussed. Overall, this was viewed very favorably by Council. Ethan Stivers was interested in trails to connect towns (maybe not all of the towns) and would use the trails if they were accessible to him.

## ANDREWS TOWN COUNCIL

### NOVEMBER 13, 2017 - 6 PM

Jonathan Dorsey and Mandy Woods invited members of the public and council members to comment on what they would like to see in the county. Jonathan guided the discussion with questions and suggested topics. Ideas specific to Andrews were not discouraged, but it was made clear that this is an update to the county’s comprehensive plan.

Topics of concern identified by citizens/council:

- Council member Bonnie Walker brought up her work with HARTA (Huntington Area Recreational Trails Association) and advocated for a trail between Huntington and Andrews, which would/could eventually connect to Wabash and Lagro. This could follow the Old 24 route.
- The topic of trails brought up some citizen contention – one person voiced that trails are not safe, referencing two girls that were killed on a trail in Delphi. Safety in numbers or with specific groups and different trail routes (near or far from the road) were discussed.
- The canoe ramp off of 105 (Andrews area) needs improved and is not safe. This has been discussed with DNR, but the status is unknown.
- It was suggested that citizens should be able to utilize the whole river area more through kayaking, canoeing, etc. The river should be seen as an asset and an opportunity to attract more people through recreation.
- Citizens suggested that Andrews needs more businesses. Town used to have factories (those have left), and stormwater issues prevent future growth.
- On a county level, it was stated that additional industrial parks are needed with more “shovel-ready” sites.
- A community center is needed in Andrews. In general, more community assets are needed in town.
- There is potential for Fleck’s property (7961 W Old Wabash Rd), if it is cleaned up. This is in the ETJ, not town limits, but it still impacts Andrews (part of the gateway into town).
- Andrews needs retail (once water issues are addressed).
- Andrews needs family restaurants – the bars don’t have family rooms anymore. It was discussed how a restaurant in Fairmount attracted people and helped revitalize their downtown. This same principle could apply to Andrews, and it would benefit the county as a whole, not just Andrews.
- Town recently had a very successful festival that was enjoyed by all ages. The concept of community was discussed, and how important it is for the Andrews community to get involved and for everyone to help.

- Andrews Elementary School was identified as an asset to the town. When redistricting happens, it will be interesting to see the impact on the town and the school.

## MARKLE TOWN COUNCIL

### NOVEMBER 15, 2017 - 7:30 PM

Jonathan Dorsey and Mandy Woods invited members of the public and council members to comment on what they would like to see in the county. Jonathan guided the discussion with questions and suggested topics. Ideas specific to Markle were not discouraged, but it was made clear that this is an update to the county's comprehensive plan.

Topics of concern identified by citizens/council:

- Citizens/council suggested improved access to the parks, such as sidewalks.
- A comment was made that the trails in/around the reservoir should be opened back up. Bike or walking trails are desired.
- A sidewalk is being proposed for Markle's park, along with outside exercise equipment along the pathway that people can stop and use.
- Questions were raised about what grants were available to help fund park improvements, including the outside exercise equipment idea and the historic log cabin being moved to Old Mill Park.
- Good restaurants are needed in and around Markle. Council President, Jeff Humbarger commented that a small grocery would be great, but it is challenging to do in a small town. Perhaps a Dollar General would be more successful.
- There was discussion about places to grow/build more homes, especially single family dwellings. Grants for infrastructure to housing additions are needed (if they exist – Jonathan will research).
- The current transportation systems in Huntington County/Markle were discussed – HAT (Huntington Area Transportation) and WOW (Wells on Wheels – Wells County only). These are on-demand, but don't have set routes/times. A bus route may be nice, but Jeff Humbarger questioned if there was enough demand.
- Citizens discussed bike rentals options along trails and asked if Huntington city's bike rental stations were used.

## MOUNT ETNA TOWN COUNCIL

### DECEMBER 7, 2017 - 6 PM

Jonathan Dorsey and Mandy Woods invited members of the public and council members to comment on what they would like to see in the county. Jonathan guided the discussion with questions and suggested topics. Ideas specific to Mt. Etna were not discouraged, but it was made clear that this is an update to the county's comprehensive plan.

Topics of concern identified by citizens/council (most discussion was by council members, Clerk-Treasurer Erica Dorsett, and the town's singular street maintenance employee):

- Consensus was they would like to see more businesses in the county.
- Mt. Etna is NOT growing. In general, the southern part of the county is in trouble regarding growth. People are moving to Fort Wayne.
- Huntington North High School has too many students, but there's not enough students in the

elementary schools/middle schools (as demonstrated by the impending school closures/redistricting). Erica Dorsett works in the school system and commented that many students are switching to homeschooling, not necessarily private schools.

- A “quick-stop” would be nice in or near Mt. Etna, but the one out on the highway doesn’t thrive.
- DNR used to care for the reservoir land near the town – but it’s been several years since real maintenance was done toward the Mt. Etna area. Because of the lack of maintenance, and the remoteness of USACE employees (district office located in Louisville), the reservoir has suffered and is rarely usable. Either it is too low or too full, or not safe to swim, etc. It needs local attention. It could be an asset, but hasn’t been an asset in a long time. There is no boat launch anymore, and only one entrance to the reservoir that is barely usable.
- Council member Randy Brightmire’s opinion is that Mt. Etna went downhill around 1968, when the reservoir was put in, and when SR 9 moved out of the town (became the bypass). Relocating SR 9 eliminated through traffic, so there is little need for businesses in town anymore.
- General consensus from council is that cooperation between Mt. Etna and the County needs to improve. Sometimes the town gets service by the Sheriff. County Highway used to plow/maintain roads in Mt. Etna, but that has stopped. Mt. Etna has one street employee who does plowing, patching roads, etc. There isn’t enough money in the annual budget for these basic needs.
- The County’s Animal Care and Control Department doesn’t take calls in Mt. Etna town limits. Council and Erica don’t know what their jurisdiction is – who are they supposed to serve? If they are supposed to serve Mt. Etna, the town really needs their help. No one in town is qualified to handle animal problems when they arise.
- Annual budget is \$30,000 including \$10,000 CEDIT – it doesn’t go far when factoring in roads and sanitary sewer systems for two towns (Lancaster, population of ~91, and Mt. Etna). When Lancaster Elementary closes, it will hurt the system (it accounts for 26 users of the sanitary sewer system). Mt. Etna assumes all debt liability related to sewer infrastructure for the school, even when the school closes.
- No politicians or prominent individuals live near Mt. Etna, so little attention is given to the area.
- Town needs more street lighting, but this is too costly.
- Drivers don’t slow down when driving through town – this is dangerous.