





Vermillion County Courthouse - Newport

VERMILLION COUNTY, INDIANA

LOCAL RESOLUTION APPROVING
IOCRA PLANNING STUDY PLANNING GRANT
COUNTY-WIDE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-03

WHEREAS, Vermillion County had identified adequate reason to analyze County-wide comprehensive issues in a Comprehensive Planning Study – Planning Grant, and

WHEREAS, Vermillion County has hired HWC Engineering to define and describe the issues, advise us of our options, and make recommendations to address County-wide comprehensive issues in the near future, and

WHEREAS, Vermillion County has received federal Community Development Block Grant dollars from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (IOCRA) to fund this study and has contributed \$7,500 as local match for this project which came from the Vermillion County Economic Development Council's (VCEDC) checking account, and Vermillion County has reviewed the process and completed study thoroughly and is satisfied with the services performed, information contained therein, and methodology applied;

WHEREAS, Vermillion County has received ten (10) copies of this document for our records and will keep them on file in the Town offices for future reference, and

BE IT RESOLVED that County Comprehensive Plan - planning document was reviewed and then officially approved by IOCRA on 2-2-22 and now the final document is hereby approved by Vermillion County.

Adopted by the County Commissioners of Vermillion County, Indiana this 15th day of March 2022.

SIGNATURE: _____

Chief Elected Official, Title
(Tim Yocum, Vermillion County Commissioner President)

ATTEST: _____

Chief Financial Officer, Title
(Brenda Furry, Vermillion County Auditor)

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Acknowledgments

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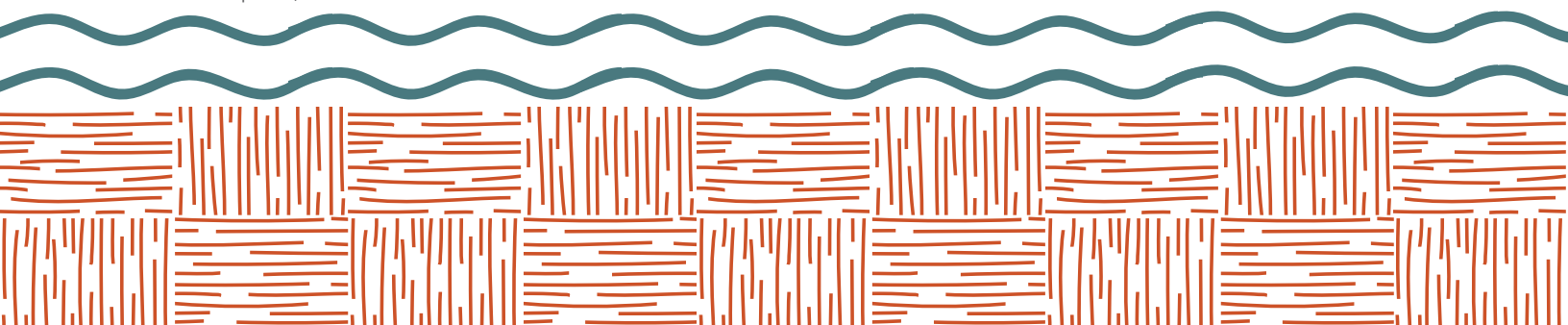
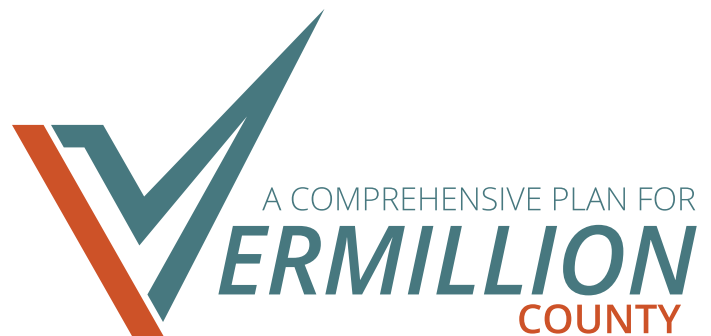
Adopted: March 15, 2022

Prepared by:



HWC
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Eugene Covered Bridge

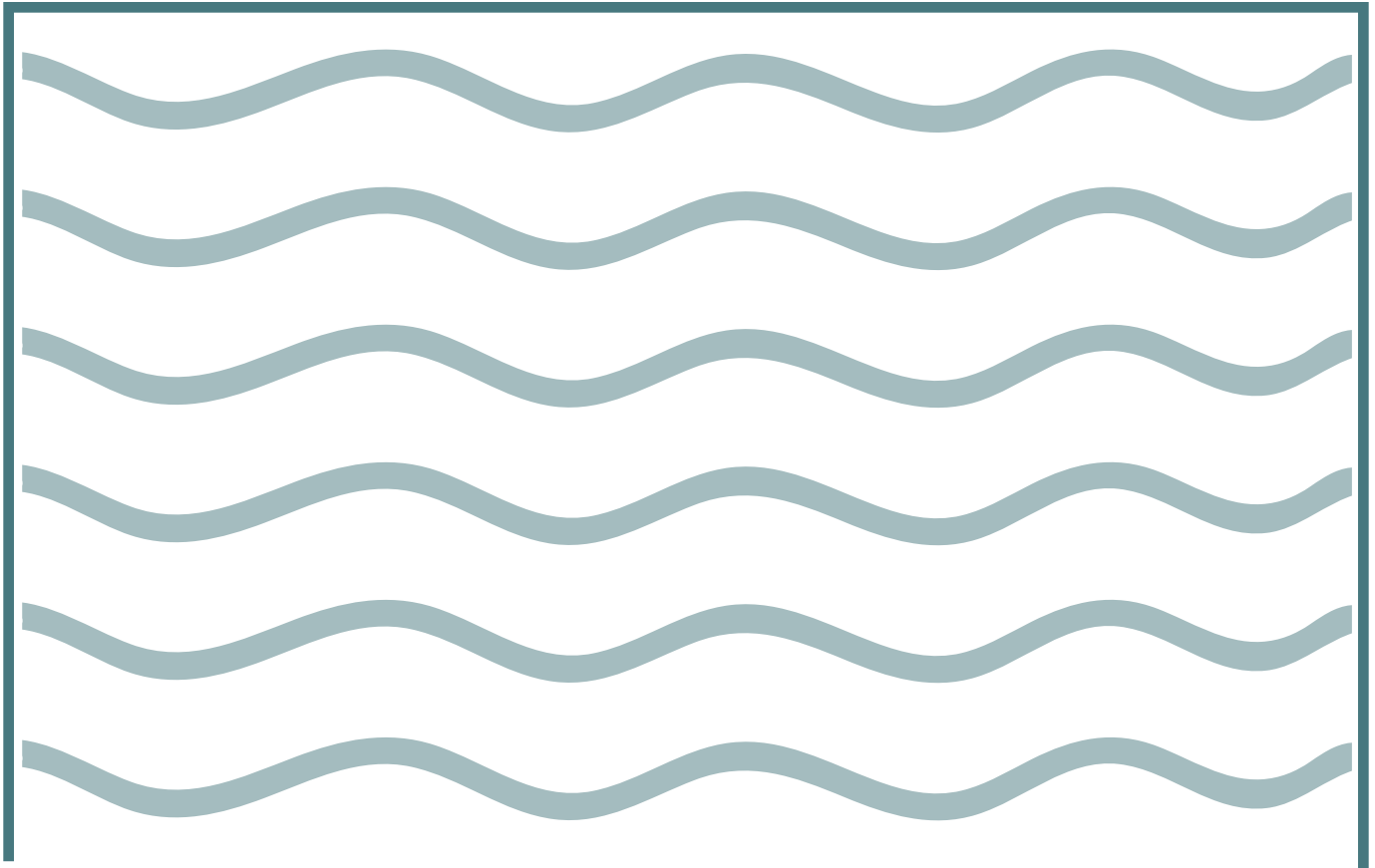
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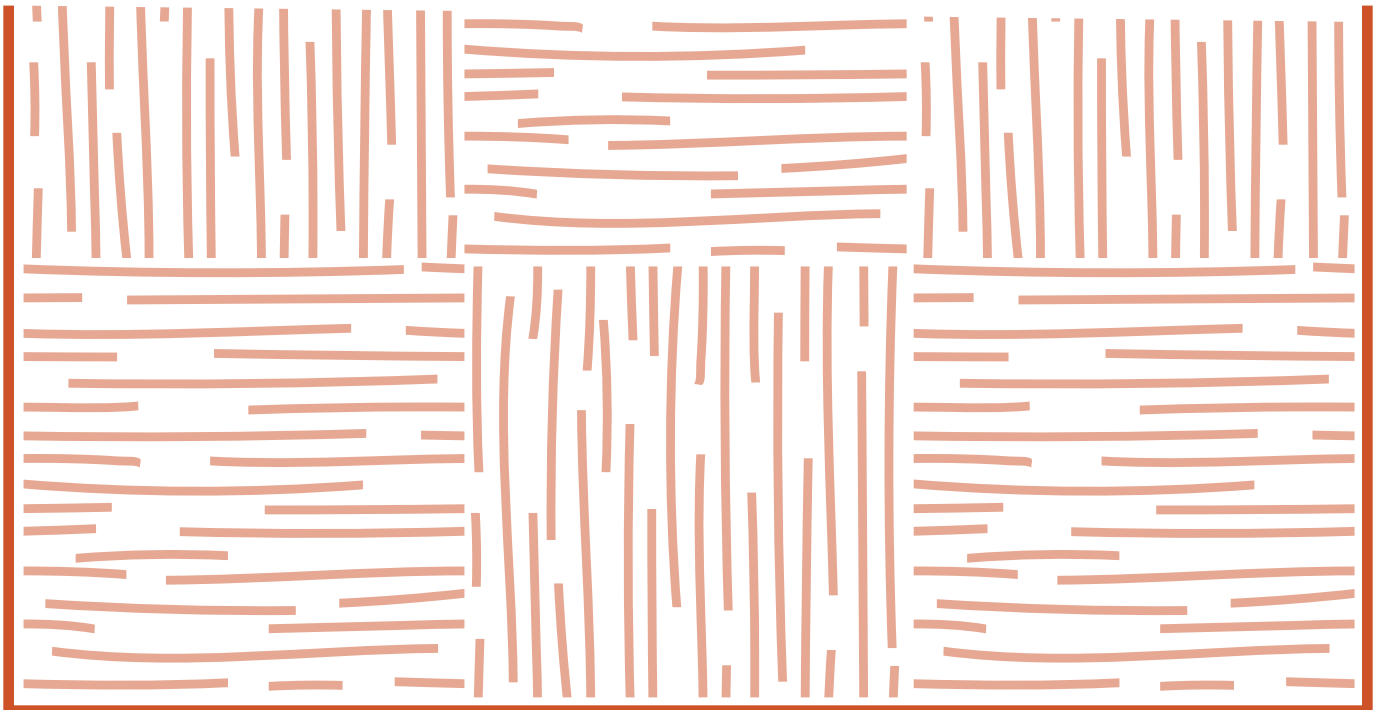


Vermillion County Fair Carnival - Cayuga



Executive Summary

1



Purpose and Scope of the Plan

Introduction

The Vermillion County Comprehensive Plan presents a vision to shape policy in a way that will help the community see continued prosperity in the future. Vermillion County has faced many recent challenges but it is also positioned to embrace significant opportunities. This plan is a forward looking document that establishes recommendations based on opinions expressed by many residents, stakeholders and government officials.

This plan establishes an outline for overcoming recent challenges and maximizing future opportunities. Success will require a focused and coordinated effort to enhance economic development and quality of life results. The approach must be strategic and intentional and fit into the county's vision and goals for the future.

This document also covers topics such as land use and the need to update county zoning ordinances. In order to promote economic development and investment in the community, the county's land use and ordinances should be clear, straight-forward and easy to understand. They must also fit into the county's larger vision.

Funding for this plan comes from the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA). Public input and steering committee conversations serve as the foundation for the goals and ideas described within this plan. Many Vermillion County residents and visitors volunteered time to participate in engagement for this plan. Residents appreciate what they have in Vermillion County and look forward to making their community even better.

This plan provides guidance in the following areas:

- Establish land use opportunity areas to inform future zoning ordinance updates
- Define areas of growth and preservation
- Identify thoroughfare improvement opportunities to facilitate investments in areas where growth is desired
- Aid in capital planning by identifying needed changes to the functional classification map
- Outline population trends and suggest desired demographic goals
- Communicate community desires for long range policy related to housing, quality of place, parks and open spaces and natural resources
- Identify key business and economic development strategies
- Help residents understand desired changes for the future of the county
- Inform the decision making process when inevitable challenges arise

Planning Process & Engagement



Project Kickoff *

June - September 2020

- County tour and existing conditions analysis
- Research and data collection
- Steering Committee Meeting #1



Public Engagement *

August 2020 - December 2021

- 2020 Public Survey - 237 respondents
- Plan Summit & Steering Committee Meeting #2
- Stakeholder Interviews
- 2021 Public Survey Follow-Up - 647



Analysis + Plan Development *

October 2020 - December 2021

- Review existing conditions analysis
- Analysis of public input materials
- Draft plan development



Plan Review + Adoption *

October 2021 - March 2022

- Plan review workshops
- Public meeting for draft plan review
- Adoption of final draft plan

*For additional information about the Planning Process refer to Chapter 2 of this plan.

Plan Summary

This plan will allow Vermillion County to address areas of improvement within the county while maintaining what makes it unique. A long stretching county, Vermillion County is situated on Indiana's western border with Illinois and is home to diverse collections of cities and towns, each with their own distinct character and charm. The comprehensive plan is a tool that will help the county consider various options as changes and growth happens.

Based on requirements from the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) several things were considered for this plan. Below are the chapters required by OCRA for a comprehensive plan:

- Land Use
- Government and Fiscal Capacity
- Public Facilities
- Placemaking
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Transportation
- Agriculture
- Natural Resources
- Parks and Recreation
- Historic and Archaeological Resources
- Hazard Mitigation

Based on the action-oriented nature of the county, an action plan was also created as a part of this plan to help prioritize goals for the community. The county can use this action plan to offer guidance on what goals have a higher priority based on steering committee discussions and public input.

The following pages detail goals for each chapter of the plan. These goals were created with the steering committee based on feedback given at the public workshop and on the public survey. Like all counties in Indiana, change in Vermillion County is inevitable. While this document contains goals for the county moving forward, the Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide-post for the county. As elected officials come and go and change occurs, this plan will ensure Vermillion County always stays true to its core values. Goals in this plan are based on improvements that will help enhance the existing assets of Vermillion County .

Outline of Plan Goals by Chapter

3 *Land Use*

- Update the county zoning and subdivision ordinances.
- Promote the Growth Opportunity Areas recommended in this plan.
- Plan for the development and utilization of alternative energy.

4 *Government and Fiscal Capacity*

- Increase public participation and engagement.
- Expand local and regional collaboration.

5 *Public Facilities and Services*

- Complete feasibility studies for infrastructure expansion to support Growth Opportunity Areas.
- Expand broadband facilities throughout the county.

6 *Placemaking*

- Develop a placemaking strategy for Vermillion County.
- Expand upon existing community activities and events.
- Develop a county-wide gateway and wayfinding program.

7 *Economic Development*

- Develop an Economic Development Plan for the I-74/SR 63 Interchange.
- Encourage entrepreneurship in the county.
- Support Development at Vermillion Rise.
- Increase educational attainment to ensure a skilled workforce.
- Support the development of the TIF district on SR 63 north of Clinton and all future TIF districts in the county.

Outline of Plan Goals by Chapter (continued)

8 *Housing*

- Strategically expand and make more housing options available.
- Continue blight elimination and revitalization in strategic areas by coordinating efforts already in progress.

9 *Transportation*

- Develop a prioritized plan for county roadway repairs and updates.

10 *Agriculture*

- Strengthen and preserve Vermillion County's agricultural land and prepare the next generation of farmers for the future.

11 *Natural Resources*

- Utilize the shared resource of the Wabash River as a connecting element throughout the county.
- Support the preservation of woodland and natural resources throughout the county.

12 *Parks and Recreation*

- Expand the county-wide parks system to increase access to outdoor recreation.
- Increase marketing and visibility for county parks and recreation opportunities.
- Develop recreation sites at Vermillion Rise and make them available for public use.
- Actively participate in ongoing efforts to plan and develop county-wide trail networks.
- Add more county dog parks.

Outline of Plan Goals by Chapter (continued)

13 *Historical and Archaeological Resources*

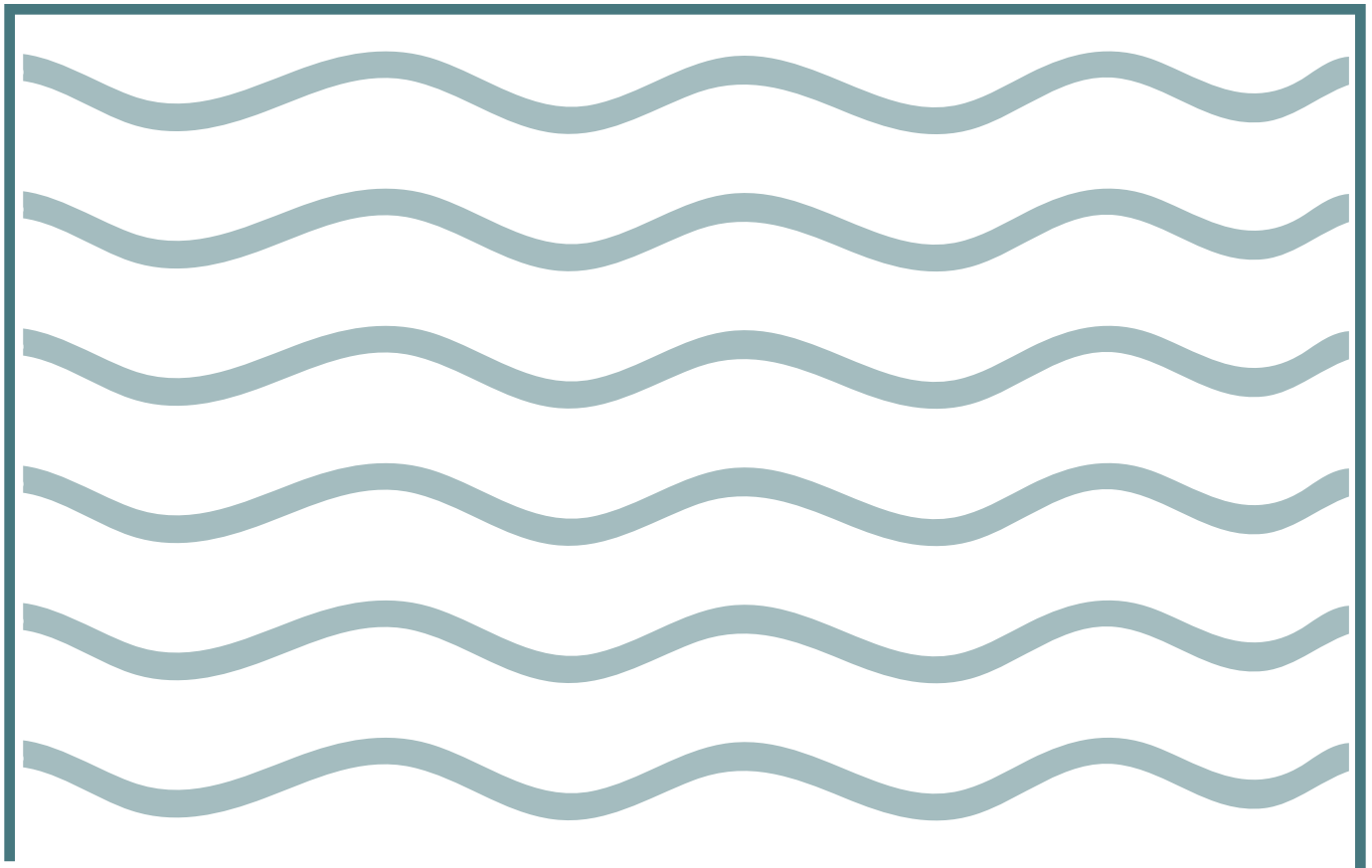
- Develop additional opportunities for the community to learn about and celebrate the history, traditions, and heritage of those in the county.

14 *Hazard Mitigation*

- Keep the county's emergency response plan current.

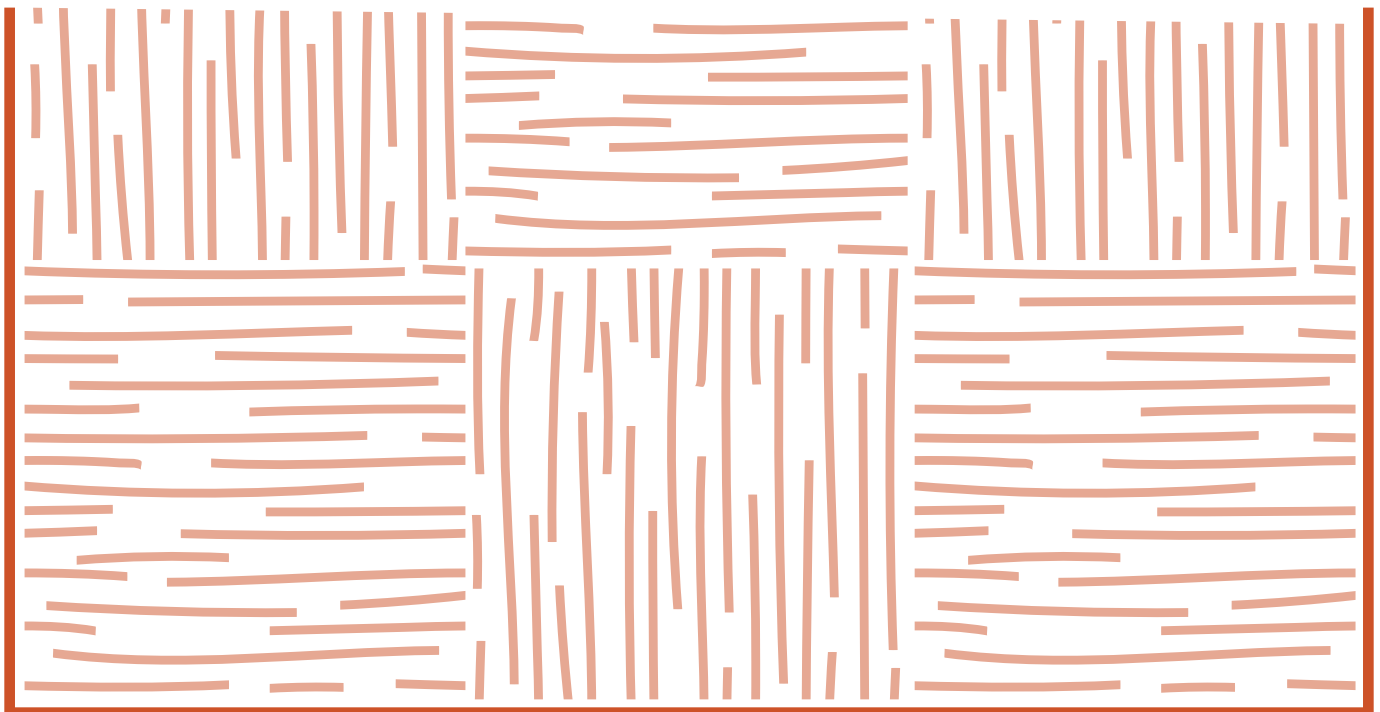


Gathering at the Crossing - Cayuga



General Background

2



Location

Introduction

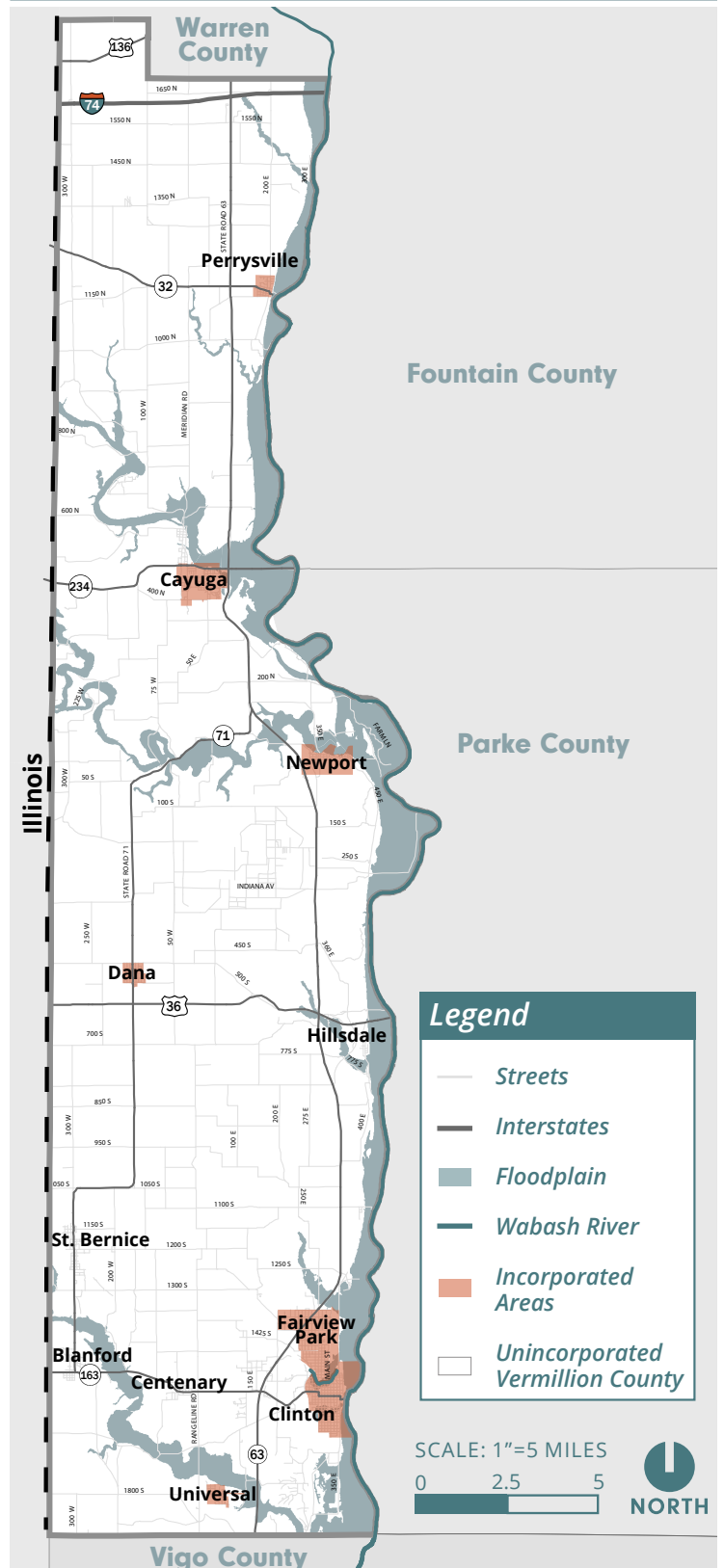
Vermillion County is located along the western border of Indiana about an hour and a half west of Indianapolis. It is part of the Thrive West Central Indiana Economic Development District. Geographically, Vermillion County is part of the greater Terre Haute metropolitan area, but is not part of the Terre Haute Urbanized area or within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). While residents in southern Vermillion County may work and do business in Terre Haute, residents in the northern part of the county commonly work and do business in other areas such as Lafayette, Crawfordsville, Indiana, and Champaign, Danville, Illinois.

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 provide an overview of the location of and the major features of the county.

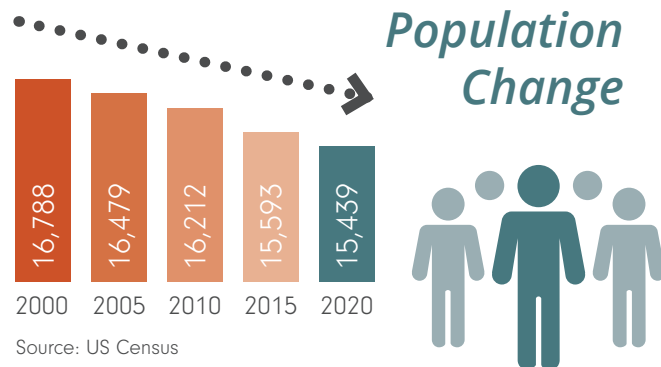
Figure 2.1
County Location Map



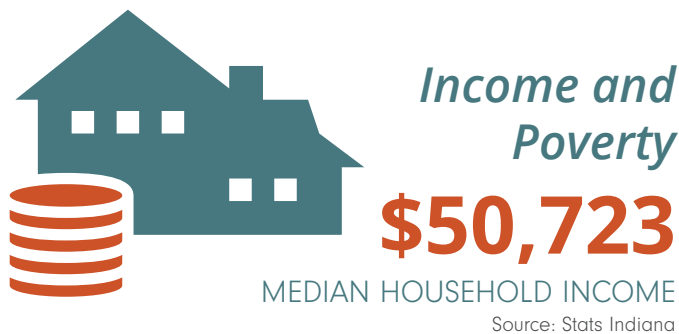
Figure 2.2
County Overview Map



Demographic Overview



Vermillion County's population peaked in the 1920's and has been declining ever since. As one of the smallest counties in the state and with a declining population, Vermillion County's resources are limited.



The median income in the county is lower than that of the state of Indiana by over \$15,000. Affordability needs to be considered in this plan when considering housing, amenities, and cost of living expenses.



6,590

LABOR FORCE AS OF 2020

Employment & Labor Force

3.8%

SEPTEMBER 2021 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Source: Stats Indiana & Indiana Department of Workforce Development

The unemployment rate has trended slightly lower than that of the state of Indiana. Training and continued job growth within the healthcare, manufacturing, warehousing, and retail markets should be emphasized as part of the county's economic plan to attract employees and employers.

Housing

The majority of people in the county own their own home. Affordability and revitalization of existing housing stock needs to be considered in this plan.



Educational Attainment

Overall, Vermillion County's educational attainment is relatively strong but still lags behind the state in the percentage of the population with degrees after high school.

94.1%

PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

24.9%

PERCENT POPULATION WITH ASSOCIATES DEGREE OR HIGHER



Source: Stats Indiana & Rural Indiana Stats 2019

OCRA Community Vitality Indicators

What is OCRA CVI?

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) is now employing the Community Vitality Indicators (CVI) as a way of assessing how well counties in the state are doing on a core set of metrics. These variables are intended to provide counties with a snapshot of how they stack up relative to other counties in the state. By tracking these measures over time, counties are able to determine the degree to which they are achieving positive improvements on one or more of these key measures.

Population

15,439

RANKED
#79 of 92

Gross Assessed Value

\$73,974

Value per Capita

Source: Rural Indiana Stats 2019

RANKED
#51 of 92

Public School Enrollment as a % of Population Under 18

72.8%

Source: Stats Indiana & Rural Indiana Stats 2019

RANKED
#24 of 92

Gross Assessed Value

\$1,149,487,320

Entire County

Source: Rural Indiana Stats 2019

RANKED
#82 of 92

Public High School Graduation Rate

94.1%

Source: Stats Indiana & Rural Indiana Stats 2019

RANKED
#25 of 92

Per Capita Income

\$38,633

Value per Capita

Source: Rural Indiana Stats 2019

RANKED
#82 of 92

Associates Degree or Higher Education

24.9%

Source: Stats Indiana & Rural Indiana Stats 2019

RANKED
#25 of 92

Population Change , 2015 to 2020

-154

Source: US Census and Rural Indiana Stats

RANKED
#61 of 92

**Overall
Ranking**

#71 of 92
Rural Ranking
24 of 42

Note: Rural Indiana Stats from Purdue University and Stats America for Indiana. Ranking is based on 92 counties in Indiana.

Community Context

Situated in western Indiana between the Illinois border and the Wabash River, Vermillion County is bounded on the north by Warren County, on the east by Fountain and Parke Counties, and on the south by Vigo County. Vermillion County is less than 10 miles wide from east to west and extends over 37 miles from north to south. The geographic makeup provides for a division amongst the northern and southernmost population centers. Because of this division in resources, the northern most communities tend to utilize the I-74 corridor to access regional services in neighboring cities and towns such as Lafayette and Crawfordsville as well as Champaign and Danville, Illinois. The southern communities are more likely to travel south to Terre Haute or west to Paris, Illinois, to access regional services. Further emphasizing the north-south divide, the school system is divided into North Vermillion and South Vermillion school corporations.

Centrally located is the county seat of Newport – a rural community. In addition to Newport, there are six other incorporated towns within the county, including Cayuga and Perrysville to the north, and Dana, Fairview Park, Clinton and Universal to the south. The remainder of the county is made up of unincorporated areas and communities such as Alta, Bono, Highland, Hillsdale, Jonestown, Saint Bernice, Summit Grove, Blanford, Centenary, Klondyke, Syndicate, Flat Iron, Gessie, Rileysburg, Sandy Town, Stump Town, Jones Town, Needmore, Rhoades, Bunsen, Tree Spring, and Eugene.

State Road 63 is a major north-south connection that links the entire county and is crucial in providing access to employment centers and communities at both ends of the county. North of Newport, SR 71 branches off of SR 63 to provide a secondary north-south connection to additional unincorporated areas of the southwest portion of the county. Primary east-west transportation routes include I-74 and US 36. In addition to these assets, SR 32, SR 234, and SR 163 provide

additional east-west connections across the county allowing for easy access to employment centers from neighboring communities. Beyond roadway infrastructure, the county is served by CSX rail lines with service to many employment centers across the entire length of the county.

One of the county's most important natural resources, the Wabash River, provides a unique opportunity. Providing access is important to the quality of life of the county.



Wabash River at SR 36



Rural Landscape of Vermillion County

Factors Leading to this Comprehensive Plan

The last comprehensive plan for Vermillion County was adopted in 2002. Much has changed in the years since the plan was written. Instead of seeing modest population growth as was anticipated in 2002, the population has fallen from 16,271 residents to 15,439 today. This is a drop of over 5 percent. Future population forecasts indicate that the county's population will continue to decline in upcoming years.

The development landscape in the county has also changed. The Newport Chemical Depot has been decommissioned. The reuse plan resulted in the opening of Vermillion Rise, which is a 7,000-acre mega park at the site. Opened with much promise to attract jobs to the county, the site has only seen modest job creation and needs considerable investment to reach its potential.

Other employers in Vermillion County have noted that attracting and retaining a skilled workforce is a top priority. This plan must address strategies for attracting and retaining workforce in the county.

Beyond economic development, the Vermillion County Area Plan Commission also recognizes that it needs to modernize its policies and ordinances to manage future growth and development. The 2002 plan does not address topics such as wind and solar.



Vermillion Rise

Planning Process

Steering Committee Meeting #1

On Tuesday, July 14, 2020, the Vermillion County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee met for the first time to discuss the county comprehensive plan. At this meeting, committee members discussed the biggest issues facing Vermillion County including quality of life amenities, housing, and a lack of community unity. Committee members met both in person and virtually to review results of the initial intake survey which can be found in the appendix of this document. A summary of this meeting can be found in the Appendix of this plan.

Steering Committee Meeting #2 and Plan Summit

A second steering committee meeting was held virtually on October 21, 2020. This meeting was both a steering committee meeting and a meeting for the public. During this discussion, participants reviewed the public input summary from the on-line survey and stakeholder conversations. Key topics included housing, economic development, and government communications. Participants also had the opportunity to ask questions directly and provide input about the planning process and the county as whole. A summary of this meeting and plan summit can be found in the Appendix of this plan.

Area Plan Commission Workshop

On November 12, 2020, an in-person Area Plan Commission workshop was held. The workshop was part of the monthly APC meeting and provided an opportunity for the public and the APC to hear the preliminary draft of the plan goals. The workshop provided an additional opportunity to gather information and provide next steps to the county.

Additional workshops were held on April 13, 2021, and October 14, 2021. At each of these meetings, Area Plan Commission members and HWC staff reviewed drafts of the comprehensive plan, and discussed strategies for key planning topics.

What we have heard:

- County communication should be expanded
- Housing is needed
- Quality of life should be improved
- Education should be supported and marketed
- Employment opportunities need to be expanded
- Senior living options should be explored



Eugene Bridge



Plan Summit Presentation

Planning Process (continued)

Stakeholder Interviews

In August and September of 2020 a series of stakeholder interviews were held to gather input on a variety of topics as it relates to the state of the county and the comprehensive plan. The topics discussed include quality of life, economic development, health and safety, and strengths and weaknesses of the county. A summary of these discussions can be found in the Appendix of this plan.

Public Survey

In August of 2020 a public survey was distributed garnering 237 respondents and key input that has helped guide the goals of this plan. In 2021 it was decided to redistribute the public survey to confirm and expand the number of responses, so the survey was relaunched in November of 2021 and was able to attract 647 respondents. A summary of the responses for both surveys can be found in the Appendix of this plan.

Final Plan Hearings and Adoption

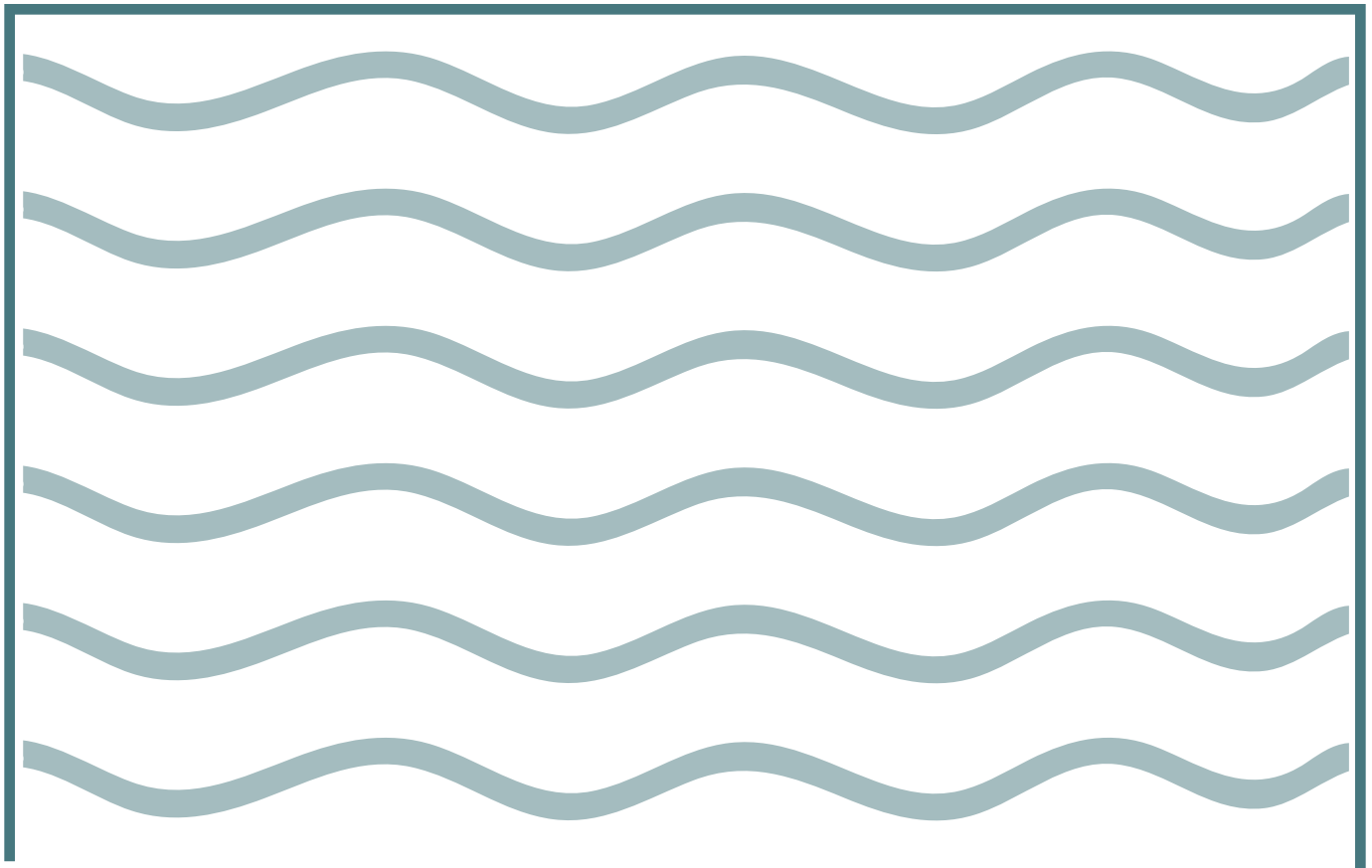
In March of 2022 the plan will be confirmed by APC for recommendation to adopt by the Commissioners at their regularly scheduled monthly meetings.



Survey Responses: What are people in Vermillion County most proud of?

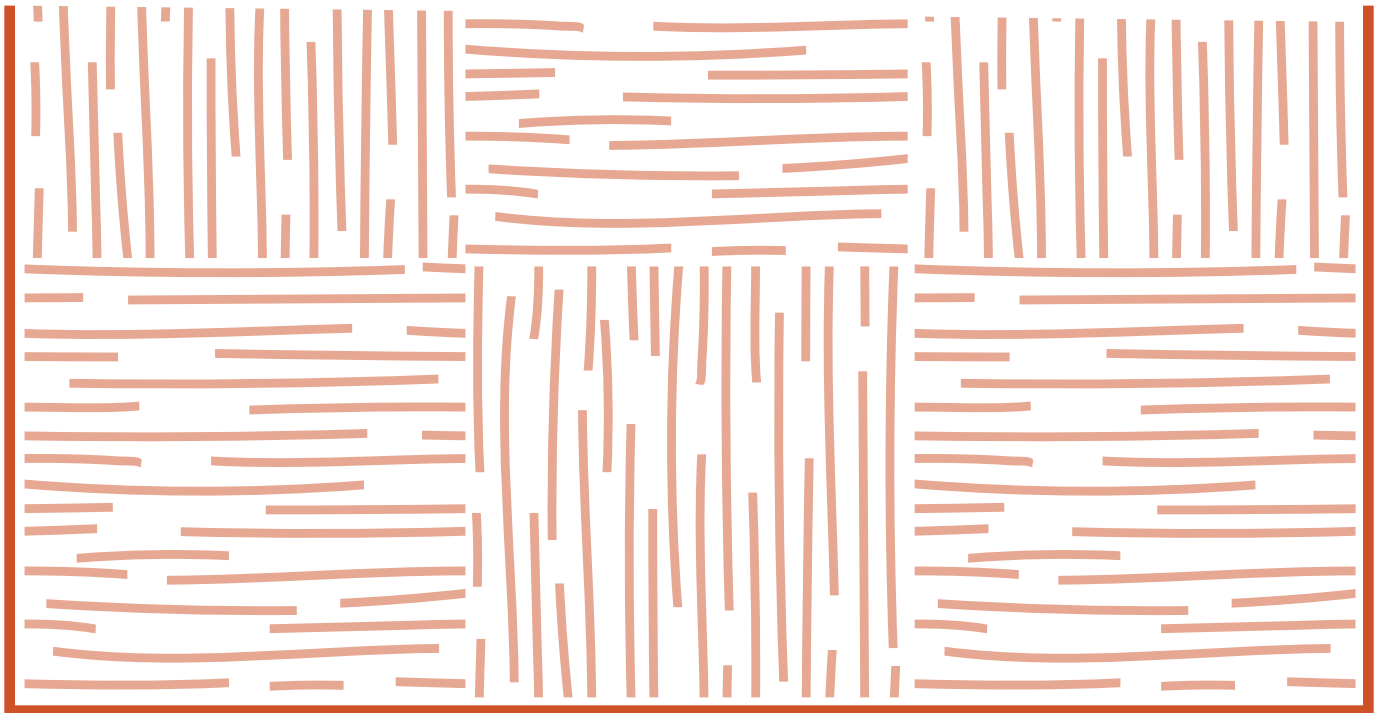


Survey Responses: What is missing in Vermillion County?



Land Use

3



Existing Conditions

Introduction

Based on community input, survey respondents believe housing is important or very important for the future of Vermillion County. Employment opportunities and workforce development also ranked high in importance. There is a desire to balance the agricultural heritage and rural character of Vermillion County with new opportunities to grow population and attract economic development. This chapter frames the discussion and provides recommendations for future land use policy to support these desired future outcomes.



Public Input

- Local grocery access is limited and needed
- Opportunities for kids throughout the year
- Housing is needed all over the county
- Employment centers are needed throughout the county
- The distance between the county's population centers hinders accessibility to resources and amenities

Area Planning Jurisdiction

Vermillion County is set up as an area planning jurisdiction and includes planning and zoning functions for all unincorporated portions of the county. Administration is the responsibility of the Vermillion County Zoning Office with oversight coming from the Area Plan Commission (APC) and Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), each of which are described in further detail to the right:

Vermillion County APC

Among other duties, the APC has responsibility for overseeing preparation and implementation of the comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan is a policy document that guides future land use decisions which contains, at a minimum, forward-looking statements on the following:

- Objectives and policies relating to future land use and development for the county.
- Policies relating to the development of public facilities including thoroughfares (public ways), utilities, lands, places, and buildings.

The Vermillion County APC currently consists of a eight-member body comprised of the following representatives: (one being an advisory member only - non-voting)

- One School Board appointee.
- One citizen legislative body appointee representing unincorporated portions of the county.
- One fiscal body appointee representing unincorporated portions of the county.
- One member of the City of Clinton legislative body.
- One citizen appointee representing City of Clinton.
- One county agriculture representative per Public Law 53.
- The county surveyor.
- One Purdue Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources representative - non-voting

Board of Zoning Appeals

The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) in Vermillion County is a five-member appointed body. The BZA is the local government body that is empowered by State Law to consider granting relief from the requirements of the zoning ordinance. From a practical standpoint, it is almost impossible to create zoning regulations that universally make sense on all parcels of land. The BZA allows property owners with unique conditions on their parcels to seek relief. The BZA is considered an administrative board that is quasi-judicial in nature. A quasi-judicial entity operates more like a court than a legislative body and uses many standards and procedures like the courts. BZA decisions are required by state law to be guided by specific criteria, and made based upon the facts, not opinions. The primary role of the BZA is to rule on the application of the existing zoning laws as opposed to passing new laws, and therefore it is considered an administrative body. The Vermillion County BZA currently is comprised of the following representatives:

- One (1) citizen member appointed by the area plan commission from its membership.
- One (1) citizen member, who may not be a member of any plan commission, appointed by the executive of the largest municipality in the county participating in the commission.
- Two (2) citizen members, of whom one (1) must be a member of the area plan commission and one (1) must not be a member of any plan commission, appointed by the county legislative body.
- One (1) citizen member, who may not be a member of any plan commission, appointed by county legislative body.

Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance is the legislative tool used to regulate land uses throughout the county to ensure proposed uses are compatible with surrounding existing uses. The Zoning Ordinance contains regulations for the appropriate division and use of land within the planning jurisdiction, in this case the entire county.

The current Vermillion County Zoning Ordinance is a simple document which has been updated as circumstances within the county have required since its original adoption. Currently it guides the use of land within the county using the following zoning classifications:

- A: Agriculture
- S-1: Suburban Residential
- U-1: Urban Residential
- B-2: General Business
- B-3: Interchange Development
- I-1: Industrial
- I-2: Industrial
- N-1: Vermillion Rise

Special Considerations and uses:

- Subdivision Control Ordinance – adopted in 1970
- 2013-007 Ordinance for Flood Hazard Areas for Vermillion County
- Vermillion Rise Zoning Map – Updated mapping to correspond with the results of the Vermillion Rise Mega Park Master
- 2020-015 Commercial Solar Energy Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance
- Residential Solar Energy Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance
- 2021-013 Wind Energy Conversion Systems Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

Future Land Use

This section of the document defines some of the factors shaping future land use decisions in the county and will provide direction for desired future land uses. Future land use policy for the county is shaped by many factors including, but not limited to, the following:

- Distinctive natural features including sensitive habitat, terrain, and existing soil conditions.
- Location, condition, and capacity of transportation facilities.
- Availability and capacity of existing utilities.
- Flood potential.

Below is a summary of significant contributing factors which were considered when developing future land use policy and must be considered when making future land use decisions.

Significant Contributing Factors:

- The location of major roadways throughout the county provide opportunities for higher intensity uses due to visibility and ease of access.
- Significant portions of land within Vermillion County have limited potential to support future development due to the extent of Wabash River and major water feature flood zones.
- Topographical conditions in large sections of the eastern, northern, and southern portions of the county will either prevent development or increase development costs on potential projects.
- Public participation has concluded that there is a desire to see new resident and job growth, supporting the notion that new housing, retail, commercial, and industrial development is needed to support growth desires.
- Agricultural, natural, and recreational activities are highly valued.

Future Land Use Policy

Future land use policy for Vermillion County should encourage lower impact uses in significant portions of the county. This supports the desire to continue the existing rural and agricultural character. There is also a desire to focus on key areas in the county to encourage appropriate development to support residential and job growth. Conditions will ultimately determine appropriateness of future development areas and need to be further defined and codified through a Zoning Ordinance update. A list of factors used to determine future land use recommendations in this document are listed below:

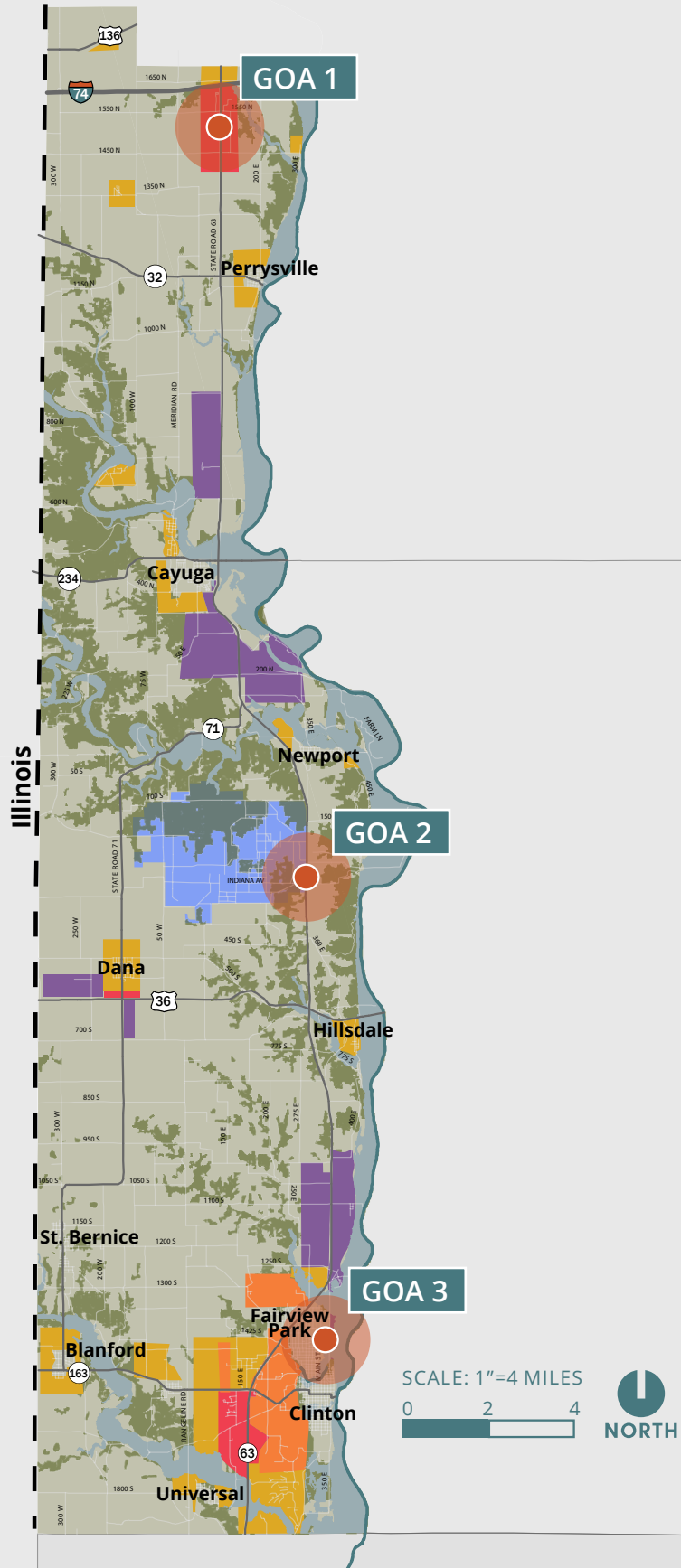
- Location and proximity to major roadway intersections,
- Intensity and extent of surrounding land uses,
- Topographical and soil conditions,
- Availability of utilities,
- Proximity to incorporated areas
- Special use areas (i.e. Vermillion Rise),
- Flood risk.

The impact of each of these factors on future land use decisions can be found in topic-specific chapters. The future land use recommendations and corresponding Future Land Use Map, shown in Figure 3.1, represent the outcomes of an analysis of the factors listed above. These are being defined as Growth Opportunity Areas (GOA), and a description for each has been provided on the following pages.

Figure 3.1
Future Land Use Map

Legend

-  Streets
-  Interstates
-  Floodplain
-  Wabash River
-  Growth Opportunity Areas (GOA)
-  Residential
-  Urban Residential
-  Business
-  Industrial
-  Vermillion Rise
-  Agricultural
-  Natural Areas



Growth Opportunity Areas (GOA)

GOA 1: I-74 and SR 63 Interchange Area

Area Summary:

- Ease of access to areas along I-74 will support a mix of interstate business, industrial, multi-family housing, hotels, and restaurants.
- Will require utility infrastructure to make future investment viable.
- Connection to the main route through Vermillion County along SR 63 will support additional opportunities in other areas of the county.

GOA 2: Vermillion Rise and Surrounding Area

Area Summary:

- Mix of light and heavy industrial supports job and economic growth.
- Quality of life amenities available, including parks and trails.
- Significant portions of land in this area are already zoned for appropriate industrial and commercial based uses.
- Available land will support future opportunities.
- Will require future utility investment to support additional growth outside of the 50,000 square feet shell building currently on site.

GOA 3: Rail Spur between Clinton and Fairview Park

Area Summary:

- Rail access opportunities support future commercial and industrial growth.
- Proximity to existing workforce is coupled with opportunities to expand housing, recreation, and commercial/retail opportunities in adjacent communities.
- Adjacent properties support compatible industrial and mixed business park uses, including the Clinton Industrial Park.

Land Use Goals

Goal #1:

Update the county zoning and subdivision ordinances.

Implementation

A clear and concise zoning and subdivision ordinance is an important step in attracting new development within the county. The existing zoning ordinance is outdated and needs to be revisited to accommodate current trends in community development. Zoning district descriptions should be updated to clearly and accurately describe the desired development or redevelopment the county is seeking.

Goal #2:

Promote the Growth Opportunity Areas recommended in this plan.

Implementation

This plan has identified key Growth Opportunity Areas where economic development activities should be promoted. Individual development plans should be created for each area to detail out recommended land use patterns and infrastructure improvements needed to support development.

Goal #3:

Plan for the development and utilization of alternative energy.

Implementation

Utilize the currently adopted Commercial Solar Energy, Residential Solar Energy, and Wind Energy Conversion Systems Amendments of the existing zoning ordinance.

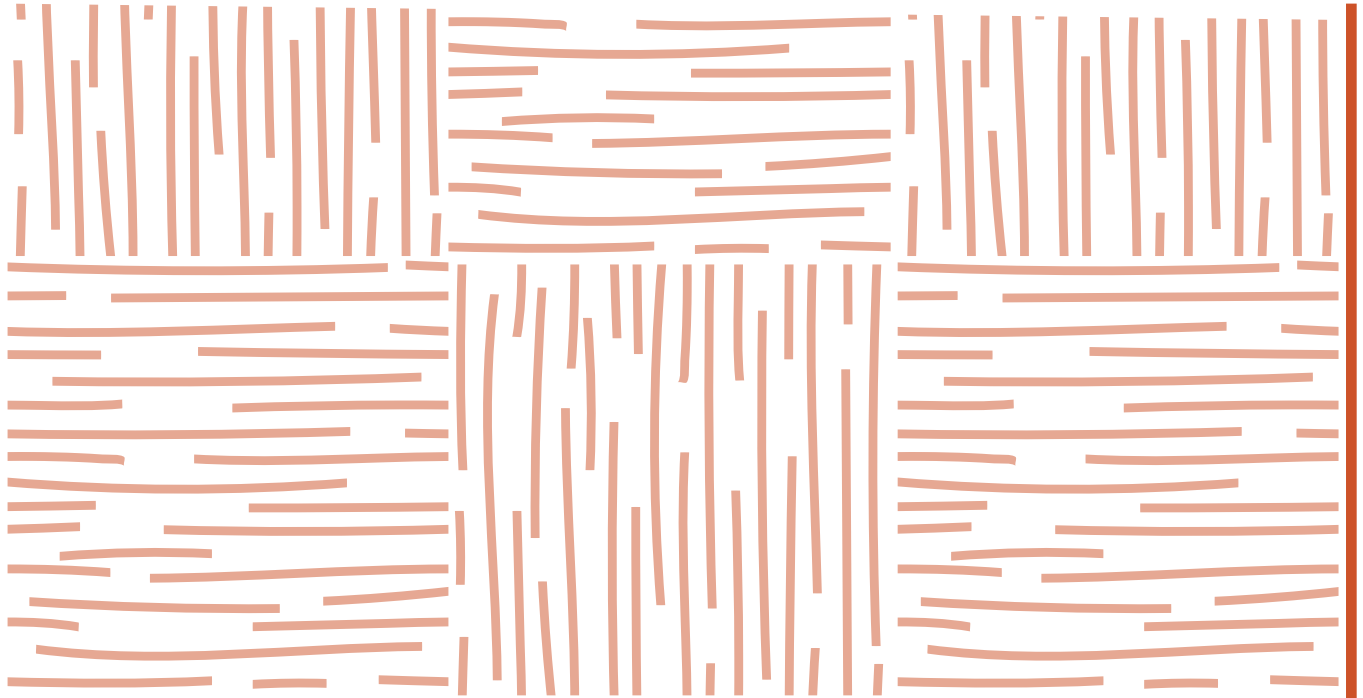


9th Street - Clinton



Government & Fiscal Capacity

4



Existing Conditions

Vermillion County is not immune to many of the challenges that face smaller rural counties. With a shrinking population and a large north-south spread of development, providing services and supporting all corners of the county can be a challenge. Diverse municipalities and a largely agrarian county can make coordination, engagement, and communication difficult.

Strong external communication is equally important as effective internal communication. During stakeholder interviews and public meetings, the need for improvements to communication and collaboration among county officials was identified. Because county government often plays the role of facilitator and collaborator, effective intergovernmental communications are essential to a productive county.

Finally, the county should also work to improve its regional standing. As part of the greater Terre Haute region, Vermillion County can benefit by working with neighboring communities on common challenges. This collaboration can help take advantage of the skills, experiences, and lessons learned from shared regional issues.



Public Input

- Communication among county officials could be improved
- Expand the county's external messaging program

Gross Assessed Value

\$73,974

Gross Assessed Value Per Capita (Rank 51/92)

\$1,149,487,320

Gross Assessed Value (Rank 82/92) from OCRA

Growing population and attracting economic development opportunities will grow the county's tax base and improve the county's fiscal capacity. This further emphasizes the importance of Vermillion Rise, Clinton Industrial Park and growing residential stock.

Source: OCRA Community Vitality Indicators / Rural

Vision

Goal #1:

Increase public participation and engagement.

Implementation

To increase public participation and engagement, it is recommended that the county expand upon its current community messaging program, which is a program currently spearheaded by the county Auditor.

A strong community messaging plan can support government transparency and make it easy for residents and businesses to have access to current information. A communications audit is recommended to determine next steps for expanding the community messaging plan. An audit would identify current channels of communication, the type of information being communicated, and any gaps in communication. Then, an action plan should be developed that identifies communications objectives (What does the county want to achieve?), strategies (What approach will the county take to achieve those objectives?), tactics (How will the county carry out the campaign?) and measurable goals for evaluating success.

According to the community survey, nearly 80% of respondents said they find out about what is going on in their community through social media. A successful communication plan should meet folks where they are. As a result, Vermillion County should prioritize the use of social media in their strategy. A good place to start is utilizing the Vermillion County website as the main source for information.

Goal #2:

Expand local and regional collaboration.

Implementation

Acting alone, Vermillion County has limited resources and capacity to address its challenges and take advantage of opportunities. Working together within the county and outside the county will help county leaders learn from others who are facing similar situations.

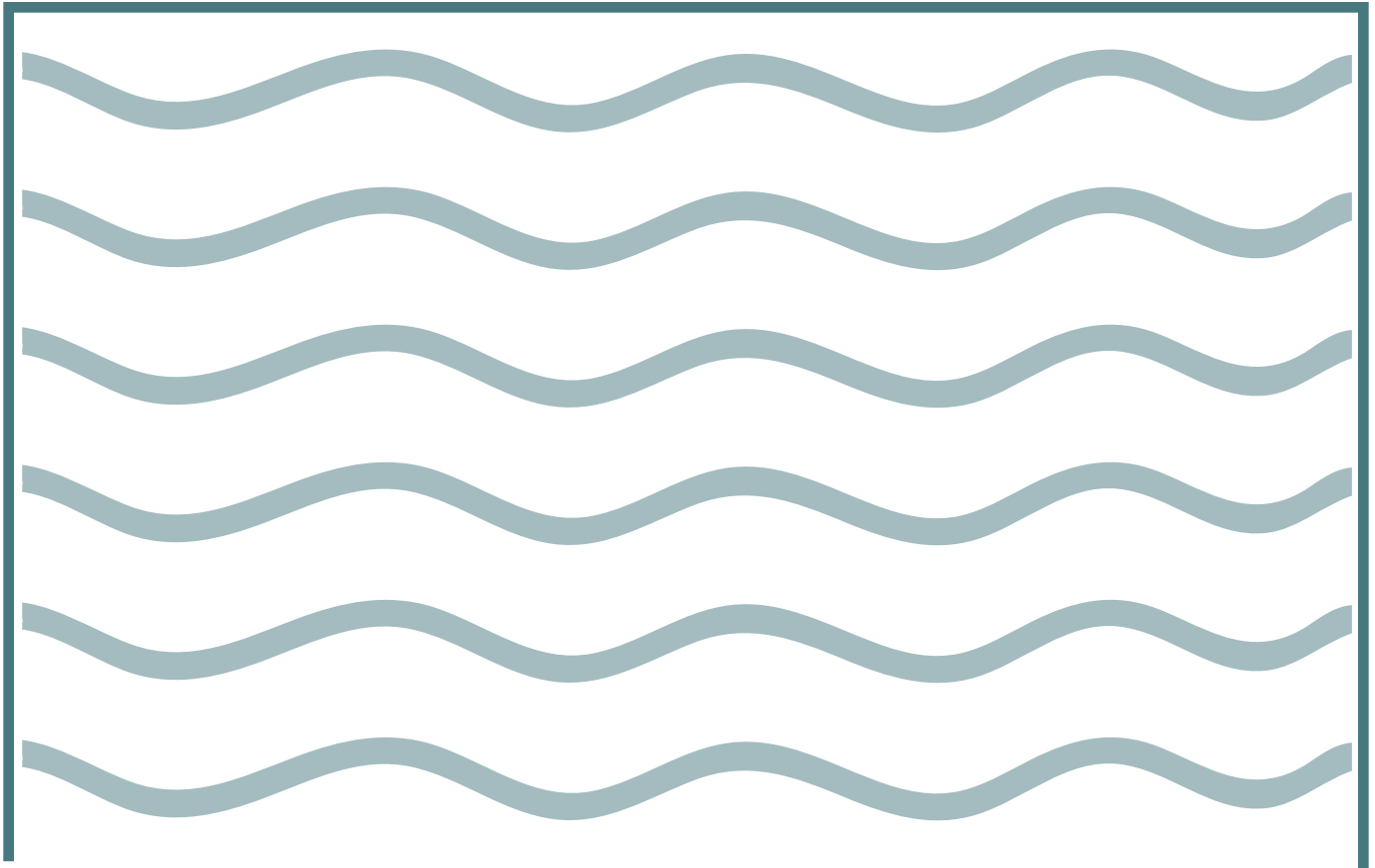
Regional collaboration is increasingly becoming an expectation for local and state government. For example, scoring for many state funding programs now considers whether projects are listed in a regional plan. On a larger scale, Indiana's 2021 Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) is further encouraging regional cooperation and supporting it with \$500 million in public investment. Vermillion County has participated in that effort as part of the plan for the Wabash River Regional Development Authority region.

The first step in getting the most out of regional collaboration is working together on shared county-wide goals. A simple place to start is a quarterly or monthly meeting of elected officials and key stakeholders from across the county. The purpose should be to understand the needs of other communities within the county, and then look for ways to work together on shared needs in a way that benefits everyone.

As Vermillion County makes progress on shared county-wide goals, steps should be taken to collaborate with neighboring counties in the region to work together on goals that span county lines. Issues such as tourism, workforce, quality of life, broadband, and housing all benefit from a shared regional strategy.

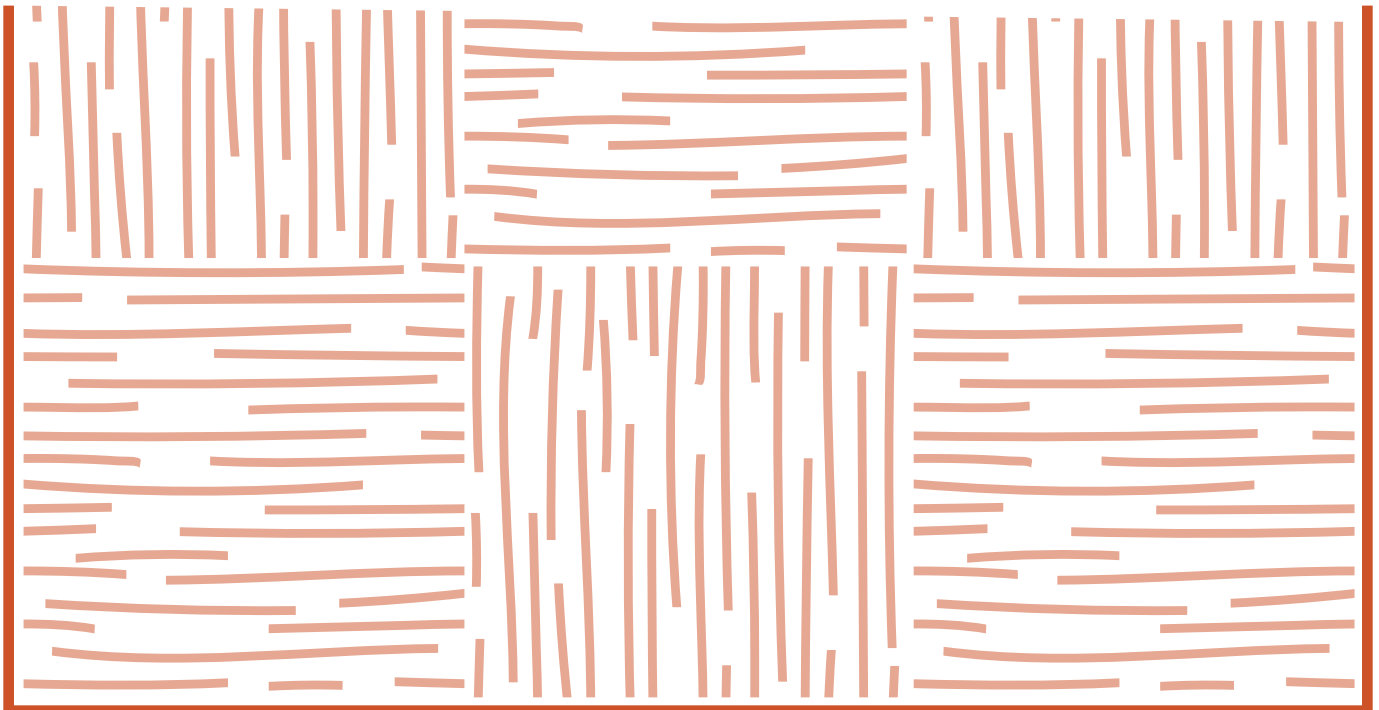


Roadside Farmland along SR 63



Public Facilities and Services

5



Existing Conditions

Most utilities and services are adequately serving Vermillion County residents and businesses. One area of need that both stakeholders and the public identified was broadband internet. Community survey respondents noted that many residents do not have access to broadband or that it is not affordable. Current broadband mapping indicates that there is service available across the county. However, most of the county is only served by wireless providers which residents have noted are slower and less reliable. AT&T and Joink provide fiber broadband service to Vermillion Rise, but not the surrounding areas. See Figure 5.1 for a map of broadband coverage.

To support broadband development, Vermillion County has instituted the preparatory procedures recommended in IC 5-28-28.5-7. By adopting these procedures, the county has received a Broadband Ready Community Certification through the Indiana Office of County and Rural Affairs (OCRA). This certification alone will not attract broadband providers but demonstrates that steps have been taken by the county to be prepared for broadband investment. In 2021, a \$700,000 match was approved by the county in an effort to capture a \$4 million grant offered through the Next Level Connections program. This effort is being led by Joink to help offset costs of implementing fiber in key areas throughout the county.

Outside of broadband, there is a need for public infrastructure investments to support economic development. Of the three areas identified as Growth Opportunity Areas in the I-74/ SR 63 Interchange, Vermillion Rise, and the Clinton Rail Spur, two need infrastructure improvements.

Benefits of Broadband

Modern Healthcare: When used effectively, telemedicine can reduce physician time required for treatment and diagnosis, save on transportation costs for patients, help avoid missed work income, lead to improved health knowledge and self-care, and reduce the use of emergency rooms and other hospital facilities.

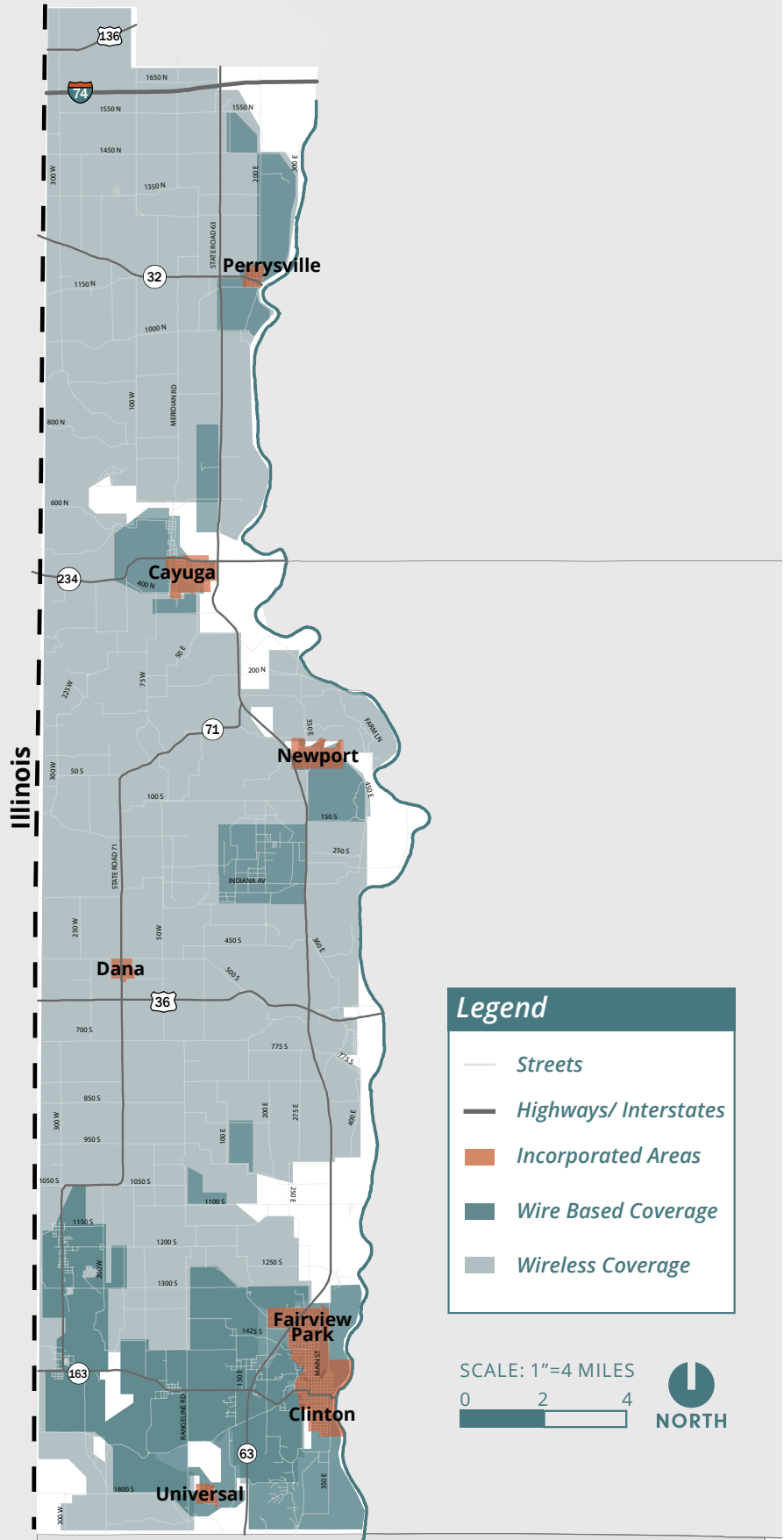
Modern Education: K-12 students would be able to complete and turn in assignments remotely and be able to electronically communicate with teachers. According to the report, rural students lacking access “will increasingly be disadvantaged by the digital divide.” Broadband access can improve student performance and older students would have increased access to distance-education options allowing them to improve job skills and compete for higher paying jobs.

Economic and workforce development: There are numerous studies that have concluded broadband access contributes to job creation, economic growth and business investment in rural areas. It also can be a significant driving factor in entrepreneurship and business startup activities in these areas.

Consumer savings and farm income changes: Broadband can help consumers save on a variety of purchases. For farmers, it is estimated broadband would enhance productivity and profitability by making it easier to communicate with suppliers and market outlets, access Extension and other farming information, have faster access to weather information that could impact decisions, as well as general improvements in farm management practices.

Source: “Estimation of the Net Benefits of Indiana Statewide Adoption of Rural Broadband”
<https://extension.purdue.edu/article/30678>

Figure 5.1
Broadband Coverage Map



Vision

Goal #1:

Complete feasibility studies for infrastructure expansion to support Growth Opportunity Areas.

Implementation

In the Economic Development and Land Use sections of this plan, three key areas are identified for their economic development potential: the I-74/SR 63 Interchange, Vermillion Rise, and the Clinton Rail Spur. It is recommended that the county develop feasibility studies to determine infrastructure needed to support economic development in these locations.

Goal #2:

Expand broadband facilities throughout the county.

Implementation

It is recommended that the county support and lead the development of goals for the recently formed task force that is currently leading county-wide broadband efforts.

The initial goals for the broadband task force should be to identify local priorities for broadband including needed coverage areas and goals for service speeds. The group should also work on outreach to broadband and telecom providers to identify opportunities for expanding and improving service.

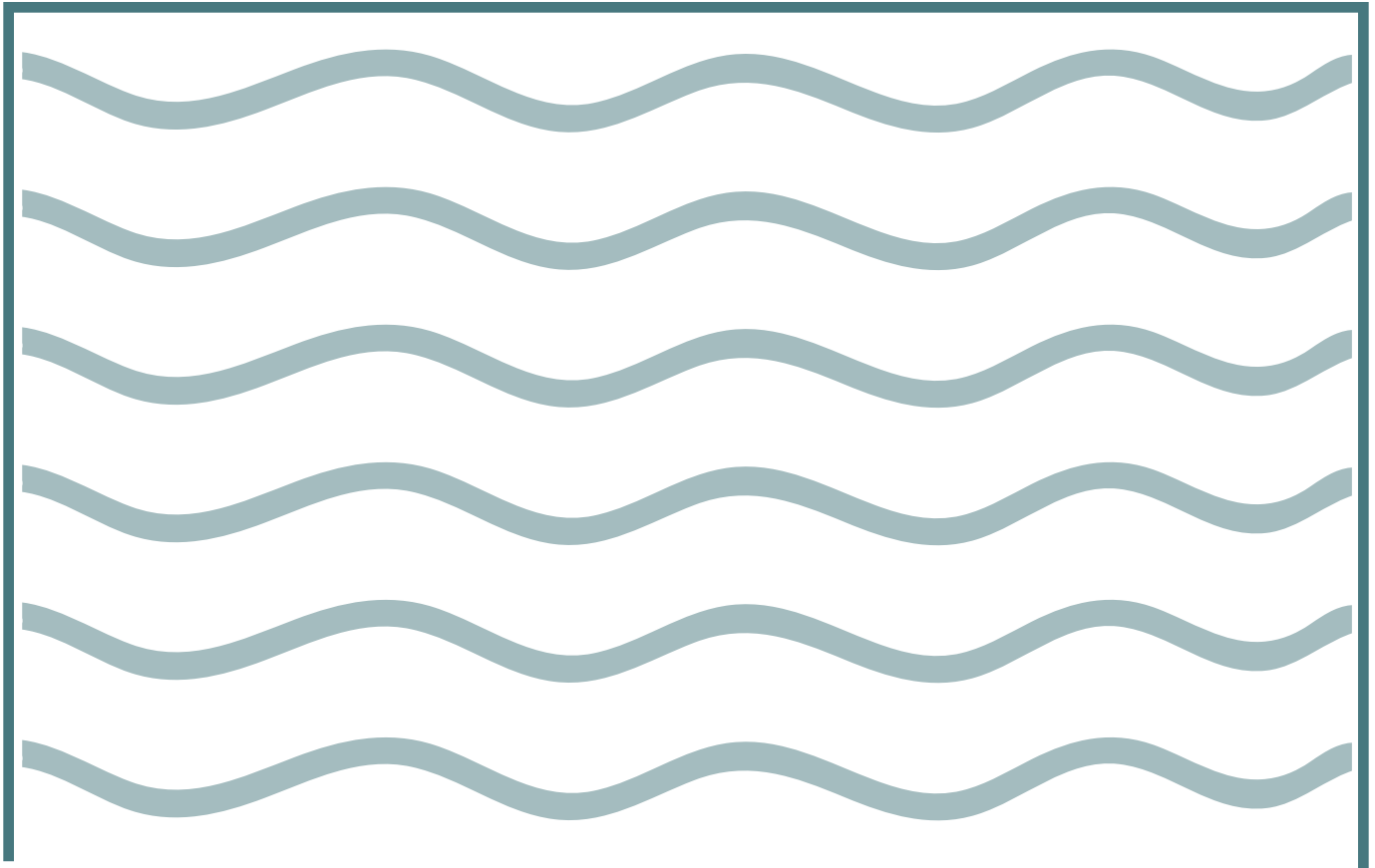
The broadband task force should also consider applying for a Broadband Planning Grant through the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA). This would allow a planning consultant to be retained to assist the task force with their efforts.

Ultimately, the task force should provide recommendations to elected officials on recommended solutions, implementation strategies, and costs.

There are a several grants the county can pursue to help with the planning and development of broadband:

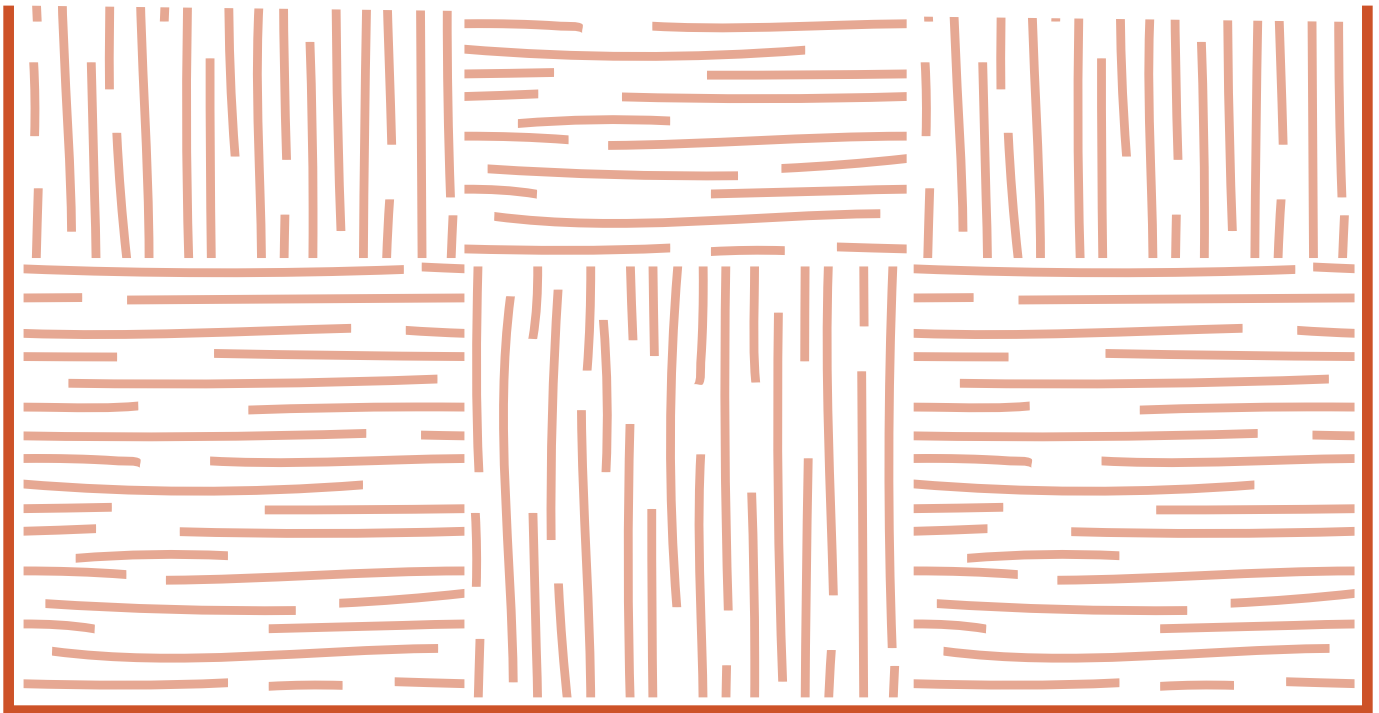
Grants to consider:

- OCRA Broadband Planning Grant
- Indiana Next Level Connections Grant (granted to providers, not units of government)
- USDA ReConnect Loan and/or Grant



Placemaking

6



Existing Conditions

Vermillion County has a rich county culture and residents have a spirit of pride in their identity. The county is well known for events such as the Little Italy Festival in Clinton, the Newport Antique Auto Hill Climb, Vermillion County Fair, and the Ernie Pyle Fireman's Festival in Dana. The community also supports arts programming, including the county-wide 18 giraffe-themed art installation called "Vermillion County - We're Standing Tall." This artwork is represented by 8 foot tall giraffes that were painted and auctioned off, most of which can be seen in public spaces throughout the county. The program was initiated by the Vermillion County Community Foundation. Eight county heritage sites and buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places as well as five historic districts - a map of these can be found in Chapter 13 of this plan. The natural amenity of the Wabash River also helps define the community, as the river makes up the county's entire eastern boundary. These attractions support local quality of life and serve to attract visitors to the community.

Between 2000 and 2020, the county lost over five percent of its population. Future forecasts indicate that population loss will continue. Quality of place investments are a key strategy for attracting and retaining population. Therefore, supporting an outstanding quality of place is becoming increasingly important to the county. The primary goal of this section is to work together on a strategy to support and expand existing quality of place assets and add complementary and new assets to the community.



"We're Standing Tall" Art Installation in Newport



Public Input

- There needs to be more for kids to do
- A need to develop more community pride

Quality of place and economic development strategies must align to be successful. Today's number one need for employers is a skilled and available workforce. It is no longer enough to have shovel ready development sites to attract investment. Communities need to demonstrate to prospective employers that they have a large supply of workers from which to recruit. Even more, employers are looking at local quality of life and asking if it will continue to attract and retain workers in the area.

Tourism in Vermillion County

- Ernie Pyle WWII Museum
- Coal Town and Railroad Museum
- Windy Ridge Winery and Distillery
- TJ Haase Winery
- Stateline Wine Trail
- Wabash River
- Newport Antique Auto Hill Climb
- Little Italy Festival
- Ernie Pyle Fireman's Festival
- The Beef House Restaurant and Dinner Theater
- 4-H FUNfest / Ag Day
- NVHS Musical
- Dancing with the Stars
- SVHS Musical
- Vermillion County Fair
- Gathering at the Crossing Living History
- Perrysville Fun Days
- Thousand Trails Campground



Newport Hill Climb



Ernie Pyle WWII Museum

Vision

Goal #1:

Develop a placemaking strategy for Vermillion County.

Implementation

To attract and retain workers, the county needs to develop a strategy for supporting outstanding local quality of place.

A strong placemaking strategy can involve many components, including:

- Community identity and civic pride,
- Access to a variety of local attractions and entertainment options,
- Access to a range of local and regional shopping opportunities,
- Parks, recreation and public spaces, and
- Arts and cultural attractions.

The community is working on several placemaking initiatives including parks, trails and downtown projects.

Goal #2:

Expand upon existing community activities and events.

Implementation

Vermillion County has multiple long-standing cultural events throughout the year including the Little Italy Festival, the Newport Antique Auto Hill Climb, the Ernie Pyle Fireman's Festival, and the Vermillion County Fair. In order to capitalize on these events and others as indicated on the previous page, the county should work to program additional complementary events to take advantage of their popularity and enhance the quality of life of the community.

Vision (continued)

Goal #3:

Develop a county-wide gateway and wayfinding program.

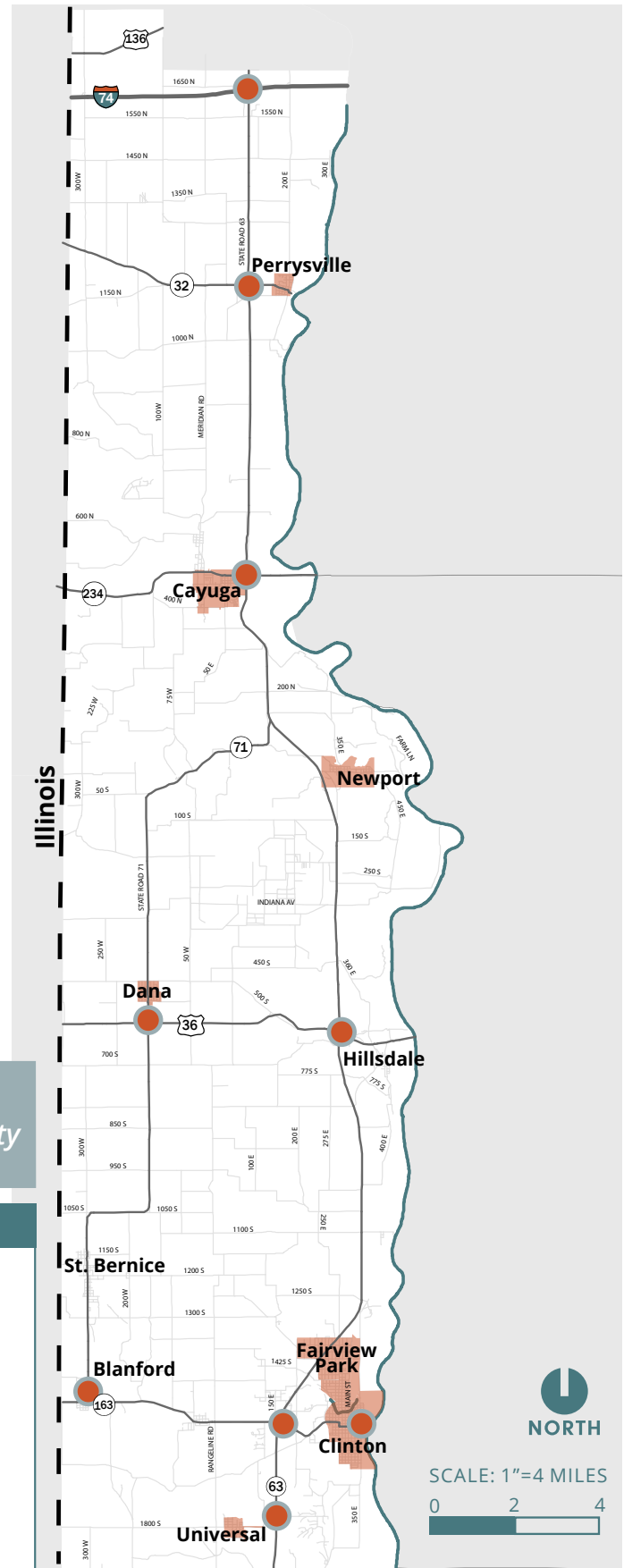
Implementation

Gateways and wayfinding help build community pride and contribute to the sense of place. The county should work with each community and develop a county-wide gateway and wayfinding master plan that identifies key locations for community and county gateways, directional signage, public facility identification, and destination identifiers. As illustrated in Figure 6.1 to the right, the county should identify key areas for wayfinding and gateway signage that helps attract people to the community.

Figure 6.1
Wayfinding and Gateway Opportunity Areas

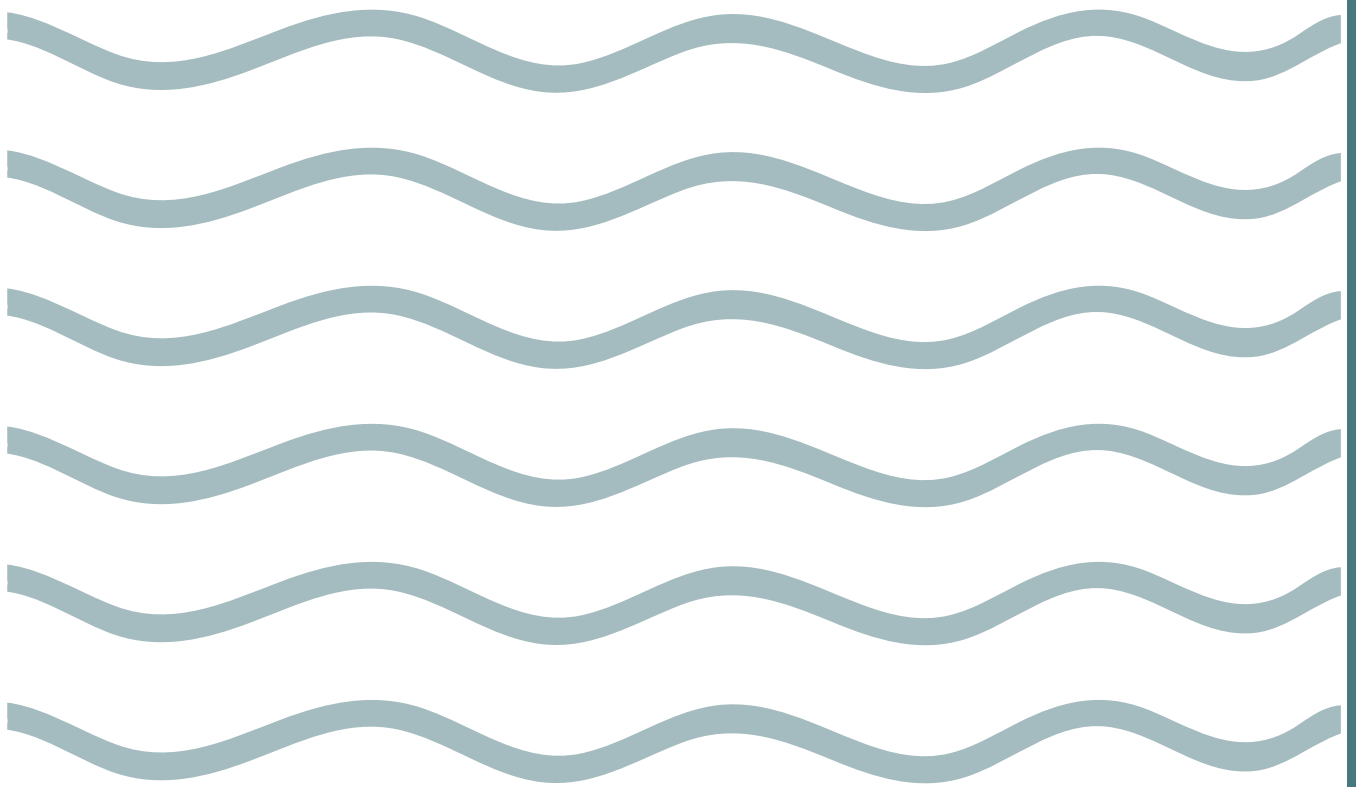
Legend

-  Streets
-  Interstates
-  Wabash River
-  Incorporated Areas
-  Wayfinding and Gateway Opportunity Areas



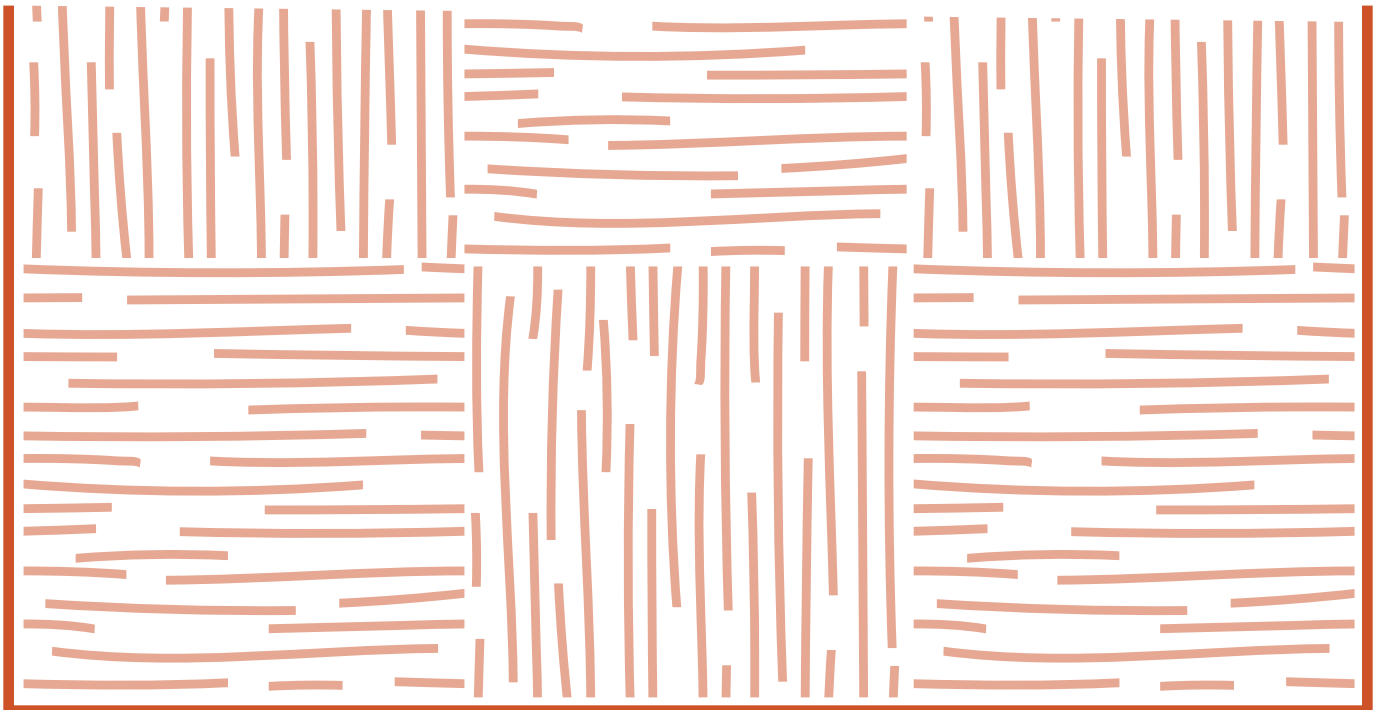


Trailhead Park Pavilion - near Newport



Economic Development

7



Existing Conditions

The largest employer in Vermillion County is Elanco with a staff of around 300 people. The second largest employer is the South Vermillion Community School Corporation. More than 10,000 of the residents of Vermillion County are employed. About 900 of those residents live and work in Vermillion County. Another 1,900 people commute into our county for work. Nearly 4,000 people leave Vermillion County every day for work outside our county. This represents a significant available workforce for our county, if the right opportunities could be developed within Vermillion County that would entice this group of workers to take jobs here. Feedback from the community survey indicated that the majority of respondents felt increasing job opportunities in the county was a top priority.

Vermillion Rise Mega Park was identified as an important economic development opportunity for the county. The 7,000-acre industrial park is home to a 50,000 square foot shell building, a handful of existing buildings with potential for reuse, and access to significant water, sanitary sewer, natural gas, electricity and fiber internet connectivity. While Vermillion Rise is an incredible asset for the county, there has been limited development at the site to date with over 6 tenants employing around 125 people. These currently include:

- Scott Pet
- General Machine and Saw
- Newport Pallet
- Preferred Tire Recycling
- Security Transport
- Gypsum Express

Vermillion Rise is not the only economic development opportunity in the county. Notably, I-74 crosses the northern part of the county and provides an opportunity to attract employers. There are also business park sites in and around Cayuga, Clinton, and Fairview Park. These locations give the opportunity for a balanced approach to economic development across a range of sites that can appeal to a wide range of developers.

Sources:

ESRI Business Analyst, Business Locator Report. Published: October 2020.

U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD 2018 Inflow/Outflow Analysis.

Hoosiers by the Numbers, Indiana Commuting Patterns.

ESRI Business Analyst, 2017 Retail Marketplace Profile.



Public Input

- Target industries based on the county's strengths
- Keep workforce in Vermillion County
- Collaborate with high schools to focus workforce development on students

Vision

Goal #1:

Develop an Economic Development Plan for the I-74/SR 63 Interchange.

Implementation

Located in the northern part of the county, the I-74/SR 63 interchange presents the only interchange development opportunity in the county. Some development currently exists at the site including the Beef House Restaurant and Dinner Theater and a One9 Fuel Stop.

It is recommended that the county complete an economic development plan to attract appropriate development to the interchange. The plan should include and consider a range of development topics, including:

- Identification of an appropriate mix of desired land uses.
- A feasibility study for water service.
- A feasibility study for sanitary sewer service.
- Information on availability of other supporting utilities (broadband, gas, electric).
- Identification of funding strategies for supporting infrastructure, including setting up a tax increment finance (TIF) district for the area.

Goal #2:

Encourage entrepreneurship in the county.

Implementation

One of the largest economic development opportunities for small counties is small and local business investment. To better support small and local businesses, the county should develop a networking program. This program could include a mentorship program that pairs established business with startups. The county should also develop a support program to guide businesses through local permitting processes in an effort to break down barriers for new businesses to start. An example of this would be to utilize the West Central Indiana Small Business Development Center located in Terre Haute. The Center offers business planning tools, workshops, templates, and examples for small business in the region.

Vision (continued)

Goal #3:

Support Development at Vermillion Rise.

Implementation

While Vermillion Rise offers great opportunity, it has not yet seen significant success in attracting employers. Although there is a significant amount of land available, extensive infrastructure investment is needed to attract development. Until aging infrastructure is upgraded, the site will continue to have limited success. It is recommended that Vermillion County and Vermillion Rise partner to identify what base level of infrastructure investment is needed to make more land available for development.

Community leaders need to build consensus around strategy, desired outcomes, and supporting investments for Vermillion Rise. Being a complex redevelopment project, achieving success at this site will require the full support and resources of elected officials, county staff, economic development staff, and community. The needed update to the Vermillion Rise re-use plan provides a key opportunity to collaborate on the next investments.

Vermillion Rise - infrastructure investments and opportunities

Water System Improvements:

- Reservoir Bypass Project
- Scott Pet Water Line
- Potable Water Storage
- Newport Pallet Water Line
- Regional Water System

Wastewater Collection and Treatment Improvements:

- Newport Pallet Sewer Line
- Wastewater Treatment Capacity

Stormwater Management Improvements:

- Stormwater Management Planning

Site and Building Improvements:

- Industrial Site Development
- Demolition and Clearance

Rail Service Improvements:

- A new Railroad Spur

Road Improvements:

- Broadway Avenue
- 10th Street

Public Facilities:

- New Administration Building
- Business Incubator Feasibility Analysis
- Business Incubator/Co-Working Facility

Rural Economic Development:

- Alternative Agriculture Support Facility
- Career and Vocational Education Facility
- Recreation and Tourism Facility Development

Economic Development:

- Update Re-Use Plan
- Marketing Program

Vision (continued)

Goal #4:

Increase educational attainment to ensure a skilled workforce.

Implementation

Graduation rates at Vermillion County schools are strong, but the county lags behind the state in the percentage of its population with advanced degrees. Increasingly, the county has seen more of the high-tech jobs at local employers being held by residents from outside the county.

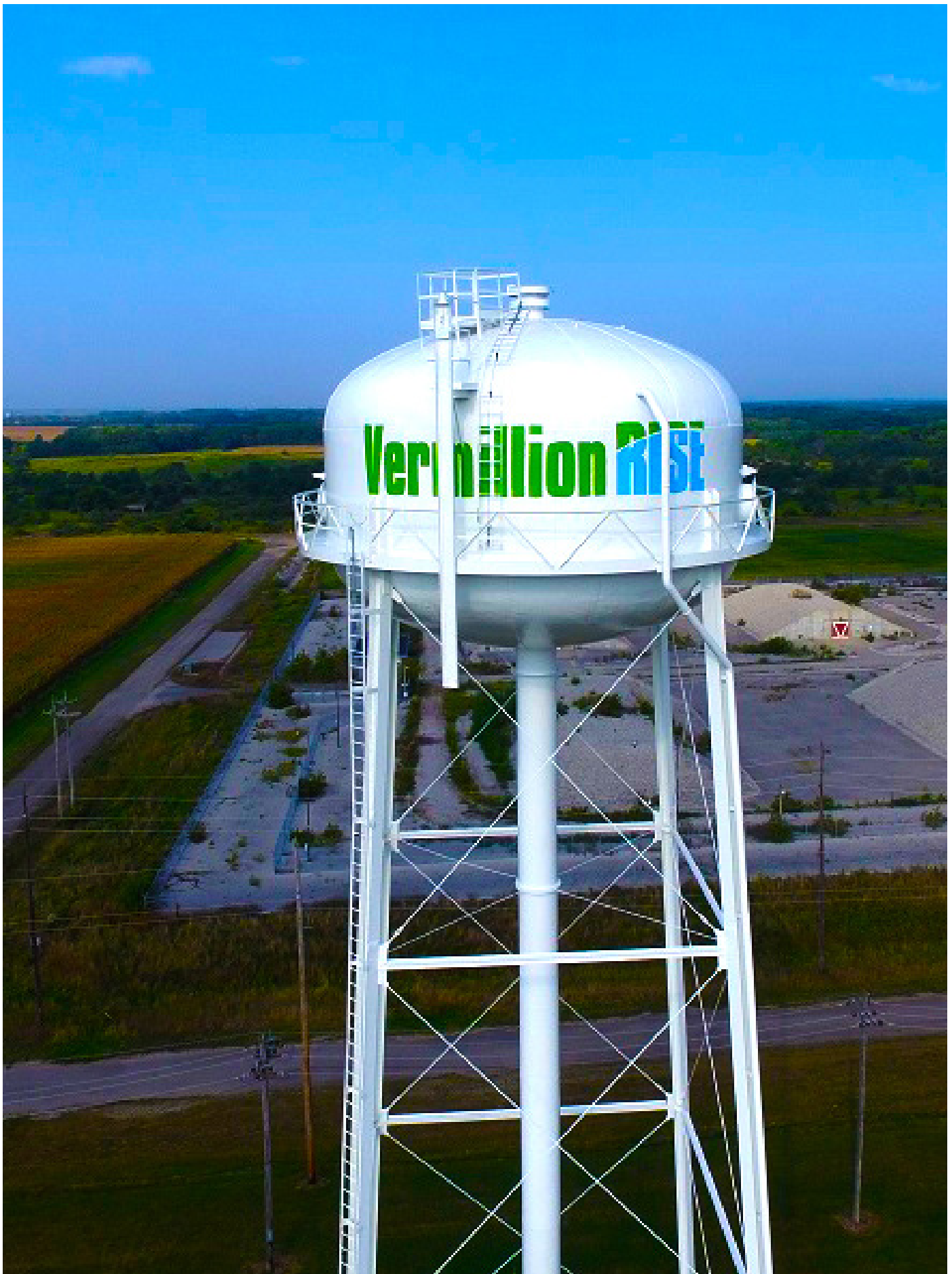
A key goal for the county is to raise educational attainment at all levels, including bachelor's degrees, associates degrees, vocational training, and specialty certificates. The county should continue to partner with local school corporations, the Wabash River Career and Technical Education Center, St. Mary's of the Woods College, Ivy Tech Community College, and Indiana State University to support advanced training during high school so students have employable skills upon graduation. Curriculum should be developed in partnership with local businesses so that training matches the needs of those businesses. Additionally, the county should support local internship programs to connect area students with local employers.

Goal #5:

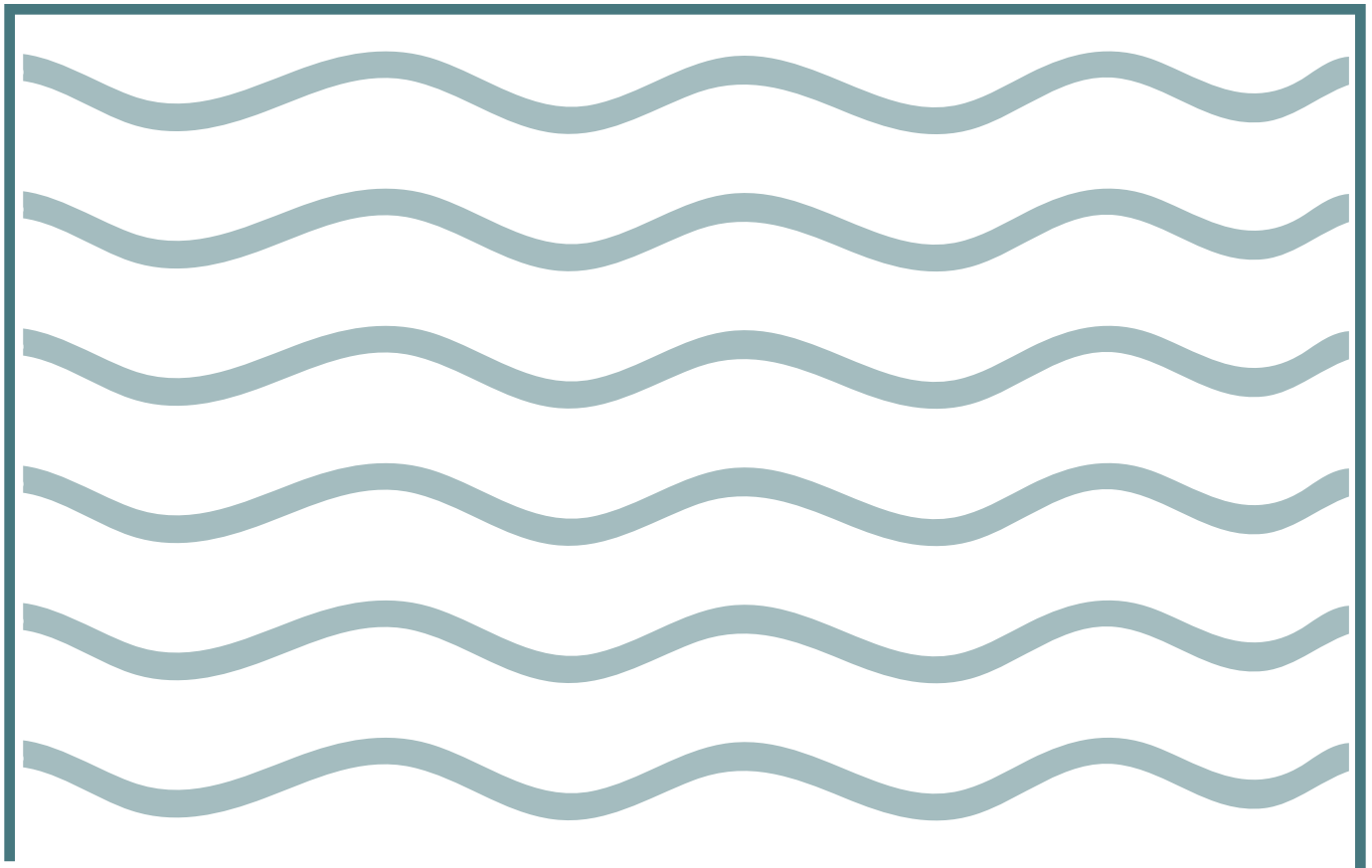
Support the development of the TIF district on SR 63 north of Clinton and all future TIF districts in the county.

Implementation

The county and local governments should work with the Vermillion County Redevelopment Commission by supporting efforts to attract and retain businesses within all current and future TIF districts, including the TIF district on SR 63 north of Clinton.

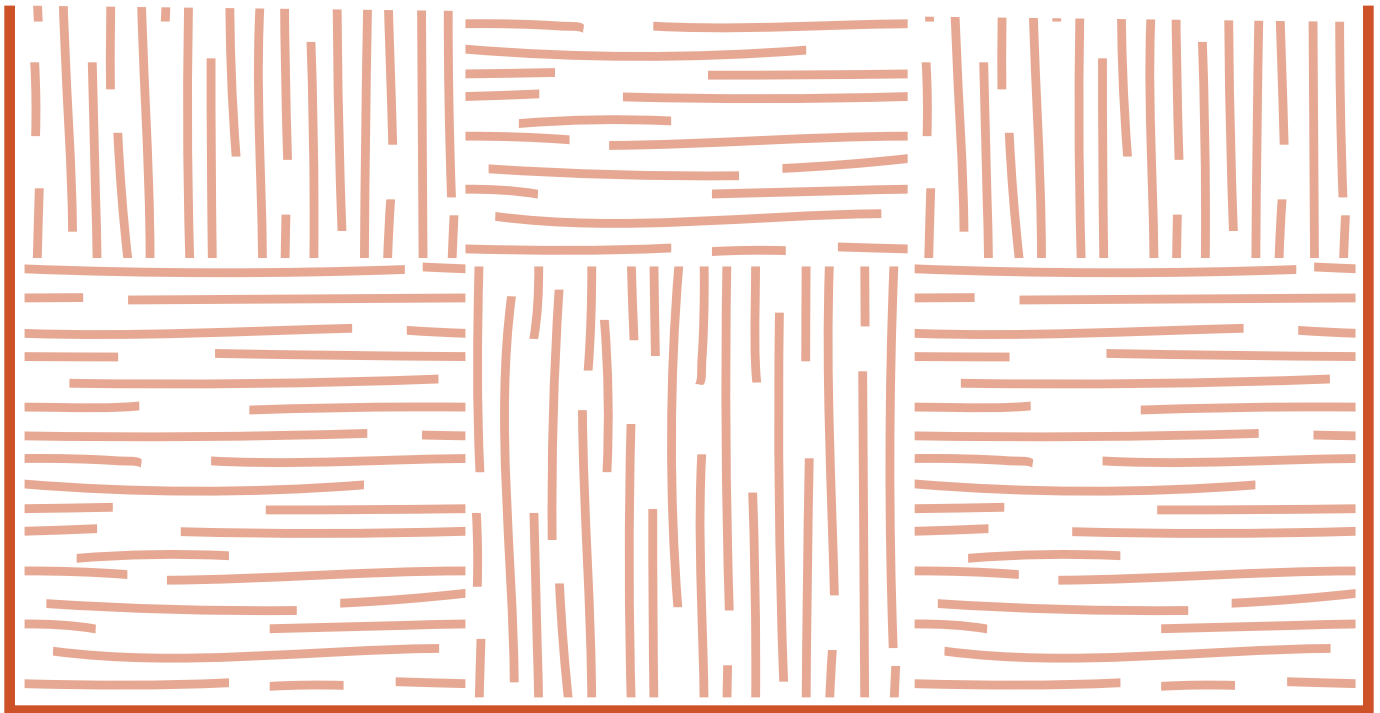


Vermillion Rise



Housing

8



Existing Conditions

Vermillion County's housing stock is largely comprised of single-family homes with pockets of multi-family residential near and within Clinton and Fairview Park. Based on conversations with stakeholders, many people move to Vermillion County because it is an affordable community with good schools. The county has the opportunity to develop diverse housing options that offer a range of housing types and costs.

Throughout the last 10 years, the average number of permits have been less than 100 issued each year. Notably, in 2020, 97 permits were issued; however, there have been several years where there have been 60 or less permits issued. Since 2000 there has been a significant decrease in permits by as much as 50 percent. Most of the housing stock, 2,625 units of the 7,499 in the county, were built before 1939. Though new homes have been built in the county, the number of new units seems to be declining.



Public Input

- We need more affordable apartment options
- We need more senior housing
- Something needs to be done with blighted properties throughout the county

Table 8.1 | Permits Issued per Year

Year	Total Permits	Residential Construction Value
2000	150	\$4,210,125.00
2001	126	\$4,375,100.00
2002	112	\$4,191,050.00
2003	148	\$5,610,987.00
2004	120	\$4,592,949.00
2005	123	\$4,016,850.00
2006	99	\$4,891,000.00
2007	82	\$2,856,516.00
2008	88	\$3,301,850.00
2009	83	\$3,683,900.00
2010	94	\$3,322,150.00
2011	57	\$3,418,160.00
2012	58	\$1,525,799.00
2013	50	\$3,259,556.00
2014	68	\$3,615,842.00
2015	71	\$2,480,033.16
2016	67	\$3,343,632.00
2017	73	\$3,591,821.48
2018	78	\$3,685,108.00
2019	57	\$2,276,815.00
2020	97	\$5,633,813.40
2021	83	\$6,341,016.00

Vision

Goal #1:

Strategically expand and make more housing options available.

Implementation

Vermillion County should welcome new housing throughout the county but should focus its efforts strategically.

The most cost-effective areas to provide housing are in locations where infrastructure and services already exist to support it. This means focusing short-term efforts in and around the incorporated communities. These locations not only have water, sewer, fire, and police service, but many also have wired broadband available.

As infrastructure and broadband are extended to future economic development areas, the county should evaluate options for supporting housing in those same areas. A map of short-term and longer-term housing opportunity areas is illustrated in Figure 8.2.

The county should work with individual communities to ensure that there is a supply of shovel-ready housing sites available in each community. When communities do not have development ready sites with available infrastructure, alternatives for incentivizing housing through infrastructure investment should be considered.

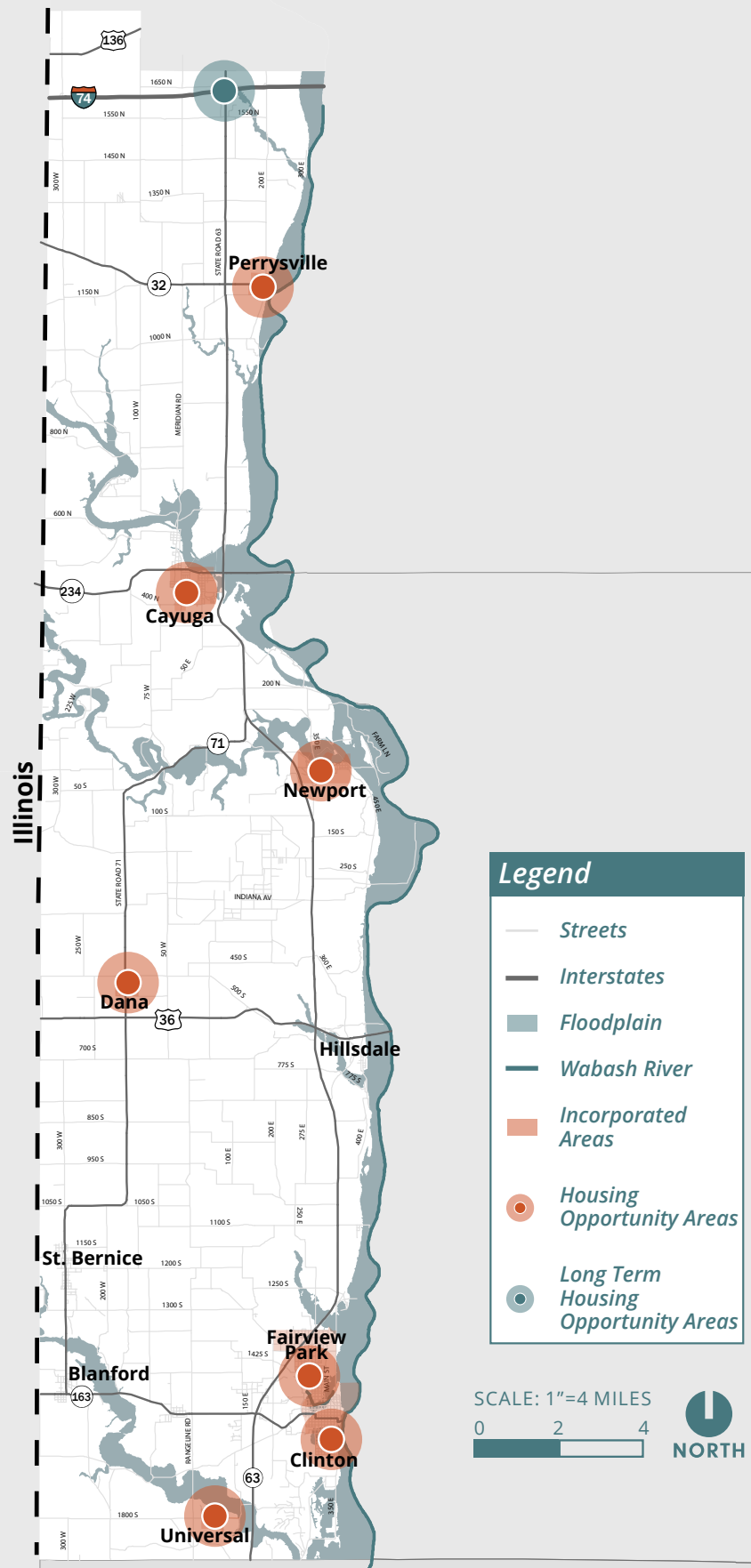
Goal #2:

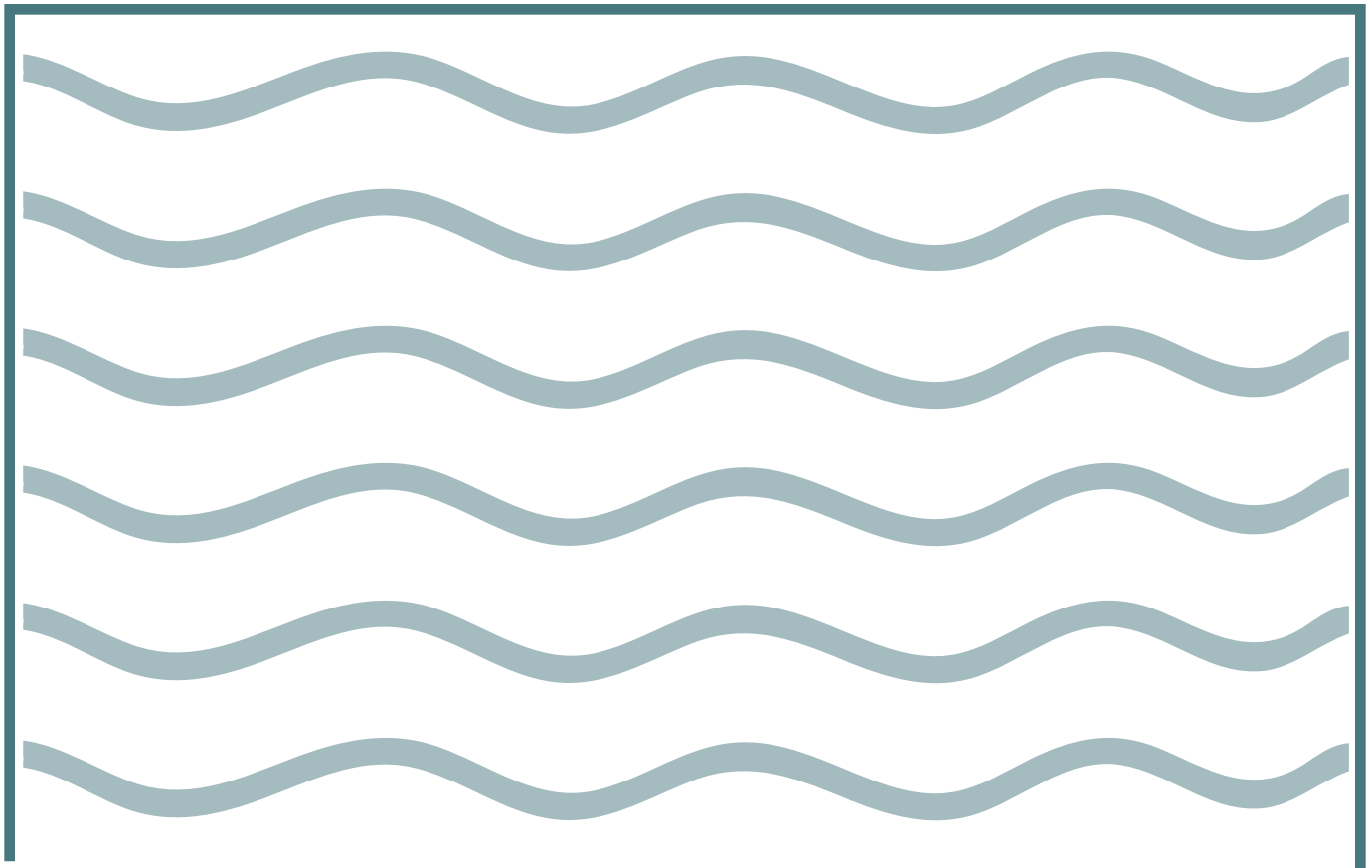
Continue blight elimination and revitalization in strategic areas by coordinating efforts already in progress.

Implementation

One strategy to increase residential development is to grow from within. Counties, like Vermillion, which have a declining population have seen great success using blight elimination programs combined with infill development. Through an ongoing county program, the Redevelopment Commission has been acquiring property through tax sales and other means to demolish blighted properties. Continuing, supporting, and coordinating programs such as the Vermillion County Redevelopment Commission effort already in place will help the county assess the ways in which growth from within can take place. Typically blight reduction and infill works best in municipalities and adjacent areas.

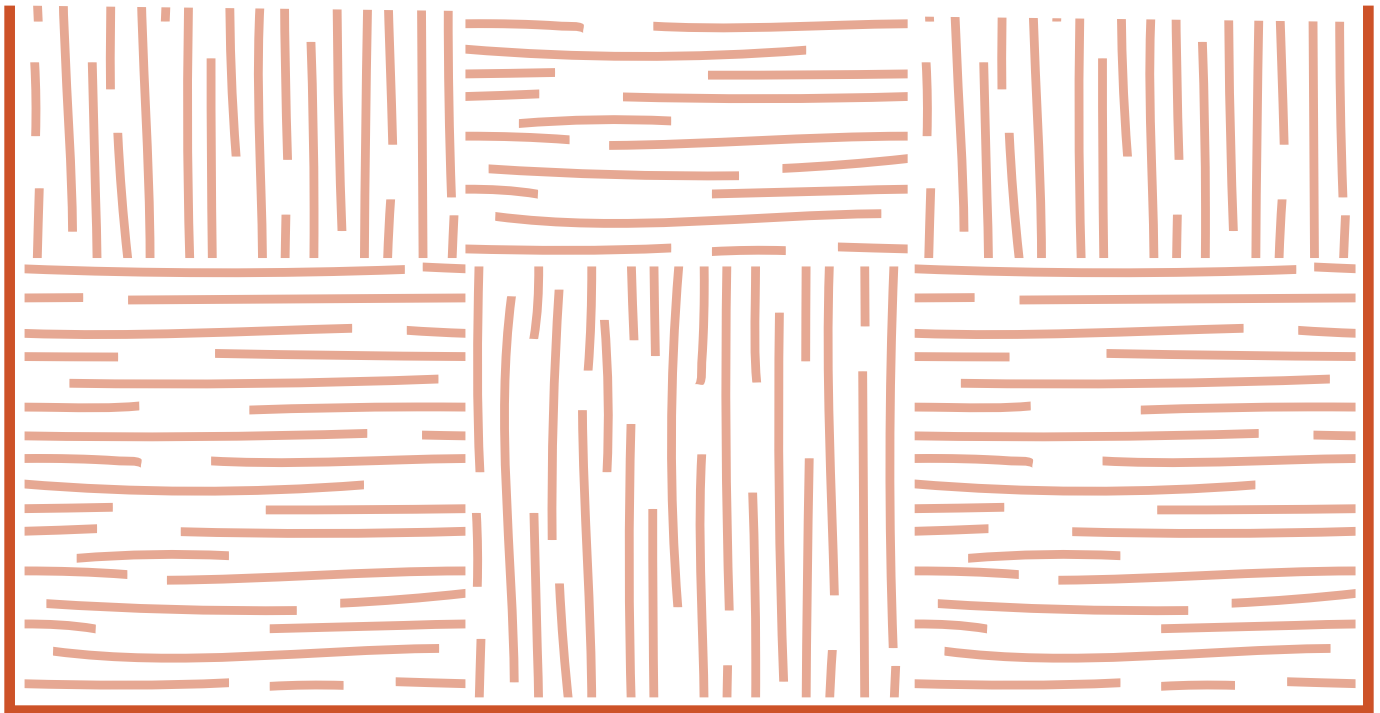
Figure 8.2
Housing Opportunity Areas





Transportation

9



Existing Conditions

Vermillion County has many positive transportation related assets. State Road 63 is the primary arterial that connects the entire county north to south. North of Newport, SR 71 branches off of SR 63 to provide a secondary north-south connection to addition unincorporated areas of the southwest portion of the county. US 36, SR 32, SR 234, and SR 163 all provide direct east/west connections across the county. Interstate 74 bisects the very northern portion of the county, providing an exit onto SR 63 and acts as a northernmost gateway to the county. A Functional Classification Map is included as Figure 9.1, which identifies main thoroughfares within the county and roads eligible for state and federal funding for capacity, condition, and safety improvements.

A review of the 2020-2024 Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) indicates a handful of preventative maintenance and repair projects throughout the county, including pavement overlay, small structure replacements such as culverts, and bridge deck overlays and replacements.

Beyond roadway infrastructure, Vermillion County is served by CSX rail lines which run north and south across the county with a spur connection near Hillsdale that runs past Dana.

Stakeholder and community survey responses indicate that residents feel satisfied with roadway conditions. The county has been proactive in obtaining funding for roadway improvements,

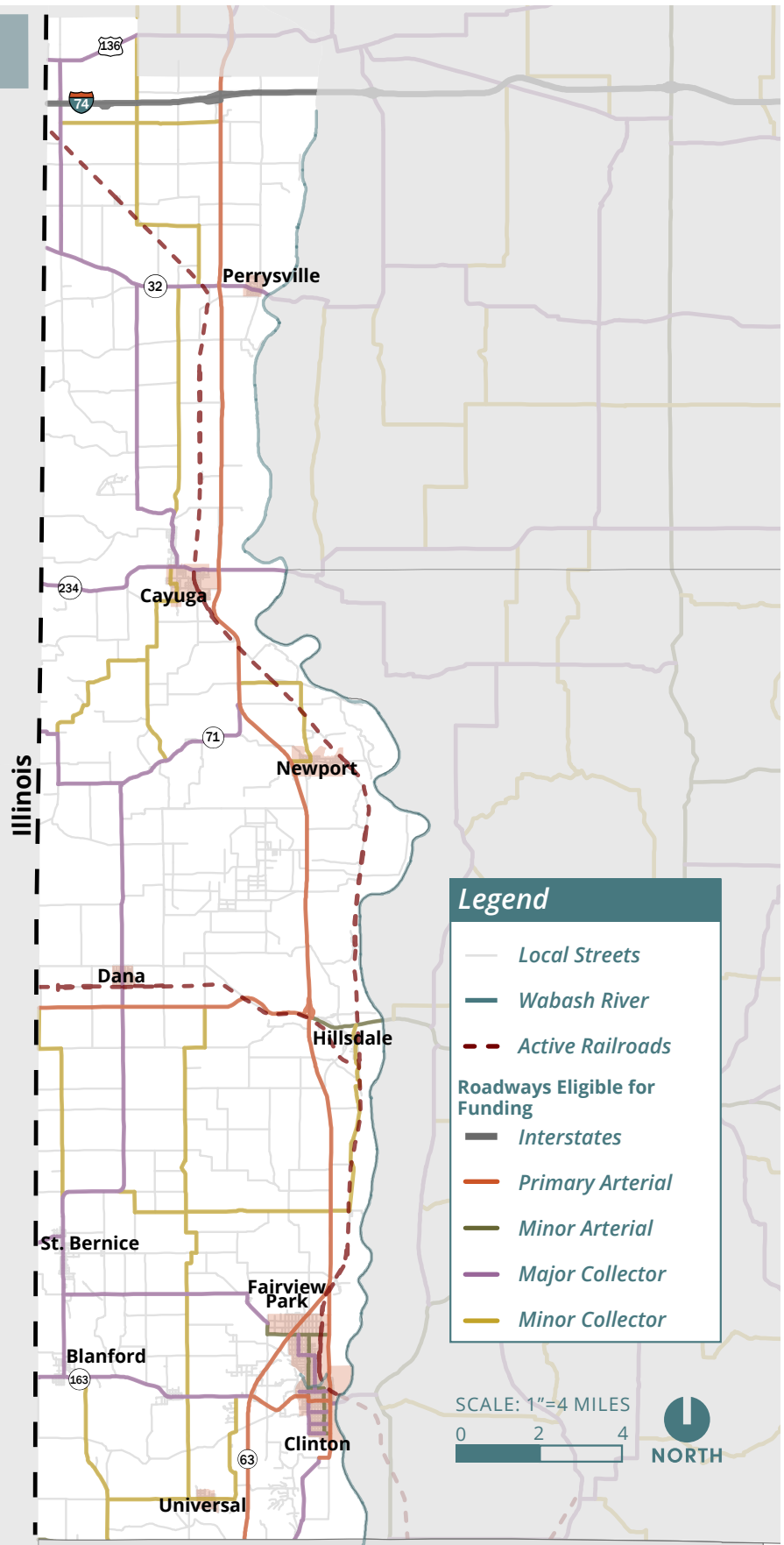
including securing the maximum grant amount of \$1,000,000 through the Indiana Community Crossings Matching Grant in 2021.

Beyond the physical condition of roadways, community survey respondents and stakeholders noted the need for increased pedestrian and bicycle routes. Furthermore, only 15% of community survey respondents agreed that gateways into Vermillion County were attractive and welcoming to visitors. The county should take into consideration that roadways can also act as a welcoming gateway into a community, helping to craft a positive first impression.



SR 63 Looking North from Newport

Figure 9.1
Existing Functional Class Map



Vision

Goal #1:

Develop a prioritized plan for county roadway repairs and updates.

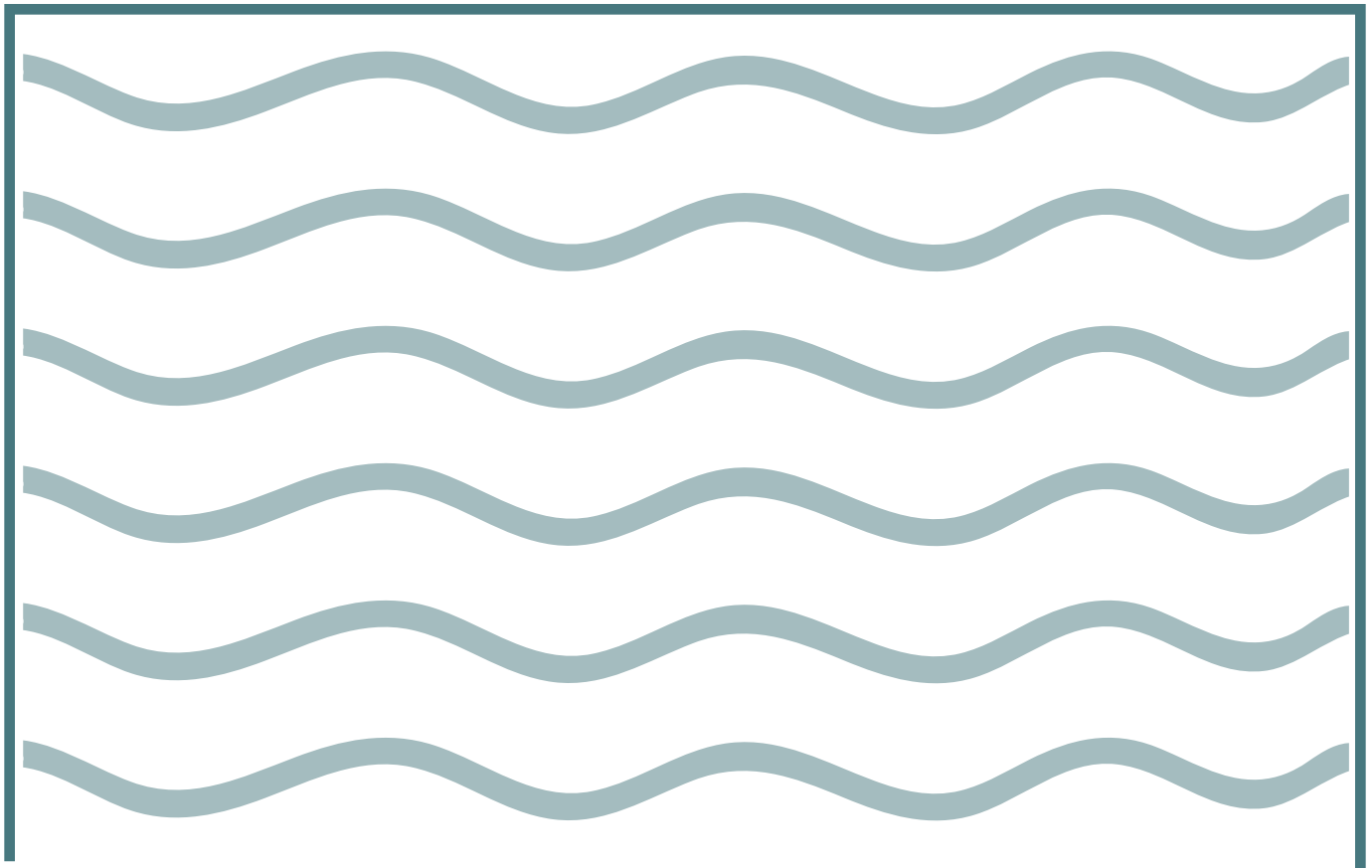
Implementation

To be eligible for Community Crossings Matching Grants, Vermillion County should continue to update its pavement asset management plan and PASER ratings. As this is regularly updated, key roadway needs that go beyond the limitations of the Community Crossings Matching Grant program should be identified and those projects targeted for other supporting grant dollars.



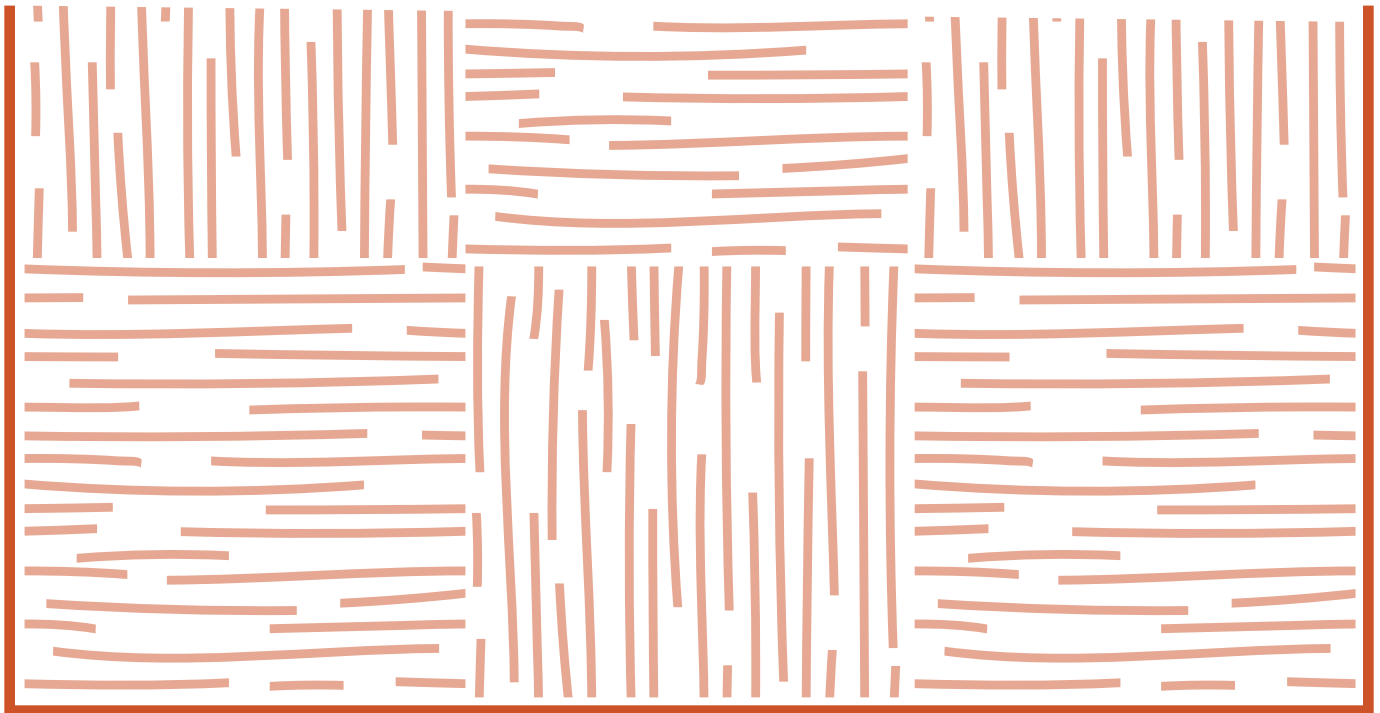
Public Input

- Most major thoroughfares in good condition
- Enhance gateways into the county



Agriculture

10



Existing Conditions

Vermillion County has a long history of farming and agricultural production. Figure 10.1 shows areas where agricultural farmland is found in the county and areas that would be considered agricultural farmland if drained within existing floodplains.

As seen on the map, most of the prime farmland is found in the southern half of the county. Continuing to protect and increase land for agricultural uses is important in protecting the rural heritage and expanding the agricultural economy of the county.

Vermillion County has a strong existing resource in the Soil and Water Conservation District. The mission of the district is to provide leadership and assistance in the proper use and management of soil, water, and related natural resources for all citizens in Vermillion County. The Soil and Water Conservation District currently provides equipment rental, soil health consulting services, educational opportunities for a variety of landowners and agricultural producers, invasive species control services, and surface water testing.

Vermillion County has an active 4-H Program which engages and educates students about the county's rich agricultural heritage. The program has recently focused efforts on S.T.E.A.M. education (science, technology, engineering, agriculture and mathematics). Vermillion County 4-H's diversification beyond traditional agricultural education will help to prepare the county's younger generation for a more technology and science centered future. In addition to 4-H, the rural heritage and agricultural economy is being supported by the North and South Community School Corporations through their robust local FFA Organization programs.

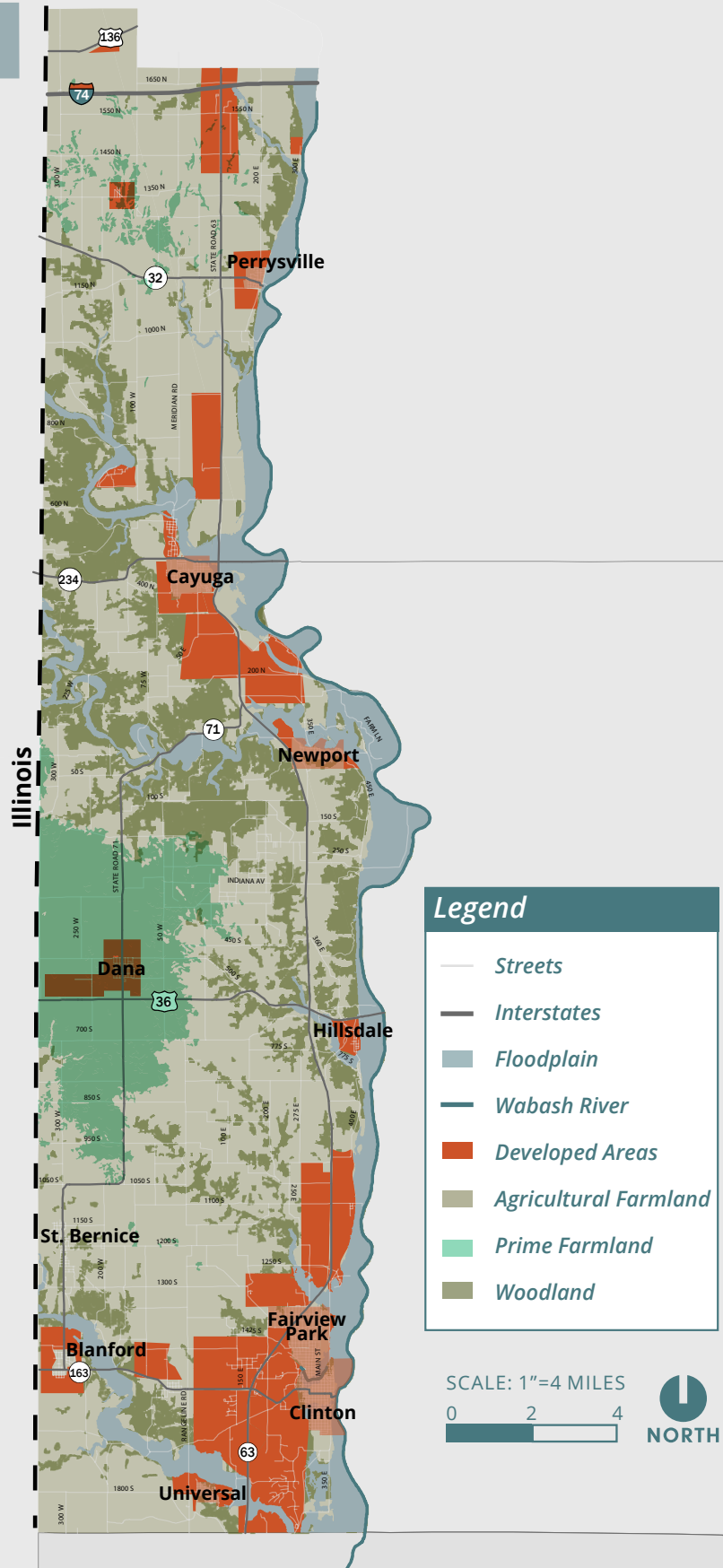
The Purdue Extension is a great resource in the county. In addition to supporting 4-H programming, they also serve the community through agricultural and natural resources consulting, community development assistance, and health and human services assistance.



Public Input

- Maintain the rural character of the county and preserve valuable farmland
- Provide more agricultural related learning opportunities and training

Figure 10.1
Agricultural Land in the County



Vision

Goal #1:

Strengthen and preserve Vermillion County's agricultural land and prepare the next generation of farmers for the future.

Implementation

Key resources for this effort include the Soil and Water Conservation District, FFA programs, and Purdue Extension programs.

The Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a tremendous asset to Vermillion County and has the potential to increase their impact through expanded services, fund seeking capacity and landowner education. Stakeholder feedback recommended that the SWCD partner on a county and municipal level to develop robust agricultural producer, rural landowner, and urban land owner outreach and education programs. Developing and expanding outreach and education programs would allow local producers and landowners throughout the county to stay up-to-date on the best management practices and integrate advancements in science and technology into their operations. Increasing soil health practices will benefit the county by keeping soil in place with less erosion due to water and wind as well as increasing water quality and quantity.

Looking forward, Vermillion County should continue to expand training and job opportunities for young agriculture professionals through higher education and FFA programs. It is recommended that the county continue to support Purdue Extension and local FFA programs by assisting in the development

of robust agricultural training and outreach programs. It is essential that the next generation of Vermillion County's agricultural producers have access to the most advanced industry information.



County Fair - 4-H Sheep Show



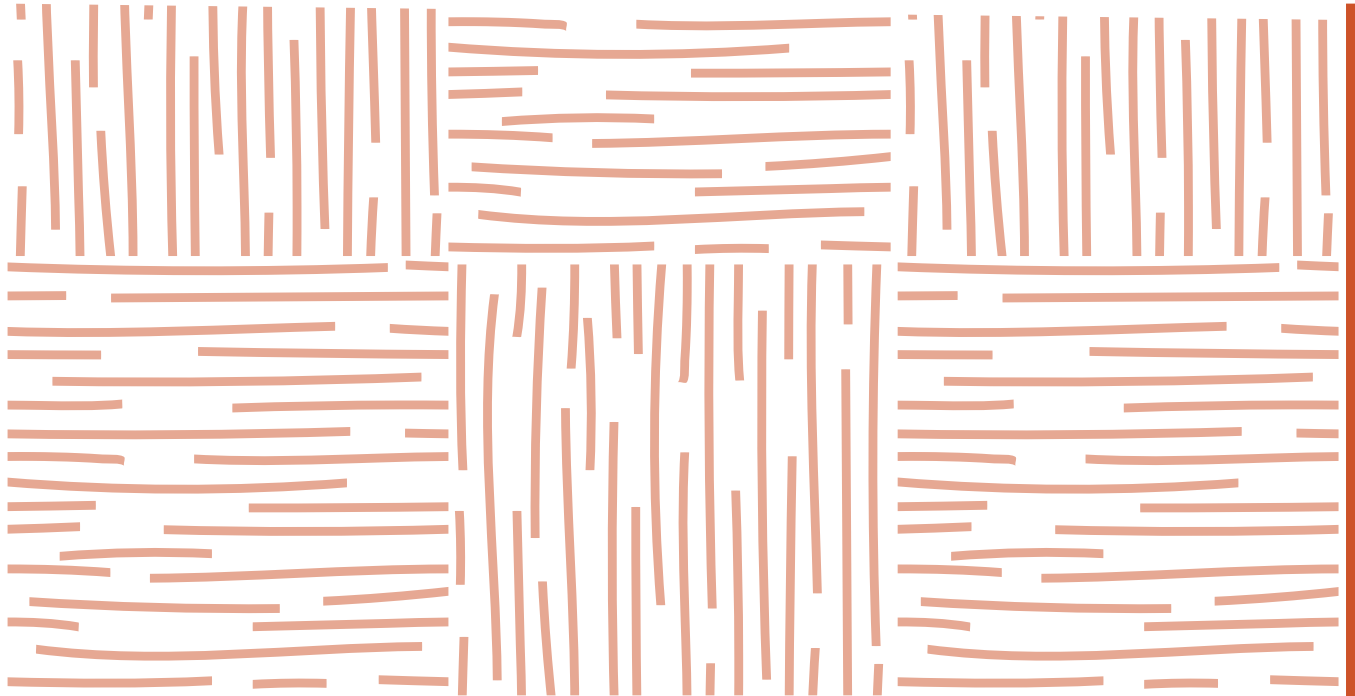
AC Grain - Dana

Photo by Tom Milligan



Natural Resources

11



Existing Conditions

Vermillion County is full of natural beauty that contributes to the quality of place and environmental integrity of the community. The county has a diverse mix of municipalities, agricultural land, and woodlands. According to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), nearly a quarter of Vermillion County is comprised of woodlands. More than 80% percent of community survey respondents indicated that protecting the county's natural resources was important or very important. Stakeholders also prioritized protection and preservation of natural resources, realizing that the county's natural beauty is inherently linked to its identity and success.

Rippling along the county's eastern border, the Wabash River was immediately identified as one of Vermillion County's most important natural resources. Because the river spans the entire length of the county, it is a powerful uniting element within the county and a recreational amenity.

Another key resource is the system of aquifers across the county. There are shallow, unconsolidated aquifers serving the county, as well as deeper bedrock aquifers. Most public and industrial wells are located adjacent to the river. Some of the wells are capable of producing 500 million gallons per day (MGD) according to U.S. Geological Survey and Indiana Department of Natural Resources records.

While not a "natural" feature, the existing landscape of the county has been heavily influenced by previous coal and aggregate mining. The southern part of the county has seen both surface and underground coal mining activity over the years. This previous land disturbance limits where some types of development can occur. A map illustrating known surface and underground activity can be found in Figure 11.1.



Public Input

- The Wabash River is an underutilized asset
- Protecting the county's Natural Resources is important

Figure 11.1
Surface and Underground Mines

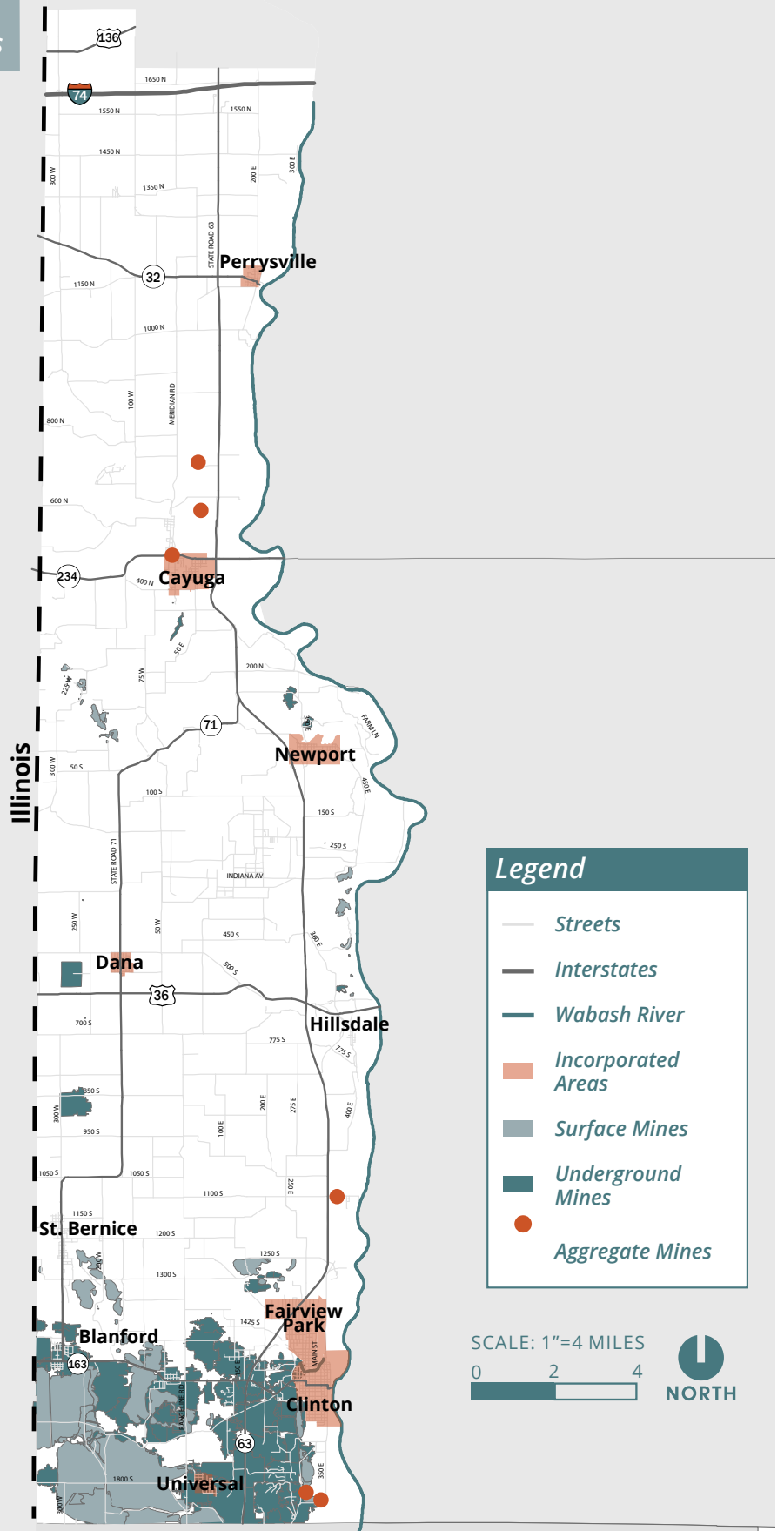
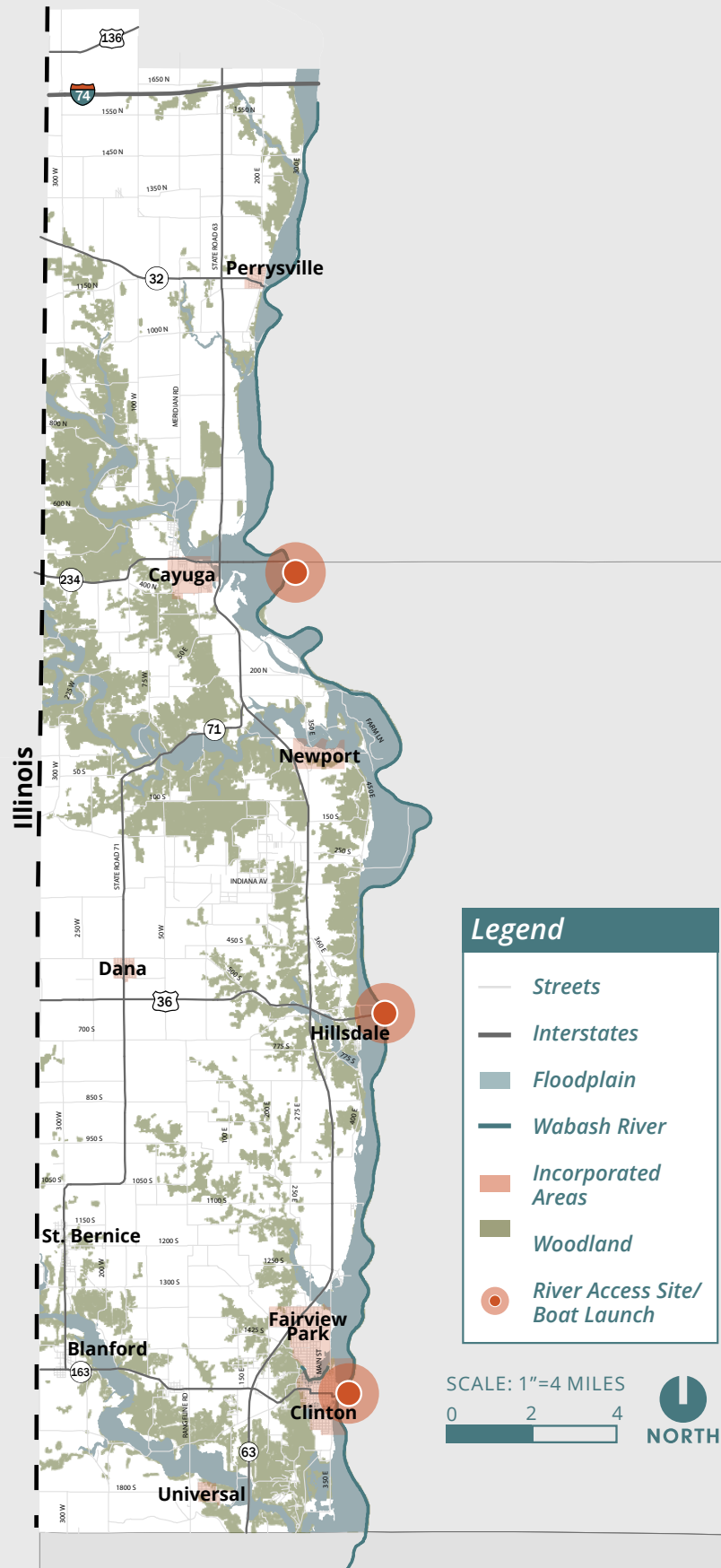


Figure 11.2
Existing River and Floodplain



Goal #1:

Utilize the shared resource of the Wabash River as a connecting element throughout the county.

Implementation

Spanning more than 45 miles along Vermillion County's eastern border, the Wabash River is a shared and unifying resource. It is recommended that the county create a consistent wayfinding system along the river. This system should be visually consistent to promote continuity and unity along the corridor. The wayfinding system should also highlight key interest points along the river such as public access points, camping, fishing, and other recreational opportunities.

Plans should also be made to emphasize the recreational potential of the river. Water trails for canoes, kayaks, and fishing are increasing in popularity. However, Vermillion County only has one public access point in Clinton. Two other access points occur along the east bank of the Wabash River in northern Parke County and Montezuma. These access points are illustrated in Figure 11.2.

Increasing county access to the river and creating a consistent wayfinding system around the Wabash River will aid in community building and further develop a shared Vermillion County amenity. These connections also have the ability to tie into efforts to create water trails and increase access in adjacent counties.

The Vermillion County Economic Development Council and Vermillion County Parks Board have looked for ways to network with the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission (WRHCC) in the past and should continue to do so in the future. WRHCC can assist in identifying potential funding sources.

Goal #2:

Support the preservation of woodland and natural resources throughout the county.

Implementation

Preservation strategies need to be implemented at the county level and spread on the local level. This is key in the new larger developments along the banks of the Wabash River, agriculture-adjacent property, and along greenways and trail corridors

It is important to raise awareness about the dangers of polluting the river. The county should determine if appropriate signage is needed in key areas to prevent dumping and littering. Many communities have annual river clean ups. Developing a clear plan to protect Vermillion County's natural resources will ensure they will be preserved for generations to come.

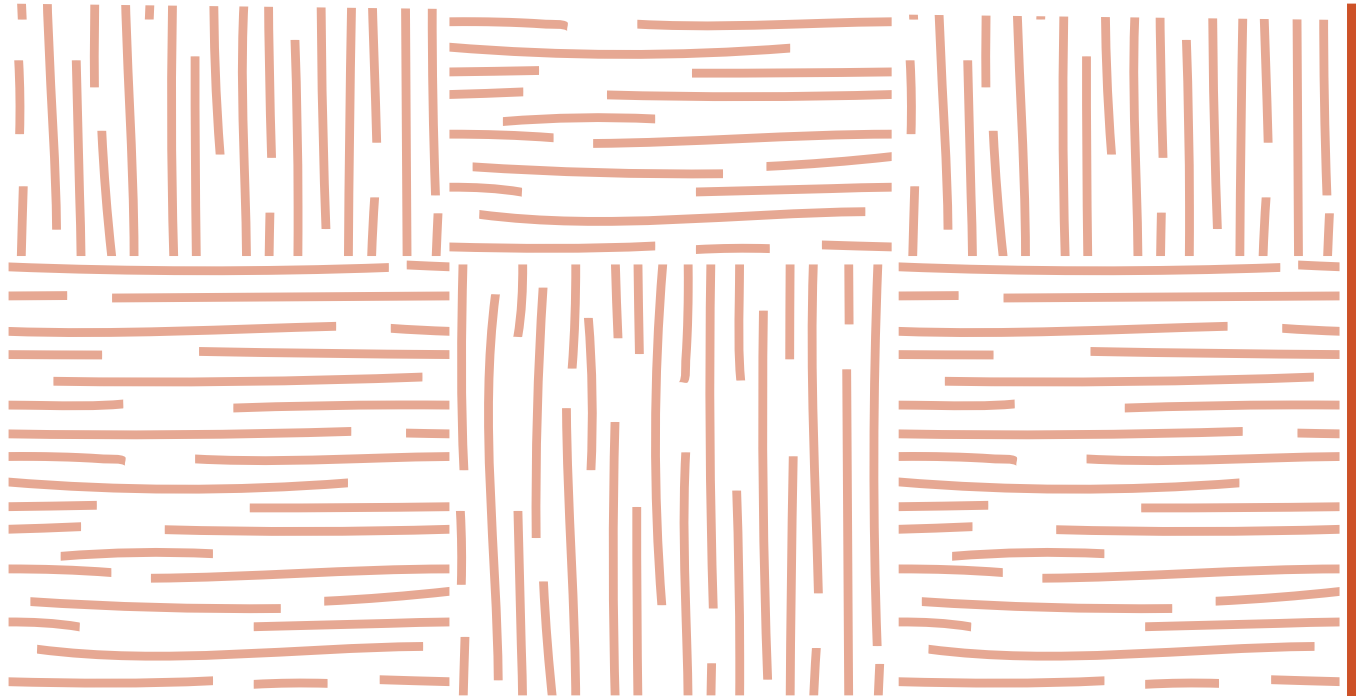


Woodlands in Vermillion Rise



Parks and Recreation

12



Existing Conditions

Vermillion County has been fortunate to be able to provide widely dispersed park spaces, mainly in the smaller towns that dot the county. These parks are key community assets and should be celebrated. Some of these spaces were successfully converted from schoolyards which become vacant with school consolidation, such as Perrysville, Universal, Dana and Newport Parks. The county currently provides five community parks, a trailhead park, and a rest park.

In addition to the county-owned parks as shown on the map in Figure 12.1, residents of Vermillion County are further served by other park and recreation amenities such as the park system in Clinton and nearby state parks and recreation areas including Turkey Run State Park, Shades State Park, and Raccoon Lake State Recreation Area. Recreational trails are also promoted and advanced by the Vermillion Trails Alliance, which has partnered with Vermillion County to develop Trailhead Park near Newport and has recently completed a bicycle/ walking trail atop an abandoned rail bed connecting the Wabash River pedestrian bridge with the town of Hillsdale.

Several stakeholders noted the importance of recreational amenities to the economic prosperity of the county. Likewise, 80% of community survey respondents indicated that parks and recreation were important or very important for

the county. While the county has successfully provided recreation spaces throughout the county, 57% of respondents felt more outdoor recreation opportunities were needed and nearly 65% felt that the county needs additional bicycle and pedestrian trails/routes.

While feedback indicated that parks and recreation were important to residents, Vermillion County has some underutilized natural resources, namely the Wabash River. Outdoor recreation can be a boon to the local economy. Building recreation opportunities around the Wabash River such as accessible natural areas, public access sites, and water trails could allow Vermillion County to attract visitors and associated spending at local businesses. Additionally, the river serves as a key quality of place amenity that supports retaining and growing the community's population.

Vermillion County Trails Alliance

Vision: The vision of the Vermillion Trails Alliance is a prosperous Vermillion County that values healthy lifestyles, embraces a conservation ethic and respects our cultural heritage; a place where people are connected with the outdoors and communities are connected with each other.

Benefits of Walking and Biking Trails

- Provide safe family recreation.
- Provide nature education.
- Provide transportation choices
- Provide the opportunity to connect communities.
- Promote healthier lifestyles.
- Promote the natural beauty of Vermillion County.
- Promote historical landmarks.
- Improve quality of life for residents.

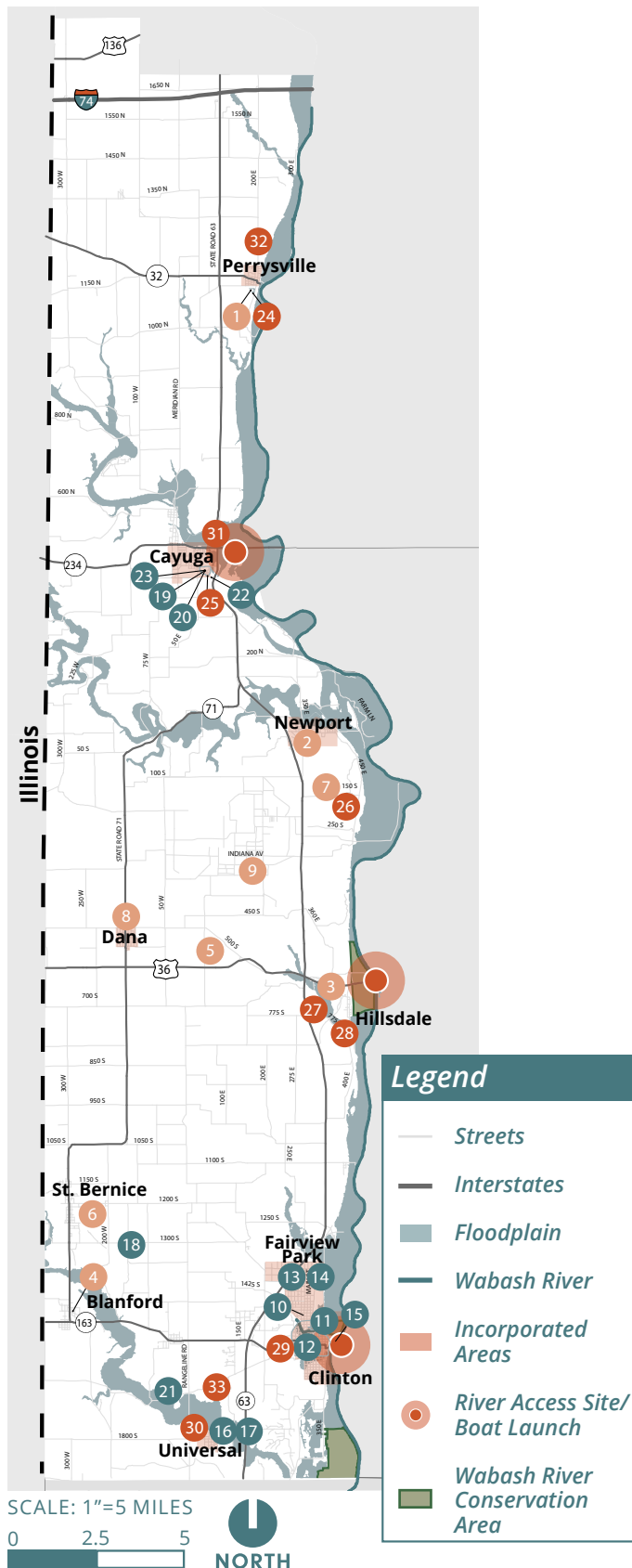
Source: <https://www.vermilliontrailsalliance.com/>



Public Input

- More outdoor spaces needed throughout the county
- More bicycle and pedestrian trails/routes

Figure 12.1
Parks and Trails Map



Existing Vermillion County Parks

- 1 Perrysville Park
- 2 Newport Park
- 3 Hillsdale Park
- 4 Blanford Park
- 5 Ernie Pyle Rest Park
- 6 Miller Park
- 7 Trailhead Park
- 8 Dana Town Park
- 9 Vermillion Rise Park

Other Recreation Organizations/Amenities in the County

- 10 Veterans Park - Clinton
- 11 Delta Theta Tau Peg Helms Park - Clinton
- 12 Sportland Park and Dog Park - Clinton
- 13 Fairview Park - Clinton
- 14 Matthews Park Golf Course - Clinton
- 15 Riverside Park - Clinton (river access site)
- 16 Universal Town Park - Universal
- 17 Bocce Court - Universal Park
- 18 Thousand Trails RV Campground - near St. Bernice
- 19 Cayuga Park and Campground /County Fairgrounds
- 20 Frisbee Disc Golf - Cayuga Park
- 21 Rangeline Conservation Club
- 22 Illiana Skeet and Trap Club
- 23 Skate Park - Cayuga Park

Vermillion County Trail Network

- 24 Perrysville Park Walking Trail
- 25 Cayuga Walking Trail
- 26 Trailhead Park Walking / Biking Trail
- 27 Hillsdale Park Circle Trail
- 28 Hillsdale Walking Trail and Wabash River B&O RR Bridge Hillsdale / Montezuma Trail
- 29 Sportland Park Trail
- 30 Universal Circle Trail
- 31 Cayuga to Wabash River - Railroad along SR 63 (planned)
- 32 4 Arches Trail and Extension (planned)
- 33 Wabash Valley - Hunts Spur Trail - Clinton (planned)

Nearby Recreational Opportunities (not shown on map)

- Turkey Run State Park
- Raccoon Lake State Recreation Area
- Shades State Park
- Portland Arch - Covington
- Rockville Lake Park and Campground
- Vigo County Parks and Recreation
- Terre Haute Parks and Recreation
- Forest Glen Preserve (Illinois)
- Harry Woodward State Natural Area (Illinois)

Vision

Goal #1:

Expand the county-wide parks system to increase access to outdoor recreation.

Implementation

The Vermillion County Parks Department has identified individual improvements for each park with a focus on improving accessibility. In the future, the park board will work with the Vermillion Trails Alliance to connect all parks via a walking/ biking trail and/ or route system. This is a great first step and demonstrates commitment by the county to their park and recreation system.

Beyond this step, the county should evaluate distribution of park and recreation amenities throughout the county and ensure equitable distribution of park resources. As of 2021, a Five Year Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Park and Recreation Master Plan has been approved by the county and should be utilized as part of this plan.

This evaluation should build off of and complement the work already being done by the Vermillion Trails Alliance and Vermillion County Parks

Department in cooperation with existing entities within the county to connect current and future parks and resources throughout the county. As Vermillion County is long and narrow, a centrally located destination park could be a unifying amenity between the north and south portions of the county. The property at or near Vermillion Rise could become this destination park. This destination park can offer amenities currently not found in smaller community parks, such as a splash pad or pool, large accessible playground, frisbee golf, or other amenities which can benefit county residents as a whole.

Vision (continued)

Goal #2:

Increase marketing and visibility for county parks and recreation opportunities.

Implementation

While Vermillion County has a solid framework of county parks and recreation offerings, it is difficult to find information about these amenities. As parks and recreation resources are vital to maintain current county residents, these resources are also important to attract potential residents and businesses who are considering a move. The county should ensure that available park and recreation amenities are highlighted in multiple locations including, but not limited to, the following:

- Vermillion County Parks website: Continue to update and provide information on the recently launched parks page on the county web page.
- Vermillion Trails Alliance website and social media: Continue to update and provide information on the website and social media pages.
- Vermillion County Economic Development Council website: Ensure that park and recreation amenities, including state, private, and municipal amenities are highlighted under the 'Life' page.
- County GIS application: Ensure that trails and parks are included as a layer on a web-based GIS platform.

Goal #3:

Develop recreation sites at Vermillion Rise and make them available for public use.

Implementation

The re-use plan for the 7,000-acre Vermillion Rise property indicates that 1,800-acres could be opened up for public use as early as 2026. These lands would mostly include forested and other natural lands that could be used for hiking, biking, regulated hunting, and other uses set aside by the Newport Chemical Depot Reuse Authority and DNR when the Newport Chemical Depot was decommissioned. Existing road and railroad corridors would allow these areas to be readily adapted for public access. Because of the past use of the site, there are clearance and access steps required to make these sites available to the public. It is recommended that the county work closely with Vermillion Rise to plan out steps needed to make these lands open to the public. Concurrently, the county should work with Indiana Department of Natural Resources to consider what grant funding could be available to activate use at the site, including programs such as Next Level Trails, Indiana Trails Fund, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and others.

Vision (continued)

Goal #4:

Actively participate in ongoing efforts to plan and develop county-wide trail networks.

Implementation

The Vermillion County Parks Department and Vermillion Trails Alliance have started efforts on identifying key trail connections between park amenities in the county. Combined with efforts of the Thrive West Central Regional Trails Network, Parke Trails Alliance, Tri-County Loop Trail Group, and other organizations to develop an interconnected regional and county-trail network. This network will be able to tie Vermillion County into amenities in nearby Parke and Vigo Counties while also highlighting the natural resources valued by county residents.

A lot of the planning work has been started by the Vermillion Trails Alliance with cooperation of the Vermillion County Park Board but additional funding will be needed to make progress. The county can assist by partnering on grant applications. The county should also actively work to ensure all future roadway improvements are coordinated with the Parks Department and Trails Alliance to identify any possibilities for joint enhancements.

An identified short-term goal is to expand the trail originating from Trailhead Park located at the center of the county just east of SR 63.

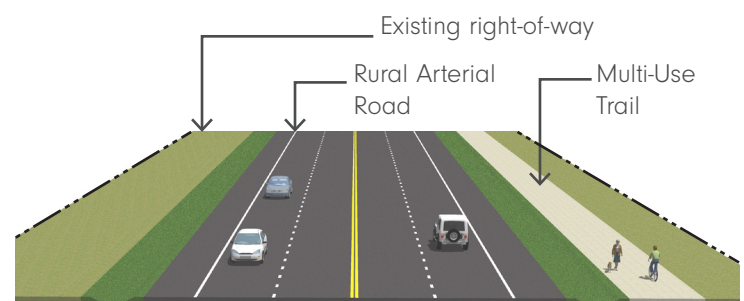
As trail planning continues, Vermillion County should also review options for developing a trail

the length of the Wabash River. This could extend to Vincennes the greater Lafayette's vision of developing a Wabash River Greenway; the vision is currently from Logansport to Covington.

Vermillion Trails Alliance is planning to establish a working group to explore options to maintain pedestrian and bicycle access across State Route 63 when INDOT removes the existing overpass of the abandoned railbed. This would provide recreational access to the Wabash River for residents of Cayuga and surrounding areas.

VTA is also considering other potential trail routes including one from Dana to the SW corner of Vermillion Rise, a trail from St Bernice to Blanford on the old Milwaukee Railroad line which would pass over the historic 4 Arches Bridge as well as trails within Vermillion Rise.

There are several funding alternatives available for trail development through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, including Next Level Trails, the Indiana Trails Fund, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Along the Wabash River, projects are also eligible for Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund dollars.



Example trail alignment within existing rural arterial right-of-way

Vision (continued)

Goal #5:

Add more county dog parks.

Implementation

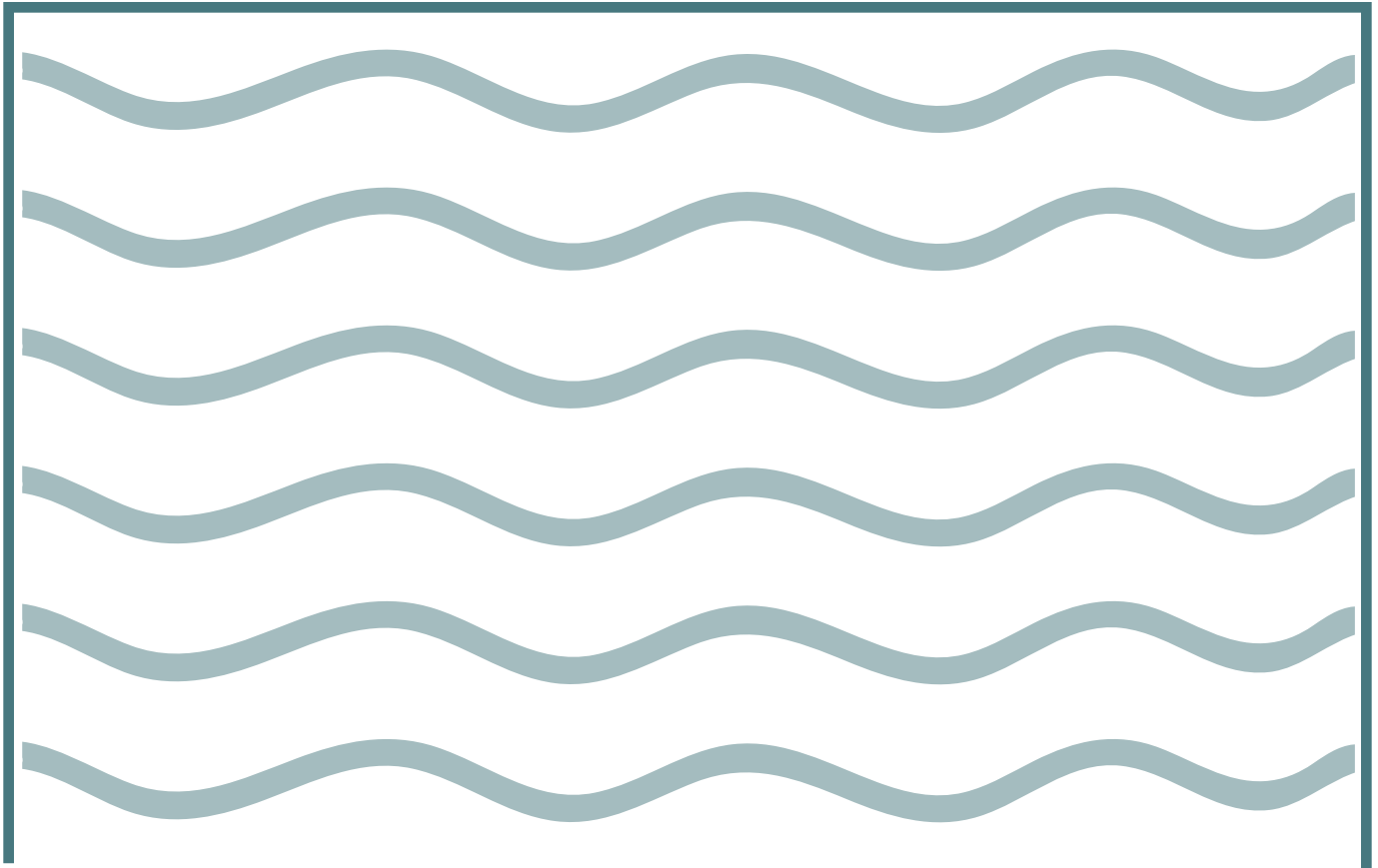
Vermillion County should partner with cities and towns in the county to develop a network of dog parks in the north, central, and south parts of the county. By working together, the need for each jurisdiction to provide their own facility will be eliminated. The county could start by working with Clinton as they already have an established dog park in Sportland Park that could be used as a precedent study.



Sportland Dog Park - Clinton

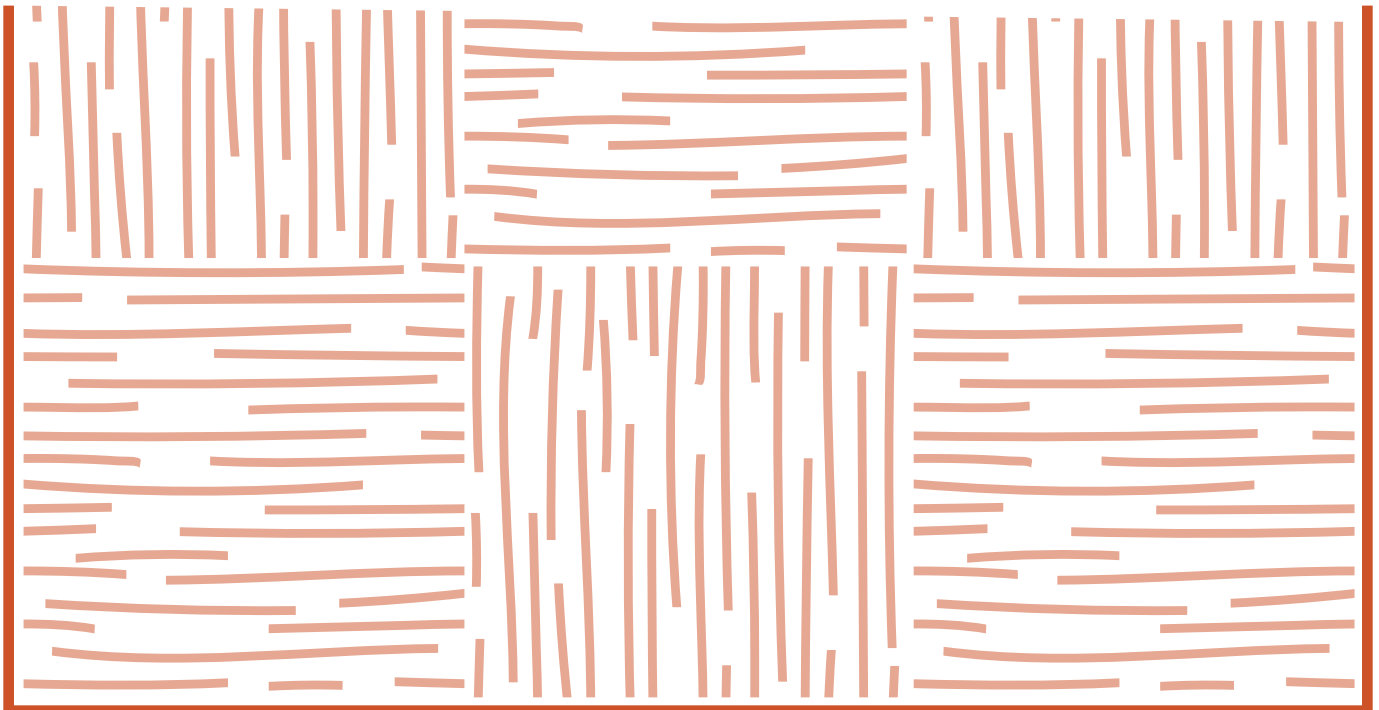


Perrysville Park Pavilion and Trail - Perrysville



Historic and
Archaeological
Resources

13



Existing Conditions

Vermillion County has a long and rich history. The French word “Vermillion” is a translation of the Miami word “pe-auk-e-shaw,” a name given to the Vermillion rivers because of the red earth on the Vermillion River banks. This red earth, known as Cinnabar, was used as a pigment.

Long before white settlement of the land, Vermillion County was home to mound building native Americans. The only remaining evidence of their existence are the clusters of mounds found along the tract of land between Eugene and Newport and southeast of Dana in Helt Township. Native American mounds are also thought to exist in Clinton Township along Feather Creek.

Early explorers and French missionaries passed through Vermillion County on the Wabash River as early as 1670. The first French trading post, LaChapelle, was established by M. LaSelle. A second post was set up on John Collett’s farm.

Following the establishment of the Indiana Territory in 1800, a series of treaties were signed with Native Americans that forced them from their lands. These treaties still leave their mark today, as the lines drawn created irregularities that have to be addressed as today’s local surveys and plat documents are created.

Settlements were added to Vermillion County through the 1800’s. In addition to the communities that still exist today, Summit Grove was founded on the Wabash River just north of Clinton. It served as a river boat port serving settlers with supplies and transportation.

Vermillion County historically had thriving economy in many industries including pottery, coal mining, and timber. The coal industry that attracted large numbers of newly arriving Italian immigrants to Vermillion County between 1910 and 1930.

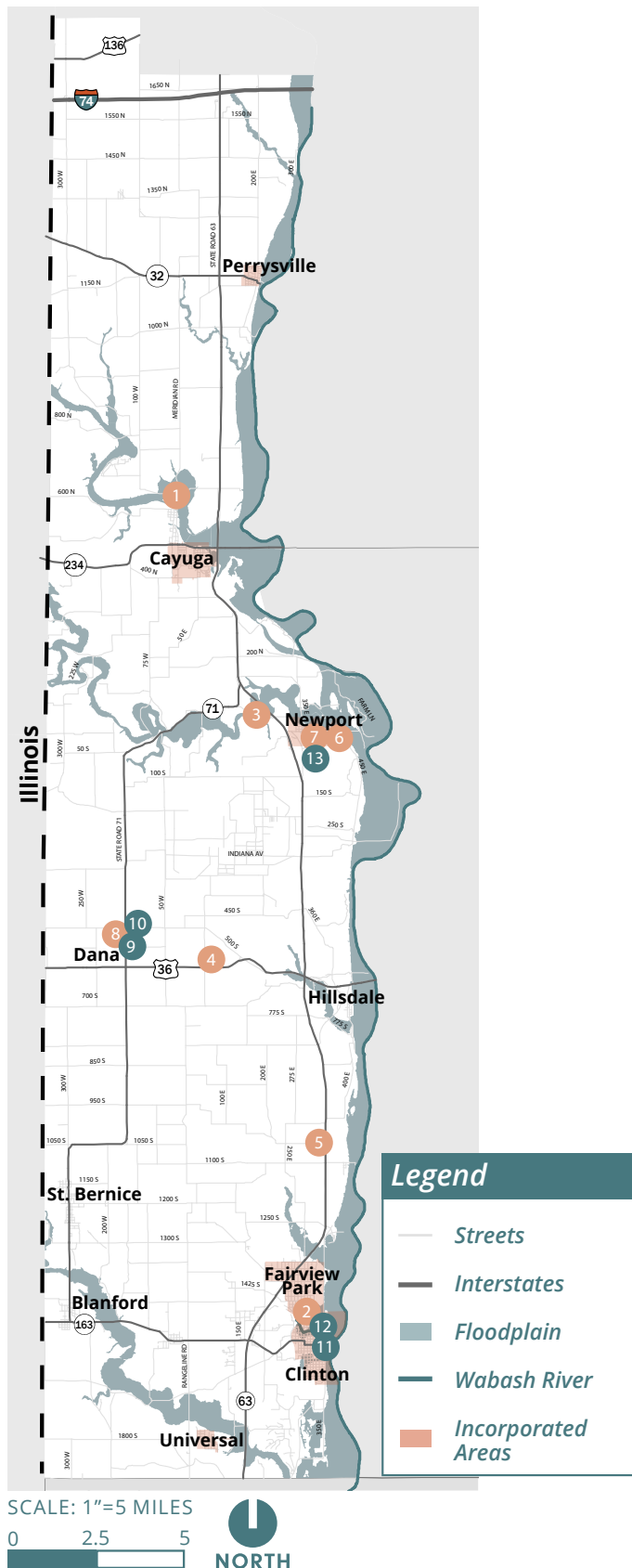
As illustrated in Figure 13.1, Vermillion County is home to eight National Register of Historic Places. The county is also home to other key historic sites including the Ernie Pyle Museum and Newport Hill Climb. Ernie Pyle earned recognition as a journalist during World War II and is one of the best-known American war correspondents. The Town of Dana celebrates Ernie Pyle’s birth-place with a state historical site. Dana is home to the Ernie Pyle WWII Museum run by the Friends of Ernie Pyle Development Fund Inc.

The Newport Hill Climb likely began as an “innocent” challenge between two owners of those new-fangled automobiles. While early autos had trouble making it up the crest of the hill, soon topping the 140-foot plus hilltop became common, but still a great struggle with the early gasoline engines. Then it was not just enough to top the hill; you had to be the fastest to climb it.

The first Newport Hill Climb was held in 1909 and organized by the businessmen of Newport to capitalize on the interest in climbing the hill. Hill climbing contests were becoming more commonplace, and by 1915 the “newness” had worn off, and board-track and other circular racing forms were becoming more popular.

Today the event is coordinated by the local Lions Club and is one of the 20 largest festivals in Indiana, attracting more than 100,000 visitors each year to the Vermillion County seat. With a world-wide audience, the Hill Climb has grown into the third-largest motorsports event in the Hoosier State, trailing only the Indianapolis 500 and the NASCAR Brickyard Race.

Figure 13.1
Historic Sites Map



National Register of Historic Places

- 1 Eugene Covered Bridge
- 2 Hill Crest Community Center
- 3 Newport Covered Bridge
- 4 Possum Bottom Covered Bridge
- 5 Salem Methodist Episcopal Church
- 6 Vermillion County Jail and Sheriffs Quarters
- 7 Vermillion County Courthouse
- 8 Ernie Pyle State Historic Site

Historic Districts

- 9 Dana Commercial Historic District
- 10 Dana Residential Historic District
- 11 Clinton Commercial Historic District
- 12 Mulberry/Blackman Historic District (Clinton)
- 13 Newport Courthouse Square Historic District

Vision

Goal #1:

Develop additional opportunities for the community to learn about and celebrate the history, traditions, and heritage of those in the county.

Implementation

Vermillion County, like many Indiana counties, has the opportunity to discover and recognize additional historic landmarks. Communities with significant histories often attract tourists and visitors which can help increase economic development opportunities. Capitalizing on the historic aspects of Vermillion County can also help create a sense of place in the community leading to better quality of life.

By utilizing the Vermillion County Interim Report, the county should leverage development in key areas that support the historical heritage of the community. Identification of historic districts, whether commercial and downtown areas or residential neighborhoods, can help bolster identity and quality of life within the individual communities. By identifying these neighborhoods and commercial/ downtown areas, communities can begin to leverage both public and private funds, such as various INDOT, façade repair, and beautification grants. One example of this being done in the county is through the revitalization efforts made by the Cayuga Area Revitalization Effort (CARE). The county can team with CARE to understand how to implement these concepts on a larger scale.

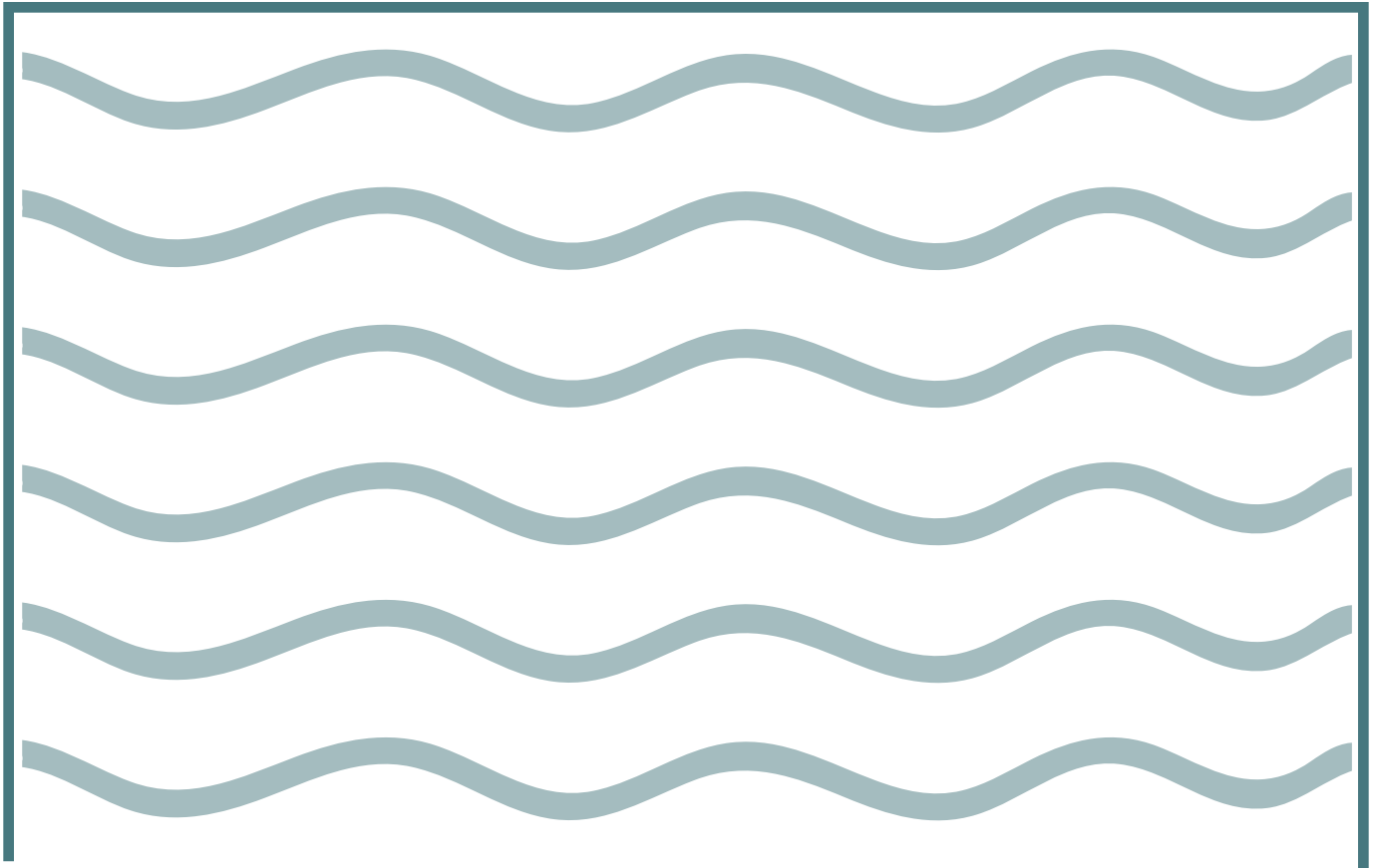
One key opportunity is the development of a new public park at Vermillion Rise. This park could include interpretive signage explaining the history of the Newport Chemical Depot. There are also archaeological sites on the property that could be incorporated.

Why invest in beautification?

A report in the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Dollar & Sense series also found that:

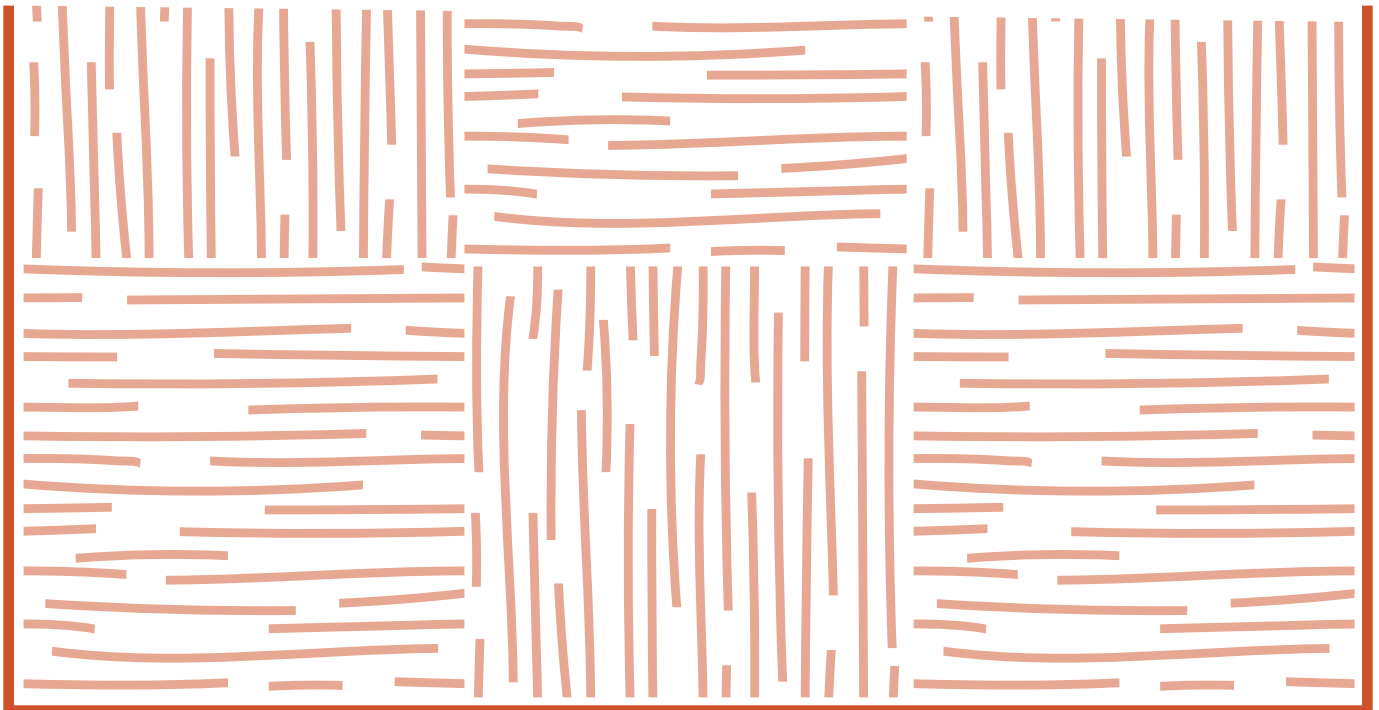
- Commercial building improvements resulted in an increase in sales in the year after the improvements were made,
- Sales improvements were sustained for several years,
- Sales increases exceeded increases in local taxes,
- The improvements attracted new businesses and shoppers to the target area,
- Participants were often motivated to make additional improvements (such as to interior spaces or product lines), and
- Owners/tenants of properties and businesses in surrounding areas were motivated to make improvements

Source: PlannersWeb.com



Hazard Mitigation

14



Existing Conditions

Considering the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic, hazard mitigation and community resiliency is at the forefront of many community conversations. Tornadoes, flooding, winter weather, and droughts are generally rare in Indiana communities, but they can be detrimental. Natural disasters as well as human error and technological accidents pose threats to the day-to-day operations of the county.

To address these threats, the Vermillion County Emergency Management Agency maintains a hazard mitigation response plan. This plan addresses the most common risks to the county such as those listed above. It also addresses challenges unique to Vermillion County such as former surface mines, landfills, underground mines, and ash ponds.

Vision

Goal #1:

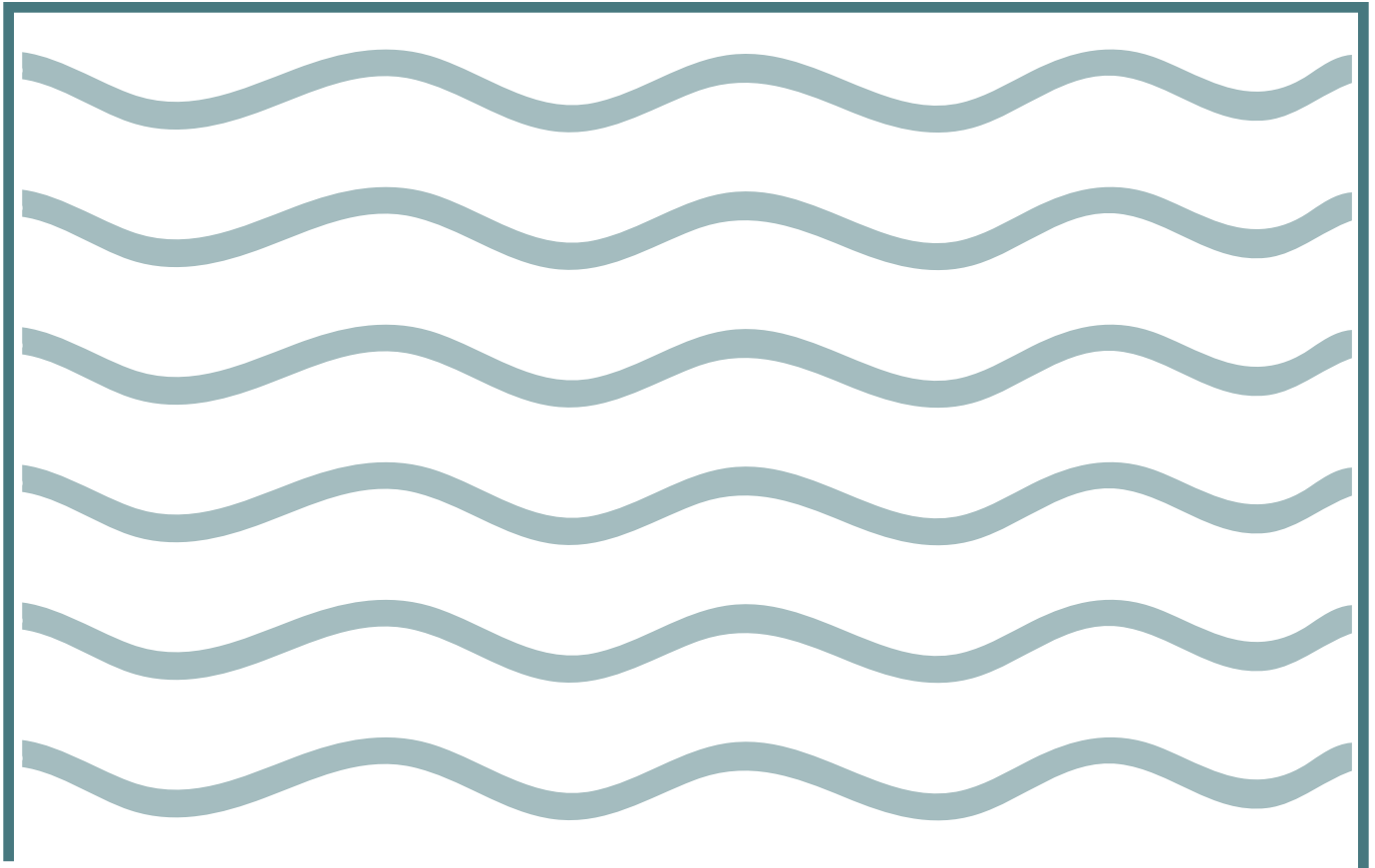
Keep the county's emergency response plan current.

Implementation

The county's emergency response plan is a critical tool for managing and mitigating response to hazards and disasters. The county should keep this plan current and should be working on the preparatory actions recommended in the plan.

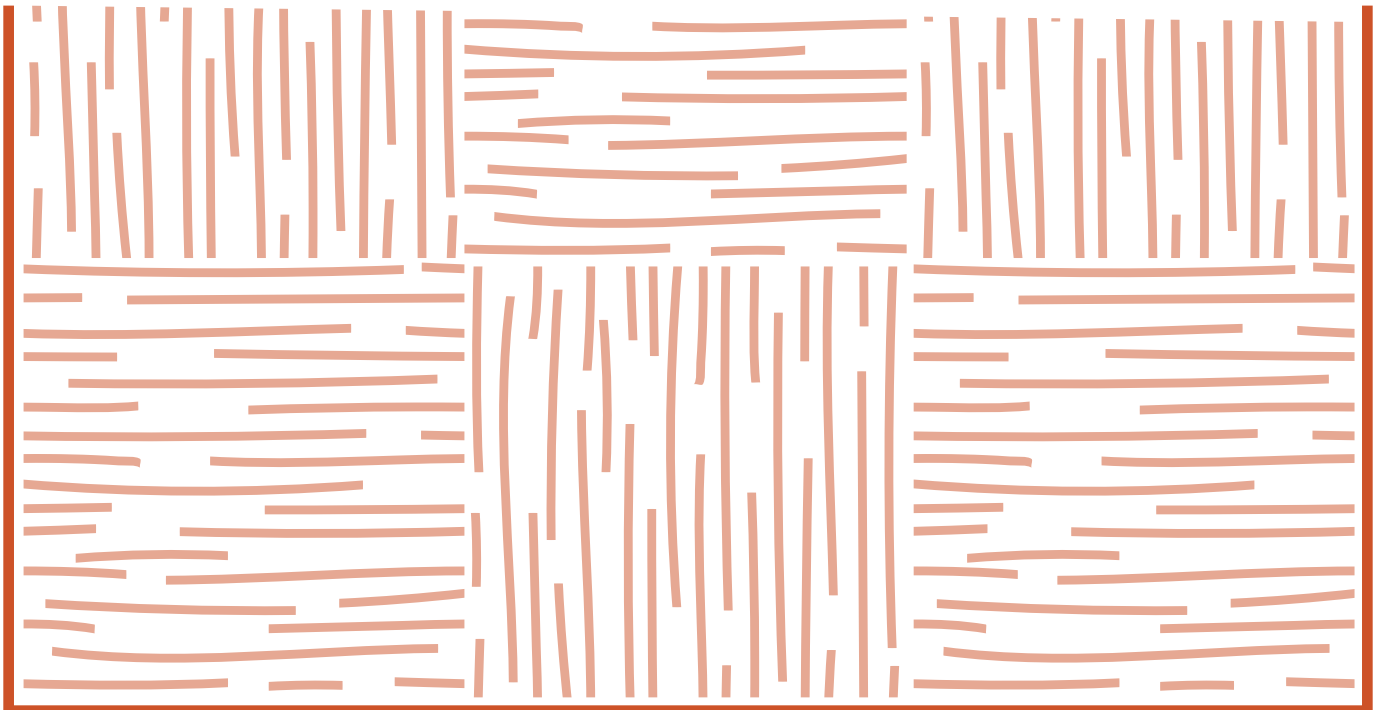


Duke Energy - Cayuga



Action Plan

15



Action Plan

The Action Plan was created as a prioritized list of recommendations that should take precedent based on feedback from the public engagement process. Goals are by chapter and are listed in no particular order. Table 13.1 designates each goal as either short, medium, and long term. Each designation is defined below.

Short-term

Short-term goals are either a priority for the county or goals that can be completed in a short amount of time. These goals have the capacity to be completed between 0-2 years.

Medium-term

Medium-term goals should be completed within 3-5 years. Goals described as medium are important to the county, but they aren't a top priority. Goals in this section might need more time and coordination to be completed successfully.

Long-term

Long-term goals are goals that will take a longer time to be completed. Goals characterized as long-term also includes goals related to maintaining what the county already has.

Table 13.1 Action Plan		Priority	Engaged Entities
Land Use			
Update the county zoning and subdivision ordinances.	Short-term	Area Plan Commission	
Promote the Growth Opportunity Areas recommended in this plan.	Long-term	Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, Board of Zoning Appeals	
Plan for the development and utilization of alternative energy.	Short-term, Long-term	Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, Board of Zoning Appeals	
Government and Fiscal Capacity			
Increase public participation and engagement.	Long-term	County Commissioners, General Public	
Expand local and regional collaboration.	Long-term	County Commissioners, General Public	
Public Facilities and Services			
Complete feasibility studies for infrastructure expansion to support Growth Opportunity Areas.	Short-term	County Commissioners	
Expand broadband facilities throughout the county.	Short-term, Long-term	County Commissioners	

Table 13.1 Action Plan	Priority	Engaged Entities
Placemaking		
Develop a placemaking strategy for Vermillion County.	Short-term	County Commissioner, Economic Development Council, Local Entities
Expand upon existing community activities and events.	Short-term, Long-term	County Commissioner, Economic Development Council, Local Entities
Develop a county-wide gateway and wayfinding program.	Medium-term	County Commissioner, Economic Development Council, Local Entities
Economic Development		
Develop an Economic Development Plan for the I-74/SR 63 Interchange.	Short-term, Medium-term	Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, Economic Development Council
Encourage entrepreneurship in the county.	Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term	Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, Economic Development Council, Vermillion County Chamber of Commerce
Support Development at Vermillion Rise.	Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term	Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, Economic Development Council, Vermillion Rise
Increase educational attainment to ensure a skilled workforce.	Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term	Partnerships between Local Businesses and High Schools and Higher Education
Support the development of the TIF district on SR 63 north of Clinton and all future TIF districts in the county.	Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term	Partnerships between County Redevelopment Commission and County Commissioners

Table 13.1 Action Plan		Priority	Engaged Entities
Housing			
Strategically expand and make more housing options available.	Long-term	Partnership between Board of Zoning Appeals, County Commissioners, County Redevelopment Commission and Developers	
Continue blight elimination and revitalization in strategic areas by coordinating efforts already in progress.	Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term	Redevelopment Commission, County Health Department, County Sheriff	
Transportation			
Develop a prioritized plan for county roadway repairs and updates.	Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term	Partnership between County and Indiana Department of Transportation	
Agriculture			
Strengthen and preserve Vermillion County’s agricultural land and prepare the next generation of farmers for the future.	Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term	Partnership between local farmers, Soil and Water Conservation District, FFA Programs, and Purdue Extension.	
Natural Resources			
Utilize the shared resource of the Wabash River as a connecting element throughout the county.	Long-term	Partnership between Economic Development Council and County Parks Board	
Support the preservation of woodland and natural resources throughout the county.	Long-term	Partnership between all County and Local agencies	

Table 13.1 Action Plan	Priority	Engaged Entities
Parks and Recreation		
Expand the county-wide parks system to increase access to outdoor recreation.	Short-term, Long-term	County Parks Board
Increase marketing and visibility for county parks and recreation opportunities.	Long-term	County Parks Board
Develop recreation sites at Vermillion Rise and make them available for public use.	Long-term	County Parks Board, Vermillion Rise, and Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Actively participate in ongoing efforts to plan and develop county-wide trail networks.	Short-term, Long-term	County Parks Board and Trails Alliance
Add more county dog parks.	Long-term	County Parks Board
Historic and Archaeological Resources		
Develop additional opportunities for the community to learn about and celebrate the history, traditions, and heritage of those in the county.	Short-term, Long-term	Partnership between all County and Local agencies
Hazard Mitigation		
Keep the county's emergency response plan current.	Long-term	Partnership between County Commissioners and County Health Department

Funding Opportunities

This action plan can help the county prioritize projects but also showcases possible funding opportunities. There are many organizations and foundations in the state that offer funding for community projects that the county can benefit from.

Office of Community and Rural Affairs

The Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), helped fund this comprehensive plan and also offers other funding opportunities for towns and cities all over Indiana. Below are some OCRA programs that can benefit the county.

- Blight Clearance Program
- Quick Impact Placebased Grant (QuIP)
- Public Facilities Plan

Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority

The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA), is a state organization that works with communities, developers, nonprofit organizations and others to serve low- and moderate-income Hoosiers. IHCDA has programs that help increase sense of place in communities, help individuals, and help the community as a whole. Below are some IHCDA programs that can be utilized in the county.

- CreatINg Places
- Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program (home repairs)

Indiana State Department of Health

The Indiana State Department of Health works with communities to help create healthier communities in Indiana. ISDH has grants that encourage healthy lifestyles across the state.

- Tactical Urbanism Demonstration - Supporting Active Transportation
- Community-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Indiana Rural Development

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) supports the Indiana Rural Development Office. This agency provides programs through USDA that primarily benefit rural communities across the country.

- Rural Economic Development Loan Grant Program (REDLGP)
- Rural Business Development Grants
- Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant

The following pages include additional detail on the grants above as well as a variety of other grant opportunities in the state that the county can utilize.

Additional Funding Sources

Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)			
Grant	Eligibility	Project Types	Grant Limits
Next Level Trails	Local Government, Non-profit organizations. Must fulfill at least one of the following roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Own (or acquire) the trail corridor Manage and maintain the trail once developed Oversee and manage trail construction through completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All non-motorized trails Multi-use trails (consideration) Trails must be open to the public 	\$200,000 - \$5,000,000 (20% match can include land value, and in-kind donations)
Historic Preservation Fund	Municipal government entities, educational institutions, not for profit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Architectural and historical archaeological, and acquisition and development (rehabilitation) 	\$35,000 - \$50,000 (50% match)
Land and Water Conservation Fund	Parks and Recreation Boards with a current 5-year parks master plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily acquisition but also funds various park/recreation 	\$50,000 - \$250,000 (50% match)
Recreational Trails Program	Government agencies, non-profit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land acquisition and trail development and amenities 	\$50,000 - \$200,000 (20% match)
Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund (WRHCF)	Units of Governments (preferably Park Boards) and 501(c)(3) not-for-profits. Projects must be located in one of the 19 counties along the Wabash River Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation and recreational development projects 	\$50,000 - \$150,000 (20% match)
Economic Development Administration (EDA)			
Grant	Eligibility	Project Types	Grant Limits
2020 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governments, organizations, non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction, planning, technical assistance 	\$100,000 - \$3,000,000

Indiana Finance Authority (IFA)			
Grant	Eligibility	Project Types	Grant Limits
<u>State Revolving Fund (SRF)</u>	Municipalities that have a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water, wastewater, and non-point source projects 	Loan
Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)			
Grant	Eligibility	Project Types	Grant Limits
<u>Community Crossings Matching Grant</u>	Indiana cities, towns, and county governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road reconstruction, resurfacing, preservation, bridge rehabilitation 	\$1,000,000 (match requirements based on population)

Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC)			
Grant	Eligibility	Project Types	Grant Limits
<u>Industrial Development Grant Fund</u>	Municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lease, purchase, construction or repair of real estate and personal public property 	
<u>Community Revitalization Enhancement District (CRED)</u>	Taxpayers that invest in redevelopment/rehab of a property located within a revitalization district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquisition costs, when necessary for redevelopment or rehabilitation, Consulting fees 	Tax Credit
<u>Skills Enhancement Fund (SEF)</u>	Businesses, communities, employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Software New Capital Investments 	50% Match

Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH)				
Grant	Eligibility	Project Types	Grant Limits	
<u>Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan</u>	Communities and non-profits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan preparation in house or via consultant 	\$10,000 - \$20,000	
<u>Tactical Urbanism Demonstration</u>	Incorporated communities in Indiana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary bicycle and pedestrian safety demonstration projects Property purchases Traffic calming projects 	\$10,000	
Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA)				
Grant	Eligibility	Project Types	Grant Limits	
<u>Creating Places</u>	Non-profit entities and Local units of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streetscape beautification and walkability Art/Public plaza development activation etc. 	\$10,000 - \$100,000 (50% match)	
<u>Community Service Block Grant</u>	Non-profit entities, community organizations, governmental entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homes, educational attainment, community organizations 		

<u>Wastewater and Drinking Water Program</u>	Non-entitlement communities, Communities with at least 51% low-moderate income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wastewater improvements • Drinking water system improvements 	(\$500,000 - \$700,000 20% match)
Rural Development (RD)			
Grant	Eligibility	Project Types	Grant Limits
<u>Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program</u>	Governments, organizations, non-profit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking water sourcing • Treatment • Storage distribution 	Loan
<u>Rural Business Development</u>	Towns, state agencies, non-profits, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support targeted technical assistance training, etc. 	\$10,000 - \$500,000
<u>Rural Economic Loan Grant Program</u>	Local utility organizations, local businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing revolving loan funds that will create or retain rural jobs 	\$300,000
<u>Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant</u>	Public bodies, community based non-profits and federally recognized tribes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas 	Loan
Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA)			
Grant	Eligibility	Project Types	Grant Limits
<u>Blight Clearance Program</u>	Non-entitlement communities, Communities with at least 51% low-moderate income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of deteriorated or abandoned buildings as well as vacant and unusable industrial sites 	\$500,000 (10% match)
<u>Quick Impact Placebased Grant</u>	Indiana Main Street communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placemaking projects 	\$2,500 - \$5,000
<u>Planning Grants - Infrastructure</u>	Non-entitlement communities, Communities with at least 51% low-moderate income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study of infrastructure 	\$35,000 - \$50,000

Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA)			
Grant	Eligibility	Project Types	Grant Limits
<u>Planning Grants - Community Planning</u>	Non-entitlement communities, Communities with at least 51% low-moderate income, or slum and blight designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Plans • Downtown Revitalization Plans • Economic Development Plans • Public Facilities Plans 	\$20,000 - \$40,000 (10% match)
<u>NextLevel Connections</u>	Non-entitlement communities, Communities with at least 51% low-moderate income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband improvements including affordable service and increased reliability in rural communities. 	\$60,000
<u>Public Facilities Program</u>	Non-entitlement communities, Communities with at least 51% low-moderate income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of architectural barriers • Community Centers • Daycare Centers • Emergency Centers 	\$500,000 (10% match)
<u>Main Street Revitalization Program</u>	Indiana Main Street Community and Non-entitlement communities, Communities with at least 51% low-moderate income, or slum and blight designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streetscape upgrades • Facade renovations • Downtown infrastructure 	\$500,000 (10% match)
<u>Stormwater Improvement Program</u>	Non-entitlement communities, Communities with at least 51% low-moderate income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood prevention reduction • Environmental protection 	\$600,000 (10% match)