

Approved Resolution

STARKE COUNTY

LOCAL RESOLUTION APPROVING THE STARKE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE FLAN; FL-18-616

Resolution 0000 - 004

WHERHAS, the County of Starks had identified adequate reason to analyze the County of Starks Comprehensive strategy, and

WHEREAS, the County of Surfee has hired HWC Engineering Inc. define and describe the searce, advise us of our options, and make recommunications to address the County of Starks Comprehensive straingy and the town's moods for the fixture, and

WHEREAS, the County of Starks has received federal Community Development Block Grant dollars from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs to find this study in the amount of \$39,600 and has contributed the local match in the amount of \$4,400 for this project, and

WHIREAS, the County of Starke has reviewed the process and completed study thoroughly and is satisfied with the services performed, the information contained therein, and the methodology applied;

WHEREAS, the County of Starks has received at least one copy of this document for our records and will keep the same on file in the County Commissioners offices for future reference, and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Starke County Commissioners has considered the input from the Community, has received approved by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs and is hareby approved by said Starke County Commissioners on behalf of the County of Starks.

On this _____ SI _____ day of ______ TONIANO A 2019. SC

BV

Starke County Commissioners President

Sugar County Commissioners

Stades County Commissioners

Amer: Starke County Auditor

Acknowledgments

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Plan Funding:

This plan was partially funded with a planning grant from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA).

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Table of Contents

	1	Executive Summary7
		General Background £
E	3	Land Use
	4	Government and Fiscal Capacity 31
	5	Public Facilities And Services3
	6	Placemaking
-		Economic Development47
/E	3	Housing55
10.0		Transportation 61
1	0	Agriculture
1	1	Natural Resources73
1	2	Parks and Recreation79
n	3	Historic and Archaeological Resources 87
10	4	Hazard Mitigation91

Plan Purpose

Starke County wants to attract and retain population, and become competitive in economic development and employment apportunities, all while providing a great place to live, work and play. With a relatively small population, Starke County encounters challenges like most rural communities, but can focus on building quality of life and quality of place that attracts residents and visitors to enjoy its unique and diverse county-wide assets.

Starke County realizes the need to improve their quality of life in order to achieve their long-term goals. The county, along with the Town of Hamlet, North Judson, and the City of Knox have comprehensive plans that encourage the community to build quality of life to attract residents, enhance economic development opportunities, support infrastructure and guide land use decisions. These planning decisions are already paying off by being selected as a Stellar Communities Finalist. The Stellar Communities Grant supports the initiatives within this comprehensive plan. Regardless of the Stellar status, these goals and objectives within this plan are important for the county and should be implemented.

Starke County Vision

Bacoma a whole-life community that celebrates diversity and tourism of the county's abundant natural resources, rural character and quality of life assets.



The Kankakee Fish and Wildlife Area is a Starke County asset.

Plan Development

Planning Process

The Starke County Comprehensive Plan has been developed through a process that included public input workshops, steering committee input, stakeholder interviews, and online survey dara gathering. Public feedback is detailed in Chapter 2. General Background,

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee met three times during this planning process. Committee members represented county stoff, economic development and community services, public safety and county residents.

Public Engagement

Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder conversations were held with local businesses, local and non-profit organizations, schools, and community representatives who provided input on county challenges and future opportunities.

Public Input Workshops

Meeting #1: Public Input Workshop at the Commissioner's Room in the County Building Annex 1 on May 22, 2019.

Meeting #2: Public Presentation of the draft plan held on September 4, 2019 at the Commissioner's Room in the County Building Annex 1.

Online Survey

A total of 56 respondents took the online survey. The survey was available for four weeks to gather additional public input.

Prioritized Key Goals

Government and Fiscal Capacity

Goal 1: Expand capacity to support county-wide programming and events.

Public Facilities and Services

Goal 1: Improve speed and reliability of broadband services.

Placemaking

Goal 1: Expand trail connectivity between Starke County communities and destinations.

Goal 2: Develop a county-wide initiative to promote the arts in Starke County.

Economic Development

Goal 1: Develop a county-wide tourism initiative.

Goal 2: Support Starke County Economic Development to attract employers to local industrial sites.

Housing

Goal 1: Support the development of a variety of housing options throughout Starke County.

Transportation

Goal 1: Provide every county resident the ability to live within 1-mile of an asphalt roadway.

Goal 2: Promote the development of sidewalks within suburban residential areas.

Goal 3: Maintain access to U.S. 30.

Natural Resources

Goal 1: Support the preservation of woodlands and natural resources throughout Starke County.

Parks and Recreation

Goal 1: Expand recreational amenities at the lake districts.



Goals that contribute to regional impacts are identified with this icon throughout the plan.

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Chapter 3

General Background & Introduction

Source Municips

Community Context

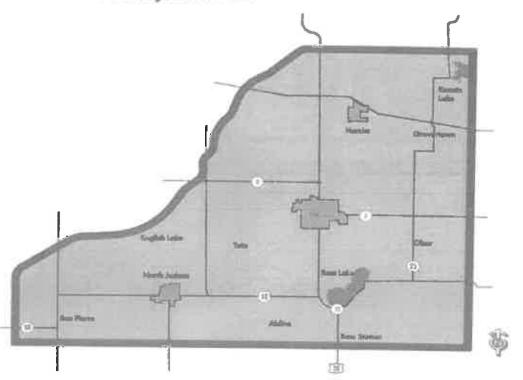
Introduction

Starke County, located in the northwestern region of Indiana, includes three incorporated municipalities, the Towns of Hamlet, North Judson, and the City of Knox. This plan covers the unincorporated portions of the county, including its numerous unincorporated villages. Starke County is home to two popular lakes, Koontz Lake and Bass Lake, and a variety of natural resources along the Kankakee and Yellow Rivers.

Plan Jurisdiction

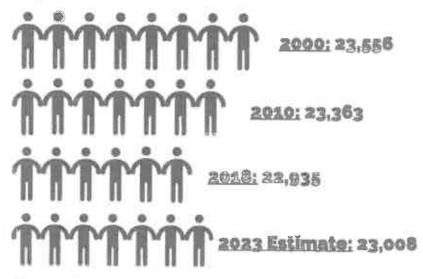
The Starke County Area Planning Commission serves all of Starke County, except for the City of Knox. Concurrently with this planning effort, the Town of Hamlet and the Town of North Judson have prepared comprehensive plans for their respective communities. As a result, this plan is intended to serve the unincorporated areas of the county.

Starke County, Indiana



Demographic Summary

Population & Growth



Source: Census.gov

Starke County's population at the 2010 census was 23,363 and slightly decreased to 22,995 in 2018. The forecast for 2023 indicates that population decline may be stabilizing.

Age

The median age for Starke County residents is 42 years.



Education

Majority of Starke County residents have a high school degree or higher, while only 11% of individuals have a bachelor's degree or higher.



of Starke County residents have a bachelor's degree or higher

Income

Storke County is experiencing a slightly higher poverty rate than the state average. Factors that may contribute to the poverty rate include: employment opportunities, education, housing options, and quality of place amenities. which are all addressed in this planning effort.

Source: STATS Indiana

Poverty Rate



ndiana 13.5%

Median Household Income



Indiana: \$52,182

Starke County: \$45,526

Housing

According to Rural Indiana Stats, 80% of houses are owneroccupied while only 20% are being rented. The median Year Structure Built is between 1966-1975. Home value statistics and projections are as follows:



- 2018 Average Home Value \$138,672
- 2018 Median Home Value \$110,157
- 2023 Median Home Value \$116,993

Employment

July 2019 Unemployment Rate





Starke County

Indiana

Unemployment is a challenge for many communities. Starke County's unemployment rate is slightly higher than the state's rate. Many citizens expressed the desire to attract more and better paying employment.

Source: STATS Indiana

Public Engagement

Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholders were engaged throughout the planning process, representing public, private, and non-profit constituents in Starke County. Stakeholders provided input on challenges and opportunities within Starke County.

Public Survey

An online public survey was available to collect additional public input and ideas on key planning issues in Starke County. There were over 55 responses to quality of life, economic development, infrastructure, education, and natural resource topics. Some critical topic responses include:

- 55% of respondents don't think there is a clear branding and marketing message for the county.
- 53% of respondents believe there needs to be more effort for reuse and redevelopment of vacant properties.
- · Proximity, people, affordability, rural character, walking trails, and small towns are a few aspects that make Starke County better/different than other communities.

Public Presentation

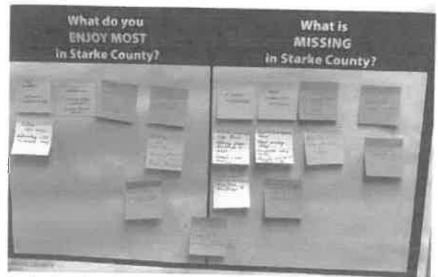
A public presentation of the draft plan was held on September 4th, 2019 where almost 20 people attended. Public comment and question were welcomed that help influence revisions to the plan.



Public Input Workshop

The Public Input Workshop for the Starke County Comprehensive Plan was held on May 22nd, 2019. This was a free flow style public meeting held in the Commissioner's Room at the County Building Annex. Some key topic responses include:

- Starke County needs broadband internet service
- Focus on trails and sidewalks, quality of life, and economic development.
- People would like to see grocery options, art opportunities, and more community cohesion.
- County assets such as the Kankakee River and Lake communities should be marketed.



Stake County - Pubic Input

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee met three (3) times throughout the planning process to discuss the future needs of Starke County. The committee was composed of Community Foundation representatives, county economic development staff, the county attorney, county commissioners, county highway department staff and public safety officials.

Steering Committee Meeting 1

At this meeting the committee discussed what they wanted to see from this plan as well as existing conditions of Starke County. The committee indicated that the desire for change in Starke County was positive. Housing was considered as a priority and collaboration through the county and its communities needs to be enhanced as events and programs are built in the future.

Steering Committee Meeting 2

The committee focused primarily on the future land use map and how that should change to reflect the future desires of the county. The goals for this plan were also discussed and refined at this meeting.

Steering Committee Meeting 3

This final committee meeting focused on a page-turn of the draft plan. Edits and comments were encouraged during and after the meeting to ensure accurate reflection of the community's needs.

Chapter 4

Land Use



Introduction

Existing Conditions

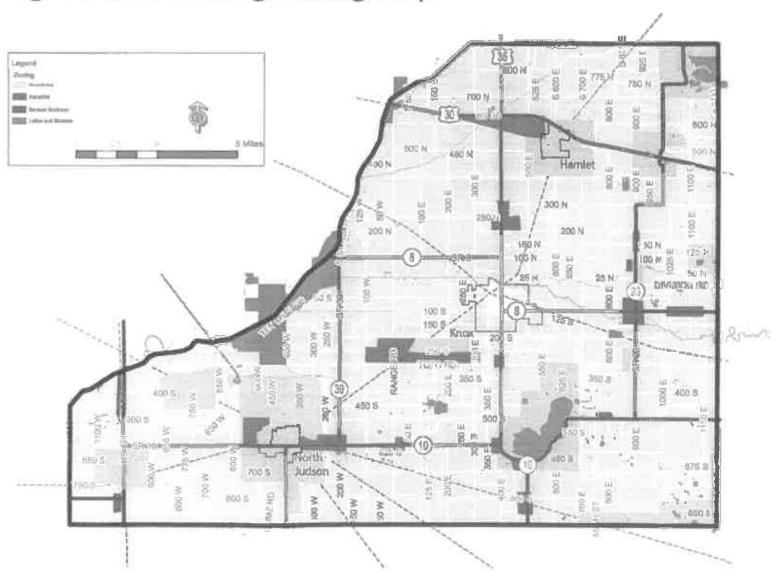
Starke County's current land uses include agriculture, recreation, residential, industrial, commercial/retail, and protected natural resources. All these land uses contribute to the way development occurs around the county. Because the county covers a large area, including unincorporated towns and villages, land use decisions must be complementary to the individual goals of each community and the incorporated municipalities.



Starke County's scenic terrain.

Source: MLucas

Figure 4.1 | Existing Zoning Map



Future Land Use

Update Future Land Uses

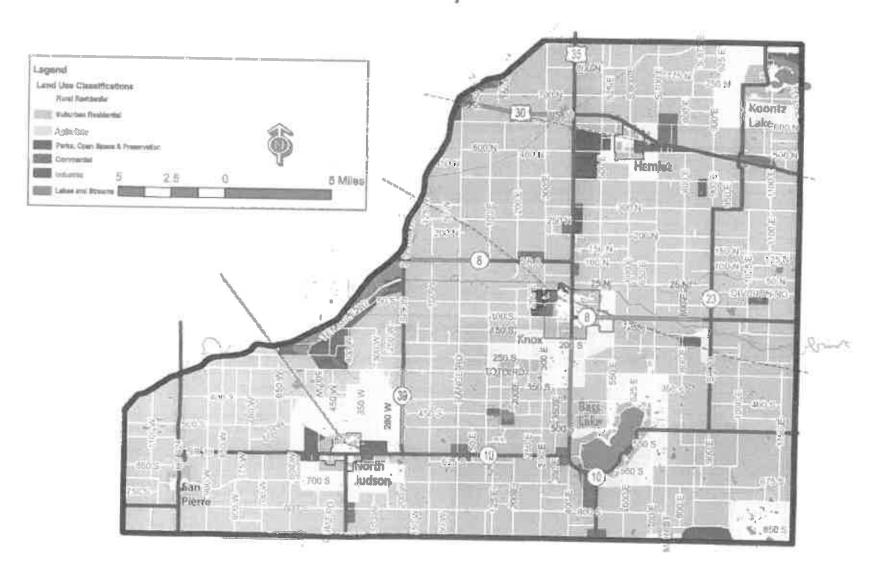
The Future Land Use Map (Figure 4.2) illustrates land use classifications and areas within the county that support these uses. Starke County's Future Land Use Map focuses on supporting and protecting agricultural uses throughout the county while targeting a variety of residential densities around populated areas. Expansion of industrial and commercial uses in critical areas within the county are indicated. Preservation of parks and open space is also indicated so that these key assets are protected.

Future Land Use Classifications

Figure 4.2, illustrates six key land use classifications within the county:

- Rural Residential- Includes low density, large tract singlefamily residential in rural or agricultural areas.
- Suburban Residential-Includes single-family, two-family, and multi-family residential development. Suburban residential areas are clustered around populated areas such as Knox, San Pierre, North Judson, Bass Lake, Hamlet, and Koontz Lake.
- Agricultural- Includes preservation of prime agricultural land for farming and production, as well as allows limited density single-family residential. Agricultural areas may also include low-intensity commercial uses to serve the agriculture community and rural residential.
- Parks, Open Spece & Preservation-Intended to preserve natural areas including managed lands and buffer waterways from development impacts.
- Commercial- General business areas have been expanded to areas where commercial development is located currently.
- Industrial-Industrial uses have been expanded to existing industrial areas along major roadways, railroad corridors and in industrial parks.

Figure 4.2 | Future Land Use Map



Township Land Use

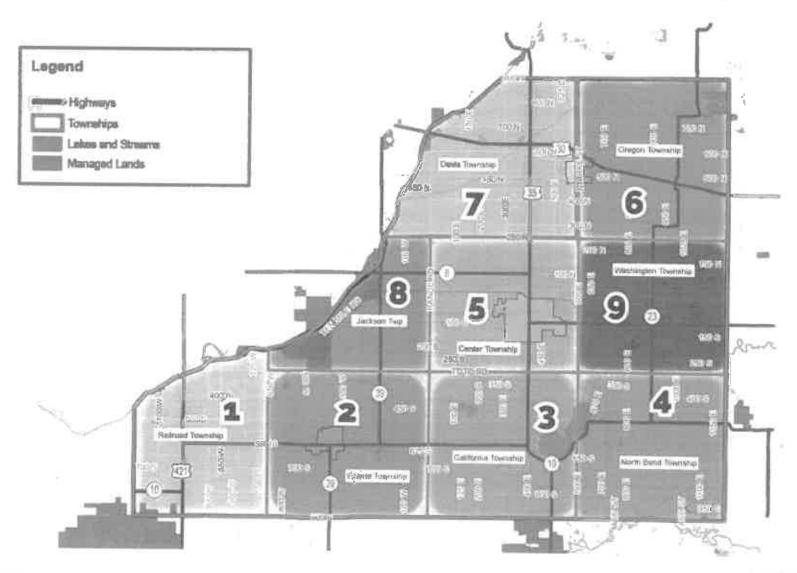
Existing and Future Land Uses by County Townships

The county should support the specific development needs and assets within the nine-county townships (Figure 4.3). These townships all have unique land use characteristics including natural resources, industry, agriculture, businesses, and economic opportunities.



The Starke County Airport is located in Center Township.

Figure 4.3 | Existing and Future Land Uses by Townships



Township Land Use Characteristics

Railroad Township

The northern part of the township includes the Kankakee River floodplain. In the south, some partions of the Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area are within the township. The dominant use in Railroad Township has been, and should continue to be for agricultural purposes. Within San Pierre, the development will be a mix of uses consisting of a combination of housing and commercial uses. Commercial uses should focus on the U.S. 421 corridor within San Pierre. Any industrial uses should be located in and around San Pierre but should be limited in size and intensity to fit within this rural community. Residential uses should locate in the San Pierre area, with limited rural residential in the rest of the township.

Wayne Township

Wayne Township Includes S.R. 10, S.R. 39 and the Town of North Judson. Unincorporated areas of the township focus on rural residential mixed with agricultural uses.

Commercial uses in the township should centralize to areas within the Town of North Judson.

Industrial uses should reside east and west of North Judson along S.R. 10. Development to the west is the short-term priority, with areas east of town reserved for long-term employment sites.

3 California Township

Bass Lake is the largest community in California Township. Areas around the lake should utilize suburban residential development. Two mixed-use areas should develop around the lake. At the southwest side of the lake, mixed-use development should encourage commercial and multi-family residential. The corridor around Bass Lake Beach should include a mix of multi-family housing and commercial uses.

Areas further from the lake are recommended for rural residential uses. Industrial uses are not supported in this district and should reside in other locations in the county. Outside of the area around Bass Lake, the balance of the township is primarily intended for agricultural use.

4 North Bend Township

Located in the southeastern boundary of Starke County is North Bend Township. This township is rural and supports agricultural uses. Some residential is situated here but is found mostly around Bass Lake. The Future Land Use Map encourages maintaining the existing development patterns of North Bend Township. Maintenance is done by expanding residential opportunities around Bass Lake while preserving the natural areas and agricultural nature of this area of the county. Commercial and industrial uses should be discouraged within this township.

5 Center Township

The City of Knox and adjacent land dominate Center Township. Residential, commercial, and industrial development should occur in and around the city. In the areas south of the city, rural residential use should be the focus. Northwest of the city, areas have been designated for industrial expansion.

The northwest portion of the township is mainly in the floadplains of the Kankakee and Yellow Rivers. Unless noted otherwise, these areas should be primarily for agricultural, recreation or open space uses.

6 Oregon Township

Oregon Township includes the U.S. 30 corridor, Koontz Lake, Grouvertown and a partion of the Town of Hamlet. Recommendations for Koontz Lake include a mixed-use district development around the Lake and the Iriquois Street intersection. This district would include commercial and multi-family housing.

Denser residential uses should be directed toward Hamlet and Koantz Lake in Oregon Township. Rural residential uses should be encouraged in areas surrounding the communities of the township. Commercial uses should be directed to the U.S. 30 corridor and downtown Hamlet, Industrial uses should be directed to the Hamlet Industrial Parks. The balance of the township should include agriculture purposes.

7 Davis Township

Davis Township is in the far northwest corner of the county. It includes part of the Town of Hamlet and the U.S. 30 and U.S. 35 interchange. The goal is to direct residential, commercial, and industrial development to the Hamlet area, Industrial should be located in one of Hamlet's Industrial Parks, and commercial should occur in downtown Hamlet or along the U.S. 30 corridor.

Since the majority of the county is part of the Kankakee River floodplain, the primary land use outside of Hamlet should be for agriculture. Since the U.S. 30 and U.S. 35 interchange is within this floodplain, development at the interchange should be discouraged.

Jackson Township

A significant portion of this township is part of the Kankakee and Yellow River floodplains. It is also home to the Kankakee Fish and Wildlife Area. Therefore, future land use in Jackson Township. should be primarily agriculture, recreation, and open space. Limited scale commercial uses to support outdoor recreation are appropriate within this district, but most other commercial uses should be discouraged. Industrial uses should also be discouraged in this township.

9 Washington Township

Washington Township should continue to be primarily agricultural in nature. The Ober Sand Savanna Nature Preserve is a key asset in this area and should be buffered from development. Commercial and industrial uses should be discouraged within this township,

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Chapter 4 Governme NOTE PHANE -- STATE PARKING

Introduction

Existing Conditions

Utilizing local organizations and resources to complete quality of life projects can help the county when budgets and personnel are limited. Some local organizations and groups that already provide services within the county can be better utilized and supported. Table 4.1 illustrates the county's fiscal and governmental capacity.

Government and Fiscal Capacity Recommendations

Greate a communications plan to collaborate an events council of local organizations and county representatives to coordinate programs, events, organizations and happenings around the county.



Starke County Courthouse

Existing Conditions

Table 4.1 | Governmental

Capacity

2010 Elected Officials	
Charles Chesak	County Commissioner
Kathy Norem	County Commissioner
Bryan Cavendar	County Commissioner
Dave Pearman	County Council
Brad Hazelton	County Council
Freddie Baker	County Council
Howard Balley	County Council
Robert Sims	County Council
Kay Gudeman	County Council
Don White	County Council
Bernadette Manuel	County Clerk
Judge Kim Hali	Circuit Court Judge
2019 County Boards and Commiss	ions
Zoning Board	Building Code Review Board
Plan Commission	Building Corporation
Corrections Board	Hospital Community Board
Drainage Board	Alcoholic Beverage Board
Economic Development Board	Aviation Board
Emergency Management Board	Library Board
Health Board	FEMA Board
Finance Board	

Fiscal Capacity			
2014 Property Tax Cap	\$78,550		
2014 Total Tax Levy	\$3,791,482		
2014 Certified Net Assessed Value	\$958,170,961		
Budger and Expenditures			
2014 Local Option Income Tax Total	\$4,279,739		
2014 Total General Pund Balance	\$643,206		
2014 Total General Fund Revenue	\$5,774,066		
You Increment Financing (TIF)			
Sysco TIF 2013 Base AV	\$74,765		

Source: Indiana Gateway Fiscal Health Indicators

Goal 1

Expand capacity to support county-wide programming and events.

Starke County is fortunate to have several community organizations that work for the betterment of the community by providing services and events for the public. Creating a council of county-wide towns and local organizations will help communicate and share community events at the county level. This council should meet monthly to discuss events and programs that are happening for their organization. Town representatives should work to promote these events or provide ideas for sponsorship or event locations.

Action Steps

- Create a permanent council of county and local elected officials, community stakeholders and representatives from local organizations.
- Encourage the creation of local Main Street Organizations throughout the county.
- Create a communication plan that effectively advertises local events and opportunities.

Main Strest Organizations in incorporated communities:

North Judson is seeking to reinstate it's local Main Street Organization. This organization will likely be run through volunteers initially to build interest and involvement within the town. The Main Street Organization can help bridge the gap of local organization events and happenings through the town into other county communities.



This is a regional goal.

Existing Conditions

Providing quality and reliable utility and infrastructure service is a prime role for local governments. Starke County has many private utility providers that offer electric, gas, cable and internet. A summary of those providers are listed in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 | Utility Providers

Provider	Utility Notes	
Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO)	Gas and Electric	
Kankakee Volley REMC	Electric	
Knox Utilities	Water and Sewer	
Hamlet Utilities	Water and Sewer	
North Judson	Water and Sewer	
CenturyLink	DSL	
Fourway	Wireless	
HyperWave	Wireless	
Mediacom Communications	Cable and Internet	
VigSat, Inc.	Satellite	
dishNET	Satellite	

Public Facilities and Services Recommendations

 Seek alternatives to provide reliable internet service to residents.

Goal 1

Improve availability and reliability of broadband service.

Broadband internet is a basic need for Starke County residents. The county is currently preparing a broadband readiness study which is being funded by a Broadband Readiness Planning Grant from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) and is intended to aid rural areas of Starke County to provide reliable broadband service. Towns such as North Judson and Hamlet have initiatives to partner with the county to complete and implement the recommendations of the broadband feasibility study.

Action Steps

 Collaborate with all Starke County communities in the completion and implementation of the recommendations of the broadband readiness study.



This is a regional goal.

Goal 2

Complete Storm Water Infrastructure Improvements.

Starke County has experienced historic flooding due to its Kankakee and Yellow River floodplains, as well as natural lakes causing costly flood damage to roadways, farm land and structures. Due to its flat terrain, these areas are more prone to flooding than others within the county. As it is infeasible to provide and maintain storm water infrastructure for the entire county, key areas that experience frequent flooding should be considered for infrastructure improvements.

Action Steps

 Inventory structures and areas that routinely experience historic flooding. Chapter 7

Placemaking



HAMLET IN

AUG. 16&18

Introduction

Starke County has numerous recreational and cultural assets. Placemaking is the strategy of utilizing these assets to make Starke County a great place to live, work and play. Placemaking strategies can include economic development initiatives, improving parks, holding festivals, improving education or recruiting desired businesses to the area.



A memorial stands where the former San Pierre High School stands.

Existing Conditions

Community Assets

Starke County has several anchor institutions and county assets which directly impact the short and long term prospects of the County. These assets bolster civic pride and serve as partners to accomplish shared goals. Figure 7.1 displays current community assets for Starke County. These resources can be found within municipalities and throughout unincorporated areas in the County.

A few key community resources within Starke County include:

Starke Memorial Hospital

Healthcare has desired and the horizons and the horizons and the beautiful and the horizons.

Starke County Public Library Branches

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Starke County School Corporations

The Purior Coulds' of the Composition Coulds' in The River Coulds' of the Coulds'

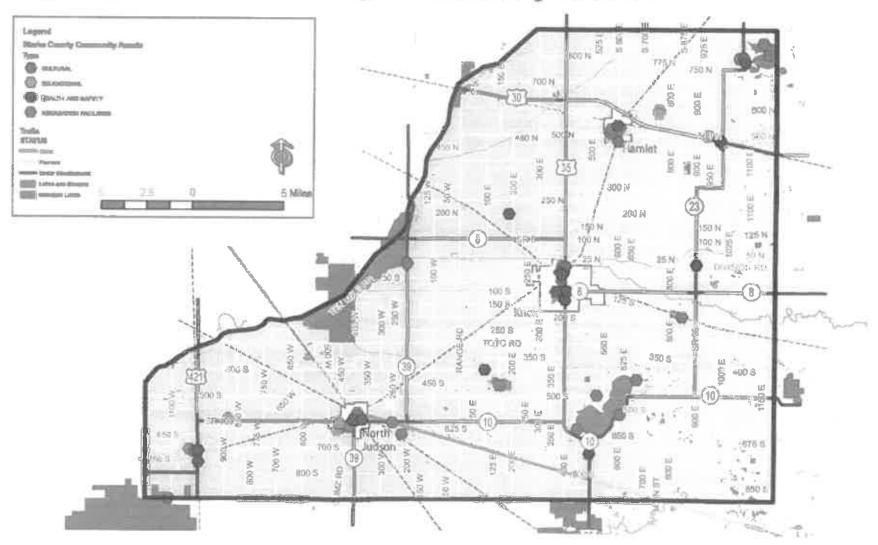
Northern Indiana Community Foundation

The Starke County Community Foundation 19 14 1 ion over \$13 million in endowment funds that supports local communities and projects. Recently, more than 48 scholarships were awarded to Starke County students. The BLXT also provides to be known to be a provided to the pr

Starke County Chamber of Commerce

The Starke County Chamber of Starke and the arrangement promoting, and attracting local business, thereby supporting the overall economy and quality of life in Starke County" (Starke County Chamber).

Figure 7.1: Starke County Community Assets



Expand trail connectivity between Starke County communities and destinations.

The American Discovery Trail and Great American Rail Trail both are routed through Starke County. A portion of the trail route coincides with the Erie Trail, a local rails to trails project. To capitalize on these assets, the county should encourage the development of a trails master plan and the construction of trails to connect destinations, amenities, and communities within Starke County.

Another regional trail connection opportunity exists to the south of Starke County. The Panhandle Pathway currently extends from Logonsport to Winamac. If this trail were extended north into Starke County, it would provide another regional trail connection and link Starke County to the Tippecanoe River State Park,

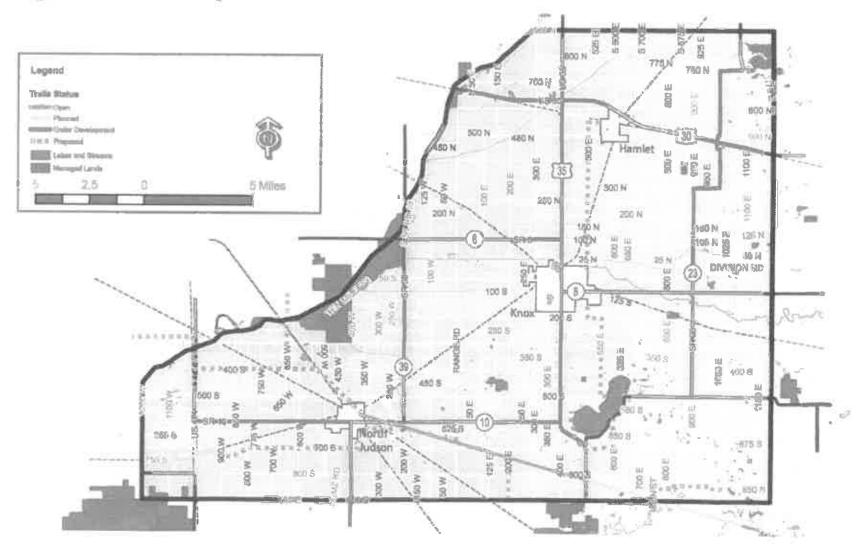
Figure 7.2 illustrates the existing and proposed future trail network. This network connects county-wide communities and amenities. Enhancing the trail connectivity enriches residents' and visitors' lives by promoting public health efforts.

Action Steps

- Complete a master trails plan.
- Complete the development of the Erie Trail as a section of the American Discovery Trail and the Great American Rail Trail through Starke County.
- Promote public health and culture of walking and biking through education and programming.
- Evaluate the feasibility of extending the Panhandle Pathway trall into Starke County, connecting it to Tippecanoe River State Park.



Figure 7.2: Proposed Trail Network



Additional Considerations

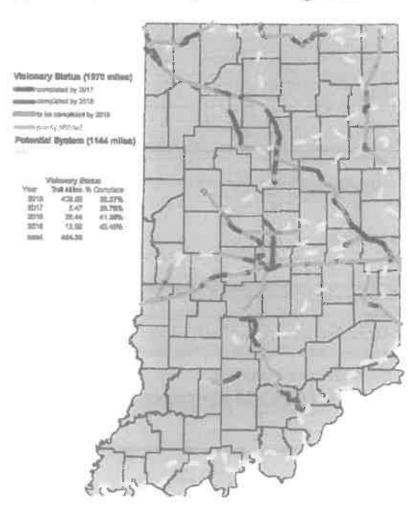
Figure 7.3 shows the Visionary Trails in the State of Indiana from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Based on this map, Visionary Trails in Starke County are completed or planned with priority in the county. This is found primarily in the southern half of the county. The planned visionary trails should be considered in conjunction with the Proposed Trail Network in Figure 7.2.



Enhancements at trail heads and gateways through Starke County are easy place making projects.

Source: MLucas

Figure 7.3: Visionary Trails Progress



Develop a county-wide initiative to promote the arts in Starke County.

Promoting arts and culture is a key component of placemaking. As an initial step in promoting the arts, Starke County desires to develop an "Art for Everyone" program. Starke County has begun this process by creating the "Constellation of Starke Creatives Network". This group has not taken any formal action as of now, but they are working to bring different artists and types of art together throughout the county. This group would promote and celebrate local art, including performing arts, sculpture, culinary arts, folk art, murals, painting and more.

Long term, the ultimate goal would be to support the development of local arts groups and help them develop facilities to support their work.

Program Ideas:

- · Pop-up shops
- Temporary art installations (metal or wood sculpture, murals, etc.)
- Art for Everyone events (culinary, woodworking, sculpture, painting, music, leather crafting, hobby art, etc.)
- = Art classes and workshops
- Art displays (local shop windows and government spaces)

Action Steps

- Partner with local artists and recognized artists to commission statues, signs and murals that represent the county's assets.
- Partner with local artists and recognized artists to host and promote "art for everyone" events.
- Encourage the creation of local arts groups and the development of supporting facilities for arts.



Chapter 8

Economic ; Development

Source of Liber

Introduction

Existing Conditions

Economic development in rural communities has traditionally focused on the development of employer sites and recruiting businesses to fill those sites. In today's economy, employers are struggling to find employees to fill open positions. It is now important for Starke County to demonstrate that they have a qualified and available workforce to fill jobs.

In order to be competitive for economic development opportunities, it will be important for Starke County to attract and retain population. The most effective way to attract and retain population is to build quality of life that makes Starke County a desirable place where people wish to build their futures,

A strong economic development strategy requires the county to have employer sites available with infrastructure in place. Here, Starke County is in a strong position with sites available. This means that the county's short-and medium-term focus should be on building quality of life.

Economic Development Capacity

Currently, there is an economic development board made up of two commissioners and two council-persons. The role of this board is to work with individual towns to accomplish economic development gods and initiatives that build tourism around Starke County's existing assets.

The Starke County Economic Development Foundation is a county group that works to increase economic opportunities and improve the quality of life for citizens of Starke County.

SCILL Center

The Starke County Initiative for Lifelong Learning (SCILL) Center provides workforce education, training and programs for Starke County residents and individuals from surrounding areas. The SCILL center is located in Knox.

Existing Conditions

Table 8.1 | Top Employers

(not organized by number of employed)

Location	Title	Category
Knox	Puthfinder Services, Inc.	Services
Knox	MPI Indiana Fineblanking	Industry
Knox	Knox Community School Corporation	Education
Knox	JW Hicks Inc.	Construction Materials
Knox	Starke Hospital	Medical
Hamlet	Oregon Davis Jr/Sr. High School	Education
North Judson	American Oak Preserving Co., Inc.	Commercial Services
North Judson	Bailey's Discount Center	Services

Current Capacity

Table 8.1 illustrates the top ten employers in Starke County. Although most of these are in the City of Knox, employment opportunities are throughout the county.

Source: STATS Indiana

714 commute into Starke County

3,688 commute out of Starke County

Build quality of life assets to promote economic development.

Building quality of life that attracts and retains local population is crucial for economic opportunity. Focusing on quality of life should be the short-to-medium term priority for local economic development officials. Several quality of life initiatives are outlined in this plan including an arts initiative, developing trails, and supporting downtown revitalization in local communities.

Action Steps

- · Promote workforce attraction.
- · Attract a sustainable population growth.
- Support existing local businesses.



A plant nursery in Toto also offers fresh produce.

Develop a county-wide tourism initiative.

There are many well-known attractions in Starke County and even more hidden gems. The county is located adjacent to major attractions, including Tippecanoe River State Park and Jasper Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area.

There are opportunities to capitalize on each of these assets, and build micro-economies to support local jobs. Where trails pass through towns, communities can provide services to cater to trail users. For the many outdoor recreation areas, suppliers and outfitters could be supported. For all of these, there is also a need for lodging in the community.

To capitalize on these apportunities, it is recommended that the county develop a tourism initiative. The first step is developing a tourism board and funding a staff position to lead the initiative.

A few regional tourism assets:

- Downtown districts
- Jasper Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area
- Ober Sands
- · Starke County 4-H Campgrounds
- Yellowstone Traff
- ADT/GART/Erie Trali
- . Tippecanue River State Park
- Hoesier Valley Rathroad Museum

Action Steps

- · Hire a part-time individual who supports all populated areas and assets of the county (events, natural resources, recreation opportunities, local art, marketing and promotion).
- · Attract retail that supports quality of life and tourism (hotels, air bnb, campgrounds, etc.).
- Start a local tourism board.



Develop and market employer sites.

There are multiple industrial parks with infrastructure and sites available for industry. It will be important to maintain this supply of sites in the future. Figure 8.1 displays areas in the county that have the potential for job attraction. Locations for job attraction are around existing populated areas. The Starke County Initiative for Lifelong Learning (SCILL) provides residents with training apportunities to obtain a career in a specialized industry. This program continues to be a critical program for the unemployed and career-ready high school graduates.

Starke County has four industrial parks with open capacity: Hamlet East Industrial Park, Hamlet West Industrial Park, Knox Industrial Park, and North Judson Industrial Park. Table 8.2 displays the existing industrial parks in Starke County.

Figure 8.1 Industrial Parks





Support workforce development throughout Starke County.

SCILL provides Starke County with training opportunities to obtain a career in a specialized industry. SCILL utilizes partners from around Starke County and neighboring communities to provide a variety of programs that build workforce education. A few training programs that SCILL provides include:

- High School programs in automotive technology
- · Welding technology programs
- Training in computer software
- E Programs to enhance literacy
- · Industrial mechanics programs
- · Training in leadership, teamwork and communication alilla

SCILL continues to be a critical program for the unemployed and career-ready high school graduates and should continue to be supported as programs and county needs evolve.

Action Steps

Support expansion of the SCILL Center.



SCILL automotive students take part in the Automotive Service Excellence Exam twice per year.



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Chapter 9 AND E THE REAL

Introduction

Residents appreciate Starke County because of its affordability, proximity to metropolitan areas, rural character, and natural beauty. Housing variety was mentioned as a desire during public participation for this plan. The county wants to become a whole-life community by evaluating the current housing market, determining housing needs, and where different types of housing would be best suited within the county.

Public Input:

Residents would like to see more diversity in housing options. If new housing were to be built in Starke County, single-family residential would be supported around Knox, as well as southwest, and north of North Judson. Multi-family residential would be supported around Koontz Lake and Bass Lake. Senior housing is demanded within every community of Starke County.

Of survey respondents, 50% believe the housing stock within the county could be maintained better.

Housing in incorporated communities:

In areas around North Judson, Knex and Hamlet, a diversity of housing types and densities are supported. These populated communities are more likely to support multifamily and two-family residential.

Housing Recommendations

Provide a variety of housing options, including workforce housing, rural living, multi-family housing and senior living options.

Existing Conditions

Current Capacity

Over 170 homes were sold within the past 12 months, according to Zillow. Homes continue to sell quickly, leaving a slim market for available houses within the county. This illustrates that there may be a need for additional housing and housing variety within the county. With limited access to lumber and hardware stores within Starke County, rehab and small housing infili projects are more achievable than large subdivision development.

Over 10% of the housing units within the county are for seasonal use or recreational use. This is due to Bass Lake and Koontz Lake's attraction of tourists and seasonal residents. While this is not a substantial number, it should still be considered as structures remain vacant during off-seasons. Maintenance and upkeep should be monitored to ensure seasonal properties do not negatively affect the surrounding full-time resident neighborhoods. Additionally, drainage approvals for rebuilding or rehab of existing residential structures should be closely monitored as storm water infrastructure is limited in these areas.

According to available 2019 Housing and Urban Development (HUD) data, there are currently no HUD census tracts nor development areas, nor are there Low Income Housing projects within the county outside of incorporated areas, Based on census data, the average home value in Starke County is \$138,672, which makes Starke County considered on affordable community and should be marketed as such.



A remodeled home enhances the surrounding neighborhood

Support the development of affordable and diverse housing options throughout Starke County.

Through public engagement, workforce housing and affordable housing options have been identified as a need for the county. The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) Development Fund administers multiple programs that support safe and affordable housing and economic development projects for communities. This, along with other federal funding options, provide a hand up for communities struggling to revitalize their housing stock for affordable alternatives. Some programs include:

- Community development block grant (CDBG)
- Tax-exempt bonds
- Low-income housing tex credits (LIHTC)
- · "HOME" investment partnership programs
- Owner occupied repair programs

Action Steps

- Support the development of affordable housing.
- Support rural residential that is sustainable and sansitive to agricultural operations.
- Support the development of single-jemily and multi-family housing within iche districts.



Rural living includes large tract parcels of land with a residence that supports agricultural operations.

Encourage the development of senior living options within the communities of Starke County.

Whole-life communities accommodate the needs of residents for their entire lifetimes. Housing is a large part of attracting and retaining residents. Starke County has approximately five senior living, nursing home, or rehab facilities. Expansion of existing facilities, or development of new senior living options throughout the county was supported through public engagement.

Senior housing projects are built around amenities, including ADA compilant sidewalks and transportation options and low maintenance homes that are close to facilities. These facilities can include pharmacies, small grocers, gardens, as well as hospitals and other health resources. Recently, independent, active senior living neighborhoods have been developed for those who desire to down-size but keep their close-knit community feel. Assisted living and memory care facilities are also options for seniors with more dependent needs.

Building quality of life assets targeted to residents of all ages throughout Starke County communities can help the county become a whole-life community.

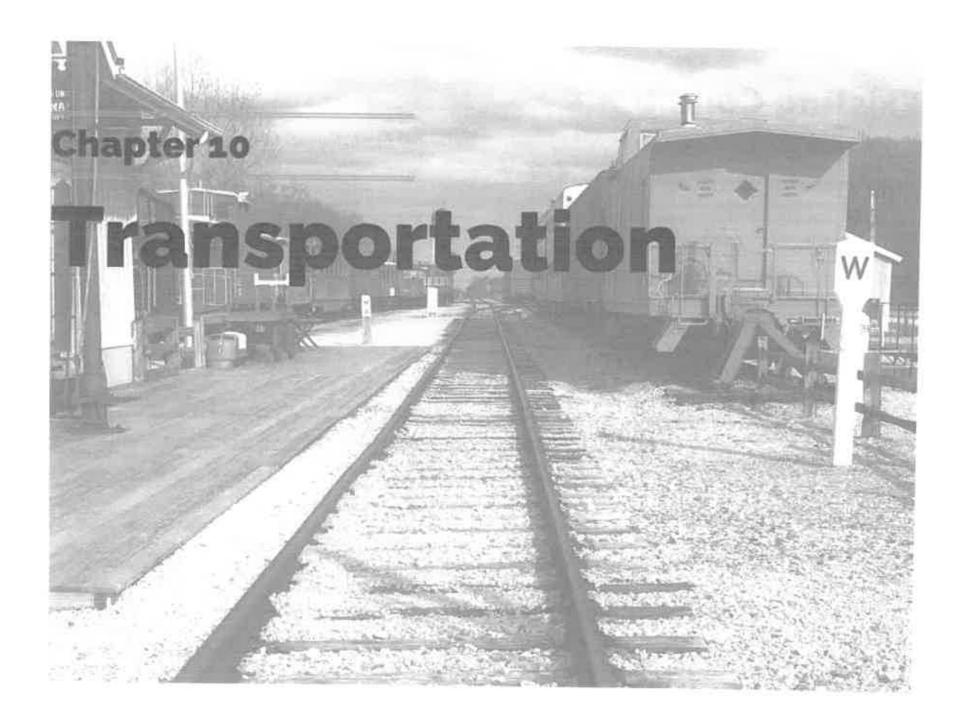
Action Steps

 Develop amenities that support senior living facilities throughout Sturke County.



Close-knit active senior living neighborhoods allow active seniors independence to live in detached homes in a small cluster of homes. Source: smallhomesforaging.com

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Existing Conditions

Introduction

Starke County has a quality road network that meets the current needs of the county. Transportation is a key part of increasing connectivity and safety in a community and should be evaluated for improvements.

Rail

Figure 10.1 displays the existing active and abandoned railroad corridors throughout Starke County. Currently, there are 31.8 miles of active rail and 49.1 miles of abandoned rail in Starke County, According to the 2017 Indiana State Rail Plan, the Norfolk Southern Railroad in Knox is to receive a new rail spur at the Knox Industrial Park to benefit economic development in the area. Safety improvements were also planned for the CSX Rails in Knox however no other parts of the county were mentioned in the plan. Currently, about nine miles of abandoned rail in the county have been converted to recreational trails where about 15 miles are planned to be added as a county-wide master trail.

Air

The Starke County Airport is the most used air facility in the county, it has 30 T-Hangars and the Main Hangar space for pilots looking for storage or space for their aircraft. There are two runways, one grass and one asphalt for pilots to use. The county also has 11 other air facilities throughout.

Source: 2017 State Rail Plan and Starke County Airport

Existing Functional Classification

Functional classification is how the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) classifies roads nationally. Functional classified roads have federal funding apportunities for capacity and condition improvements.

Figure 10.2 shows the current Existing Functional Classification Map for Starke County. As is shown, not all roads are functionally classified in the county. Functionally classified roads within the county include federal and state routes and key county road corridors where populated areas are. Starke County has several primary routes that provide critical connections:

- # U.S. 30
- # U.S. 35
- = U.S. 621
- B SR 8
- = S.R. 23
- = S.R. 10
- = S.R. 39

Any improvements or upgrades to these routes and highways requires collaboration with INDOT.

Figure 10.1 | Rail and Air

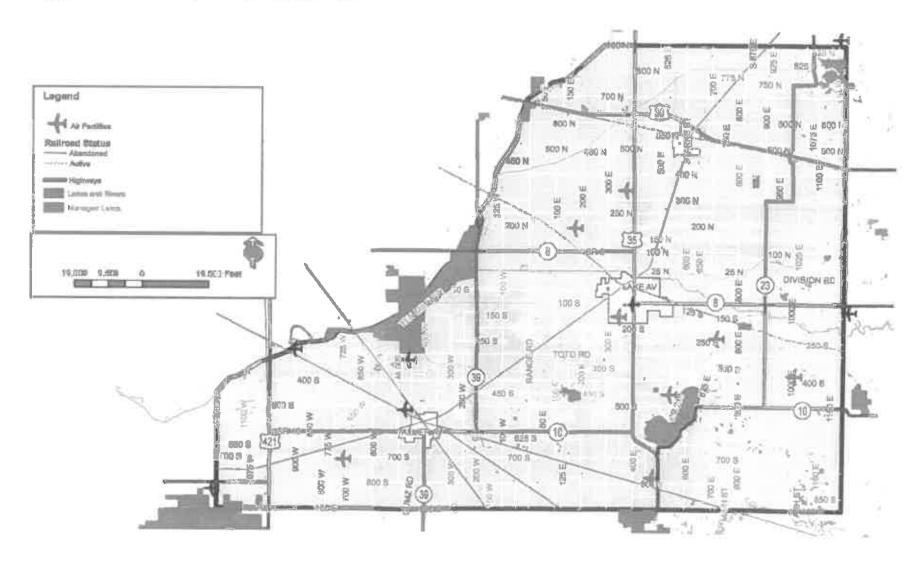
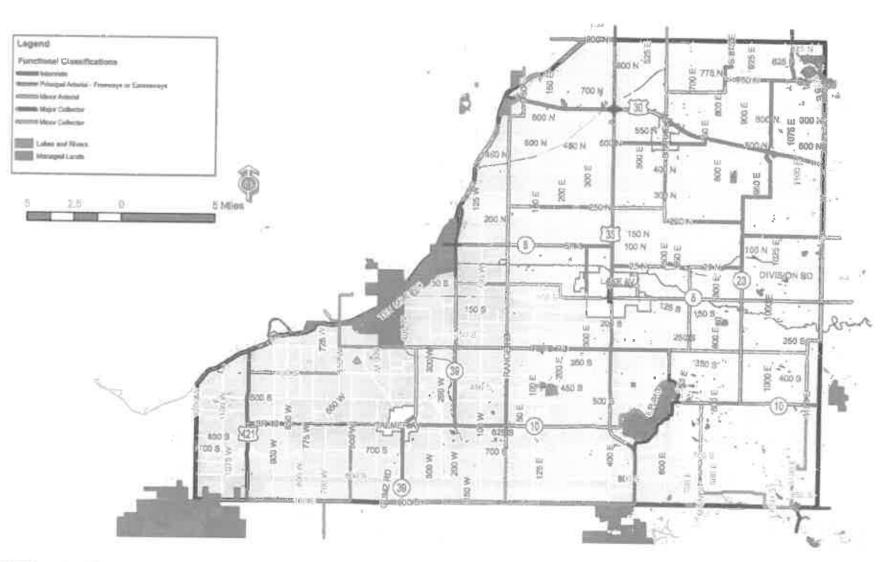


Figure 10.2 | Existing Functional Classification Map



Expand public transportation alternatives throughout Starke County.

The Community Services of Starke County is an organization that currently provides assistance and services to the county's senior citizens and families in need. One of the many services includes a transportation system throughout Starke County. This service sees heavy ridership, and the current service hours are not sufficient to meet current demands for those needing transportation to healthcare appointments, jobs or shopping.

The county should explore ways to expand the capacity, service hours and provide weekend transportation services by collaborating with Community Services of Starke County, or other service providers and organizations.

Action Steps

 Partner with existing service providers of Starke County's transportation program to provide increased capacity and weekend/ evening service.



Provide every county resident ability to live within 1-mile of an asphalt roadway.

The 5-year Bridge and Road Maintenance Plan is an ongoing planning tool that the Starke County Highway Department and county leadership have used to accomplish roadway projects. A goal within this plan supports the upgrade of county roads to provide every resident the ability to live on an asphalt roadway or have access to one within a mile radius. This proactive approach is an ongoing effort and should be continued to provide residents the quality roadway system they need.

Action Steps

 Gemplete paving and upgrade projects to complete the county's 5-year Bridge and Read Maintenance Plan.



Paving and road maintenance ensures a quality road network within the county.

Source: Starke County Highway Facebook

Promote the development of sidewalks within suburban residential areas.

Sidewalks might not be necessary for all areas of Starke
County due to its rural character. However, sidewalks should
be encouraged in suburban residential areas and along key
corridors to create safe pedestrian passages. The Future Land
Use Map in Chapter 3 identifies areas where suburban residential
is supported throughout the county. This classification is
located around towns and populated areas where there is
growth potential. Sidewalks should be a requirement for new
developments within these areas to ensure pedestrians can safely
get to and from areas within the county.

Where sidewalks are currently installed, rehab or reconstruction to accommodate ADA users is needed. Additionally, areas around the lake communities need sidewalks to safely connect to key destinations such as community centers and the beach.

Action Steps

 Update county zoning ordinance and street standards to define when sidewalks are required in new developments.



Bass Lake should have sidewalks to connect to key destinations such as the beach.

Maintain Access for U.S. 30.

U.S. 30 is a major transportation route through northern Starke County. There have been local discussions about loss of access or possible access controlled measures regarding the Starke Street/U.S. 30 intersection in Hamlet. Starke County should continue to be actively involved in the U.S. 30 coalition to be proactive in any future improvements to the corridor. Recent traffic studies for the intersections of U.S. 30 through Starke County should be used to establish a long-term plan with the goal of maintaining access. Any potential projects that limit access to U.S. 30 should be discouraged. Collaboration with INDOT can help clarify plans so the county can prepare for the future of U.S. 30.

Action Steps

Collaborate with INDOT to establish a long-term access management strategy for the U.S. 30 corridor through Starke County.



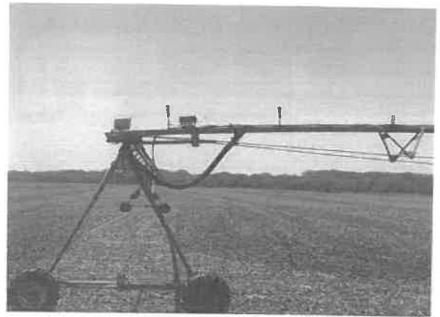
Chapter 11 d

Introduction

Existing Conditions

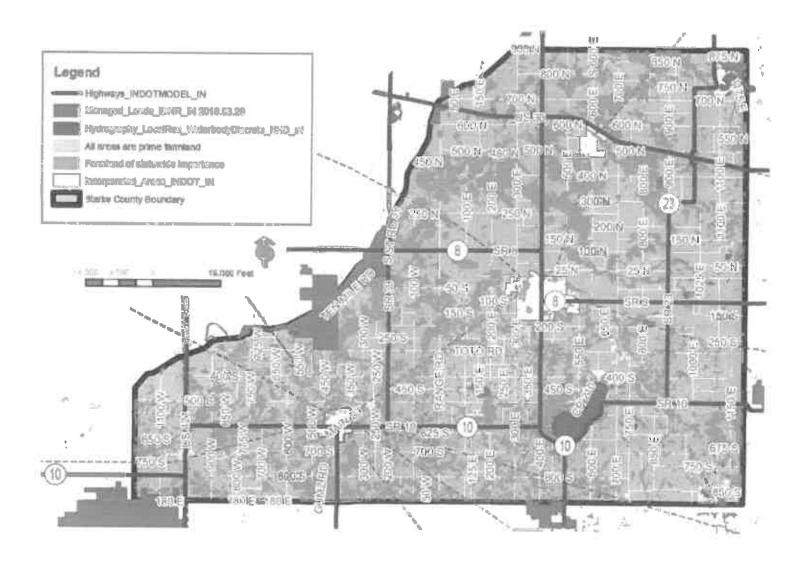
Starke county has a long history of farming and agricultural production that will continue to be a focus as the county moves into the future. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture Report, Starke County has a total of 511 farms with 133,459 acres of farmland total. Most of the farms in the county are between 10-49 acres. However, there are farms with over 1,000 acres in the county. Farmland makes up over half of the total county landmass and should be preserved.

Figure 11.1 shows the Prime Agricultural Land in Starke County. Currently, the most significant agricultural products sold within Starke County are grain, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas. Additionally, the county ranks number one in the state for mint oil and peppermint production according to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, making agricultural operations highly crucial for the county. While portions of the county are limited due to the major rivers and floodplains, there are still large areas specific to farmland uses.



Agricultural operations can be found throughout Starke County.

Figure 11.1 | Prime Agricultural Land



Maintain the county's agricultural character by the supporting agricultural sector throughout Starke County.

As indicated in Chapter 4- Land Use, the agriculture sector is essential to the county's quality of place, rural character, and local employment. The agricultural sector consists of much more then just farm ground. It includes livestock, supply companies, repair shops, the fairgrounds, and the many businesses that support the industry.

Starke County should work to not only preserve farmland. but work to support the many businesses that make up the agricultural sector of the community.

The future land use plan (Chapter 4) includes specific steps aimed at encouraging farmland preservation. Notably, significant land is designated for agricultural use in Storke County, Rural residential areas are separated from agriculture so that agricultural operations do not need to be limited by adjacent residential areas.

Agriculture in incorporated communities:

The Starke County 4-H Fairgrounds is an asset for the Town of Hamlet. Hamlet encourages expansion of 4-H events and collaboration for multi-use community buildings to use year-round.

Action Steps

- Support farmland preservation and protect agricultural sector businesses throughout the county.
- · Support the Town of Hamlet and the Starke County 4-H Pairground on expanding facilities and programming for egricultural tourism.



The Starke County 4-H Fairgrounds celebrates the agricultural heritage with year-round events.

Chapter 12

Natural Resources

STATE ATTENDED

Introduction

Starke County's natural resources are valuable assets and integral to local quality of place and environmental integrity. Because of the importance of these assets, it is critical that these resources remain protected by limiting or restricting development within environmentally sensitive areas.

Existing Conditions

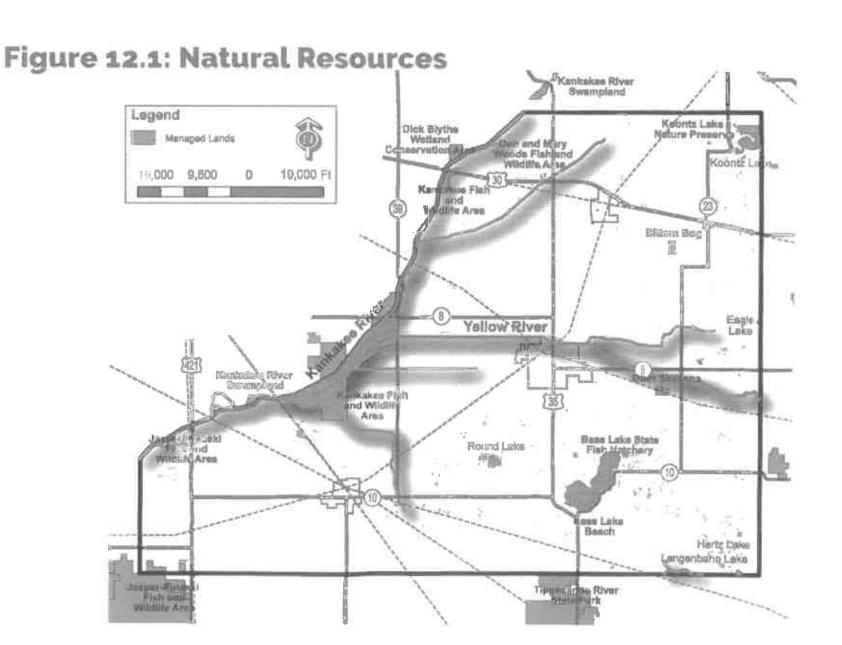
Starke County is rich in biodiversity and is home to black oak woodlands, wetlands, and sandy terrain. Notably, the county is one of the most wooded areas in Northwest Indiana with a majority of the county retaining a forest cover of 20-40%. Thousands of acres of preserved natural areas are scattered across the county, as shown in Figure 12.1. Additionally, 5890 acres of forest and woodlands are preserved within 131 privately owned parcels through the DNR'S classified lands program. Table 12.1 to the right lists some notable managed lands home to notive vegetation and wildlife populations.

The county's ability to preserve its natural resources is strengthened by the area's low-population density, rural ideology, and the ability to acquire land at a low-cost for future preservation opportunities. However, fragmentation of land. intensive agricultural practices, clearing of native vegetation, and unsustainable drainage projects pase significant threats to these resources. County leadership is aware of these strengths and threats and can use this awareness to create stronger policies in favor of preserving these natural resources long-term.

Table 12.1 Managed Land

		The second	
Location	Size	Managed by: IDNR Northwest Chapter of Waterfowl USA	
Kankakee Fish & Wildlife Area	4100 Acres 210 Acres		
Don and Marry Roberts Wildlife Area			
Turkey Foot WCA	153 Acres	IDNR	
Classified lands	5890 Acres in 131 parcels	Privately owned	
Round Lake	140 Acres	IDNR	
Koontz Nature Preserve	200 Acres	IDNR	
Ober Savanna Nature Preserve	90 Acres	The Nature Conservancy	
Starke County Forest	129 Acres	Bruce Wakeland	
Erie Trail	9 miles of paved trail passing w/ portions through wetlands, woodlands and sand prairies.	Volunteers Prairie Trails Club. Owned by Hoosier Volley Rail Museum	

Source: Understanding Starke County, An Introduction to Natural Areas in Starke County Indiana, Their History, Status and Future Prospects.



Goal 1

Protect Water Quality in the Kankakee River Watershed

Quality water is in high abundance across the Starke County region. The County aims to protect its water quality by ensuring its waterway systems such as the Kankakee River are protected from conflicting development patterns

The Kankakee River Flood and Sediment Management Work Plan focuses on flood management strategies and recommendations. These recommendations orient towards flood management practices which also serve to protect water quality in the Kankakee River Watershed. The Plan identifies increasing runoff erosion, and sedimentation as the primary risks to water quality in the river. Along with increasing rainfall, land uses such as irrigated agriculture, confined feeding animal operations (CAFO'S), and residential development are identified as the largest contributers to harmful runoff into the river.

While traditional flood control practices may help with flooding. these solutions are costly, short term, and are less effective in protecting water quality. The best solutions to protecting water quality are to limit conflicting development near the river and to allow the river to flow naturally without intervention.

Chapter 15: Hazard Mitigation discusses floodplains in detail.

Action Steps

- Implement development barriers that disalless harmful uses to be built near the rluers.
- Investigate conservation buffer areas ground the Kankakee River from development impasts.

Goal 2

Support the preservation of woodlands and natural resources throughout Starke County.

Updating the zoning ordinance is necessary to prevent conflicting development patterns and to ensure the preservation of woodlands and natural resources. The update should include preservation and development guidelines within and surrounding natural areas.

These guidelines should limit development within and surrounding highly sensitive areas such as floodways, werlands. and mature vegetation areas, permitted land-uses should adhere to development standards in order to reduce run-off and pollution into natural areas. Tree and vegetation preservation and open space requirements should also be included within the ordinance guidelines.

Action Steps

- Update the county zoning ordinance to limit development in natural resource areas.
- Require use of conservation subdivisons when developing in sensitive areas.

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Chapter 13

Parks & Recreation

Introduction

Existing Conditions

Recreational apportunities are prevalent throughout Starke County in the form of municipal and state parks, open space. state lands, and public access sites. These assets should be expanded to improve quality of life. A few key Starke County recreational amenities include:

Figure 13.1 illustrates where current parks and recreational amenities are within the county. These natural and recreational amenities are apportunities for creating and promoting an active lifestyle throughout the community.

- Kankaken State Fish and Wildlife
- Starke County Parest
- . Koontz Labe
- · Turkey Foot Wetlands Management Area
- . Yallanı Rhier
- . Wythogan Park
- Round Lake Wetland Conservation Area and Nature Preserve
- . Serenity Park
- · Sandy Acres Park
- " Chesapeake Run Golf Club
- . North Judson Town Park
- Hamlet Town Park
- San Pierre School Park
- San Pierre Tierny Park



Kankakee State Fish and Wildlife

Existing Conditions

The Kankakee River

The Kankakee River traverses through Starke County and is a key waterway through northwestern indiana and eastern illinois. The Point is a natural feature in the county where the Yellaw River and the Kankakee River converge. The Point is located on the western part of the county bordering Porter County where public access sites are located encouraging kayaking, fishing and hiking.

Recreational Trails

Figure 19.1 also shows the current trails in Starke County. The North Judson Erie Trail is part of the American Discovery Trail which is the first coast to coast non-motorized trail. Starke County will have part of the American Rail Trail as well as the Great American Rail Trail. These trails can be seen as proposed on Figure 7.2 in the Placemaking chapter of this plan. This asset should be marketed as a county tourism opportunity. Trails in Starke County are primarily concentrated in the southwest corner of the county and should be expanded to connect to other recreational amerities within the county.

Parks

Parks make up most of the recreational amenities in Starke County and provide an attraction for residents and visitors. Norwayne Field, Wythogan Park, Hamlet Town Park, and San Pierre Tierny Park are popular parks in the county.

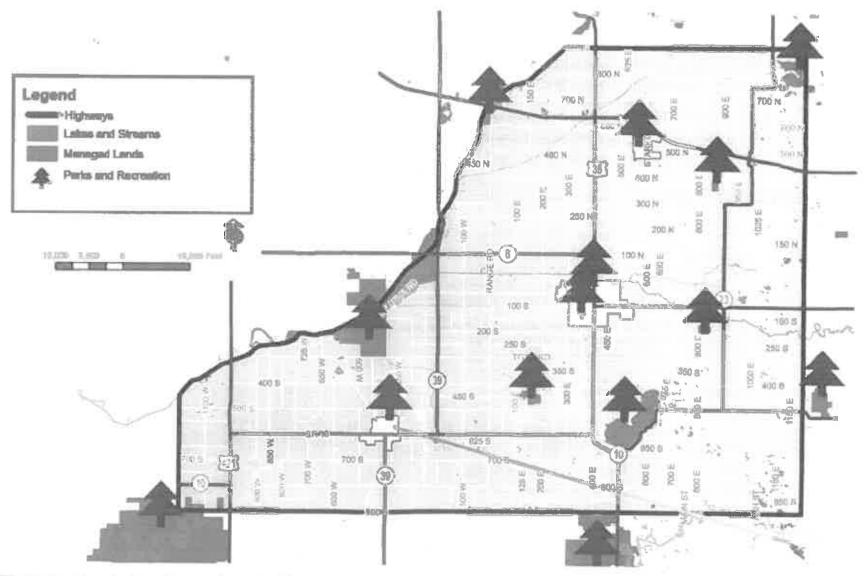
Lakes

Bass and Koontz Lake are the two largest lakes in Starke County and are very popular tourist destinations. Lakes provide seasonal recreation activity and can attract new residents and amenities that are built around the lake economy.

Regional Assets

Starke County is located in close proximity to other recreational features like Tippecanoe River State Park and Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area. Recreational connections to these areas should be supported as the county continues to expand trails. The American Discover Trail is planned to go past the Tippecanoe River State Park which will help connect this key regional asset to the county.

Figure 13.1 | Current Parks and Recreation Amenities



Goal 1

Expand public access and recreation opportunities at the "point" and Yellow River.

The point, where the Yellow River converges into the 133 mile long length Kankakee River is a unique feature that should be enhanced. The Kankakee River Association oversees this area and has recently added public access points to the rivers. The county should partner with the association to designate this area as an established nature preserve. This supports the expansion of educational programming about the natural Indiana river ecosystem and will help build the county's quality of life. Longterm investments at the "point" and along the Yellow River include the development of a nature center facility or community center where educational programming and rental space for events are available. These spaces can be used year-round and bring visitors to the area in the colder months.

Establishing more trails in this area that increase access to the point will bring awareness to the recreational amenities that Starke county has. Expanding the future county-wide trail network to this area also promotes tourism opportunides.

Action Steps

- Conduct an environmental assessment on trail potential for the area around the point.
- Work with the Kanhakee River Association to determine the feasibility of establishing a nature preserve and facilities.



Natural amenities can be enjoyed in the winter months.

Source: MLucas

Goal 2

Expand park and recreational amenities for all county residents.

Public access at Bass Lake Beach and Koontz Lake should be expanded to bring more visitors to the area and enhance economic opportunity. Improvements for these areas will support increased quality of life and economic development opportunities throughout the county. Table 13.1: Identified Recreational Facility Improvements identifies a list of Starke County Park Improvements that should be pursued in this plan, including Improvements at the Bass Lake Beach.

Action Steps

- Conduct an environmental execution on trail potential for the area around the point.
- Improve park amenities according to identified projects on Table 13.1.

Best Practices

Culver, Indiana located in Marshall County, directly east of Starke County has a well maintained beach that attracts visitors each year to Lake Maxinkuckee. There are two public access points on the lake that provide beach and boat access. Around Lake Maxinkuckee there are shops and restaurants that support the lake district economy.



findculver.com

Table 13.1 | Potential recreational improvements at County properties.

Park/Location	Improvement
Buss Lake Beach	Beach house and site improvements: Demolish existing structure
Stree Prints Begich	 Build a new facility that includes a cafe, meeting room, offices, restrooms, locker rooms, and restaurants
	Site improvements: • Accessible parking
San Pierre School Park	• New playground
	* Tennis court improvements
The second secon	Site Improvements: • Walking paths
San Plarre Tierney Park	a New playground
	* New benches
	Site Improvements:
Koontz Lake	Community center
	Park improvements

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Chapter 14

Historic & Archaeological Resources

Introduction

History

Before Starke County was established, the area was first home to Mound Building cultures such as the Hopewell from 200 BC to 400 AD and the Mississippian from 1000 AD TO 1400 AD. Little evidence remains of these cultures, but archaeological surveys suggest that settlements were largely temporary camping sites with very few village settlements. What remains of these cultures are small tools and various mounds scattered throughout the county. The Pottawatomie Indians were noted to have settled in Northwest Indiana around the 18th century.

Around the same time, the first European settlement in Starke county was established in 1840 near the Town of Ober, known as the Osborn Settlement. In 1834-1845, Starke County was surveyed and platted as a rectangle with 12 townships. The northwest corner was annexed into La Porte County in 1842. In 1850, Starke County was organized into its own government.

Existing Conditions

Historic structures in Starke County are identified in the county through the Indiana State Historic and Archaeological Research Database (SHAARD). However, very few are classified as outstanding with two structures classified under the state or national registry. There are no historic places or districts listed within the county. Figure 14.1 highlights Historic structures located across the county.



Plat of Starke County, 1852 Source: Starke County Historical Society

Source: Starke County Historical Society

Figure 14.1: Historical Structures in **Starke County**

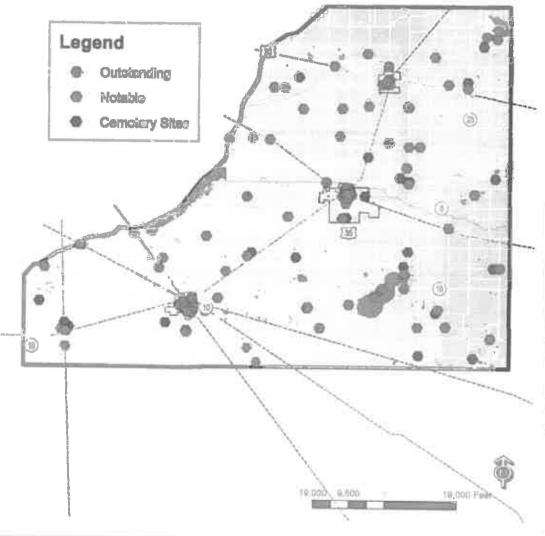


Table # | Outstanding Historical Structures

Title	Registry
Starke County Courthouse	National & State
Shricker, Governer Henry F and Maude Brown Home	State
Indiana Pipeline Pumping Station	N/A
Origer Farm	N/A
Norwayne Field	N/A
Bass Lake Fish Hatchery	N/A
Maple Farm	N/A
Jordan School	N/A
Reiss and Horner Building	N/A

Source: Indiana State Historic Architectural and Archaeological Research Database (SHAARD)

Goal 1

Evaluate and Record Historic Landmarks throughout Starke County

Historical and archaeological preservation keeps Starke County's history alive while also maintaining its character. Landmark preservation also leads to economic and aesthetic benefits. identifying historic landmarks such as structures, places, and districts across the county and within county municipalities is important to preserving the history of these assets. After historic landmarks are identified, they should be registered to obtain funding for preservation and facade improvements.

Bass Lake Fire Department, 1952



Source: Starke County Historical Society

Action Steps

- Work with the Starke County Historical Society to identify and register historical landmerks through the Indiana National Register of Elistoric Places
- Market historical resources to expand tourism efforts

Chapter 15 Hazard Mitigation

Introduction

Natural disasters such as tornadoes, flooding, winter weather, and droughts are generally rare but can be detrimental to communities. Human error and technology also pose threats to communities. Multi-hazard mitigation strategles ultimately minimize disruption to the local economy, loss of life, and property damage. Response and preparedness are then essential to remaining resilient in the face of an emergency. Therefore, the County's goal is to minimize hazardous threats impacting the health, safety, and well being of communities by planning.

Existing Conditions

The most significant threats to Starke County are storms and flooding. Table 15.1 below lists the number of recorded major natural disasters or emergencies to date. Figure 15.1 shows the existing floodplains surrounding the Kankakee and Yellow Rivers. Most of the county is faces a risk of moderate flooding (Zone X) Areas shown in teal (Zone A) display a high risk of flooding.

Table 15.1 | Natural Disasters

Title	Registry
Floods	5
Storms	5
Winter Storms	4
Tornadoes	2

Source: City-Data.com

Current Capacity

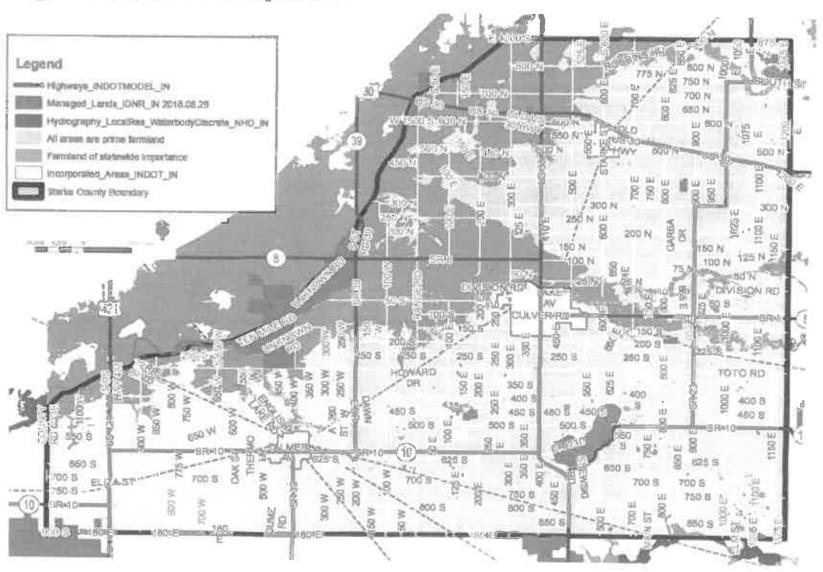
The Starke County Emergency Management Agency works with county-wide communities on preparation and mitigation for weather-related emergencies, travel advisories, hazardous material spills, and flooding. The Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) was created as a subcommittee for annual review of emergency response plans. Table 15.2 below provides a list of Emergency Support Functions identified in the County's Emergency Operation Plan.

Table 15.2 | Capacity

Function	Primary Agency
Transportation	Starke County Highway Department
Communications	Starke County Sheriff's Department (91) Center)
Public Works	Starke County Highway Department Local Public Works Department Starke Emergency Management
Firefighting/EMS	Local Jurisdictional Fire Departments Starke County EMS
Emergency Management	Starke County Emergency Management

Source: Starke County Emergency Operation plan.

Figure 15.1: Floodplains



Goal 1

Support the Starke County Emergency Management Agency in Preparedness and Response

The County should continue to support the Emergency Management Agency in reviewing and updating emergency response plans. The County currently has a five-year Emergency Management Strategic Plan (2012-2017), an Emergency Management Operation Plan (EOP), and a Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan in place. Supporting the agency in reviewing and updating these plans will ensure that all County departments understand the risks and take proactive action in minimizing hazardous impacts.

Action Steps

 Review Emergency Response Plans Annually

Goal 2

Complete Storm water Infrastructure Improvements to prevent flooding.

Starke County has experienced historic flooding due to its Kankakee and Yellow River floodplains and natural lakes causing costly flood damage to roadways, farm land and structures. As seen in Figure 15.1 majority of the county has a moderate risk of flooding and the eastern boarder has a high risk of flooding. As it is unfeasible to provide and maintain storm water infrastructure for the entire county, key areas that experience frequent flooding should be considered for infrastructure improvements. These preventative improvements can help reduce the impacts of flood related

Action Steps

 Inventory structures and areas that routinely experience historic floading.



Due to its flat topography, areas around the lake communities experience flooding.

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Chapter 15

Appendix

Source: MLucas

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Table of Contents

Public Workshop Summary	200
Public Survey Summary	104
Public Presentation Summary	106
Steering Committee Summary	107
Demographic Summary	208

STARKE COUNTY, INDIANA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Public Input Workshop Summary

The first public meeting for the Starke County Comprehensive Plan was held on May 22rd, 2019. This was a free flow style public meeting which was held at in the Commissioner's Room at the County Building Annex. The public meeting started at 5:00pm.

A summary of the response trends is included below, with photos of the actual response boards included at the end of the summary for further reference.

Exercise #1: Visioning Exercises

For this exercise, participants were asked to write down their thoughts and place post-it notes on a board indicating what they like about Starte County, what's missing, how would you describe Starte County today and what hopes you have for the county in the future.

How would you describe Starke County TODAY?

- Underperforming economically
- Low aducation
- Alice countryside
- Friendly x3 /neighborly
- Rurel/small towns x2.
- Farming
- · Light Industry
- A little stuck in the past
- Lect of emphesis on education
- D LOW WARES
- Strong desire to improve things//moving forward ::2
- 2 types of communities that sometimes clash- Agriculture vs urban city
- Government buildings in good shape
- o New Jail
- Needs tweeked

Describe Starke County in TEN YEARS?

- Improved infrastructures x2 (transportation, residential, commercial, industrial)
- Growing the erts and music scane x2
- More tourism at the lakes
- More diversity
- Rostaurants
- · Better child care and health sarvices
- Vibrant Countowns (small parks, artsy stores, coffee shops and restaurants) x2

100 | Starke County, IN | Comprehensive Plan

- Jobs that pay better wasse
- County-operated beach with upgrades
- New hospital/health care facilities and ratings x3
- High occupancy in downtown buildings
- · New fast food
- Shoe store
- Access to rivers and lakes- baach
- Public transportation
- Public gethering places
- Adequate worker housing
- Good grocery stores and/or co-op grocery & produce
- Prairie trail extanded further SE & MW
- Trails connect to city & towns
- Business growth
- Slight population growth

What do you ENJOY MOST in Starke County?

- The lettes x3
- Outdoor opportunities/hunting/fishing x6
- Uncrowded/fewer people/specs x2
- Netura/lakas/rivars/wooded areas x8
- Interacting with the people here/neighborly x2.
- Safety/low crime x2
- Low traffic
- Small town/rural atmosphere x2
- 4-H
- Yallow River

What is MISSING in Starke County?

- Dacent & cleen supermarket/Grocery x5
- Mora community cohesion
- Art opportunities x2
- Cultural Activities
- Access to rivers, lakes beach
- More and improved outdoor rec facilities/parks
- Gathering places for people to meet/engaged apecas
- Working cless housing
- Public transportation
- Lack of good restaurants x2 (delry queen, KFC)
- Unoccupied & poorly maintained downtown buildings
- School annoliment declining/struggling academically
- Undate hospital

Exercise #2: What's most important/unimportant to Starke Co?

This exercise asked people to place dots in categories that Starias County should focus on for short term goals (see next page for map)

Top important Topics:

- Trails and Sidowalks x6.
- Quality of Life aspects ::6
- Economic Davelopment x5
- Natural Resources x5
- Ragionalism x3
- Public Safety #3
- Education & Worldorce Development x3

Least Important Topics:

- Roadway infrastructure
- Utility infrastructure
- Investment to County wide towns
- Agriculture and Ferming
- Getsweys

Exercise #3: Land Use Location

For this exercise, participants were asked if new development is encouraged in Starke County, where should those lend uses be located? Areas identified for development:

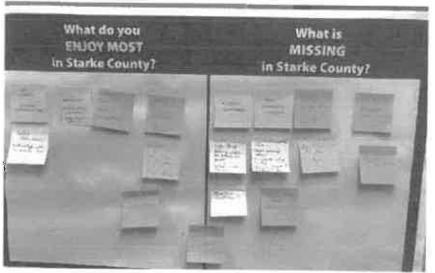
- Single-Family Residential located south of Knot, NW and SW North Judson
- Multi-Family Residential located at San Plarre and around Sess Lake
- Commandai/Ratall along US 30 by Hamlet, along US 35 south of Knox, along Bass Lake and SR 10 towards North Judson.
- Agricultural Projection sporedic evound county- primarily along western adge of county.
- * Natural Resources Protection around Bess Lake, around CR 400/Toto/Monterey
- Parks/Racrastion around Koontz Lake, Bass Luke, San Plarre, Know.
- Lisht Industrial/Manufacturing located eround South/SE Hamlet, NW Knox and West of North Judson

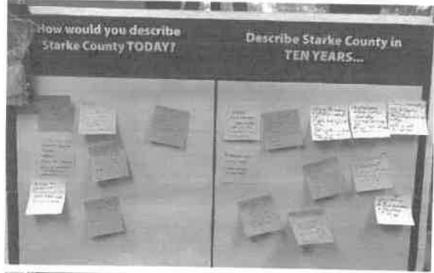
Additional Comments via comment cards

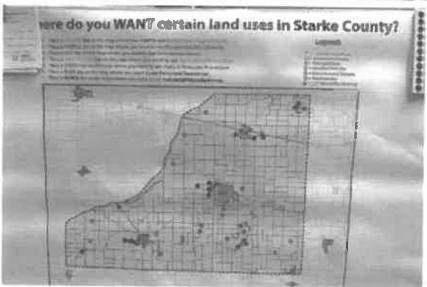
- Utilize the "point" where rivers connect for keyeking and public access
- Need, not desire for broadband service
- No birthing center laft in county-need for upgreda/update hospital facility

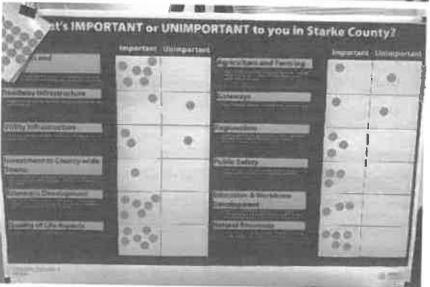
Public Meeting Board Photos:

The following are photos of the actual response boards from the event.









Public Survey Summary

The Starke County survey received 56 responses total, majority of the responders (26%) have lived in Starke County for over 40 years. Respondents really like that Starke County isn't a big city, it is small and page full and provides a different environment compared to larger areas.

What aspects of Starke County are you proud of?

- Small-town/Rural
- People
- Historical
- Sanse of community
- Prairie Trail
- Low orking rate
- Meture
- Older/Historic Structures
- Splash Ped

People really appreciate the trail(s) and the nature in Starke County. People also like the safety, history, and the people in the county. People would like the future of Starks County to be theiring, small town, rural, safe, and more employment opportunities.

What are the key issues Starke County is facing today?

- Lack of employment opportunities
- Drugs
- Poverty
- Housing
- · No grocery storas

Why do you think people move away from Starke County?

- Jobs
- o Mousing
- Political differences
- Bigger cities
- e Nowhers to shop

Responses with over 50%

55% of respondents disagree that there are enough retail options in Starte County.

50% of respondents disegree that the overall existing housing stock in the county is well maintained.

52% of respondents egree that Starte County can support more living options for seniors.

53% diagrae that there is a good affort to rause and redevelop vacant properties.

55% of respondents disagree that there is a clear branding and marketing message for the county.

104 Starke County, IN | Comprehensive Plan

What makes Starke County better and/or different than other towns?

- Proximity to other grass
- People
- Small towns
- Rural
- · Cheaper
- Waiking trail

Where do you go for entertainment, shopping, restaurants, and recreation?

- Plymouth
- Valparaiso
- South Bend
- Michigan City

Comment Section

Although majority of people leave the county for entertainment, a lot of them mentioned that they would like to stay local but can't because lack of amenities. A lot of respondents mention the past and how the community used to be better. There is a lot of opportunity in Starte County and it only needs to be capitalized on.



Public Presentation Summary

Starke County Public Presentation 9/05/19

At this meeting a presentation that highlights sections of the plan was given to attendees. This presentation discussed the plan purpose as well as specific chapters in the plan. After the presentation residents relied questions about the plan as well as about the county itself.

Here is a list of topics discussed at the meeting:

- Public Transportation attandaes believe public transportation should be expanded in Starke County.
- Why do people live in Starke County? This was esked to determine why people live here currently, as well as how can we get people to move here in the future.
- Scoodband Readiness Study Attendess wanted to know how this plan connected with that plan and if they were related.
- Accommodations Starke County needs some places for people to stay over night. It is hard to travel to a place where you can't spend the weekend.
- Natural Resources Even though Starks has a lot of natural resources, they aren't year round and that is something that needs to be considered.
- Communication more county wide communication outlists need to be created and maintained to keep people in the know in the county.
- Economic Development Woney doesn't stay in the county because people don't have places to spend it.

Steering Committee Engagement Summary

The Starke County Staering Committee was made up of nine members who represented the county highway department, public safety, education, local business, residents and elected officials. The three committee meetings, dates and raviewed tasks can be found in the table below:

Committee Mesting	Date	Tusks
Steering Committee Meeting #1	June 26th at 3:00pm at the Commissioner's Room (Lower Level Starke County Annex 1 Building)	Kick-off Meeting to review demographics report and public engagement summary reports.
Steering Committee Meeting #2		Draft goals and objectives/future land use discussion.
Steering Committee Meeting #3	August 29th at 3:00pm at the Commissioner's Room (Lower Level Starke County Annex 1 Building)	Review of draft plan.

Starke Co Demographic Summary

Data as of 5/8/2019

introduction

Of the over 310 square miles of lend within Starke County, there is a rich heritage and countless assets that residents are proud of. Starke County is located at the northwestern region of the state of indiana and is of rural status based on its population. (Insert region map)

Population & Growth

2000 population: 23,556

2010 population: 23,363

2018 population astimates:22,935

2023 estimated population (ESRI Business Analyst): 23,003

This is a 1.8% decrease since 2010, indicating Startae County as a whole is remaining steady according to Census.gov/quickfacts

in 2017, only 50 building permits were approved. This indicates that while there may be some investments in the county, Starke County has potential to increase the number of building permits by encouraging development and redevelopment within the County.

Rural Indiana Stats: Community Vitality Indicators- At present, CVI is constituted of six variables. They are:

- Population Estimates
- Public School Enrollment as a % of Population Under 18 Years
- Public High School Graduation Rate
- Percent Population with Associates Degree or Higher
- Gross Assessed Value Per Capita
- Per Capita Personal income





According to Consus.gov/quickfacts, there are slightly more individuals over the age of 65 (18%) than the state of indiana (15%). Like many communities, Starke County's older population's needs are much different than those of younger residents. The median age for Starke County is 42 years.

Income

17% of individuals within Starke County are living in poverty. This is slightly higher than the 13.5% of the indiana state average. (Census.gov/quickfacts) The median household income in 2017 is lower than the state's average income, at \$45,526 and \$52,182. (Census.gov/quickfacts)

Education

Majority of Starke County residents have a high school degree or higher, while only 11% of individuals have a backelor's degree or higher. While some recent afforts have been made for additional educational opportunities after high school graduation within the County, it is important that residents know about these programs and opportunities. (Census.go/quickfacts) There are two public school corporations within Starka County, North Judson-Sen Pierre School Corporation and Knox Community School Corporation. Below is a table that illustrates the change in enrollment for a 10-year period, according to doz.in.gov:

Cors Name	2009	2019	Charres
North Judson- Sen Pierre	1356	1005	-351
Knox Community	2015	1845	-170

This data suggests that the public-school corporations within Starte County are slowly losing students. This could simply be a cause of the older population, but could be a potential risk for the county if it does not attract young families with student aged children.

As school systems start utilizing laptops and mobile devices for learning, it is important Starks County has the infrastructure that allows students to have e-learning days to keep up with allike school systems. Broadband and high speed internet are essential these days. According to Census.gov/quickfacts, over 66% of households within Starke County have a broadband internet subscription. Being part of the northwestern indians area, Starks County has better coverage than some of its counterpart counties to the south. (Insert broadband map (broadbandmap.foc.gov)

Employment

As of July 2019, according to ESRI Business Analyst, Starke County's unemployment rate is 4.4%. // Higher than State's unemployment rate of: 3.4%

Starke County's service industry ranks higher than most of where people are employed at 40%. Manufacturing industries employ about 25% of the population while others, including retail trade, transportation and utilities, construction, agriculture, finance and real estate each only employ less than 10% of the employed labor force. (ESRI Business Analyst)

45% White Coller//40% Blue Coller

15% Service

Rural Indiana Stats Agricultural Commodity: 2017

Starks County leads state in Rya (>100-675 scres) and Mint (>1-5,486 scres) Mint oil (peppermint and spearmint): 6,486 acres only other county that produces mint is Pulsski County, south of Starks Co.

Majority (7,150) people lesve for their primary job. Onyl 1,700 people commute into Starka County for work. (See commuter graphic on next page)

Housing

2018 Avarage Home Value: \$135,672

2018 Median Home Value: \$110.157

2023 Median Home Value: \$116,993 (ESRI Business Analyst)

According to Rural Indiana State, 20% of houses are owner-accupied while only 20% are being ranted out. Median Year Structure Built between 1965-1975

OnTheMap

Inflow/Outflow Report

Primary Jobs for All Workers in 2015

onp.co. cones. por en 64/30/3019 Created by the U.S. Coresa Breast's Orth. Map 14439: //water

Inflow/Outflow Counts of Primary John for Selection Area in 2015

The property 7,156 All Works SAMAN! **JONES OF SOLUTION** 11,7,50 1000 H

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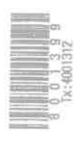
Retail MarketPlace Profile

Starke County, IN (18145) Starke County, IN (18145) Geography: County

Property by Earl

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June 27, 2019



STARKE COUNTY

202000253

STARKE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; PL-18-016 0.00 LOCAL RESOLUTION APPROVING THE

HANDY THOMASON, RECORDER STARKE COUNTY, KHOX, IN RECORDED AS PRESENTED

Resolution 5020 - COL

WHEREAS, the County of Starks had identified adequate reason to analyze the County of Starks Commehensive strategy, and

WHEREAS, the County of Starke has hired HWC Engineering Inc. define and describe the insues, County of Starke address the Comprehensive strategy and the town's needs for the fluture, and advise us of our options, and make recommendations to

WHEREAS, the County of Starke has received federal Community Development Block Grant dollars from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs to fund this study in the amount of \$39,600 and has contributed the local match in the amount of \$4,400 for this project, and

WHEREAS, the County of Starke has reviewed the process and completed study thoroughly and is satisfied with the services performed, the information contained therein, and the methodology WHEREAS, the County of Starke has received at least one copy of this document for our recents and will keep the same on file in the County Commissionas offices for future reference, and BE IT RESOLVED that the Starke County Commissioners has considered the input from the Community, has received approved by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs and is hereby approved by said Starke County Commissioners on behalf of the County of Starks.

dey of Albahond, 24 19.30 On this

BY:

Starties County Commissioners President

Startes County Camminatoners

Searing Country Commissioners

Attent: Startes County Auditor

Recommended and Approved By The Starks County Plan Commission On Jenuary 13, 2020 Aprent Novem, vice president Charles Cheenle, president Starke County Flan Commission Public Hearing Held On January 13, 2020 Presented To The Starks County Commissioners On January 21, 2020 This Ordinance shall be officiave upon its passege and posting of law.

Dated this of day of April A. 2020.

Starte County Board of Commissioners.

Bryan-Cavender, member

Rachel Oesterreich, Auditor