

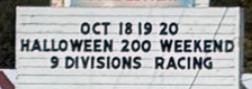
**WASHINGTON**  
**COUNTY**  
*Indiana*

WASHINGTON COUNTY

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**DEC. 17, 2024**





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RESOLUTION NO. 2024-09

**RESOLUTION OF  
THE WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
APPROVING A NEW WASHINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, J.C. 36-7-4 *et seq.* empowers the Washington County Plan Commission to prepare a Comprehensive Plan for the promotion of public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, or the general welfare and for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of development; and

**WHEREAS**, I.C. 36-7-4 *et seq.* authorizes a Comprehensive Plan to include a variety of elements including but not limited to any factors that are a part of the physical, economic, and social situation within Washington County and to prepare reports and recommendations setting forth plans and policies for the development and improvement of the physical situation so as to substantially accomplish the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, I.C. 36-7-4 *et sec.* authorizes a plan commission to adopt entire comprehensive plan amendments to comprehensive plans or individual elements of a comprehensive plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Washington County Plan Commission conducted a public hearing on December 3, 2024 in accordance with I.C. 36-7-4 *et sec.*, with respect to a proposal to update and amend the Washington County Comprehensive Plan and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Commissioners, Washington County, Indiana that:

The Board of Commissioners of Washington County, Indiana, hereby approves the new Washington County Comprehensive Plan (a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by this reference) and directs the Clerk of the Washington County, Indiana, to place one (1) copy on file with the Washington County Building Commissioner and (1) copy on file with the Recorder of Washington County, Indiana.

**DULY ADOPTED** by the Board of Commissioners of Washington County, Indiana this 17<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2024.

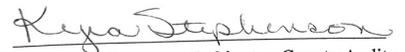
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS,  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, INDIANA

  
Commissioner Phillip Marshall, President

  
Commissioner Todd Ewen

  
Commissioner Rick Roberts

Attested by:

  
Kyra Stephenson, Washington County Auditor

I AFFIRM, UNDER THE PENALTIES FOR PERJURY, THAT I HAVE TAKEN REASONABLE CARE TO REDACT EACH SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER IN THIS DOCUMENT, UNLESS REQUIRED BY LAW.

/s/ ANTHONY M. SMART

This Instrument Prepared  
By:  
Rachel Cardis-Senior  
Planner  
American Structurepoint  
9025 River Road | Suite  
200  
Indianapolis, IN 46240  
Phone: (317) 547-5580

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## STEERING COMMITTEE

Phillip Marshall, District 1 County Commissioner  
Todd Ewen, District 2 County Commissioner  
Rick Roberts, District 3 County Commissioner  
Mark Abbott, At-Large County Councilor  
Keely Stingel, At-Large County Councilor  
Angie Buchanan, Washington County Economic Growth Partnership, Executive Director  
Doug Katt, Jeans Extrusions  
Lori Gilstrap, Realtor, The Day Company  
Sherry Fleenor, Accountant

## COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Phillip Marshall, District 1 County Commissioner  
Todd Ewen, District 2 County Commissioner  
Rick Roberts, District 3 County Commissioner

## COUNTY COUNCIL

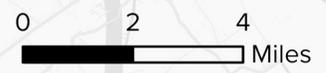
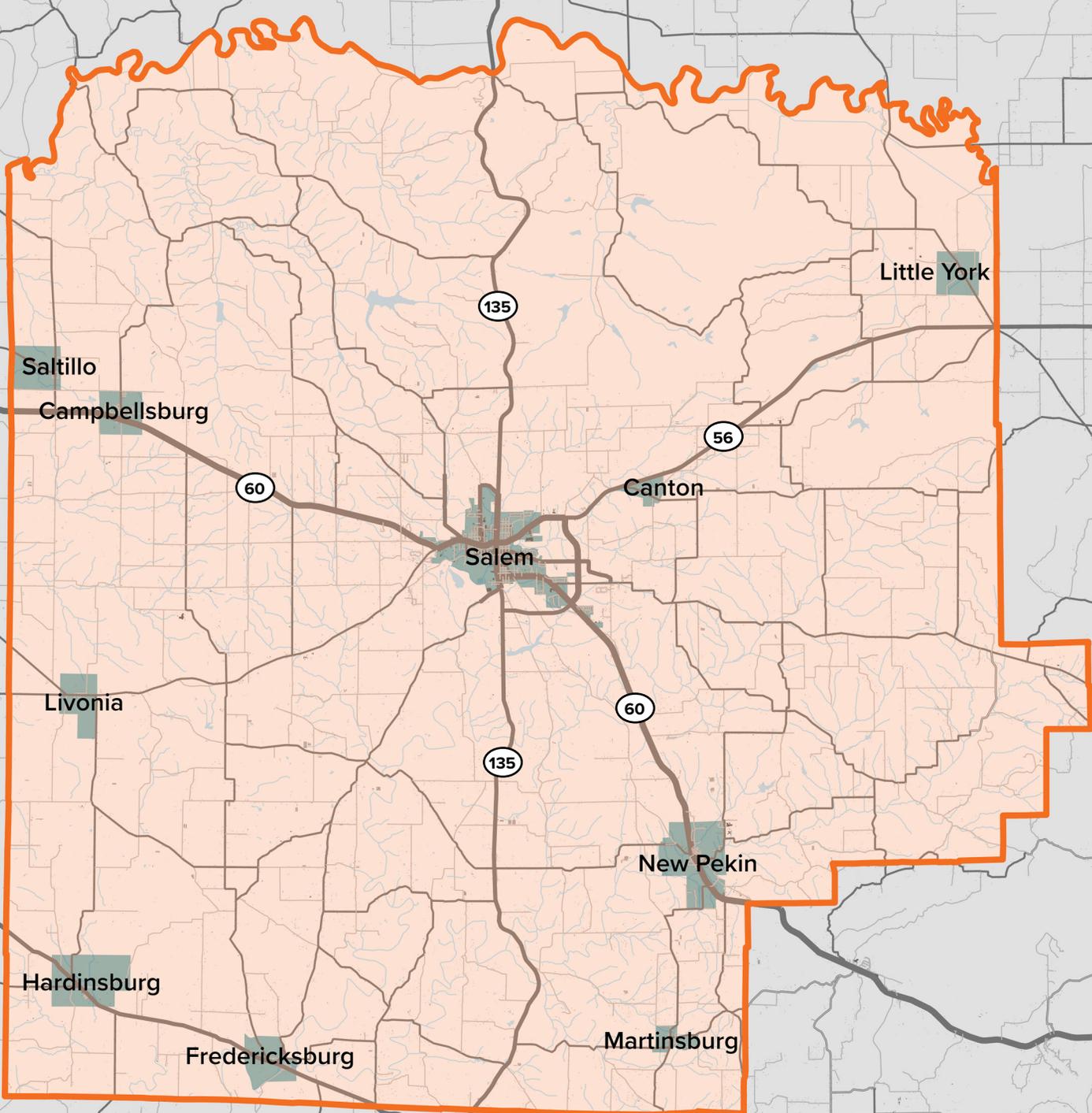
Gerald Fleming, District 1 County Councilor  
Andrew Davisson, District 2 County Councilor  
Preston Shell, District 3 County Councilor  
Karen Wischmeier, District 4 County Councilor  
Rondale Brishaber, At-Large County Councilor  
Keely Stingel, At-Large County Councilor  
Mark Abbott, At-Large County Councilor

## CONSULTANT TEAM

American Structurepoint, Inc.  
Hoosier Planning Associates

# Legend

-  Washington County Boundary
-  Incorporated Places



# Washington County Basemap

# INTRODUCTION

Washington County is situated in southeast Indiana near the Ohio River. It is one of Indiana's largest counties geographically. Washington County is home to one incorporated city: Salem, IN, which serves as the county seat. Washington County is within the Louisville, KY metropolitan area. It is about a 50-minute drive from Salem, IN to Louisville, KY. The County's unique location relative to Louisville, combined with its natural environmental assets and existing economic strengths, creates unique opportunities for economic development and growth through strategic investment initiatives.

## PURPOSE

The County Commissioners initiated this Comprehensive Plan to enhance Washington County's development and redevelopment opportunities by aligning existing policy documents, community strengths, infrastructure assets, and clear identification of challenges so that the County can encourage more economic development activity. This document includes, within the appendix, the Existing Conditions Report, an analysis of local and regional market conditions, existing land use patterns, and infrastructure assets. The recommendations of this plan identify and prioritize potential growth areas and investment opportunities for the community to fulfill present and future needs. This plan was completed to further align countywide goals across multiple topics with strategies aimed at economic development.

# PLANNING PROCESS

This plan was created using American Structurepoint’s “Vision2Action” process. The primary goal of any planning process is to provide in-depth issue identification through data research and stakeholder engagement processes specific to each planning effort to achieve realistic and hopeful outcomes. For this document, the consulting team worked with County officials in three phases: Educate, Explore, and Empower.

During Educate, data gathering occurred from multiple resources, such as the census and industry reports, to create an inventory of existing conditions.

The Explore phase builds on the findings of the Educate phase to begin formulating and evaluating the strengths and challenges facing the County in the context of applicable goals and strategies.

The Empower phase yields final economic development strategy recommendations and a supporting work plan built upon the direction and conditions established in the previous phases.

## Phase 1: Educate



- Project kick-off meeting
- Land planning and economic development opportunities
- Stakeholder meetings
- Existing and planned infrastructure review
- Public engagement events

### Deliverables

- Existing Conditions Report

## Phase 2: Explore



- Drafting of plan recommendations
- A deeper analysis of existing conditions report trends
- Evaluation of potential development scenarios
- Review of public survey results

### Deliverables

- Public engagement summary
- Initial strategy recommendations

## Phase 3: Empower



- Plan drafting and Implementation Initiative development
- Financial review and feasibility analysis
- Adoption meetings with County officials

### Deliverables

- Washington County Comprehensive Plan
- Implementation Initiatives

## EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

The existing conditions report (ECR) is a preliminary step in the overall planning process. When preparing a plan, it is vital to understand where the community is currently. The ECR summarizes the findings from extensive research on the past and current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats specific to Washington County. Topics considered include demographics, housing, employment, economy and market, land use and development, transportation, private and public services, history, environmental conditions, and community input. Existing planning documents and policies were reviewed, and data was gathered from multiple sources, including the US Decennial Census, the American Community Survey, and ESRI Business Analyst. The full ECR can be found in Appendix A, Existing Conditions Report.

## STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Stakeholder meetings were held in person and virtually in small group settings or one-on-one interviews. Stakeholders are community members with relevant experience in a specific field related to the County's economic development. They may take on a professional or volunteer role within the community. Some of the organizations from which we requested a stakeholder meeting included the Washington County Family YMCA, the Washington County Economic Growth Partnership, Hoosier Energy, Jackson County REMC, the Building Department, the Washington County Community Foundation, the Chamber Of Commerce, etc. These meetings provide context for data trends that are observed in the ECR.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community buy-in is an important facet of a successful planning effort. To gauge community sentiment regarding economic growth and development within the County, the consultant team attended free community events and spoke with attendees. The consultant team set up a booth with interactive boards and activities to speak with residents at the Friday Night on the Square event on 9/20/24 and Old Settlers Days on 10/5/24.

An online community survey was also conducted and advertised to residents through multiple avenues. This survey received 233 responses regarding what types of growth residents want to see and where they would like to see it occur.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE DOCUMENT

The Comprehensive Plan outlines key themes determined from input received during the planning process and the ECR at the beginning of each section of the document. These themes and trends informed the strategies and recommendations that follow. The final section of the document will lay out an implementation plan through Implementation Initiatives. These strategies have been identified based on their importance and ability to be accomplished within the next five years. Implementation Initiatives are intended to propel Washington County's continued economic development.

## THEMES

Themes are identified after the data gathering and community input have been completed to frame the strategies and recommendations. The following themes were identified to constitute the content of this plan:

- Housing
- Land Use
- Workforce Development and Business Retention/Expansion
- Entrepreneurship
- Tourism
- Quality of Place



# HOUSING

## WHAT WE LEARNED

**Aging Population:** The median age has increased significantly since the 2010 Census. The largest five-year age cohort in the County is people aged 60-64. An older population can indicate unique housing needs such as one-story homes, assisted living facilities, or larger households caring for elderly dependents.

**Lack of Housing Diversity:** Only about 5% of homes in Washington County are duplex or multi-dwellings. 76% are single-dwelling detached homes, and 18% are mobile homes. Single-detached dwellings are not always the most appropriate housing choice for every household, and diversifying the housing stock can assist with improving affordability and reducing the housing cost burden on residents.

**Stagnated Development:** Data shows that fewer homes have been built in the past decade. The majority of housing development occurred in the 1990s and prior to 1940. Homes built before 1940 may have increased maintenance costs and deteriorating quality.

## WHAT WE HEARD

**Dilapidated/Blighted Homes:** Abandoned or ill-maintained homes hurt the overall image of the County and discourage nearby property owners from working to maintain a clean and beautiful neighborhood.

**Affordability:** Located in the Louisville metropolitan area, the County is a great place to find affordable housing with a reasonable commute. People choose Washington County because it fits their price point.

**Market Pressure:** Resident concern was expressed regarding home buyers from outside the state moving to Washington County and potentially causing housing prices to rise above what is locally affordable.

## DIVERSITY OF HOUSING TYPES

With residential development stagnant in recent years and very few housing options besides single-dwelling detached homes or manufactured homes. It is important for the County to consider housing stock diversification strategies. In many cases, economic development follows residential development, meaning that to attract new industries, there needs to be adequate labor force numbers and a market for commercial retail. A single-dwelling detached home may not be the right fit for people just starting their careers or who do not earn a high wage. These people may benefit more from having multi-dwelling, townhome, and duplex alternatives. The most appropriate place for these increased-density housing developments would be near existing incorporated areas. The County should determine appropriate locations for these developments and update the land use regulation ordinances to allow for these house types in those areas.

## RESIDENTIAL TIFS

Residential tax increment finance (TIF) districts allow local governments to finance public infrastructure expansion and improvements to incentivize developers to build homes. A redevelopment commission establishes the TIF and captures the increase in property tax revenue over a certain period to reinvest into improvements within the TIF district. There are several residential subdivisions within the County that were never built upon. These subdivisions may have been approved without adequate infrastructure to support new housing. To ensure that infrastructure can serve these potential housing developments, the County should consider establishing a residential TIF near incorporated communities on these unbuilt subdivisions. Housing developers will be incentivized to build on those sites because the land has already been subdivided, and the collected increment will support the infrastructure. This should be done in partnership with incorporated communities to ensure housing development is consistent with city or town policies and standards.

The state of Indiana typically has a restriction on residential TIFs that requires municipalities to pass the 1% rule. The 1% rule restricted the number of homes constructed over the past three calendar years to less than 1% of the total number of single-family residential homes in the area. This stipulation has been suspended until July 1, 2027. The County should prioritize establishing a residential TIF before the 1% test is reinstated in 2027.

## AFFORDABILITY

With the proportion of County households experiencing poverty being higher than the state average, it is important to consider housing affordability to ensure residents are able to find homes that fit their needs and income.

## USDA PROGRAMS/LOANS

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers Section 502 home loans to assist low- and very-low-income households.<sup>1</sup> These loans assist in paying the downpayment on a home to make ownership possible in rural areas where it may otherwise have been unattainable due to financial constraints. The County should aid in creating awareness that all Washington County properties are USDA-eligible and that home buyers should talk to their lender to see if they qualify for these benefits.

1 [USDA: Rural Development](#)

## Case Study: USDA Section 502 Home Loans

Lori Bonifay is a rural Montana resident who recently purchased a home for her family through the Self-Help Housing 502 Direct Home Ownership Program.<sup>2</sup> Lori has five children and had never owned a home before. Lori had previously always received some kind of government assistance to make ends meet but was determined to eventually break that cycle. She enrolled in a first-time homebuyer class that helped her navigate her finances and set goals for the future. She worked on an application for a USDA Section 502 Home Loan through that class and eventually moved into her first home in 2023. Lori is now on a path to financial stability and independence with a home to call her own.



## HOUSING STRATEGIES



### **Housing Diversity:**

Promote greater diversity of housing types, where appropriate, through the amendment of land development ordinances.



### **Residential TIF:**

Implement residential TIF districts on approved but unbuilt subdivisions near Salem, New Pekin, and other incorporated areas with utility capacity to promote housing development and infrastructure improvements in strategic locations.



### **Housing Affordability:**

Assist homebuyers by creating awareness of downpayment assistance through loan programs such as the USDA 502 home loans.



Source: Getty Images.



# LAND USE

## LAND USE CHARACTER CLASSIFICATIONS

### AGRICULTURAL

The Agricultural land use classification includes areas that are substantially tillable or used for a variety of agricultural operations. Land under this classification is located where little or no concentrated urbanization has occurred or is likely to occur in the near future.

### RECREATIONAL

The Recreational land use classification includes areas that are to be protected due to their scenic nature. These areas are substantially wooded and typically under public ownership. The land under this classification is located where little or no concentrated urbanization has occurred or is likely to occur in the future.

### RESIDENTIAL 1

The Residential 1 land use classification includes areas of concentrated populations and rural subdivisions. The land under this classification should protect aesthetically pleasing residential environments outside of existing municipal services.

### RESIDENTIAL 2

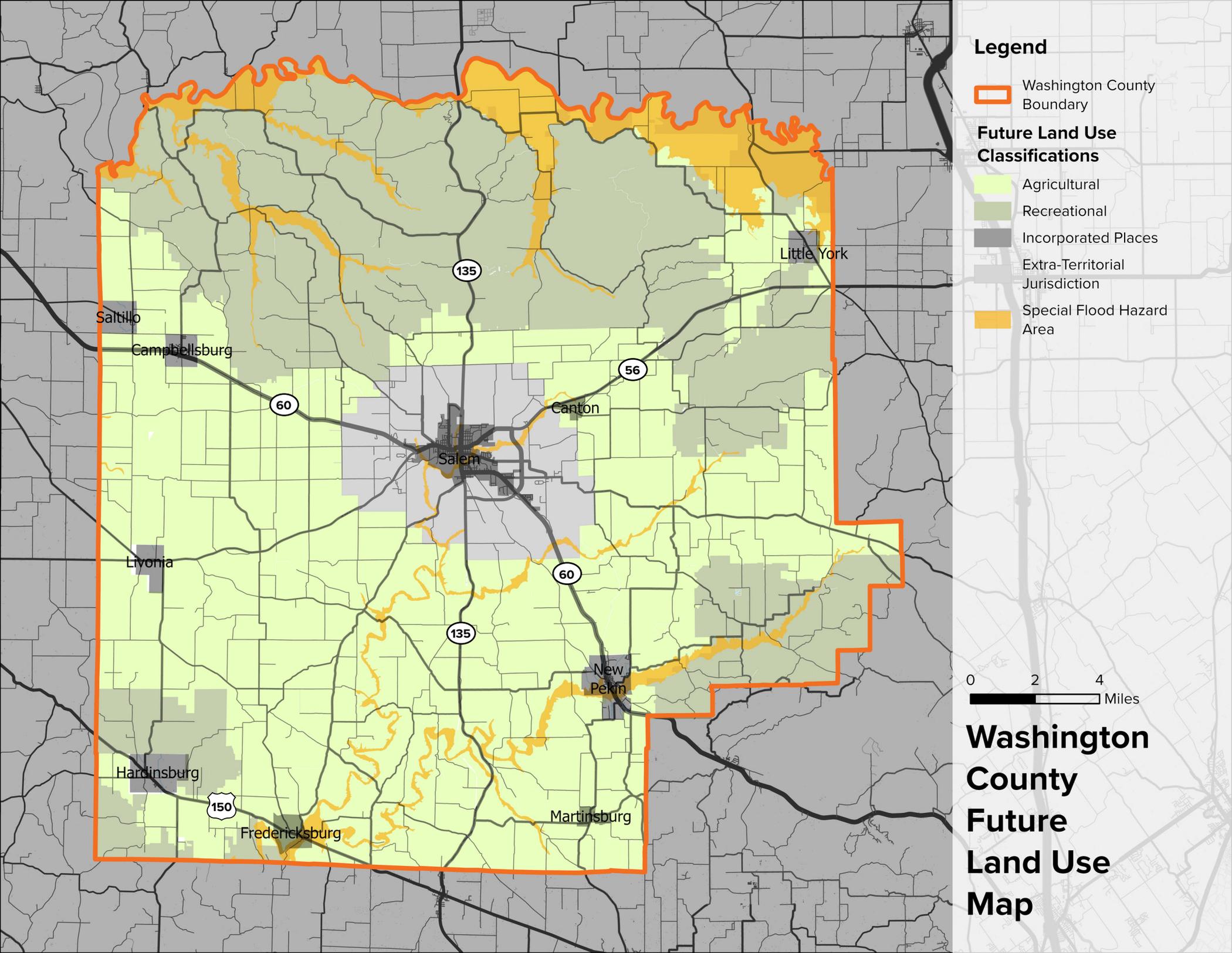
The Residential 2 land use classification includes areas of relatively moderate density, with single- or multiple-family residences, in locations where the infrastructure is capable of supporting higher-density development or where higher-density development has previously occurred. The land under this classification should allow for a more compact form of development near and in established communities.

### COMMERCIAL

The Commercial land use classification includes areas that are appropriate for commercial, retail, service, and mixed-use land uses that serve the regional market and require convenient access to major transportation routes or existing platted communities.

### INDUSTRIAL

The Industrial land use classification includes existing facilities and areas that are best suited for future industrial use due to accessibility and location. The land under this classification should promote the well-planned development of the industrial areas within the County.



### Legend

 Washington County Boundary

### Future Land Use Classifications

-  Agricultural
-  Recreational
-  Incorporated Places
-  Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction
-  Special Flood Hazard Area

0 2 4 Miles

# Washington County Future Land Use Map





**SUNOCO**

**SUNOCO**

Regular Cash  
**325.9**  
Regular Credit  
**331.9**

PEKIN FOOD MART

**SUNOCO**

ATM OPEN

Home City Ice

24/7  
ANY CO. NIGHT  
PRICE  
THAT'S  
RIGHT  
5 PAIR SPECIAL  
\$ 19.95

SOLD  
HERE

526

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS RETENTION/ EXPANSION

## WHAT WE LEARNED

- **Labor Force Participation:** The labor force participation for Generation Z (born 1997-2012) is higher within the County than at the state level, but for Generation Y, or “Millennials” (born 1981-1997), the labor force participation rate is lower.
- **Industry:** The three largest industries in Washington County are manufacturing, retail trade, and educational services. There are three major manufacturing companies within the County.
- **Income:** Washington County has a lower household income than the surrounding metropolitan area and the state. About 13% of households in the County experience poverty.

## WHAT WE HEARD

- **Lack of Development:** The County building department explained that very few commercial development permits have been pulled in recent years. The majority of commercial development has occurred in the form of confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs).
- **Difficulty Finding Labor:** Local employers expressed challenges around finding people with proper training and commitment to work manufacturing jobs.
- **Remote Work:** Stakeholders and steering committee members have observed that more families moving to Washington County since the COVID-19 pandemic are working from home for a company based in a larger metropolitan area.
- **Vocational Programs:** County schools are working with community partners and other nearby school districts to create trades training programs to help students get started with careers that do not require a college degree.

## EDUCATION

Students at the three high schools in Washington County have the opportunity to participate in programs at the Prosser Career Education Center.<sup>3</sup> Prosser is located in New Albany, IN and there are no comparable programs for high school students within Washington County. The County's school systems should continue to maintain a relationship with Prosser but work to find employment partners within the County to pair students with to encourage students to pursue their careers within Washington County after graduation. The high schools also offer a work release program allowing students to explore careers and trades and the County E2 committee is working on expanding these opportunities. This type of career and technical education is vital to ensuring that students are prepared to enter the workforce after high school if they are not choosing to attend college. For students who are not interested in working a trade that can be taught in a vocational program, participation in Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4H programs should be promoted to encourage continued agricultural investment and production in the County. Students who grow crops or raise livestock may even be able to work with local stores or restaurants to get their product into the local food system through relationships fostered by the County and local schools.

## TARGET INDUSTRIES

The Washington County Economic Growth Partnership has identified the following target industries to attract to the County:<sup>4</sup>

- **Advanced Manufacturing of Metals:** automotive parts, drivetrain units, metal processing and products, fabricated metals
- **Advanced Manufacturing of Plastics:** flexible, rigid, and dual durometer PVC and TPE NSF
- **Lumber, hardwoods, and wood production:** office furniture, fresh-sawn hardwood lumber, custom cabinetry
- **Healthcare and Medical Services**

These industries are all somewhat established within the County, and the goal of identifying and advertising target industries is to attract more of that type of economic development.

The County should consider identifying agricultural research and seed research companies as an additional target industry. The target industries that have already been identified do not acknowledge the significant agricultural base that makes up most of the County's land usage. Agricultural research companies could use the vast available farmland to test seed products. Agricultural research businesses will also diversify the County economy beyond traditional agricultural production. Partnering with a research institution like Purdue University through Purdue Extension may also be an effective way to create an economic environment that would welcome agricultural research businesses.

3 [Prosser Career Education Center: Sending Schools](#)

4 [WCEGP: Target Industries](#)

## POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES

The Verisite Jackson County REMC Industrial Site Evaluation completed in 2022 identifies four Washington County sites with attributes lending them to industrial development. These sites were selected due to the availability and capacity of the nearby infrastructure. Ten sites were identified and four of those sites are in Washington County. Much, but not all, of the necessary infrastructure needed to support development is already in place at these sites. It is important to note these sites are privately owned and purchasing the land would be a necessary step in redevelopment.

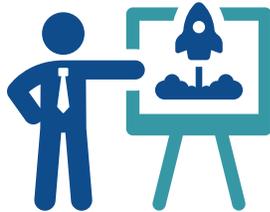
In addition to the Verisite sites mentioned above, a Strategic Sites Inventory was completed in June 2024 identifying potential sites to be developed should the owner want to sell. The inventory reviewed 15 sites; 9 for agribusiness, 4 for light industrial, 1 for heavy industrial, and 1 for distribution/freight logistics. These sites should be considered if they become available and a similar analysis should be done to determine what steps should be taken to make them shovel ready.

It is important to continually update site inventories as new information becomes available, at the time this plan was written the sites mentioned above were the most recently identified for potential development.

## J.F. HELSEL COMMERCE PARK

The J.F. Hesel Commerce Park is land owned by the Washington County Economic Growth Partnership that is shovel ready with water, wastewater, electric, natural gas, and fiber internet available. The land sits northeast of Salem along Jim Day Road. The zoning for the property is light manufacturing. The J.F. Hesel Commerce Park is being advertised by the Washington County Economic Growth Partnership and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. The County should continue to prioritize this site as it is the only shovel ready site in the County. To fund any additional infrastructure improvements that may be necessary to accommodate a new commercial or industrial land use, the County could consider implementing a TIF district.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS RETENTION/ EXPANSION STRATEGIES



### **Vocational Education:**

Encourage collaboration between the three school systems to find career technical education employment partners within the County in partnership with, or as an alternative to, the Prosser program.



### **Agricultural Research Target Industry:**

Identify agricultural research as a target industry for the County and ensure land regulation ordinances and appropriate partnerships are set up to support the industry.



### **Shovel Ready Site:**

Continue to promote the J.F. Helsel Commerce Park to potential commercial and industrial tenants and consider a TIF district to help fund needed infrastructure expansion.





*Dining Room*

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## WHAT WE LEARNED

- **No Job Growth:** When analyzing the data, it became clear that there has been little to no job growth in the County in recent years. Very few new businesses have opened up.
- **Retail Gap Analysis:** According to a retail gap analysis run for Washington County, there is a \$128 million leakage in total retail trade, including food and drink. Residents leave the County for retail goods and services, indicating a market for potential new businesses.

## WHAT WE HEARD

- **Local Support for Small Businesses:** Stakeholders and community members expressed that Washington County's small businesses are one of its largest strengths. The businesses on the courthouse square and those scattered throughout the County are staples of the small-town rural lifestyle.
- **Desire for New Restaurants:** Residents have been outspoken about the need for new restaurants and small retail shops. These businesses should be locally owned and not regional/national franchises.
- **Local Business Closing:** Small businesses that are doing well enough to continue operating have begun to close because the owners are unable to find someone to take over the management. Residents are disheartened to see otherwise successful businesses close for this reason.

## SMALL BUSINESS RETENTION AND LONGEVITY

### INDIANA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Washington County works with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the South Central regional office hosted at the Ivy Tech location in Bloomington. The SBDC is able to offer no-cost business advising, training, referrals, and other resources aimed at the longevity of small businesses. The regional office is located in Bloomington, which can make accessing resources more difficult and time-consuming for Washington County business owners. The County works with the SBDC South Central regional office to have a representative work out of the Washington County Courthouse on a regular basis so that business owners can easily meet with them to discuss any needs they may have. These continued efforts to reach out to business owners and remind them of the resources the SBDC has available are beneficial in strengthening their relationship with the County and helping small business owners succeed.

### WORKER COOPERATIVES AND EMPLOYEE-OWNED BUSINESSES

To sustain a successful small business, the business will need consistent leadership and employees. As small business owners reach their elderly years, finding someone with enough experience and dedication to continue running the business can be difficult. Employing people to work at a small business can feel transient at times, with employees coming on board and leaving shortly after, which can hurt small businesses that experience the burden of onboarding and training costs each time they need to hire a new staff person. One strategy for small businesses that can help with retaining employees, having a succession plan, and anchoring itself within the community is transitioning to an employee-owned business model.

Transitioning local businesses to an employee-owned model can allow for the growth and success of both the business and the employees. Employee ownership is accomplished through an arrangement in which employees own a portion or share of the business; for a small business, this usually means setting up a worker cooperative.<sup>5</sup> This system shares profits proportionally with employees, and decisions on business direction are made collectively, often through a vote. Worker cooperatives allow employees at every level to feel they have a stake in the business's success and to realize the positive effects of increased revenues from that success. Worker cooperatives also would not rely on the owner to continue the business. If the person who started the business were to retire, the members of the worker cooperative would continue to decide as a group how to move the business forward, and those members would likely have a significant tenure with the business and, therefore, feel equipped to continue operating.

The National Center for Employee Ownership (NCEO), the Democracy at Work Institute, and Certified EO offer resources to facilitate businesses' transition to an employee-owned model. In partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, the County should work with small businesses to make these resources available and determine if employee ownership might be the right path.

### Business Incubation

Business incubation refers to a holistic approach aimed at giving early-stage businesses access to various resources, including mentorship and financial support through programs and policies. The residents of Washington County expressed that local businesses are what make the community great, and business incubation strategies are an important way to create new businesses and support existing ones.

5 [NCEO: What is Employee Ownership?](#)

## Case Study: Bellegarde Bakery<sup>6</sup>

Bellegarde Bakery is a small business located in New Orleans, LA, with about ten employees that successfully transitioned from a traditional ownership model to an employee-owned worker cooperative in 2022. The bakery opened in 2002 and became a facet of the surrounding community. The bakery owner had plans to move out of New Orleans but wanted the business to continue to thrive, so he sold the business to the workers. Through this conversion to an employee-owned business model, the bakery was able to continue to operate without the founder/owner while still retaining the unique identity and mission of the business.



6 [Project Equity: Bellegarde Bakery](#)

## ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

According to the Leadership Institute for Entrepreneurs, the entrepreneurial ecosystem comprises six domains.<sup>7</sup>

- Leadership and Policy
- Finances
- Markets
- Culture and Media
- Human Capital
- Support Services

In partnership with the Washington County Economic Growth Partnership and the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, the County can work with small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs to foster a successful entrepreneurial ecosystem across all six domains.

### Leadership and Policy + Finances

In terms of leadership, policy, and finances, the County makes available information and resources regarding the support for small businesses provided by the state government through the Indiana Small Business Development Center. Washington County works with the Small Business Development Center South Central regional office hosted at the Ivy Tech location in Bloomington.

### Markets

Market access can be facilitated by letting aspiring business owners know what the data says about untapped markets within Washington County. Retail gap analysis data could be very useful to potential new business owners, but they may not know how to find or interpret that data.

### Culture and Media

Culture and media can be promoted by amplifying the voices of successful entrepreneurs and small business owners and allowing their stories to be shared with the community and the young residents who may want to follow in their footsteps.

### Human Capital

Human capital can be developed through student education programs, such as the vocational programs at Prosser or the Future Farmers of America (FFA) program. Educational opportunities for adults can be explored with Ivy Tech.

### Support Services

Support services can be developed to help entrepreneurs get off the ground. One way to test a business's potential success could be to create pop-up shops using vacant Courthouse Square property. This would allow entrepreneurs to get their name out there and test their concepts.

7 [Leadership Institute for Entrepreneurs: Entrepreneurship Ecosystems](#)



## AGRIBUSINESS

This plan will refer to agribusiness and agritourism. These are two separate industries that both center around agricultural production and its ancillary land uses and businesses:

**Agribusiness** is an industry engaged in the production operations of a farm, the manufacture and distribution of farm equipment and supplies, and the processing, storage, and distribution of farm commodities.<sup>8</sup>

**Agritourism** is a form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining or educating the visitors while generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner.<sup>9</sup>

Agribusiness refers to the business of agricultural production, including traditional farming methods, crop processing, the distribution of agricultural products, and even the insurance of agricultural equipment and production. Agribusiness is a pertinent component of the farming economy, providing agricultural products both locally and globally. Farming operations distributing various agricultural products, such as produce, livestock, and lumber, can create additional ancillary businesses, including farm businesses that insure farmers and prepare and distribute farm equipment, pesticides, and seeds. There is also potential for new industries surrounding the research and development of more efficient farming practices. All of this potential business development has positive implications for Washington County's economy and emphasizes the importance of continued support for the agricultural community.

To support agribusiness growth, the County should designate strategic areas where agribusiness land uses would be most appropriate. Within these areas, land development ordinances should be amended to provide protections and restrictions to preserve large, contiguous tracts of agricultural land. Policies should also be implemented to reduce the threat of housing sprawl and incompatible land uses encroaching on agricultural land. Land development ordinances may also need to be updated to support specific agribusiness land uses, including food processing and seed, fertilizer, equipment, and pesticide production.

Farming practices themselves will also require support from the County to grow the agribusiness sector. The County should work with Purdue Extension to continue promoting best practices in agricultural production to ensure the efficient and sustainable use of land. If Washington County farmers embrace the cutting-edge of farming innovations, ancillary agribusiness industries will be more likely to see market potential. The County should also work to ensure proper infrastructure is in place to support the expansion of agribusiness within designated strategic areas.

8 [Merriam-Webster: Agribusiness](#)  
9 [USDA National Agricultural Library: Agritourism](#)



## ENTREPRENEURSHIP STRATEGIES



### **Small Business Longevity:**

Facilitate local businesses in exploring worker cooperative and employee-owned business models for the purpose of succession planning and staff retention.



### **Entrepreneurial Ecosystem:**

Take a holistic approach to establishing an entrepreneurial ecosystem, supporting entrepreneurs through all aspects of business start-up.



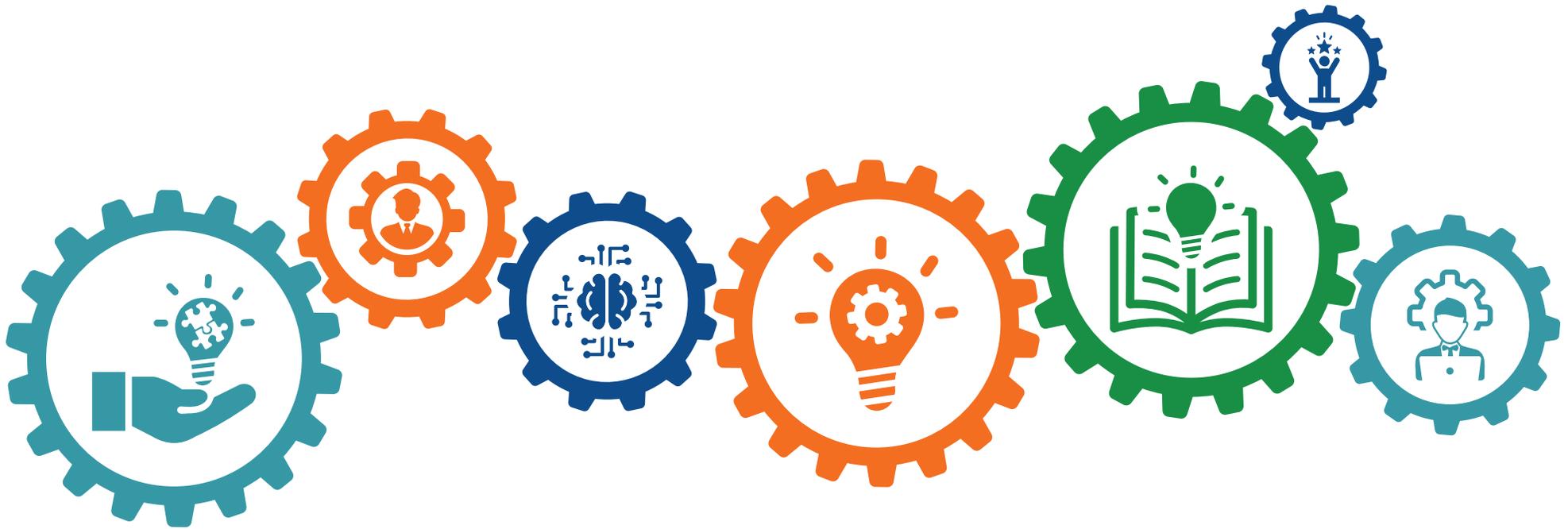
### **Agribusiness Regulations:**

Ensure land development ordinances support agribusiness through protections for large contiguous tracts of agricultural land and additional standards for ancillary business uses.



### **Agribusiness Support:**

Provide farmers with education and resources around innovative farming practices through Purdue Extension and ensure infrastructure is adequate to support agribusiness development.





# TOURISM

## WHAT WE LEARNED

- **Regional Pull for Recreational Amenities:** Through the use of cell phone internet service data, it was determined that the recreational assets with the greatest regional pull in Washington County are LM Sugarbush, Salem Speedway, and Cornucopia Farm.
- **Low Digital Media Presence:** The County does not have a strong presence on social media and does not utilize a cohesive branding/look for online correspondence. While events are advertised online, primarily by the Chamber of Commerce, the information has to be searched for in order to find it.

## WHAT WE HEARD

- **Cultural Heritage:** Washington County residents have a strong appreciation for cultural heritage, and there are multiple places in the County where people can learn about history, including Beck's Mill and the John Hay Center.
- **Seasonal Events:** Many of the amenities that bring people to the County usually hold a large seasonal event, such as fall activities at Cornucopia Farm, the maple syrup tapping in the winter at LM Sugarbush, or Old Settlers Days at the John Hay Center.
- **Lack of Accommodations:** Residents expressed concern about not having enough overnight accommodations for people who want to visit the County. One short-term rental owner claimed his properties are very busy and feels there is a need for more in the area.

## AGRITOURISM

This plan will refer to agribusiness and agritourism. These are two separate industries that both center around agricultural production and its ancillary land uses and businesses:

**Agribusiness** is an industry engaged in the production operations of a farm, the manufacture and distribution of farm equipment and supplies, and the processing, storage, and distribution of farm commodities.<sup>10</sup>

**Agritourism** is a form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining or educating the visitors while generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner.<sup>11</sup>

In the past five years, the concept of agritourism has increased in awareness and appreciation as a tourism niche growth industry within the midwestern region of the United States. Driven largely by a strategic shift in consumer tastes, agritourism allows consumers to support farms directly. The agritourism industry in Washington County, Indiana, has been primarily based on established locally grown crops, including Hunter's Ridge Winery, LM Sugarbush Maple Syrup Farm, and conventional harvest crops offering ancillary social and recreational attractions at Cornucopia Farm. These prominent County businesses have proven their stability and have created a pattern of successful agritourism within the local economy.

Washington County has a growing tourism industry with various local and regional revenue drivers, including Salem Speedway, Salem Motorsport Park, and natural recreational amenities that attract visitors outside the County. The burgeoning agritourism segment is booming in Indiana and will continue to transpire into rural counties.

The County will want to consider investing in strategies to boost agritourism because it attracts visitors and opens up opportunities for additional revenue sources through a direct-to-consumer distribution channel. Agritourism efforts will also help diversify the economic resiliency of the vast farmland that comprises the County. Additionally, as visitors and County residents become familiar with the names of local agritourism farms, they will recognize these farms' products in restaurants and grocery store shelves, further promoting the success of these agricultural operations. The County should work with the Chamber of Commerce and the Tourism Board to ensure that agritourism businesses are being promoted both within the County and to potential visitors. It is expected that these agritourism locations will pull visitors regionally; it is important that these businesses capitalize on the nearby suburban and urban residents of the Louisville metropolitan area who are looking for a rural getaway or activity.

The County should review land development ordinances, primarily the zoning and subdivision ordinances, to ensure that no regulations impede farmers from beginning agritourism ventures. The ordinances may also be updated to include parking and signage provisions to ensure quality development. When writing development standards for agritourism uses, it is important to consider nuisance mitigation, parking, the surrounding agricultural land, and the agritourism use as an accessory to the primary agricultural operation. Accessory land uses that may be encompassed within an agritourism business include restaurants and dining, hospitality and accommodations, special events, classrooms and education centers, and retail sales.

10 [Merriam-Webster: Agribusiness](#)  
11 [USDA National Agricultural Library: Agritourism](#)



## HOSPITALITY

People who live in urban and suburban areas are often looking for a scenic rural escape, even if just for a weekend. With Washington County's great variety of outdoor recreational activities as well as the historical and cultural attractions like the John Hay Center and Beck's Mill, it is reasonable to think that people would want to come and spend a few days exploring everything there is to offer. People coming to a destination like Washington County are looking for a unique experience that would be difficult to find elsewhere. Airbnb accommodations like the Ajuna River House and The Lanning House are examples of unique hospitality options that differentiate the County from other rural destinations. Delaney Creek Park also includes different camping cabins that can be rented on a nightly basis, listing these on short-term rental sites like Airbnb or VRBO could be an effective way to attract guests. Cute and quaint bed and breakfast accommodations may be successful, with visitors looking for more attentive hospitality. Working with property owners to determine potential short-term rental or bed and breakfast options could be a good way to attract more visitors. The Tourism Board and the Chamber of Commerce could also work with short-term rental and bed and breakfast owners to create promotional materials such as a pamphlet to leave with guests, letting them know what activities are nearby and nearby local restaurants.



## REGIONAL RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

Hiking and other outdoor recreation can be a cheap, and in many cases free, way to get active and have fun. With concerns circulating that there is not much to do now that the bowling alley and the pool are no longer operating, it is important that residents and visitors know about the plentiful recreational opportunities available within the County. The following outdoor recreational amenities are listed on the Washington County Tourism website<sup>12</sup>:

- Beck's Mill and Hiking Trails
- Big Spring Nature Reserve
- Blue River Natural and Scenic River System
- Cave River Valley Natural Area and Trail
- Delaney Creek Park
- Elk Creek Lake and Trailhead
- Jackson-Washington State Forest
- Knobstone Trail
- Lake John Hay
- Lake Salinda
- Old Mill Canoe Rental – Blue River
- Spurgeon Hollow Lake and Trail
- Twin Creek Valley and Henderson Park
- Veteran's Trail at Lake Salinda

While these amenities are listed on the county tourism website, they would only be found if someone were actively looking for them. It is important to let residents know that these amenities are not just for visitors. Using social media or other media avenues, such as a County newsletter, could help let people know what is available to them and alleviate concerns that the County does not have any entertainment options.

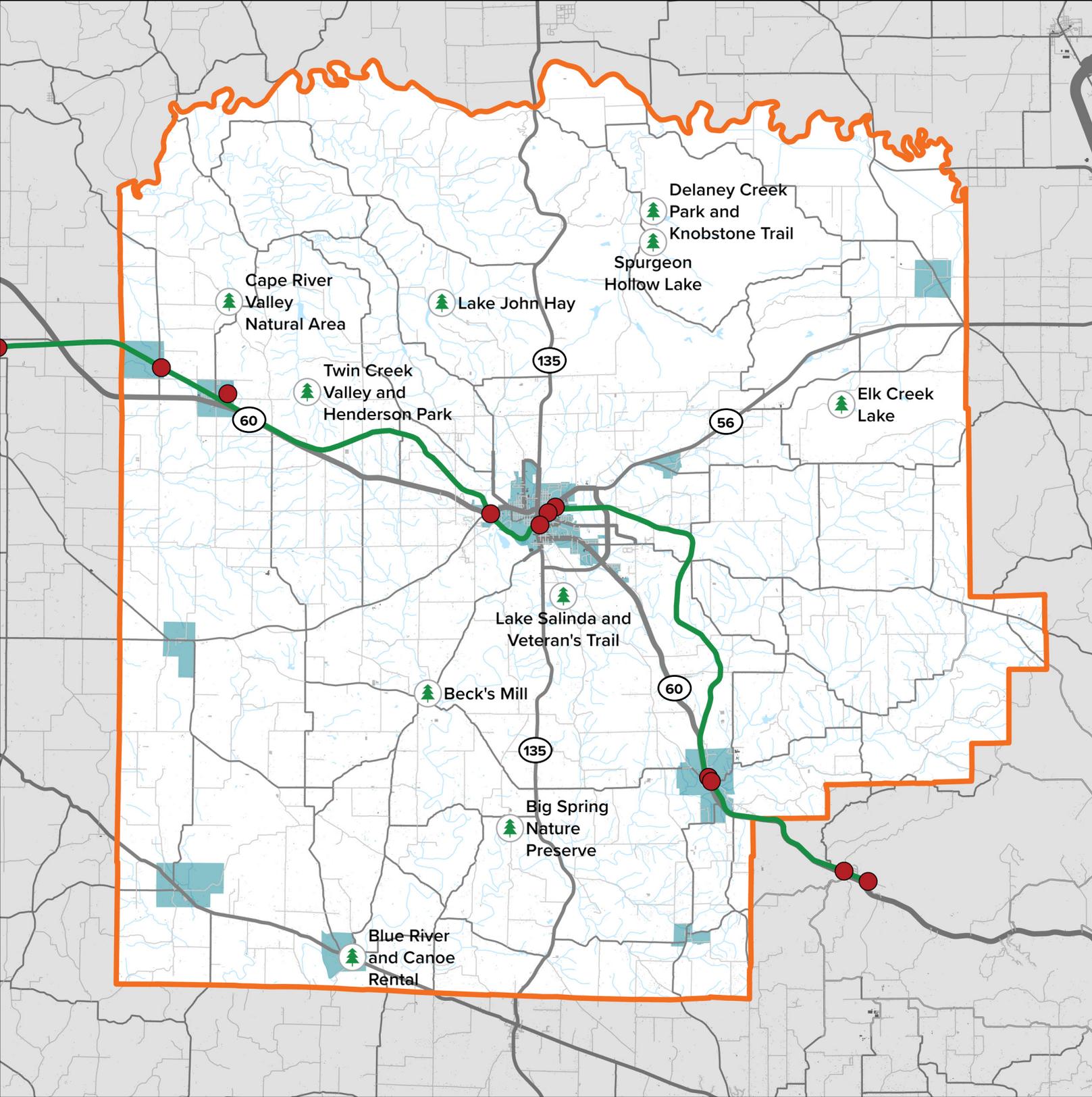
## Legend

-  Washington County Boundary
-  Outdoor Recreational Tourism Sites
-  Monon South Trailheads
-  Monon South Greenway



0 2 4 Miles

# Washington County Tourism Website Locations Map



## DELANEY CREEK PARK

Delaney Creek Park is a County-owned park that completely supports itself on generated revenue. Admission to the park is at a fee per vehicle entering. The park offers several activities and amenities, including lake swimming, fishing, hiking the Knobstone, modern camping, primitive camping, cabins, event spaces, picnic areas, boat slips, sand beach, etc. The Delaney Creek Park website has important information for people who may want to visit the park, but it is dated and difficult to navigate<sup>13</sup>. The website should be updated, and park events/activities should be advertised to attract visitors from within and around the County.

### Five-Year Parks Masterplan

To ensure continued improvement and investment in Delaney Creek Park, the County should establish a five-year parks and recreation masterplan to guide decisions around the park and any future County parks. The parks masterplan will take inventory of parks and park amenities and analyze them to determine the extent to which the County park(s) serve the community's needs. With a parks board and a five-year masterplan established, the County opens itself up to more funding options to continue maintaining and improving its parks. One potential use for state funding could be greater integration with the new Monon South trail that is currently being constructed. Under strong leadership and appropriate state funding, Delaney Creek Park has the opportunity to become even more of a regional attraction in Washington County.

## COUNTY BRANDING

A cohesive branding strategy is an important factor when looking to attract businesses and residents. Currently, Washington County has several different logos being used by each of the different organizations and departments operating under the government. A cohesive brand for the County would portray a more unified County government and imply greater collaboration and communication between departments. Each department or office does not necessarily need to use the same logo or branding. However, all logos and branding materials should use the same design language and have a common color scheme. The County should develop a plan to develop and evaluate several branding options and officially select one; these options can be developed in-house or through a consultant. Redesigning the County website, public advertisements, and official documentation to include the new branding will make official County business more recognizable and something residents can be proud of.

## DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION

With the number of different outdoor recreational amenities and historical and cultural sites and activities throughout the County, several public events could be happening on any given week. Because the County is so large geographically and incorporated areas are scattered throughout, it may be difficult for residents to find information about community events occurring outside of their immediate area. This may lead to a false perception that there is nothing to do for entertainment. To combat this sentiment, the County should explore different ways to advertise events within the community. Social media has become an important tool for local governments to communicate with and advertise to residents. Establishing social media accounts and creating content utilizing a cohesive County branding scheme can help make residents aware of what is happening. These social media posts can also be promoted through companies like Meta for a reasonable price to reach targeted audiences. For instance, if an event or place is geared towards young adults, the post can be promoted to people within a certain age range and living within a certain radius of the County to promote tourism.

## External Communication with Visitors

A potential visitor living in the nearby Louisville metropolitan area seeing a social media post advertising County amenities may be all that is needed to inspire them to plan a trip. Outdoor activities and agritourism attractions should be advertised and promoted to ensure that people who had previously never given Washington County a second thought now know all that there is to do. Entertainment possibilities should be presented as a package, encouraging visitors to visit more than one amenity in a single trip and possibly even book overnight accommodations.

## Internal Communication with Residents

The Washington County government actively works to better serve residents every day. Unfortunately, due to a lack of social media presence, residents may feel that they do not know what new initiatives the County has taken on. Active social media posting and email communication with County residents is an important step towards greater perceived transparency. For residents who prefer not to use social media, a physical or email newsletter can also be an effective tool to get the word out.

## WAYFINDING AND GATEWAY SIGNAGE

For visitors who may have seen a social media post or searched the County tourism website prior to their trip, wayfinding signage that aligns with the overall County branding scheme is helpful in guiding them to their destination. Wayfinding signage for regional attractions can also help tourists see what other activities are available within the County that they may not have found online, leading to longer stays.

Gateway signage is posted at the main entryways, indicating that visitors have entered Washington County. This type of signage can increase tourism and economic development efforts for drivers who might be passing through. If someone is looking for a place to stop, they may be more likely to stop in a place where they know the name rather than somewhere that feels like it is in the 'middle of nowhere.' Traveling through Washington County, drivers are subjected to beautiful views and scenic landscapes; with the implementation of wayfinding signage, visitors will be able to associate all the natural beauty with the County and improve the overall perception of the community.

## TOURISM STRATEGIES



### **Agritourism Promotion:**

Promote agritourism businesses through the Tourism Board and the Chamber of Commerce through various media.



### **Agritourism Regulation:**

Review and update land development ordinances to allow for the creation and expansion of agritourism uses.



### **Unique Hospitality:**

Promote unique and niche hospitality and accommodations options like culturally significant short-term rentals.



### **Park Website:**

Update the Delaney Creek Park website to improve navigability and attract visitors.



### **Parks Masterplan:**

Prepare a five-year parks masterplan in alignment with Indiana state statutes to create additional avenues to receive parks funding.



### **County Branding:**

Initiate a County branding initiative, uniting all departments and public-facing materials under a single logo and brand.



### **Digital Communication:**

Improve transparency between government and residents and overall awareness of events in the County through social media outreach.



### **Gateway and Wayfinding Signage:**

Install gateway and wayfinding signage consistent with the new County branding to attract visitors and improve overall aesthetics.



# QUALITY OF LIFE

## WHAT WE LEARNED

- **Retail Gap Analysis:** The analysis shows significant leakages in food and beverage stores, restaurants, and overall retail trade. Residents are feeling these leakages and have to drive far distances to visit the retailers they want.
- **Downtown Square:** Salem's downtown square is the major location for retail goods and services within Washington County but has several empty storefronts and professional offices.

## WHAT WE HEARD

- **Perceived Lack of Entertainment:** Residents expressed concern that there is not much to do for fun within the County, especially for children. There was discussion about previous recreational amenities, such as a community pool, a bowling alley, a movie theater, etc. that ultimately closed down.
- **Dwindling Healthcare Options:** Many residents have stated that their primary healthcare provider is located outside of Washington County because there are so few healthcare options within the County. Many specialties are no longer available at Salem Hospital, which can make finding care difficult for new parents and elderly populations.
- **Support for Agriculture:** The majority of the land in the County is used for agricultural purposes. Residents have expressed a desire to support local farmers as well as a desire for more local meat and produce available at restaurants and stores.

## HEALTHCARE

An important aspect of quality of life is allowing residents to live their healthiest lives. Ascension St. Vincent Salem Hospital is the major healthcare provider within Washington County, offering primarily emergency and urgent care services. Ascension St. Vincent Salem Hospital also offers specialty clinics including ENT, cardiology, dermatology, and urology. Schneck Family Care is another provider offering family medicine, orthopedics, podiatry, pulmonology, and OBGYN services. There are also two urgent care facilities in Salem and one in New Pekin. Washington County has been identified as a primary care shortage area, meaning that there are not enough providers to meet the needs of the residents. Every three years, non-profit hospitals conduct a community health needs assessment to determine what necessary expansion may be beneficial to residents. As Ascension St. Vincent and Schneck prepare to do their next community health needs assessment, the County should work with these healthcare providers to determine what partnerships can be explored to achieve common goals towards a healthier community. Some of the needs identified in the Ascension St. Vincent Salem Hospital 2021 assessment surrounded the population over the age of 65 years old. Healthcare providers and County services both have the potential to improve quality of life through a number of different initiatives for elderly residents, working together on these types of identified issues can be an effective way to create solutions.

## HEALTHCARE CO-OPS AND SUBSCRIPTION-BASED HEALTHCARE

A couple of ways to offer healthcare services aimed more directly at the local community are through Consumer Oriented and Operated Plans (CO-OPs) and subscription-based healthcare.

Through a healthcare co-op, patients are connected with a local network of physicians and pay directly without utilizing health insurance.<sup>14</sup> Co-ops make it easier for physicians to own their practice as they do not have to work through complicated health insurance providers and can serve patients without worrying about patient quotas or metrics set by a large hospital network.

Subscription-based healthcare involves patients paying a subscription fee to a physician and then having access to their physician for all the services they offer without any additional payments.<sup>15</sup> This system also does not involve health insurance programs. While a single physician may not be able to satisfy all healthcare needs, subscription-based healthcare often provides more direct access to your doctor so that they can quickly and easily provide a referral. It has been observed that subscription-based healthcare is often more cost-effective than traditional options if the patient does not have major health issues. This alternative also makes it easier for doctors to provide care at a local level.

The County should work with local doctors to determine the viability of these healthcare alternatives and ensure adequate healthcare access for all Washington County residents.

14 [NCBA CLUSA: Healthcare Co-Ops](#)

15 [Hospital & Healthcare Management: The Pros and Cons of Subscription-Based Healthcare](#)

## Case Study: PT360

PT360 is a healthcare co-op in Vermont specializing in physical therapy and rehabilitation. The company started in 2010 and has grown to encompass multiple clinics and 36 employees. Similarly to any other co-op business, employees have the opportunity to become employee-owners with a share of the company and decision-making power. Employee-owners at PT360 say that the business has been so successful because it is collaborative and decisions are made with everyone in mind. PT360 also says they are able to see patients more easily because they do not experience all of the challenges and obstacles present in a traditional healthcare provider setting at a hospital network.



## ENTERTAINMENT

Numerous community organizations within Washington County hold regular events aimed at families and children. Some of the events that occurred during the writing of this plan included Friday Night on the Square, Old Settlers Days, and the YMCA Fall Festival. While residents have discussed entertainment amenities such as an arcade or bowling alley, it is important not to overlook the significance of community events in serving as entertainment and recreation for County residents. Similarly with the previously mentioned strategies surrounding County branding and marketing, Washington County and its community organizations should reconsider how they are advertising their events to frame these events as entertainment opportunities and alternatives to paid commercial recreation services. Expanding the current offerings to include low-cost events like an outdoor movie night could also be an effective way to engage children in the County. The Washington County Actors Community Theatre is also an asset to the community that puts on events and entertainment for the public. One popular even by the Actors Community Theatre is the cemetery walk that happens around Halloween every year. These events are often free or attended for a low ticket price and support local businesses and causes. It is a matter of mindset to shift the thinking around these community events to be entertainment opportunities rather than the traditional kid's entertainment services, which may be a thing of the past.

## FARM-TO-TABLE

Washington County has strong agricultural roots and even those residents who do not actively participate in agriculture desire to contribute to and support local farmers. Farm-to-table refers to eating food from nearby agricultural operations with minimal processing and shipping. Opportunities to eat farm-to-table meat and produce allow residents to feel good about their food choices with respect to both their health and their community.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA)

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a model for purchasing locally produced food directly from the farm.<sup>16</sup> Buyers typically purchase a share of the harvest in advance of the season, and then the farm delivers a box of seasonal produce to the buyer throughout the season. There are several websites where farmers can advertise that they are participating in a CSA program, and nearby community members can sign up and purchase their share. These programs help smaller farmers sustain their businesses and community members to receive healthy food that benefits their community. The County should partner with the Chamber of Commerce to work with local farmers on the logistics of setting up a CSA program.

## COMMUNITY DINNER EVENTS

Another way to give residents access to farm-fresh food is through community farm-to-table dinners. These dinners can be held in a catering/event space or outdoors along a closed road. Attendees often register ahead of time to reserve their seat at the table and pay for their meal. The food prepared is grown/raised by local farmers. Not only is this a great way to get the community together at an event, but it also helps support small local farmers to sustain their businesses. People appreciate the novelty of these events and are willing to pay more for their meal than at a traditional restaurant because they know it supports the community. The County could work with the local agricultural community, potentially through Purdue Extension, to set up an annual event like this.

## COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY ACTION PLAN

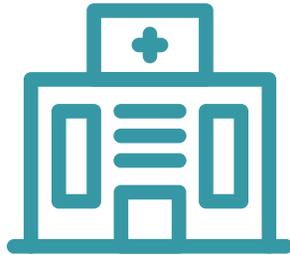
As the County sees continued economic growth, there will be a need for infrastructure improvements related to transportation and utilities to accommodate new residents and new businesses. The County should be proactive in anticipating the need for improved infrastructure and budget accordingly. A Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) is a document that identifies necessary future infrastructure improvements and creates a timeline and schedule for their completion. The Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Program is a grant program that funds CSAP improvements. The County should complete a CSAP to create a clear path for infrastructure improvements specifically where new development is expected or should be encouraged.

## Case Study: Winnsboro, SC Ag + Art Weekend<sup>17</sup>

Winnsboro is a small South Carolina town with 3,215 residents at the 2020 Census. In the summer, the town closes down a street and hosts a community dinner event at one long table with food supplied by local farm sites and prepared by local chefs. In 2016, a ticket to the event was \$30 per person. The event allowed residents to support local farmers and chefs while catching up with neighbors and meeting new community members.



## QUALITY OF LIFE STRATEGIES



### **Healthcare:**

Strengthen County relationships with existing healthcare providers to explore expansion of services and assist local medical professionals in navigating options for healthcare co-ops or subscription-based healthcare services.



### **Community-Based Entertainment:**

Promote community events as an alternative to traditional commercial entertainment services to curb the sentiment that there is a lack of entertainment available.



### **Community-Supported Agriculture:**

Facilitate farmers in getting their produce distributed locally through community-supported agriculture programs.



### **Farm-to-Table:**

Work with farmers and community partners to host farm-to-table community dinner events, fostering a greater sense of community and supporting local farmers and chefs.



### **Comprehensive Safety Action Plan:**

Create a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) to ensure critical infrastructure upgrades and expansion are accounted for annually. The County can then apply for SS4A funding to assist with improvements.





# IMPLEMENTATION

The previous chapters outlined the objectives and strategy recommendations for Washington County. This chapter focuses on priority projects or programs to make this document's recommendations a reality. These projects or programs are known as Implementation Initiatives.

There are ten Implementation Initiatives in this strategy document. Each strategy has an entire page dedicated to outlining the work plan. The work plan identifies related goals, parties to be involved, action steps, the timeframe of completion, and estimated project cost to assist in implementation.

The strategy statements in this document are created to guide the pursuit of economic development and vision for economic success through straightforward action steps to implement those recommendations. These prioritized Implementation Initiatives are a combination of short-term, affordable projects that can create near-term progress for Washington County and those important ones needed to move economic development progress forward.

## IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES

The Implementation Initiatives for this plan are listed below:

### HOUSING

**Residential TIF:** Implement residential TIF districts on approved but unbuilt subdivisions near Salem, New Pekin, and other incorporated areas with utility capacity to promote housing development and infrastructure improvements in strategic locations.

**Housing Affordability:** Assist homebuyers by creating awareness of downpayment assistance through loan programs such as the USDA 502 home loans.

### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**Small Business Longevity:** Facilitate local businesses in exploring worker cooperative and employee-owned business models for the purpose of succession planning and staff retention.

### TOURISM

**Unique Hospitality:** Promote unique and niche hospitality and accommodations options like culturally significant short-term rentals.

**Park Website:** Update the Delaney Creek Park website to improve navigability and attract visitors.

**Parks Masterplan:** Prepare a five-year parks masterplan in alignment with Indiana state statutes to create additional avenues to receive parks funding.

**County Branding Strategy:** Initiate a County branding initiative, uniting all departments and public-facing materials under a single logo and brand.

### QUALITY OF LIFE

**Community-Based Entertainment:** Promote community events as an alternative to traditional commercial entertainment services to curb the sentiment that there is a lack of entertainment available.

**Farm-to-Table:** Work with farmers and community partners to host farm-to-table community dinner events, fostering a greater sense of community and supporting local farmers and chefs.

**Comprehensive Safety Action Plan:** Create a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) to ensure critical infrastructure upgrades and expansion are accounted for annually. The County can then apply for SS4A funding to assist with improvements.

## HOW TO USE THE IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES

The following pages guide the Washington County towards implementing the identified Implementation Initiatives. Each program's dedicated work plan will include a timeframe of at most five years and an estimated cost.

### RESIDENTIAL TIF

**Implement residential TIF districts on approved but unbuilt subdivisions near Salem, New Pekin, and other incorporated areas with utility capacity to promote housing development and infrastructure improvements in strategic locations.**

**Overview:** Per House Enrolled Act 1005-2023, the State of Indiana has removed the previous required home growth threshold needed to establish a residential TIF until July of 2027. The County should work with the City of Salem, New Pekin, and all incorporated towns in Washington County to identify areas of potential residential growth to designate as TIF districts.

Action Steps	Parties to Involve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Evaluate the locations and viability of unbuilt subdivisions that were previously approved.</li> <li>❑ Ensure adequate water, sewer, gas, roads, etc., serve the residential development site.</li> <li>❑ In partnership with Salem, determine the areas/subdivisions where housing would be most appropriate.</li> <li>❑ Designate these areas deemed appropriate for housing development as a redevelopment area or economic development area.</li> <li>❑ Consider annexation of the land into the appropriate nearby incorporated municipality.</li> <li>❑ Prepare and approve a declaratory and confirmatory resolution establishing the allocation area, defining the boundaries, and stating the public purpose of the TIF.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ <b>Lead: Washington County Economic Growth Partnership</b></li> <li>❑ Washington County Redevelopment Commission (RDC)</li> <li>❑ City of Salem</li> <li>❑ Town of New Pekin</li> <li>❑ Incorporated areas</li> <li>❑ Local developers</li> </ul>
Timeframe	1-2 Years (Prior to July 1, 2027)
Estimated Cost	Staff time, legal expenses, attorney's fees

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

### Assist homebuyers by creating awareness of downpayment assistance through loan programs such as the USDA 502 home loans.

**Overview:** Homeownership can be a wealth-building tool for residents within the County and foster greater investment in the community's success. First-time homebuyers may need help navigating the process and making a downpayment. The USDA has Section 502 home loans aimed at making homeownership more accessible.

Action Steps	Parties to Involve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Determine the eligibility requirements for USDA Section 502 home loans and other state and federal home loan programs that may be applicable.</li> <li>❑ Work with representatives from the USDA and other government home loan providers to understand the application process.</li> <li>❑ Prepare materials to inform lenders and realtors of the home loan assistance programs that may be available to their clients.</li> <li>❑ Provide resources to lenders and realtors to facilitate potential first-time homebuyers on how to navigate the home loan application process.</li> <li>❑ Encourage lenders and realtors to connect first-time home buyers and loan recipients with professionals and organizations to coach them through responsible homeownership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ <b>Lead: Washington County Economic Growth Partnership</b></li> <li>❑ USDA Rural Development</li> <li>❑ Indian Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA)</li> <li>❑ Local banks and lenders</li> </ul>
Timeframe	Ongoing
Estimated Cost	No Cost (staff time)

## SMALL BUSINESS LONGEVITY

### Facilitate local businesses in exploring worker cooperative and employee-owned business models for the purpose of succession planning and staff retention.

**Overview:** Small businesses are at the heart of what residents love about Washington County. Concerns were voiced about succession plans, as many of the business owners in Washington County age closer to retirement, and there need to be plans to pass on ownership. Worker cooperative and employee-ownership business models may be an appropriate solution to retain staff and maintain the business.

Action Steps	Parties to Involve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Determine what local businesses may be at risk of closing down due to a lack of a succession plan.</li> <li>❑ Explore the different models of worker cooperative and employee ownership business to determine what might be a good solution for Washington County businesses.</li> <li>❑ Speak with business owners about what employee ownership would mean and determine if their business would be an appropriate fit.</li> <li>❑ Connect interested local businesses with a consultant who can help them with the ownership transition process. Project Equity provides services specifically aimed at small business employee ownership.</li> <li>❑ Support local businesses through the transition and assist when necessary after ownership has been passed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ <b>Lead: Washington County Chamber of Commerce</b></li> <li>❑ <b>Lead: Washington County Economic Growth Partnership</b></li> <li>❑ Small Business Owners</li> <li>❑ Heart of Salem</li> <li>❑ Indiana Small Business Development Center</li> <li>❑ Local lenders</li> </ul>
Timeframe	--
Estimated Cost	No Cost (staff time)

## UNIQUE HOSPITALITY

### Promote unique and niche hospitality and accommodations options like culturally significant short-term rentals.

**Overview:** People who come to explore Washington County are looking for unique experiences that they cannot get anywhere else. One way to differentiate the County as a destination is to have niche short-term rental properties and bed and breakfast options. These types of accommodations will motivate tourists to visit overnight rather than for just a day trip.

Action Steps	Parties to Involve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Identify current short-term rental (Airbnb or VRBO) owners to discuss how they can make their properties stand out.</li> <li>❑ Look for potential short-term rental properties near regional recreational amenities and work with current owners to expand their portfolios.</li> <li>❑ Assist property owners with extra rooms to set up a bed and breakfast operation.</li> <li>❑ Advertise these options on the County tourism website.</li> <li>❑ Work with the Tourism Board to create pamphlets and other materials/resources for guests staying in short-term rentals or bed and breakfasts.</li> <li>❑ Evaluate the need for an ordinance regulating the ownership and operation of short-term rentals to ensure residents are not burdened by noise or other disturbances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ <b>Lead: Washington County Tourism Board</b></li> <li>❑ <b>Lead: Washington County Economic Growth Partnership</b></li> <li>❑ Washington County Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>❑ Short-Term Rental Owners</li> </ul>
Timeframe	4-5 Years
Estimated Cost	No Cost (staff time)

## PARK WEBSITE

### Update the Delaney Creek Park website to improve navigability and attract visitors.

**Overview:** Delaney Creek Park is the only County-owned park. It has a wide range of activities, amenities, and services available to visitors. Most people unfamiliar with the park will go online to find more information. However, the website is outdated and difficult to navigate. An update to the website may help pull in visitors.

Action Steps	Parties to Involve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Create a logo and brand for the park that aligns with other County branding. This brand will help decide the website's color scheme.</li> <li>❑ Use fonts that are simple, easy to read, and consistent with other County branding and fonts.</li> <li>❑ Separate the information on the "about" page into different categories or sub-pages so that potential visitors can easily find the information that relates to them.</li> <li>❑ Consider hiring a consultant to build the website to your custom specifications.</li> <li>❑ Determine what the "target audience" will be for the park and consider search engine optimization to ensure visibility.</li> <li>❑ Create a contact form so visitors can easily send an email directly from the website.</li> <li>❑ Hire a photographer to take some professional photos of the park. Nice photos can go a long way in advertising the cabins, campsites, and other amenities.</li> <li>❑ Create links between the Delaney Creek Park website and the overall County website so that residents and visitors can easily find all that they need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ <b>Lead: Washington County Tourism Board</b></li> <li>❑ <b>Lead: Washington County Economic Growth Partnership</b></li> <li>❑ Delaney Creek Park</li> <li>❑ Washington County Parks Board</li> </ul>
Timeframe	1-2 years
Estimated Cost	Up to \$5,000 if a web design consultant is used

## PARKS MASTERPLAN

### Prepare a five-year parks masterplan in alignment with Indiana state statutes to create additional avenues to receive parks funding.

**Overview:** Considering that the County owns Delaney Creek Park, a five-year parks masterplan should be prepared to guide major decisions related to Delaney Creek Park and any future County park properties. A five-year parks and recreation masterplan would maximize the ability for Washington County to continue to provide amenities by evaluating service areas, ensuring adequate maintenance, prioritizing projects, improving accessibility, and enhancing connectivity. Having an approved plan also makes the County eligible to apply for LWCF grants to create or improve park facilities.

Action Steps	Parties to Involve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Determine if a parks masterplan is a staff performed project or if a consultant is needed to prepare the plan.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do preliminary work regarding public outreach and park amenities inventory, including demographics, visitors, historic assets, and environmental review. Public outreach is required at two different points in the planning process.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete the following components of the plan: needs assessment (for facilities, properties, and budget increases), a list of future projects and estimated costs for each project, and a priority projects list of capital improvements for the next five years.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the appropriate deadlines are being met for IDNR review.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Upon IDNR approval, the parks board will pass a resolution to adopt the plan,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Approved resolutions by the parks board will be submitted with IDNR.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The County will determine which projects to fund with matching funding and submit the appropriate LWCF grants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Lead: Washington County Commissioners</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Delaney Creek Park</li> </ul>
Timeframe	3-5 years
Estimated Cost	Up to \$50,000

## COUNTY BRANDING

### Initiate a County branding initiative, uniting all departments and public-facing materials under a single logo and brand.

**Overview:** Each County department seems to be using a different logo or color scheme to conduct business under. This lack of visual cohesion between departments may be confusing to County residents and imply a lack of interdepartmental communication. An updated cohesive brand will help portray a more unified Washington County government and help residents identify official County business.

Action Steps	Parties to Involve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Consider hiring a branding consultant to create a family of logos and color schemes that can be used across all County departments.</li> <li>❑ Ensure the County logo is unique to Washington County, pulling from the natural and built landmarks to differentiate it from others.</li> <li>❑ Develop a branding color scheme that provides variety but looks cohesive when used together.</li> <li>❑ Create logos for each of the different County departments that all follow the same design language.</li> <li>❑ Identify a family of fonts that is easy to read and pairs well with the rest of the branding.</li> <li>❑ Update County documents, forms, and letterhead to utilize the new logo, fonts, and color scheme.</li> <li>❑ Update the County website and subsequent department websites with all of the components of the new County branding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ <b>Lead: Washington County Economic Growth Partnership</b></li> <li>❑ Washington County Commissioners</li> <li>❑ Washington County Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>❑ Washington County Tourism Board</li> <li>❑ All Washington County Government Departments</li> </ul>
Timeframe	1-2 years
Estimated Cost	Up to \$50,000 if a consultant is hired

## COMMUNITY-BASED ENTERTAINMENT

**Promote community events as an alternative to traditional commercial entertainment services to curb the sentiment that there is a lack of entertainment available.**

**Overview:** While there was an expressed sentiment from residents that there is not much to do in terms of recreation and entertainment, there are numerous community events that happen within the County throughout the year that residents should take advantage of as an alternative to commercial recreation services like a bowling alley or skating rink.

Action Steps	Parties to Involve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Utilize digital media platforms to promote annual events already established within the County. These events can be hosted by the County or other community organizations.</li> <li>❑ Consider physical advertising materials like signs and banners in high-traffic areas, informing people about upcoming events.</li> <li>❑ Explore ideas for events that appeal to different age groups or involve different types of activities. For example, inflatable movie screens can be set up outdoors for a movie night event, and silent disco events can be popular with teens and young adults.</li> <li>❑ Work with community organizations to space out events on different days or weekends so residents do not have to choose between one or the other.</li> <li>❑ Consider partnering with the City of Salem towards creating a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) to allow for the sale of alcoholic beverages at events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ <b>Lead: Driving Change</b></li> <li>❑ Washington County Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>❑ Washington County Tourism Board</li> <li>❑ City of Salem</li> <li>❑ Washington County Actors Community Theatre</li> <li>❑ Washington County Historical Society</li> <li>❑ Local Community Organizations (YMCA, Religious Groups, etc.)</li> <li>❑ Local senior centers</li> </ul>
Timeframe	Ongoing
Estimated Cost	The County should create an annual budget item to sponsor events.

## FARM-TO-TABLE

**Work with farmers and community partners to host farm-to-table community dinner events, fostering a greater sense of community and supporting local farmers and chefs.**

**Overview:** Washington County has strong agricultural roots, and residents desire to support local farmers. The County can hold farm-to-table meal events, where residents purchase their meal ahead of time and sit down for dinner with other members of the community. The meat and produce will be provided by local farmers, and local chefs can prepare the food. This fosters support for County agriculture and strengthens community bonds.

Action Steps	Parties to Involve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Identify local farmers who grow produce or raise meat and are willing to participate in the event. These farmers will be compensated for their product through ticket sales.</li> <li>❑ Work with local restaurants to identify chefs willing to create the menu and prepare the meals for the event.</li> <li>❑ Advertise the event on digital media platforms and physical advertisements. Emphasize support for local, small-scale farming and the health benefits of eating a meal that has not been frozen or heavily processed.</li> <li>❑ Purchase or rent catering materials, including tables, chairs, tablecloths, place settings, and centerpieces. Many communities that hold similar events utilize tablecloths and centerpieces to create a more upscale atmosphere.</li> <li>❑ Require that seats be reserved ahead of time so farmers and chefs can prepare the appropriate amount of food. Consider capping ticket sales so as not to overwhelm the farmers and chefs.</li> <li>❑ Receive proper permits and approvals to allow for the safe sale of food and beverages.</li> <li>❑ Have high-quality photos of the event taken and post them on digital media platforms after the event to create buzz and anticipation for the next one.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ <b>Lead: Driving Change</b></li> <li>❑ Local Small-Scale Farmers</li> <li>❑ Local Restaurants and Chefs</li> <li>❑ Washington County Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>❑ Washington County Tourism Board</li> <li>❑ 4H</li> <li>❑ Purdue Extension</li> <li>❑ Washington County Fair Board</li> <li>❑ Agricultural organizations</li> <li>❑ Campbellsburg and New Pekin Betterment Committees</li> </ul>
Timeframe	2-3 Years
Estimated Cost	No Cost (staff time)

## COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY ACTION PLAN

**Create a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) to ensure critical infrastructure upgrades and expansion are accounted for annually. The County can then apply for SS4A funding to assist with improvements.**

**Overview:** In order to support additional economic growth, the County will need to ensure that adequate infrastructure and safety improvements are being made each year. Using the future land use map and potential residential and commercial development sites, the County should plan out where new infrastructure improvements will be in a CSAP. Once the CSAP is complete, Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant funding can be applied to the implementation of CSAP projects.

Action Steps	Parties to Involve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Consider hiring a consultant to conduct community engagement and prepare the CSAP for the County.</li> <li>❑ Work with INDOT, and incorporated communities to identify and prioritize areas to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety through the CSAP.</li> <li>❑ Prioritize areas where future development is expected and places where pedestrian-vehicle conflicts pose as a threat to safety.</li> <li>❑ Identify areas that are being underserved by the current infrastructure or areas where there are gaps in paved roadways or pedestrian facilities.</li> <li>❑ Submit the CSAP and subsequent appropriate SS4A grant applications to the appropriate administrating organizations.</li> <li>❑ Use SS4A grant money to fund projects in the CSAP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ <b>Lead: County Commissioners</b></li> <li>❑ INDOT</li> <li>❑ Incorporated areas</li> <li>❑ Washington County Highway Department</li> <li>❑ Utilities providers</li> </ul>
Timeframe	2-3 Years
Estimated Cost	Up to \$25,000



Theme	Strategy
<b>Housing</b>	<b>Housing Diversity</b> Promote greater diversity of housing types, where appropriate, through the amendment of land development ordinances.
	<b>Residential TIF*</b> Implement residential TIF districts on approved but unbuilt subdivisions near Salem, New Pekin, and other incorporated areas with utility capacity to promote housing development and infrastructure improvements in strategic locations.
	<b>Housing Affordability*</b> Assist homebuyers by creating awareness of downpayment assistance through loan programs such as the USDA 502 home loans.
<b>Workforce Development and Business Retention/Expansion</b>	<b>Vocational Education</b> Encourage collaboration between the three school systems to find career technical education employment partners within the County in partnership with, or as an alternative to, the Prosser program.
	<b>Agricultural Research Target Industry</b> Identify agricultural research as a target industry for the County and ensure land regulation ordinances and appropriate partnerships are set up to support the industry.
	<b>Shovel Ready Site</b> Continue to promote the J.F. Hesel Commerce Park to potential commercial and industrial tenants and consider a TIF district to help fund needed infrastructure expansion.
<b>Entrepreneurship</b>	<b>Small Business Longevity*</b> Facilitate local businesses in exploring worker cooperative and employee-owned business models for the purpose of succession planning and staff retention.
	<b>Entrepreneurial Ecosystem</b> Take a holistic approach to establishing an entrepreneurial ecosystem, supporting entrepreneurs through all aspects of business start-up.
	<b>Agribusiness Regulations</b> Ensure land development ordinances support agribusiness through protections for large contiguous tracts of agricultural land and additional standards for ancillary business uses.
	<b>Agribusiness Support</b> Provide farmers with education and resources around innovative farming practices through Purdue Extension and ensure infrastructure is adequate to support agribusiness development.

Theme	Strategy
Tourism	<p><b>Agritourism Promotion</b> Promote agritourism businesses through the Tourism Board and the Chamber of Commerce through various media.</p>
	<p><b>Agritourism Regulation</b> Review and update land development ordinances to allow for the creation and expansion of agritourism uses.</p>
	<p><b>Unique Hospitality*</b> Promote unique and niche hospitality and accommodations options like culturally significant short-term rentals.</p>
	<p><b>Park Website*</b> Update the Delaney Creek Park website to improve navigability and attract visitors.</p>
	<p><b>Parks Masterplan*</b> Prepare a five-year parks masterplan in alignment with Indiana state statutes to create additional avenues to receive parks funding.</p>
	<p><b>County Branding*</b> Initiate a County branding initiative, uniting all departments and public-facing materials under a single logo and brand.</p>
	<p><b>Digital Communication</b> Improve transparency between government and residents and overall awareness of events in the County through social media outreach.</p>
	<p><b>Gateway and Wayfinding Signage</b> Install gateway and wayfinding signage consistent with the new County branding to attract visitors and improve overall aesthetics.</p>
Quality of Life	<p><b>Healthcare</b> Strengthen County relationships with existing healthcare providers to explore expansion of services and assist local medical professionals in navigating options for healthcare co-ops or subscription-based healthcare services.</p>
	<p><b>Community-Based Entertainment*</b> Promote community events as an alternative to traditional commercial entertainment services to curb the sentiment that there is a lack of entertainment available.</p>
	<p><b>Community-Supported Agriculture</b> Facilitate farmers in getting their produce distributed locally through community-supported agriculture programs.</p>
	<p><b>Farm-to-Table*</b> Work with farmers and community partners to host farm-to-table community dinner events, fostering a greater sense of community and supporting local farmers and chefs.</p>
	<p><b>Comprehensive Safety Action Plan*</b> Create a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) to ensure critical infrastructure upgrades and expansion are accounted for annually. The County can then apply for SS4A funding to assist with improvements.</p>

# APPENDIX

## EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT



WASHINGTON COUNTY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

# EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

FALL 2024

**DRAFT**

**SALEM SPEEDWAY**

**Ford RACING**

**in'**

**South of Courthouse**

**Edelbrock**

**TCP**

**COMP CAMS**  
www.compcams.com

**THE SALEM SPEEDWAY**

**100-5 LOTTERY**

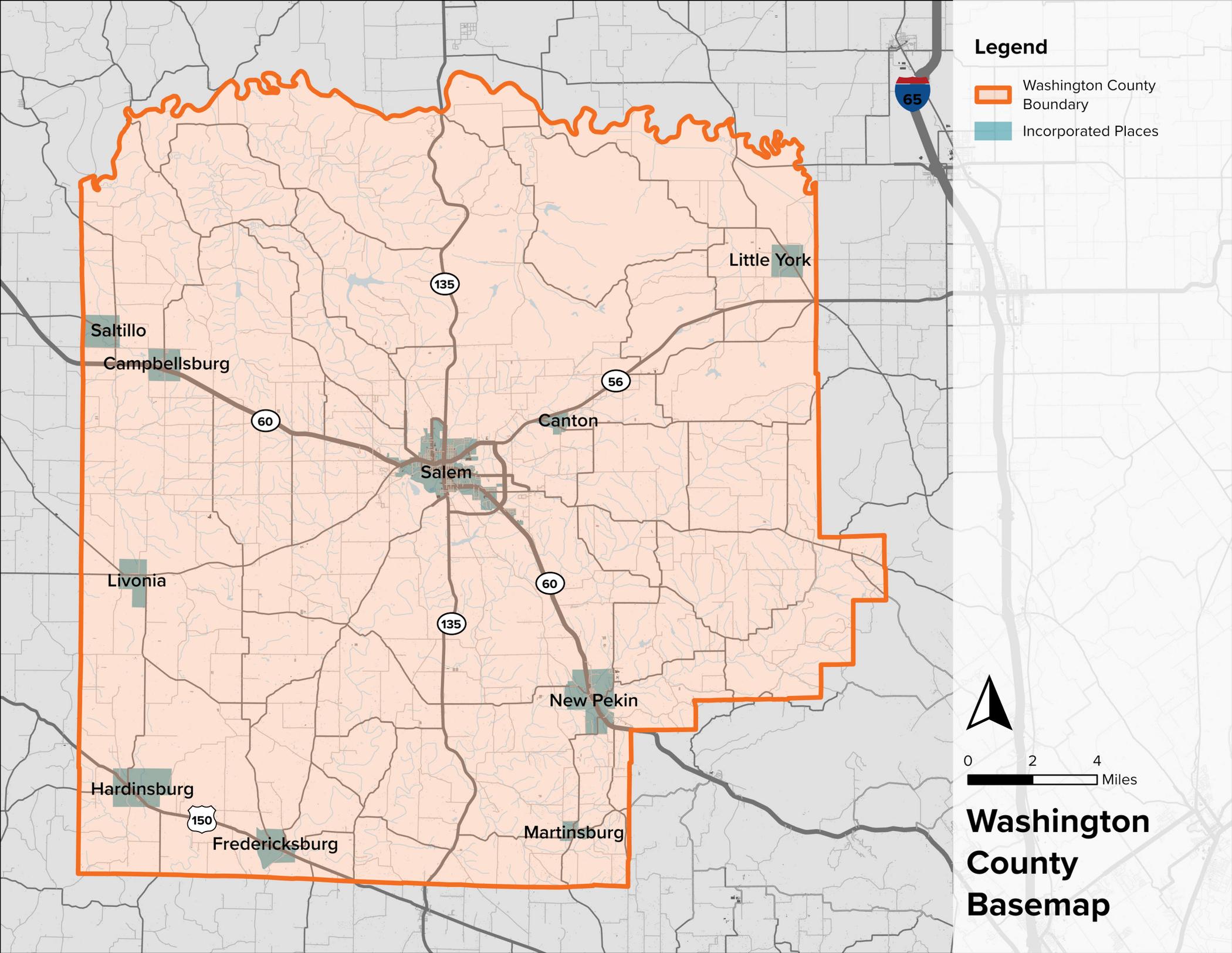
**OCT 18 19 20**  
**HALLOWEEN 200 WEEKEND**  
**9 DIVISIONS RACING**

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# Legend

-  Washington County Boundary
-  Incorporated Places



# Washington County Basemap

# INTRODUCTION

Washington County is situated in southern Indiana near the Ohio River. It is one of Indiana's largest counties geographically. Washington County is home to one incorporated city: Salem, IN. Salem serves as the County Seat. Washington County is within the Louisville, Kentucky metropolitan area. It is about a 50-minute drive from Salem, Indiana to Louisville, Kentucky.

## REPORT PROCESS

The existing conditions report (ECR) is a preliminary step in the overall planning process. When preparing a plan, it is vital to understand where the community is currently. The ECR summarizes the findings from extensive research on the past and current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats specific to Washington County. Topics considered include demographics, housing, employment, economy and market, land use and development, transportation, private and public services, history, environmental conditions, and community input. Regarding community input, throughout the process of writing the ECR, a public survey was released, and community stakeholders provided their input directly at stakeholder meetings. The ECR will inform the policy and recommendations made in the plan.

## EXISTING DOCUMENT REVIEW

Reviewing previous planning efforts to understand where the County has achieved set goals and where extra support may be needed is important. The goals and objectives of the following plans were reviewed in preparing this ECR:

- 2010 Washington County Comprehensive Plan
- Jackson County REMC Hoosier Energy Industrial Site Evaluation November 2020
- Indiana Uplands Regional Housing Study 2023 Update

## 2010 WASHINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The 2010 Washington County Comprehensive Plan was the County's first comprehensive plan. The plan is intended to guide the growth and development of the County over approximately ten years. The plan was written based on the current conditions of the County, both demographically and economically. Various data sources were used to back up the claims and recommendations made within the plan. The future land use map and the goals of the plan are the major guiding deliverables from a Comprehensive Plan. The goals of the plan are as follows:

- Goal 1: Indicate areas of the County most suitable for specific types of development, such as residential, commercial, and industrial uses. That is mostly achieved through the future land use map.
- Goal 2: Maintain the County's rural way of life. The plan recommends a protective agricultural zoning district, conservation subdivisions, a parks masterplan, and "Right to Farm" nuisance waivers.
- Goal 3: Protect the most fragile parts of the County's environment, particularly the lakes and water systems. The plan believes this can be achieved through education programs and strategic regulation of development near watersheds, steep slopes, and areas of karst topography.
- Goal 4: Discourage incompatible land uses from creating conflicts with property owners. That can be realized through a revision or readoption of a zoning ordinance that aligns with the comprehensive plan's goals and future land use map.
- Goal 5: Prevent private development practices that result in net costs to County taxpayers. That can be done through specific provisions in the zoning and subdivision ordinances that clearly state what public improvements are expected of developers and what best practices are required for the most efficient service to new residents.

Understanding where the County is 14 years after this plan was adopted creates a solid foundation for future planning efforts to address challenges and build on momentum. The plan calls for additional planning efforts to follow the comprehensive plan, which includes a stormwater and wastewater management plan, a capital improvements plan, a parks master plan, and a thoroughfare plan.

## JACKSON COUNTY REMC HOOSIER ENERGY INDUSTRIAL SITE EVALUATION NOVEMBER 2020

Hoosier Energy contracted with the Verisite team to determine ten potential sites within the Jackson County REMC for potential industrial developments. These sites were chosen based on the following criteria: site size (minimum of 20 acres), distance to primary corridors (no more than one-half mile), ownership and ease of land assembly, easements, development process, serviceability, topography, visibility, human capital availability, target industries alignment, and environmental challenges.

A 37-acre site just outside the City of Salem was selected as a potential site with frontage on SR-56 E and likely ready for development. Two additional sites were chosen on either side of SR 39 on the east border of Washington County, also considered likely ready for development. There are 42 acres available on the east side and 152 acres available on the west side of SR 39. Another property was determined viable just west of Salem. The site is 20 acres and located on W Beeline Rd and CR 250 W, considered to be likely ready for development.

The document lists the following as target industries for Washington County:

- Building Equipment Contractors
- Other Specialty Trade Contractors
- Nonresidential Building Construction
- Residential Building Construction
- Machine Shops; Turned Product; and Screw, Nut, and Bolt Manufacturing
- Building Finishing Contractors
- Specialized Freight Trucking
- General Freight Trucking
- Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior Contractors
- Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturing

## INDIANA UPLANDS REGIONAL HOUSING STUDY 2023 UPDATE

The Indiana Uplands Regional Housing Study 2023 Update identifies trends and changes from the previously completed study in 2019. The study discusses the characteristics of the overall housing stock within Washington County with respect to age, size, cost, occupancy, etc. Some of Washington County's standout trends from the study are listed below:

- Annual housing construction rates of 54 units annually have been below the estimated need of 87 units per year, as projected by the 2019 study
- Within the past decade, for a number of years, more manufactured homes were being constructed than traditional single-family homes
- There has been no newly constructed rental housing since 2012
- The percentage of cost-burdened rental households has increased over the last several years, but fewer owner households are experiencing cost burden
- A shortage of housing for residents earning over \$75,000 has grown since 2019
- The County should aim to construct 60 housing units annually until 2035 to satisfy the projected need

The report concludes with a forecast for the number of units at each price point needed by 2035 to satisfy projected demand.

## COMPARISON COMMUNITIES

Many Washington County statistics are compared to the State of Indiana, Putnam County, and/or selected comparison communities to better understand the demographic data in context. Comparison communities were selected because they contain characteristics similar to those of Washington County. If Washington County reports statistics much higher or lower than the comparison communities, that is a sign that a deeper look may be necessary to understand the reason. The comparison communities were chosen for the following reasons:

- **Jackson County, Indiana:** Directly adjacent to Washington County, rural character, agricultural economy, Southern Indiana, larger population than Washington County
- **Scott County, Indiana:** Directly adjacent to Washington County, Louisville Metropolitan Area, rural character, agricultural economy, smaller population than Washington County
- **Salem, Indiana:** The only city in Washington County, centrally located within the County, can help develop an understanding of the distribution of demographic characteristics throughout the County

Some data metrics will also be compared to the larger geographies encompassing Washington County, such as the state of Indiana and the Louisville/Jefferson County KY-IN Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The Louisville MSA comprises Jefferson County, Kentucky, and the 11 surrounding counties.



# KEY DEMOGRAPHIC THEMES

## OVERVIEW

Demographic data describes the characteristics of a community relating to population, age, race and ethnicity, and income. These metrics create a stronger understanding of who lives in Washington County and what unique opportunities or challenges the County faces. The gathered data is primarily reported by the US Census Bureau and interpreted or extrapolated by the following sources:

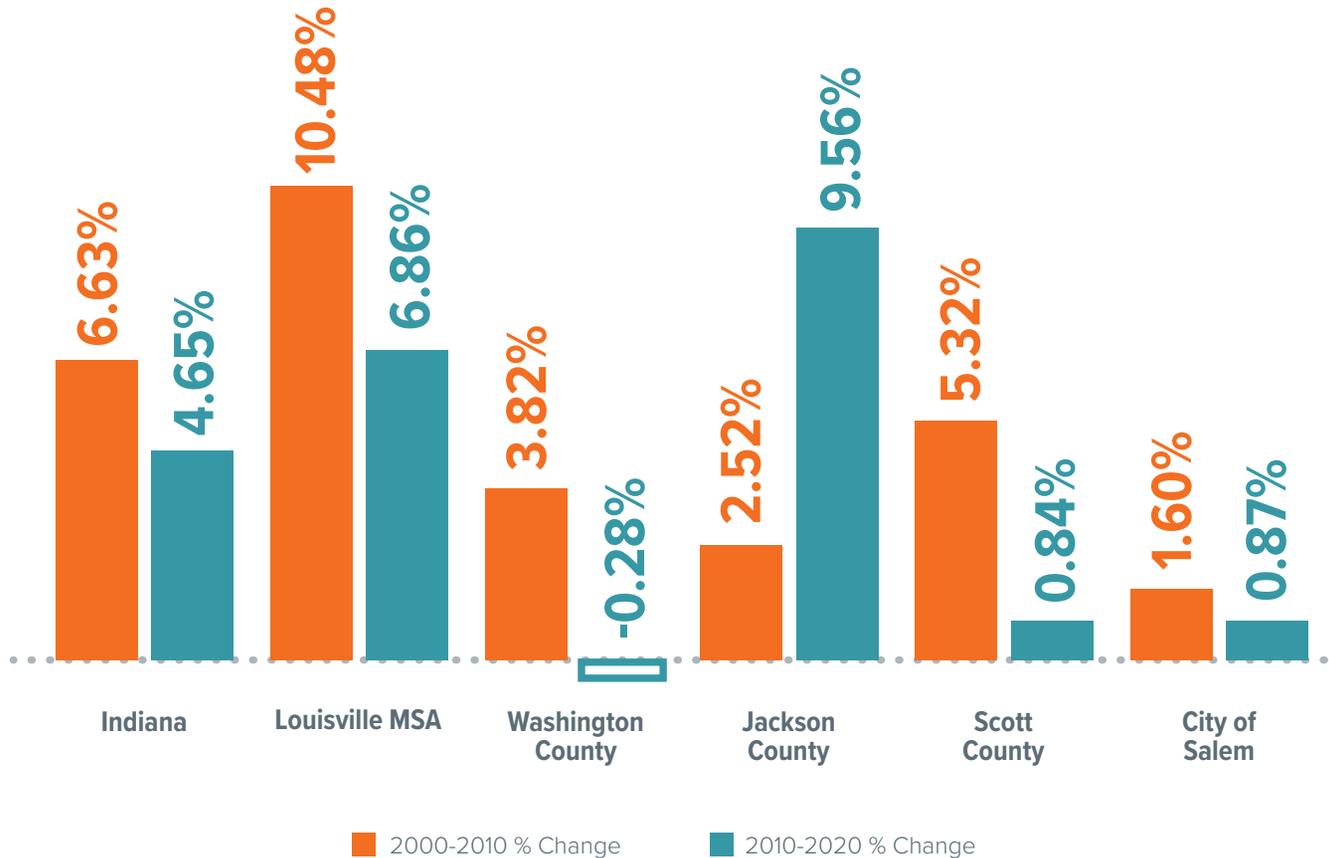
- **US Census Bureau American Community Survey:** In addition to the decennial census, the US Census Bureau conducts dozens of other censuses and surveys, including the American Community Survey. The American Community Survey is an ongoing effort that gathers information from a community through a small sample rather than the extensive 10-year survey with which most people are familiar.
- **US Census Bureau OnTheMap:** This online tool reports census data related to employment and commuting. When this report was written, the latest available data for Washington County on OnTheMap was from 2021.
- **ESRI Community Analyst:** ESRI Community Analyst is a powerful tool for analyzing data within a specific geographic location. ESRI allows data to be observed at a very local level and compared with surrounding groups.

## POPULATION

Population is a key indicator of the County's current and future state. The population creates the tax base and, therefore, can significantly impact a community's success. The population of Washington County at the time of the 2020 Census was 28,182.

## POPULATION CHANGE

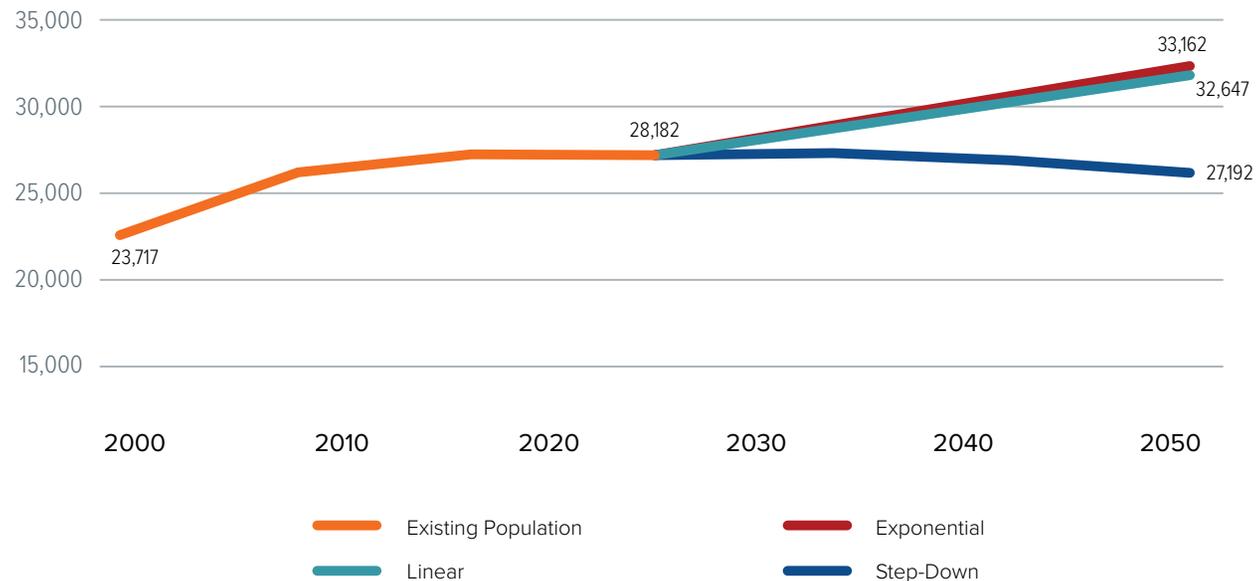
From 1950 to 2010, Washington County saw steady growth in population. The decades with the greatest population growth rates were the 1980s and the 2000s. The population in 2010 was 28,262, the highest population ever recorded in the County. From 2010 to 2020, the population decreased by 0.3%.



Washington County Population (1900-2020). Source: ESRI, US Decennial Census.

## POPULATION PROJECTION

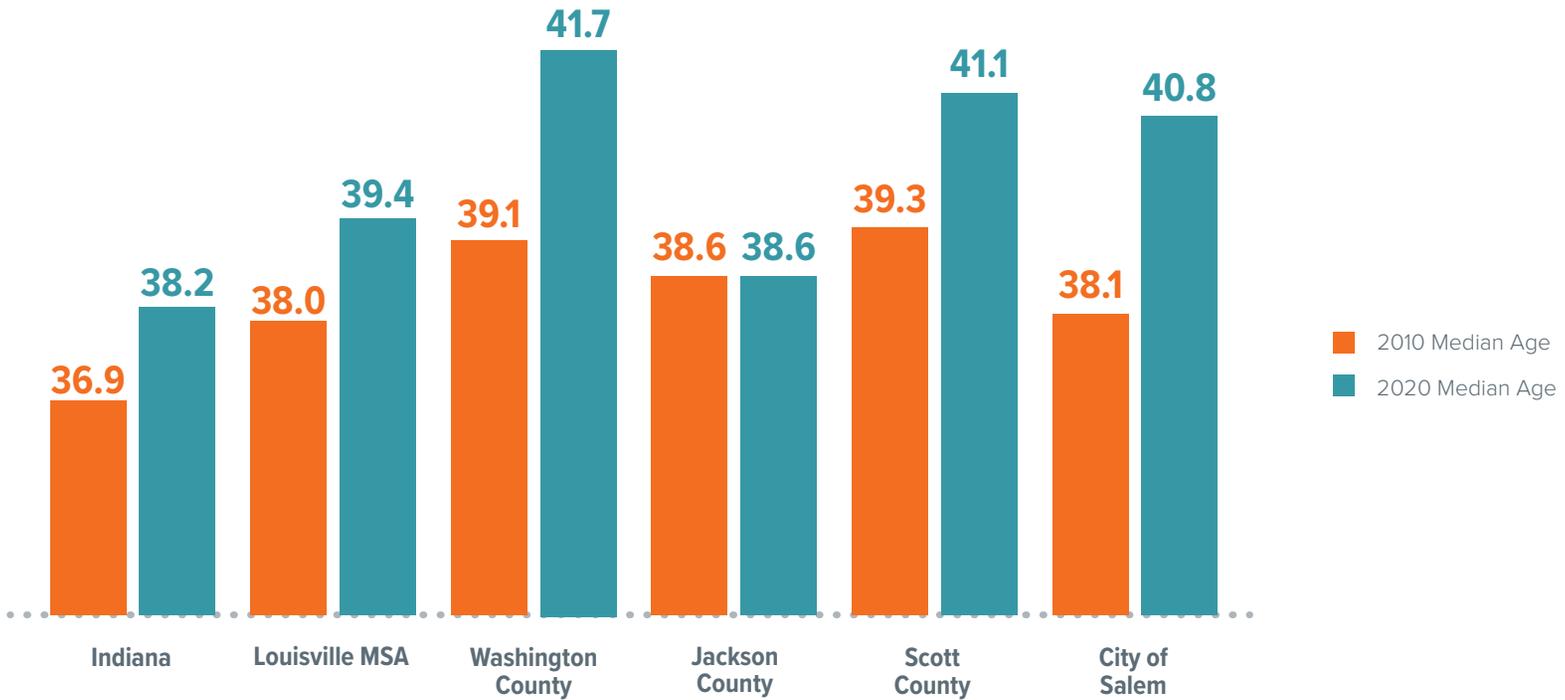
Population projections forecast what future population growth or decline may look like for a community. This Washington County population projection uses three methods to illustrate population change to 2050. The linear population projection assumes a constant rate of growth calculated based on population change from 1990-2020. The linear growth is forecasted at 1,488 additional residents per decade. The exponential projection assumes that the population will grow at a rate proportional to its current size. The forecasted rate of population growth based on the growth from 1990-2020 is a 5.3% increase per decade. The step-down projection method takes the population projection for the state of Indiana. It considers the proportion of the state's population attributed to Washington County to forecast the population of Washington County. The linear and exponential methods produce similar 2050 population forecasts with predicted increases. The linear method produced a 2050 population of 32,647, and the exponential method projects a 2050 population of 33,162. Although the state's population is projected to increase, if the proportion of the state that the County makes up continues to decrease at its current rate, the population of the County is projected to decrease to 27,192.



Population Projection (1990-2050). Source: Stats Indiana.

## MEDIAN AGE

The median age has jumped from 2010 to 2020. It was 39.1 in 2010, about 2.2 years higher than the state median but on par with the comparison communities. In 2020, it rose by 2.6 years to 41.7. That is the highest median age of the comparison communities and sits 3.5 years above the state median. That indicates that the population of Washington County is losing younger residents and/or gaining older residents at a higher rate than average. An older population brings unique opportunities and challenges that may need to be addressed with initiatives like active living and age-in-place housing.



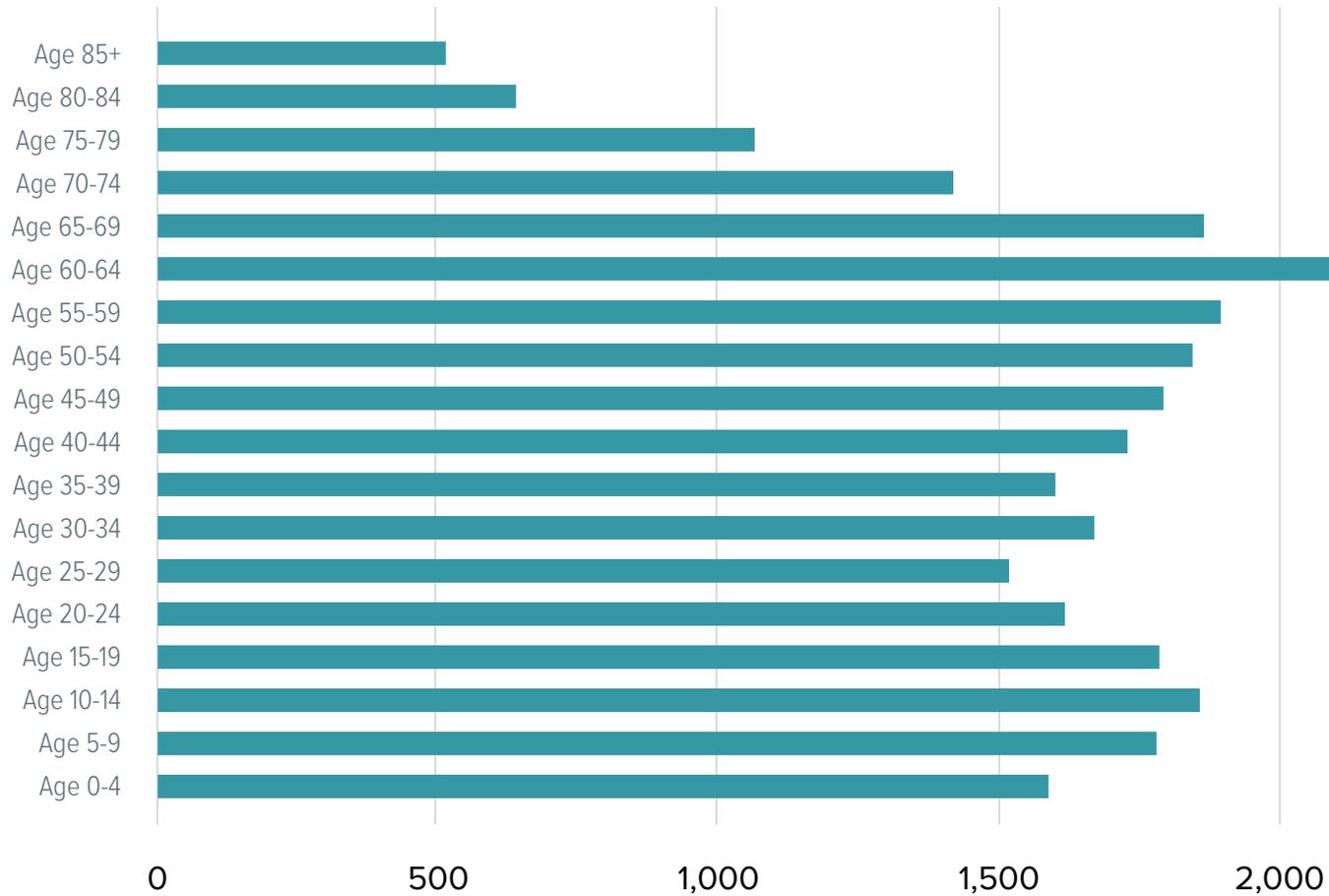
Median Age (2010-2020). Source: ESRI, US Decennial Census..

## AGE DISTRIBUTION

The age distribution chart for Washington County shows that the largest five-year age cohort is people 60-64. There is a significant dip in the population for people aged 20-29. That may indicate that people choose to leave Washington County after completing their education. The top-heavy age distribution chart aligns with the higher median age discussed previously.

## DEPENDENCY RATIO

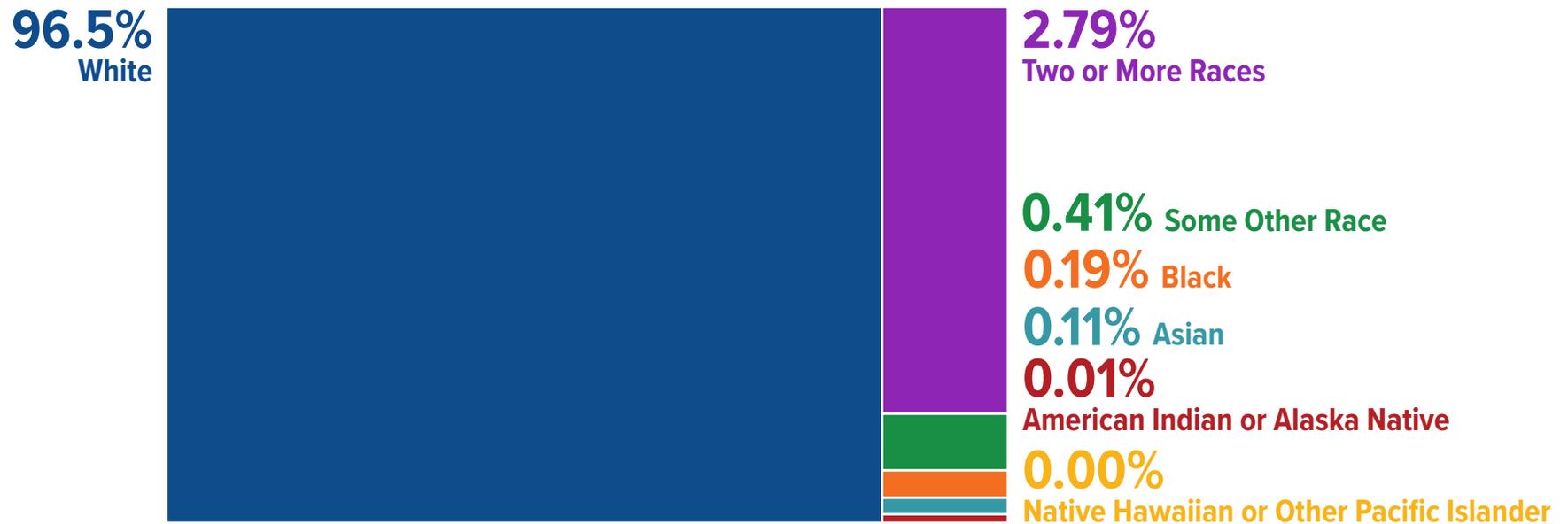
The dependency ratio is the child population, aged 0-17, and the senior population, aged 65+, compared to the working-age population, aged 18-64. The dependency ratio for Washington County is 72, meaning that for every 100 working-age people, there are 72 seniors or children. That is higher than the state dependency ratio of 67.7, which may indicate that the working population of Washington County experiences additional responsibility or burden to support dependent populations.



Age Distribution (2024). Source: ESRI.

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

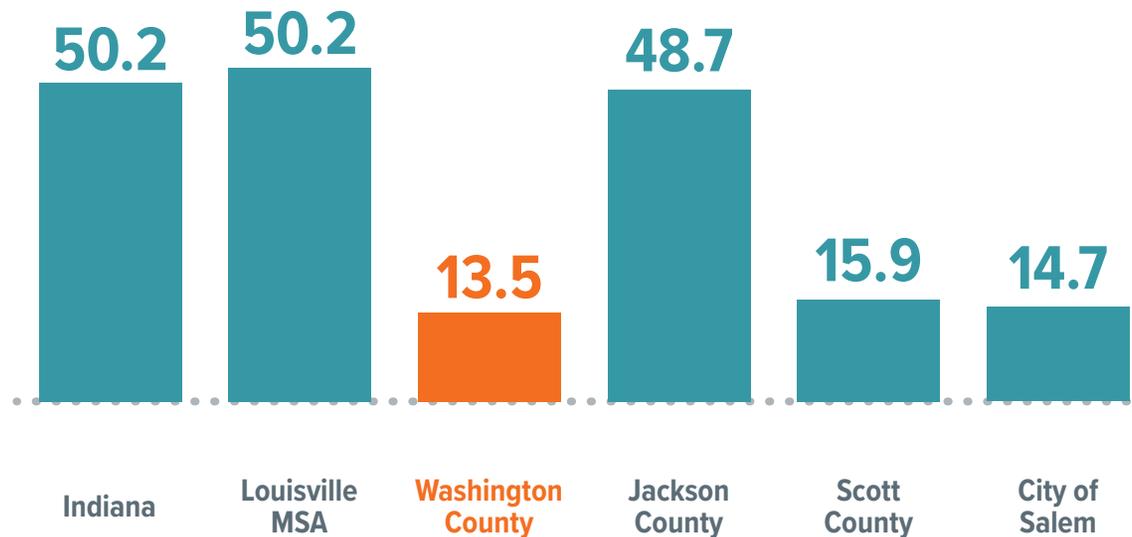
The population of Washington County is predominantly White. In descending order, the racial makeup of the County is 96.5% White, 2.8% two or more races, 0.4% other race, 0.2% Black, 0.1% Asian, 0.01% Indigenous American, and 0% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.



Race and Ethnicity (2022). Source: ESRI, American Community Survey.

## DIVERSITY INDEX

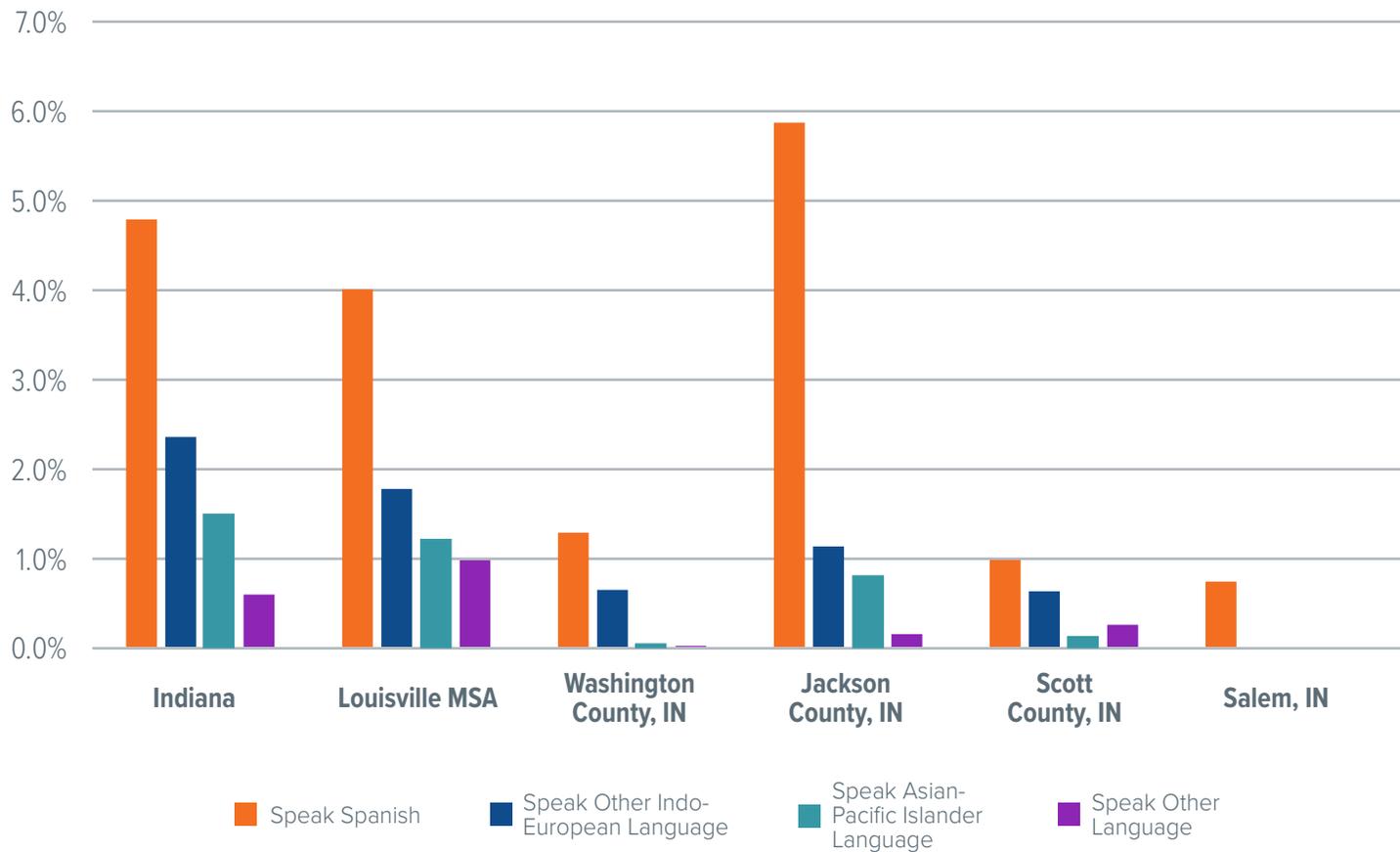
The diversity index is a measure on a 0 to 100 scale that estimates the likelihood that two individuals chosen at random belong to the same race or ethnic group. A higher index score indicates that a community has more diversity. Washington County's diversity index is 13.5, below the Louisville MSA index of 52.



Diversity Index (2024). Source: ESRI.

## LANGUAGE

In Washington County, 98% of residents speak only English, 1.3% of residents speak Spanish, 0.6% speak another Indo-European language, and 0.1% speak an Asian-Pacific Island language. The 2% of residents who do not only speak English may speak English along with Spanish, another Indo-European language, or an Asian-Pacific Island language. Jackson County has the highest percentage of residents who speak Spanish, and the city of Salem has the lowest diversity of language of the comparison communities.



Languages Spoken (2022). Source: ESRI, American Community Survey.





SALEM  
APOTHECARY

PHARMACY

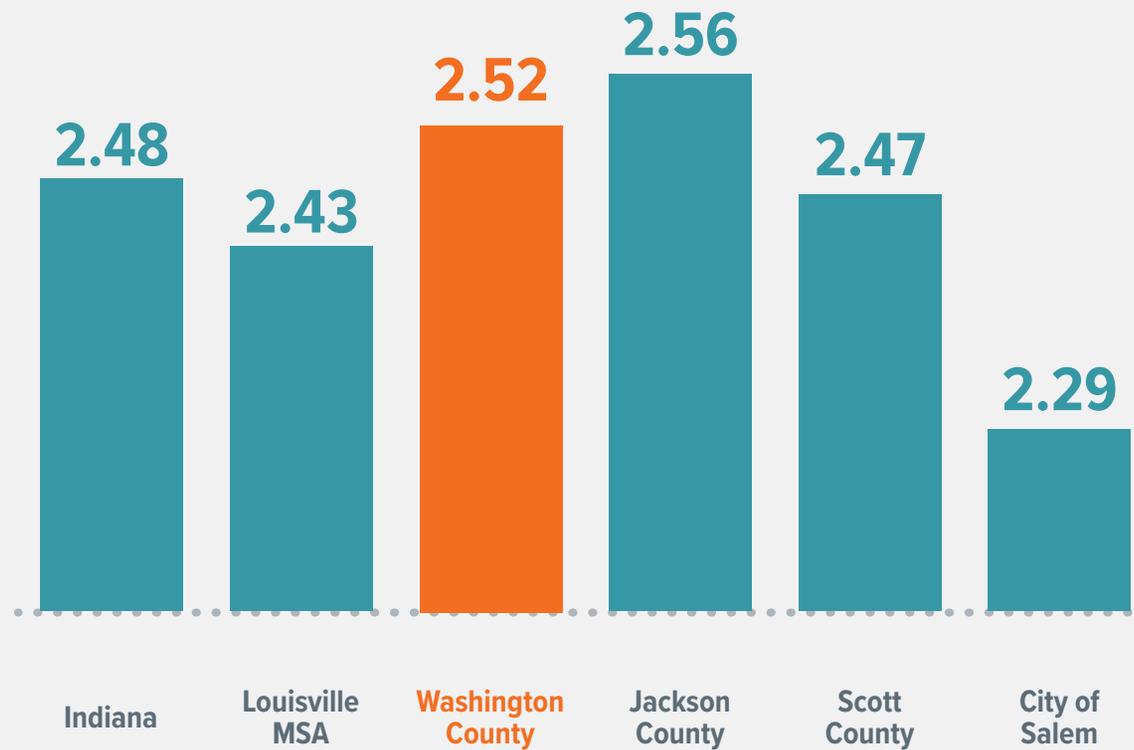
SALEM  
INDIANA

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# HOUSING

## HOUSEHOLDS

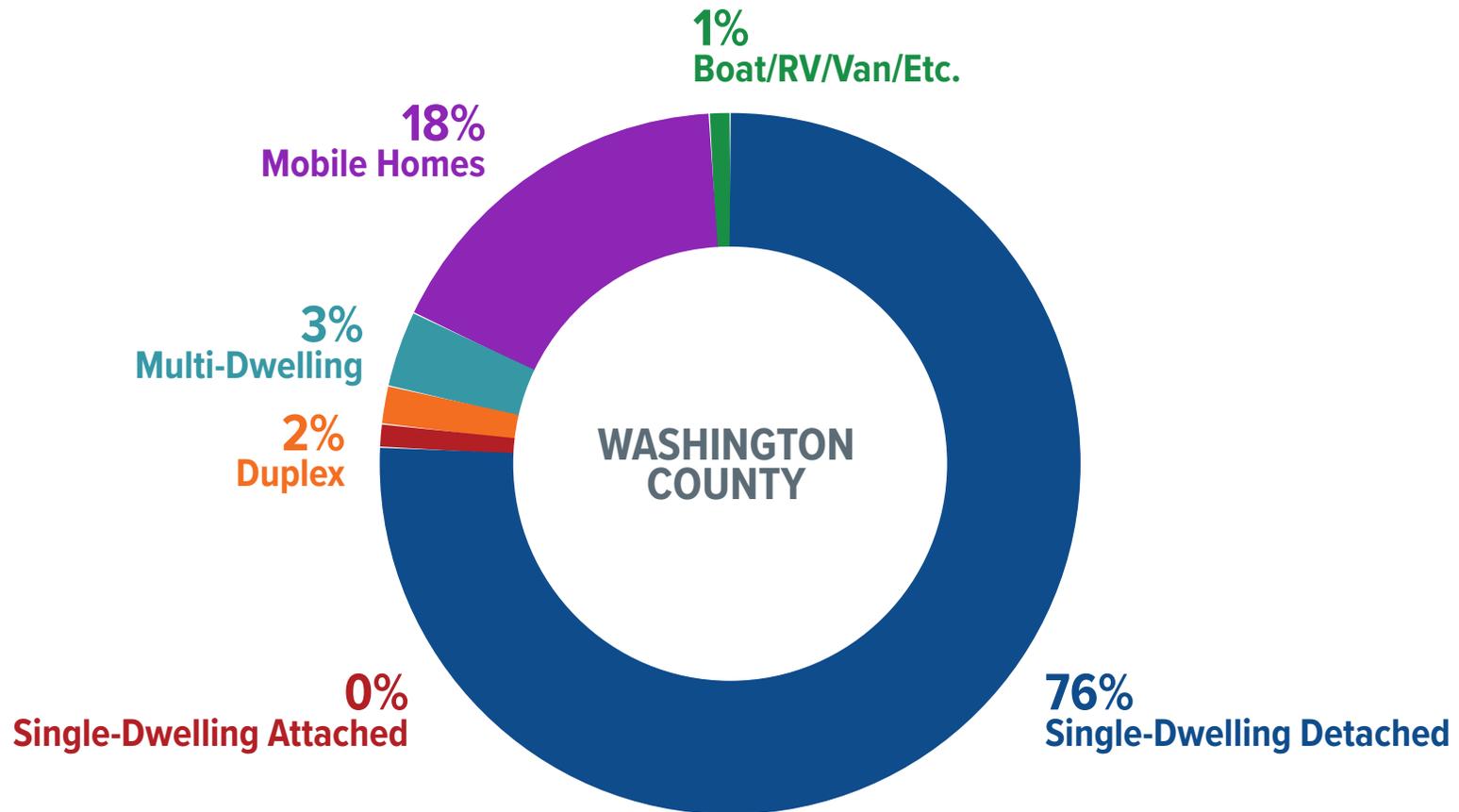
The average household size in Washington County was 2.52 people per household. This average is consistent with the state of Indiana, the nearby counties, and Louisville MSA. The City of Salem has a lower average household size, which may indicate fewer households with children.



Average Household Size (2020). Source: ESRI, US Decennial Census.

## HOUSING TYPE

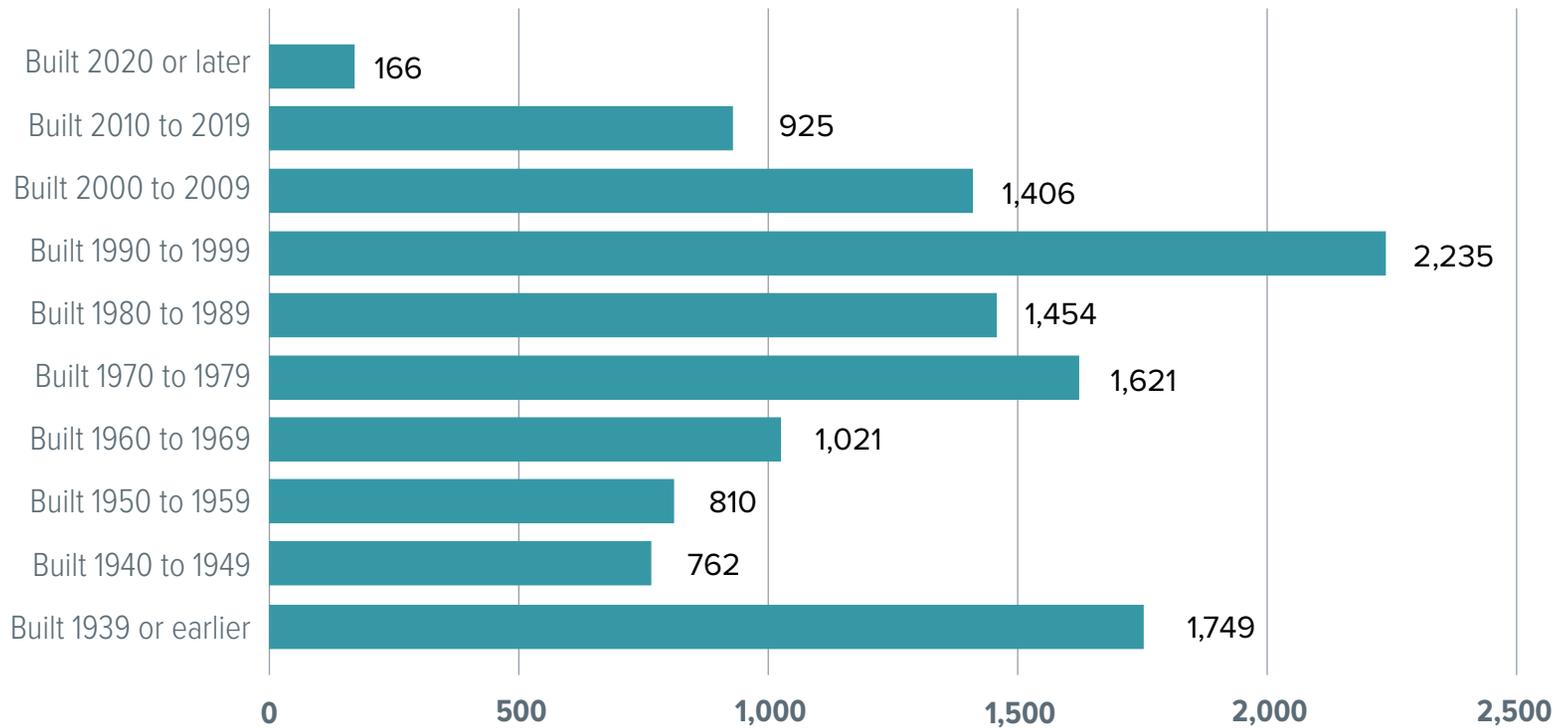
The most common housing type in Washington County is a single-dwelling detached home; 76.0% of homes are this type. There are very few single-dwelling attached units; this housing type would include townhomes. Housing units in multi-dwelling buildings comprise about 3.0% of the housing stock, mobile homes account for 18.0%, and duplexes account for 2.0%.



Housing Type (2022). Source: ESRI, American Community Survey.

## AGE OF HOUSING UNITS

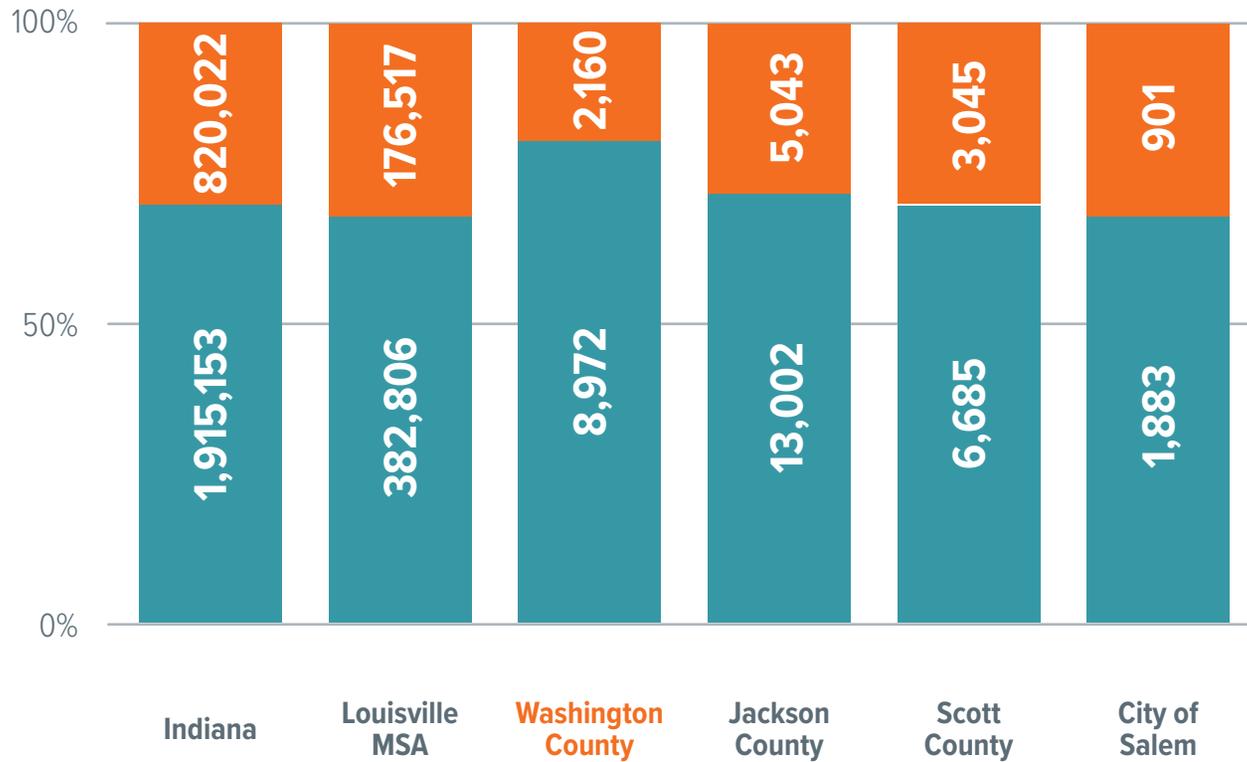
The periods that saw the most housing construction in Washington County were the 1990s, the 1970s, and before the 1940s. The median year of construction for all housing units in the County was 1981. An older housing stock may require more maintenance and create challenges related to home ownership.



Year Housing was Built (2022). Source: ESRI, American Community Survey.

## OCCUPANCY

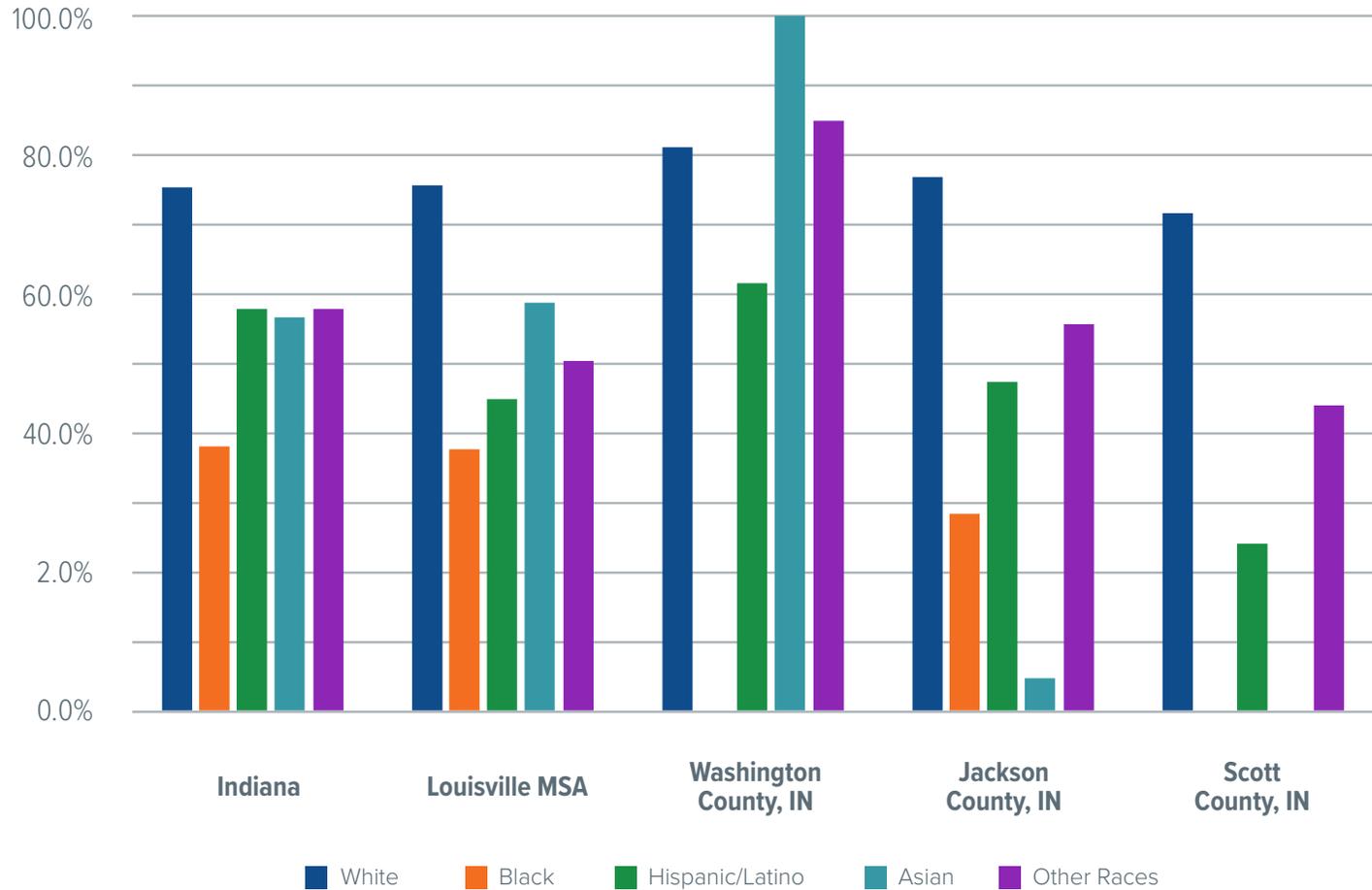
Washington County has a significantly higher homeownership rate than the state and comparison communities. Over 80.0% of homes in Washington County are owner-occupied. Indiana and the comparison communities all have about a 70.0% ownership rate. Homeownership rather than renting creates opportunities for wealth building.



Housing Occupancy (2024). Source: ESRI.

## HOMEOWNERSHIP BY RACE

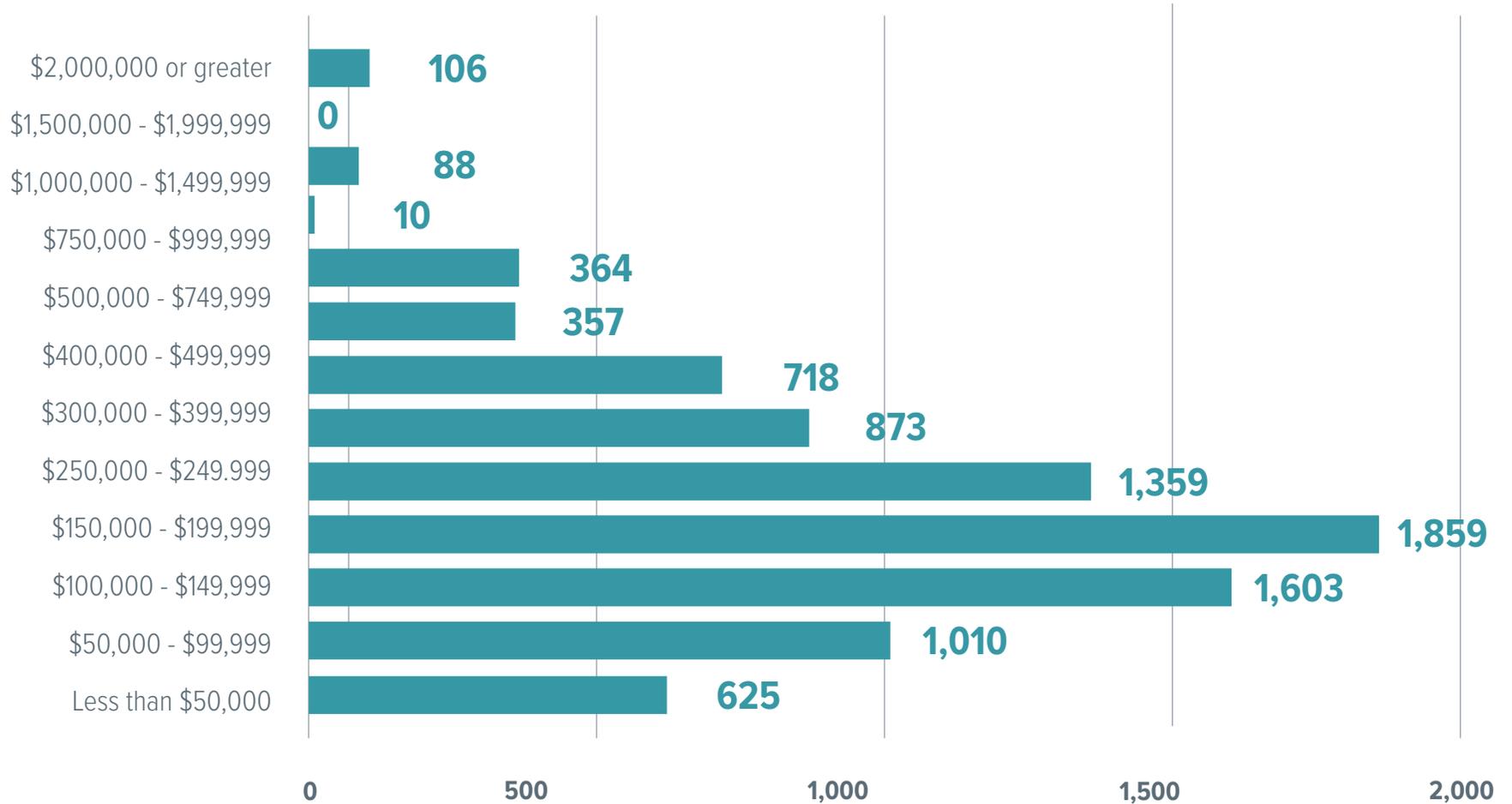
Breaking down homeownership in Washington County by race, 100% of Asian residents, 81% of White residents, 61.5% of Hispanic/Latino residents, and 84.9% of residents of another race are homeowners. There are no Black homeowners in Washington County. The County has the highest homeownership rates for all race categories except Black of the comparison communities.



Housing Occupancy (2024). Source: ESRI.

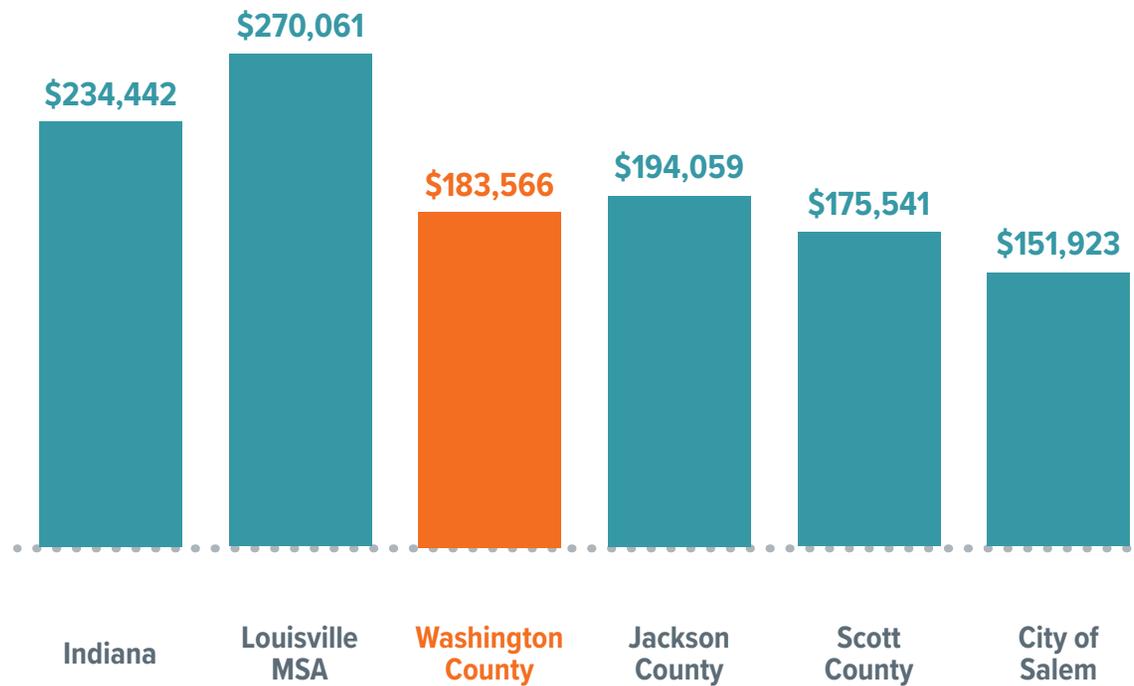
## HOME VALUE

The largest cohorts of homes in Washinton County are valued between \$150,000 and \$199,999. Consistent with that statistic, the median home value for the County was \$183,566. The median home value for the state is \$234,442. The highest median home value was the Louisville MSA at \$270,061, and the lowest of the comparison communities was Salem at \$151,923.



Home Value (2024). Source: ESRI.

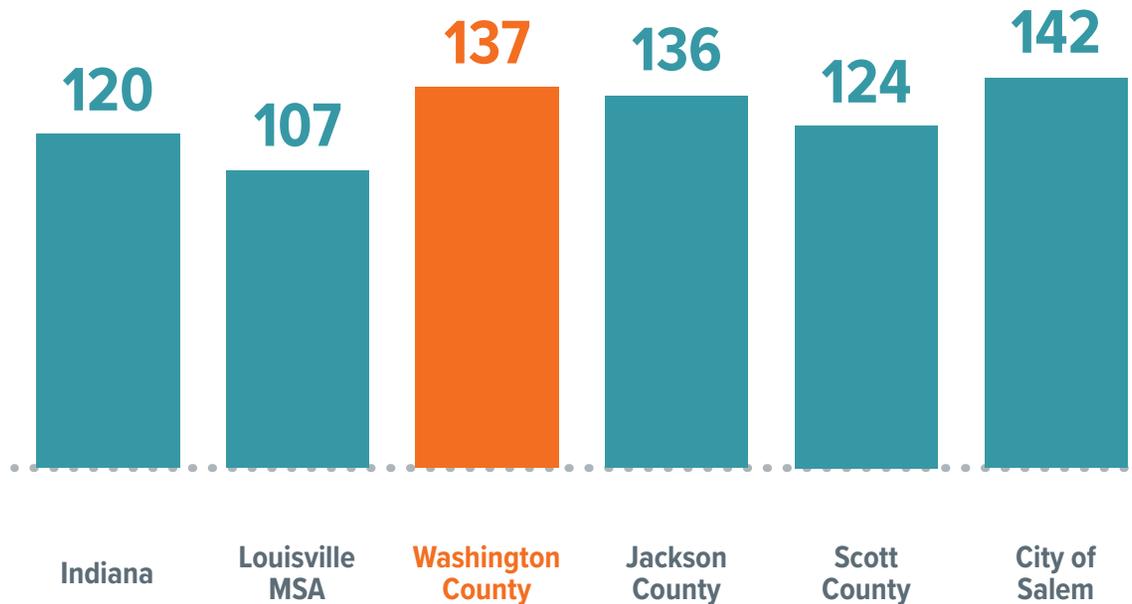
## HOME VALUE (CON'T)



Median Home Value (2024). Source: ESRI.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The housing affordability index is a measure that represents the ability of a typical resident to purchase a home. The index has a base value of 100, representing a person who makes the median income qualifying for a loan on a median-valued home without being cost-burdened. Index values greater than 100 represent more housing affordability, and index values less than 100 may represent communities where someone making the median income could not comfortably purchase a home at the median home value. Washington County and Salem had the highest housing affordability index of the communities studied. The Louisville MSA has the lowest housing affordability index of the communities.



Housing Affordability Index (2024). Source: ESRI.



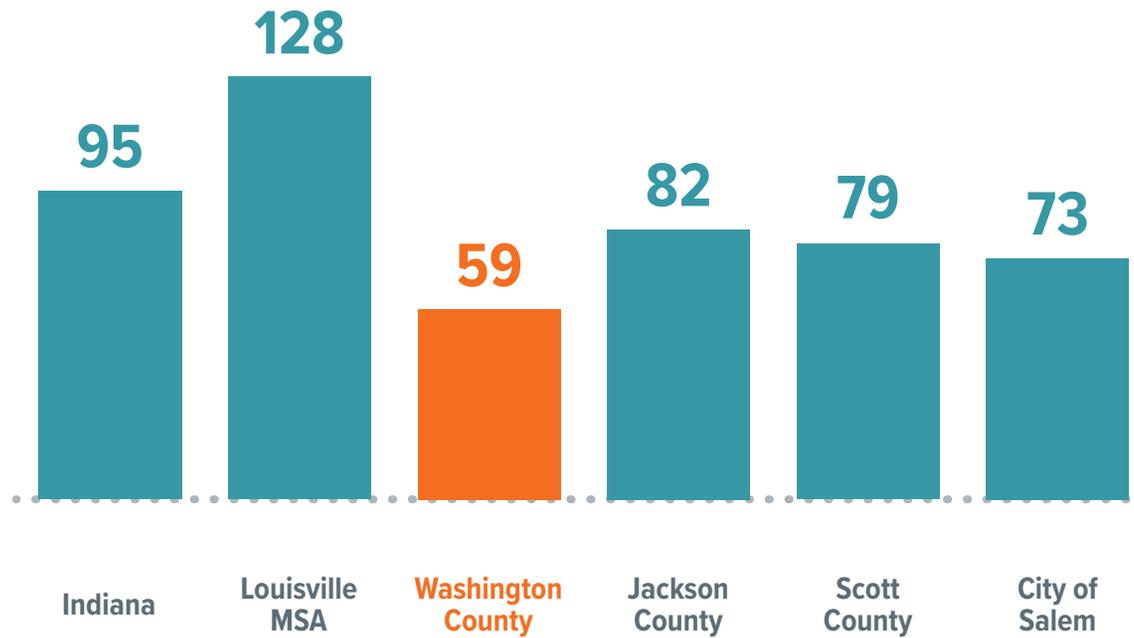


# SAFETY AND CRIME

## CRIME INDEX

The Total Crime Index assesses the relative risk of seven major crime types: murder, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. The United States as a whole nation is given an index value of 100. Communities with an index above 100 have higher-than-average crime rates, and communities below 100 have lower-than-average crime rates. Washington County has a significantly lower Total Crime Index at 59 than the other communities. The Louisville MSA has the highest index value.

## CRIME INDEX (CON'T)



Total Crime Index (2024). Source: ESRI.





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RECOVERY FOR LIVES, HURTS, HABITS AND HANG UPS

# EDUCATION

## WEST WASHINGTON SCHOOL CORPORATION

The West Washington School Corporation comprises West Washington Elementary School and West Washington Jr-Sr High School. The elementary school teaches preschool through 6<sup>th</sup> grade and has an enrollment of 523 students. The high school teaches grades 7 through 12 and has 411 enrolled students. The high school is above the state average in college and career coursework and partners with the Prosser Career Education Center.

## EAST WASHINGTON SCHOOL CORPORATION

The East Washington School Corporation comprises East Washington Elementary School, East Washington Middle School, and Eastern High School. The elementary school teaches preschool through 4<sup>th</sup> grade and has an enrollment of 542 students. The middle school teaches 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade and has an enrollment of 415 students. The high school teaches 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and has an enrollment of 389 students. The high school scores are below the state average in attendance but above the state average in college and career coursework and partners with the Prosser Career Education Center.

## SALEM COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The Salem Community Schools system comprises Bradie Shrum Elementary, Salem Middle School, and Salem High School. The elementary school teaches preschool through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and has 819 students enrolled. The middle school teaches 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade and has 407 students enrolled. The high school teaches 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and has 519 students enrolled. The high school scores are below the state average in attendance but above the state average in college and career coursework and partners with the Prosser Career Education Center.

## IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

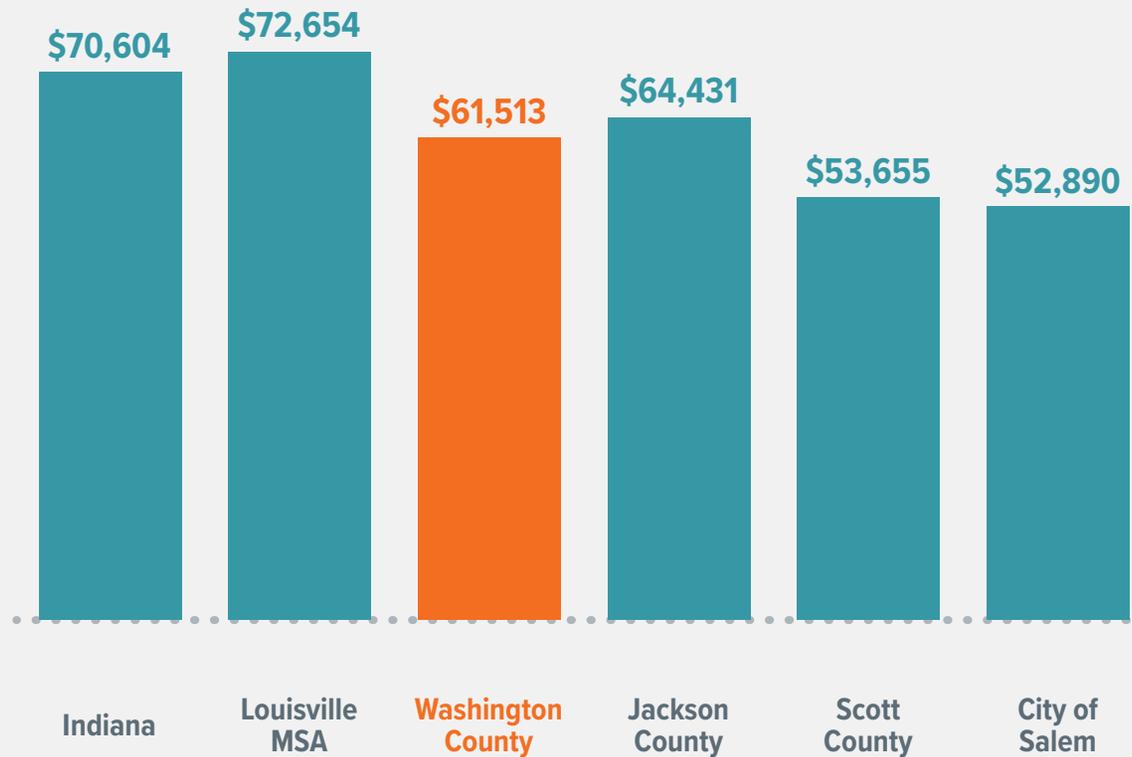
The Ivy Tech Sellersburg Campus has satellite campuses in Scottsburg and Jeffersonville. The Sellersburg Campus had 10,131 students enrolled in the 2020-21 academic year. The campus serves Clark, Crawford, Floyd, Harrison, Scott, and Washington Counties. There are 39 academic programs offered with 140 faculty members and 119 staff.



# INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

## INCOME

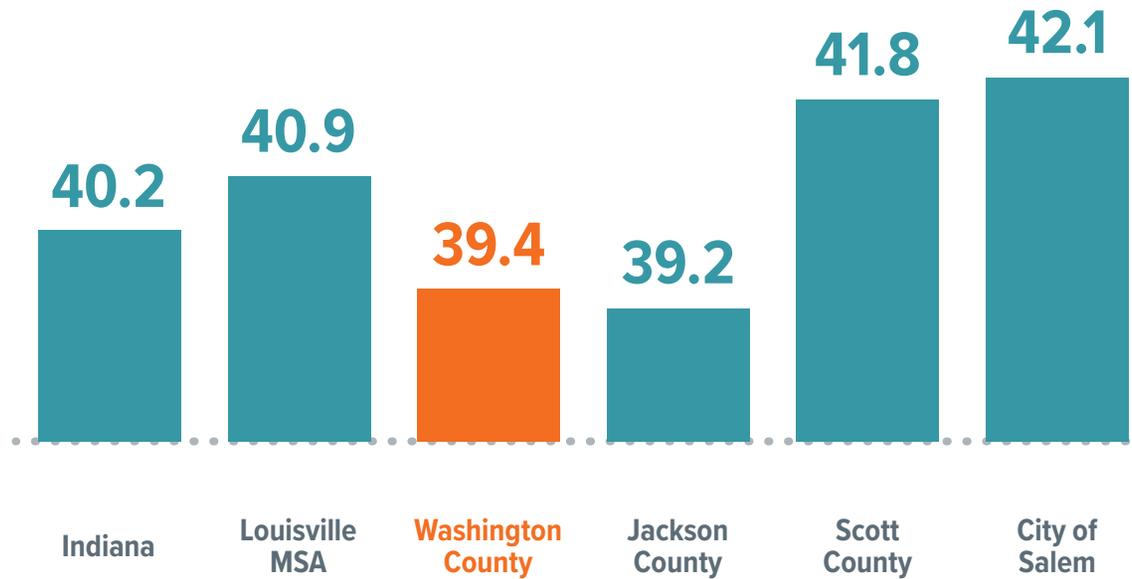
Washington County's median household income is \$61,513 annually, while the Louisville MSA's is \$72,654. Washington County has a higher median household income than the city of Salem, indicating that, on average, people who live in the County make a higher income. Incomes within the County seem to be on par with those of the other comparison communities.



Median Household Income (2024). Source: ESRI.

## THE GINI INDEX

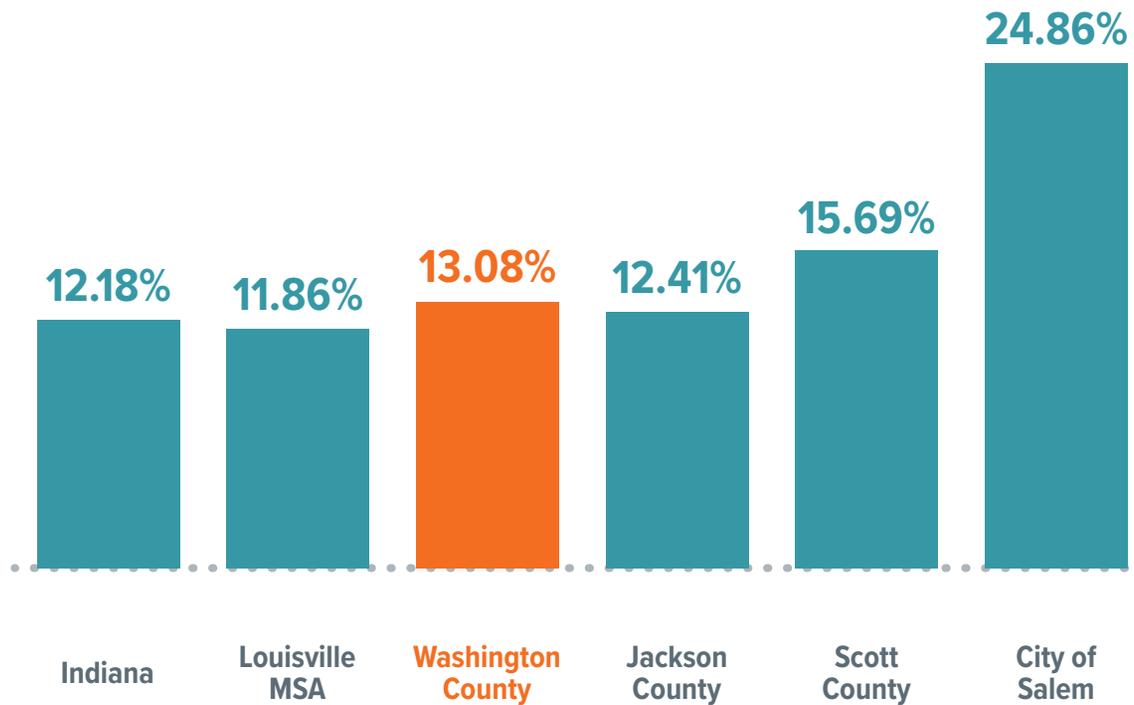
The Gini Index measures household income inequality, quantifying the dispersion of household income or the deviation from perfect equality. The index ranges from 0 to 100, with 0 representing total income equality. Washington and Jackson Counties have lower index values than the other communities. Salem had the highest index value, indicating more income inequality.



Gini Index (2024). Source: ESRI.

## POVERTY

About 13.1% of households in Washington County earn an income below the poverty level. That is consistent with the proportion of households experiencing poverty in the state and the surrounding counties. The city of Salem has a significantly higher proportion of households that experience poverty, over double that of the state of Indiana.

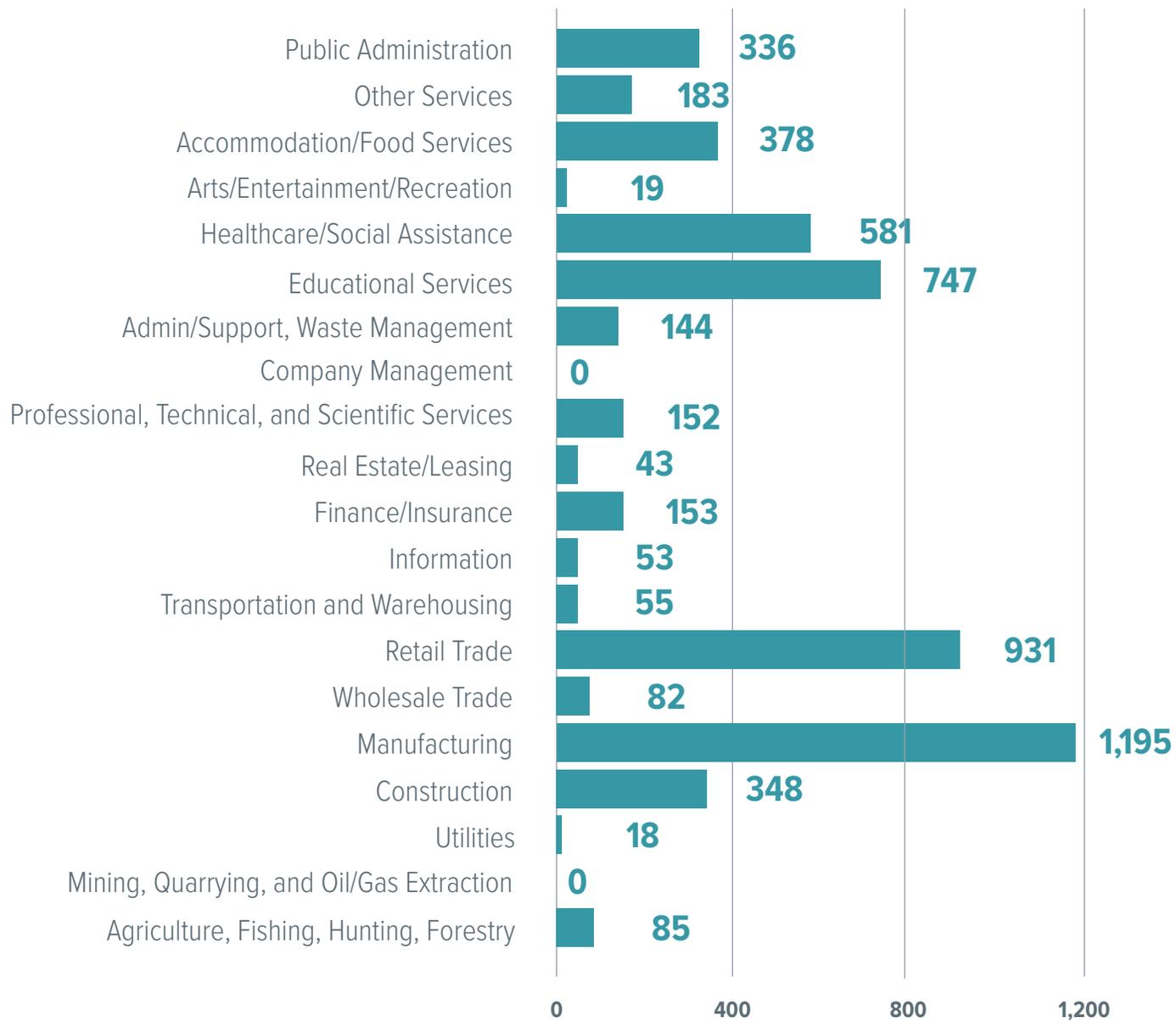


Rate of Households with Income Below the Poverty Level (2022). Source: ESRI, American Community Survey.

## EMPLOYMENT

The highest-employing industries in Washington County were manufacturing, which accounted for 21.7% of all jobs, retail trade, 16.9%, and educational services, 13.6%. Some of the major employers in the County include:

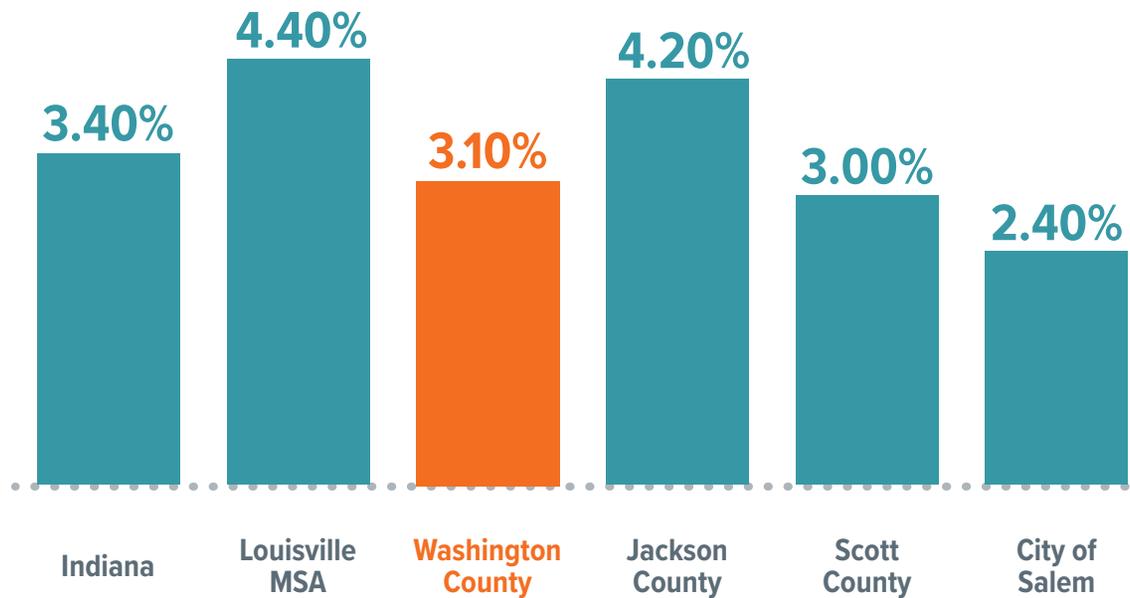
- **Kimball Office:** Located in Salem, they specialize in office furniture manufacturing and employ around 375 people
- **GKN Sinter Metals:** Manufacturing powdered metal products, the company employs about 360 people
- **Walmart:** The Salem Walmart provides retail goods and employs around 340 people
- **Peerless Gear:** Located in Salem, manufactures industrial gears and employs around 50 people
- **Ascension St. Vincent Salem Hospital:** The regional healthcare provider employs many health professionals



Jobs in Washington County (2021). Source: US Census OnTheMap.

## UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate represents the percentage of people in the labor force who are unemployed and actively looking for work. The unemployment rate in Washington County was 3.1%, lower than the state at 3.4%. The comparison community with the highest unemployment was the Louisville MSA at 4.4%.



Unemployment Rate (2024). Source: ESRI.

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

### Prosser Career Education Center

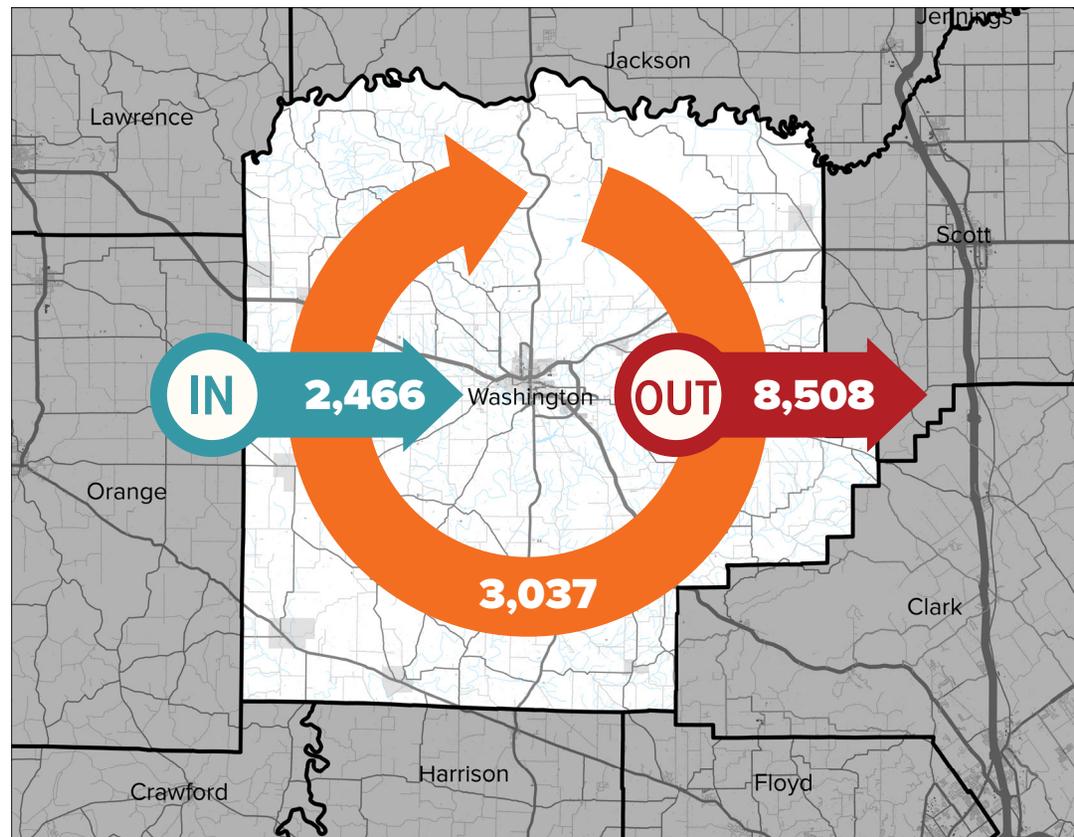
The Prosser Career Education Center is located in New Albany, Indiana. It is part of the New Albany Floyd County Schools system. The school offers 26 career and technical programs and 46 state licenses or national certifications. The East Washington School Corporation and Salem Community Schools send students from their high school to Prosser for vocational training opportunities. Vocational programs at Prosser are competitive, and Washington County can usually only send a handful of students each year.

### Ivy Tech Community College

The Ivy Tech Sellersburg Campus has satellite campuses in Scottsburg and Jeffersonville. The vocational skills programs offered at the Sellersburg Campus include automotive technology, dental assistance, healthcare specialties, HVAC, industrial technology, manufacturing production and operations, medical assistance, medical lab technology, nursing, paramedic service, patient care, and physical therapy assistance.

## COMMUTER BEHAVIOR

Each weekday for work, it is observed that about 2,466 people who do not live in Washington County drive into the County, and 8,508 people who live in the County leave. There are 3,037 who live in the County and do not leave for work. Of those who live in the County, 26.3% stay in the County for work. The 73.7% who leave the County are primarily going to New Albany, Jeffersonville, Indianapolis, and Louisville. Of all people who are employed in the County, 55.2% live in the County. The 44.8% who are coming to work from outside the County are primarily coming from Jeffersonville, New Albany, and Indianapolis.



Commuter Behavior In and Out of Washington County. Source: US Census OnTheMap.



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# ECONOMIC AND MARKET ANALYSIS

## TARGET INDUSTRIES

Due to the County's location relative to I-64, I-64, the Louisville Airport, and the Indianapolis Airport, the Washington County Economic Growth Partnership (WCEGP) identifies the County's growth industries as:

- **Advanced Manufacturing**
  - **Metals:** automotive parts, drivetrain units, metal processing, and products, and fabricated metals
  - **Plastics:** flexible, rigid, and dual durometer PVC and TPE NSF
  - **Lumber, Hardwoods, and Wood Production:** office furniture, fresh-swan hardwood lumber, custom cabinetry
  
- **Healthcare and Medical Services**

## LOCATION QUOTIENT

The location quotient analysis examines how the concentration of industries in Washinton County compares to the State of Indiana and the United States. This analysis helps determine if the current mix of companies and jobs aligns with the target industries. This comparison also helps identify potential industry clusters to help with recruitment efforts.

Location quotient ratios indicate a higher concentration of an employment industry within a given economy in Washington County in a larger economy, such as the US. If a local industry's ratio is 1.0 or higher, this local economic sector has a competitive advantage related to these types of businesses. Also, high location quotients can indicate that a local economy has a large workforce trained in these industries, which can be used to attract industry clusters and complementary businesses:

The LQ analysis indicated high concentrations of employment when comparing Washington County to the State of Indiana and the US in the following categories:

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting
- Manufacturing
- Retail Trade
- Public Administration

The other industries were near or below 1.0, showing that Washinton County does not have a high concentration of regional strength in these other industries.

<b>NAICS Category</b>	<b>Washington County to Indiana</b>	<b>Washington County to US</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1.90	1.12
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	1.53	0.73
Utilities	0.59	0.51
Construction	0.82	0.78
Manufacturing	1.61	3.24
Wholesale trade	0.41	0.43
Retail trade	1.36	1.29
Transportation and warehousing	0.25	0.31
Information	1.79	0.91
Finance and insurance	0.75	0.58
Real estate and rental and leasing	0.56	0.43
Professional, scientific, and technical services	0.38	0.25
Management of companies and enterprises	0.13	0.09
Administration & support, waste management, and remediation	0.25	0.24
Educational services	1.01	0.92
Health care and social assistance	0.83	0.78
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	0.36	0.29
Accommodation and food services	0.80	0.80
Other services (excluding public administration)	0.94	0.92
Public administration	2.76	2.19

Source: US Census, NAICS.

## SHIFT-SHARE ANALYSIS

Shift-share analysis compares a local economy's growth over a specified timeframe to a larger economy, such as the United States, change over the same period. This type of analysis is typically broken down into these calculations:



**National Growth for Industry:** The national growth for the industry calculation shows the number of local jobs a business category is expected to gain or lose based on the same category's national performance. In short, it describes how many local jobs were created or lost because of that industry's rise or decline nationally.

**Competitive Share:** A positive competitive share value indicates that a particular industry is growing faster locally than the national economy and may suggest that the local economy has an industry-specific competitive advantage. Negative competitive share values suggest that local industry is losing jobs faster than the national economy.



**Industrial Shift:** This measurement provides insight into whether an industry is growing or shrinking nationwide. An industry with a negative industrial shift is declining. It may help a local economy identify if they are reliant on a shrinking sector or where not to focus recruiting efforts.

**Absolute Change:** The absolute change number shows the pure increase or decrease in jobs between the two timeframes.



The core of a shift-share analysis is to understand which industries in your local community are “performing” better than those same industries across the country. “Better” can be defined as your community's growth in total jobs compared to the industry's average nationally. Competitive share calculation is very valuable in determining those industry categories.

NAICS Category	National Growth	Industrial Shift	Competitive Share	Absolute Change
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	8	-4	24	27
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	2	-7	-10	-15
Utilities	2	-2	-1	-1
Construction	32	54	-1	85
Manufacturing	217	-104	-357	-245
Wholesale trade	13	-8	-6	-1
Retail trade	107	-76	356	387
Transportation and warehousing	11	25	-27	9
Information	15	-1	-72	-58
Finance and insurance	19	-2	-15	3
Real estate and rental and leasing	5	2	-6	1
Professional, scientific, and technical services	14	19	1	34
Management of companies and enterprises	1	1	-11	-8
Administration & support, waste management, and remediation	12	5	125	141
Educational services	61	-43	252	269
Health care and social assistance	92	38	-180	-50
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	4	-1	-14	-11
Accommodation and food services	53	1	52	106
Other services (excluding public administration)	21	-26	4	-1

Source: US Census, NAICS.

The shift-share analysis examined Washington County's job growth from 2012 to 2022. This analysis revealed that changes in the following industries represented local strengths that outperformed these industries at the national level.

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting
- Retail trade
- Administration & support, waste management, and remediation
- Educational services
- Accommodation and food services

With a competitive share of 356, the retail trade industry was the industry that showed the most growth compared to the national economy. The other identified industries did not have competitive share numbers that were as high, but all indicated job growth. Those sectors should be examined to determine if there are strategic benefits in Washington County that can be marketed to attract more of those industries if determined to be desirable.

## RETAIL GAP ANALYSIS

A retail gap analysis was conducted for the County. The map below illustrates the three trade areas calculated via drive times from the center of the town. A retail gap analysis demonstrates current sales and revenue generated locally and how much money “should” be spent based on the local population's disposable income.

**A retail gap analysis helps to:**

- Uncover unmet demand and possible opportunities.
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of the local market area; and,
- Measure the difference between actual and potential retail sales.

**“Leakage” and “surplus” are the two categories used in a retail gap analysis.**

- **Leakage** in a local market means that people living in a trade area are spending money outside of that trade area. That indicates that additional disposable income could be captured in the trade area but is being lost or “leaking” to competing shopping districts.
- A **surplus** in a local market means more money is being invested in developing local businesses and specialty niches than the trade area's population “should be” spending. A surplus can have multiple meanings:
  - A saturation of the number of businesses that exist in the trade area without enough disposable income to support them all;
  - The trade area is increasing in various retail businesses and services from additional shoppers beyond the residents' spending power.

## TRADE AREAS

The 10-, 20-, and 30-minute drive times from the County Courthouse were chosen for this retail gap analysis.

- **10-Minute Drive Time:** This trade area covers the City of Salem, the Town of Canton, and the immediately surrounding areas.
- **20-Minute Drive Time:** This trade area covers Little York, New Pekin, Livonia, Campbellsburg, Saltillo, and the surrounding areas.
- **30-Minute Drive Time:** This trade area covers Martinsburg, Fredericksburg, Hardinsburg, Scottsburg, Borden, Palmyra, Greenville, Brownstown, and the majority of the rest of the County.

### 10-Minute Drive Time Trade Area

The retail categories within the ten-minute drive time trade area that have the highest leakage are:

- Electronic shopping and mail-order houses
- Non-store retailers
- Clothing and clothing accessories stores
- Food and beverage stores
- Electronics and appliance stores

This information signals that the ten-minute drive time retail trade area has a significantly higher demand for these services than what is currently being satisfied within the trade area. People travel more than ten minutes to purchase from these retailers.

The category for total retail trade shows the surplus trade area. The overall surplus is due to the high surplus in motor vehicle and parts dealers and general merchandise stores. Washington County exceeds the nearby demand for motor vehicle and parts dealers and general merchandise stores.

## 20-Minute Drive Time Trade Area

The retail categories within the 20-minute drive time trade area that have the highest leakage are:

- Electronic shopping and mail-order houses
- Non-store retailers
- Food services and drinking places
- Restaurants and other eating places
- Food and beverage stores

This expansion of the trade area shows that while the restaurants and drinking places within the 10-minute drive time were enough to satisfy the demand of those living in the 10-minute drive time trade area when expanded to include more of the County, there are not enough additional restaurants farther from Salem to meet the extra demand.

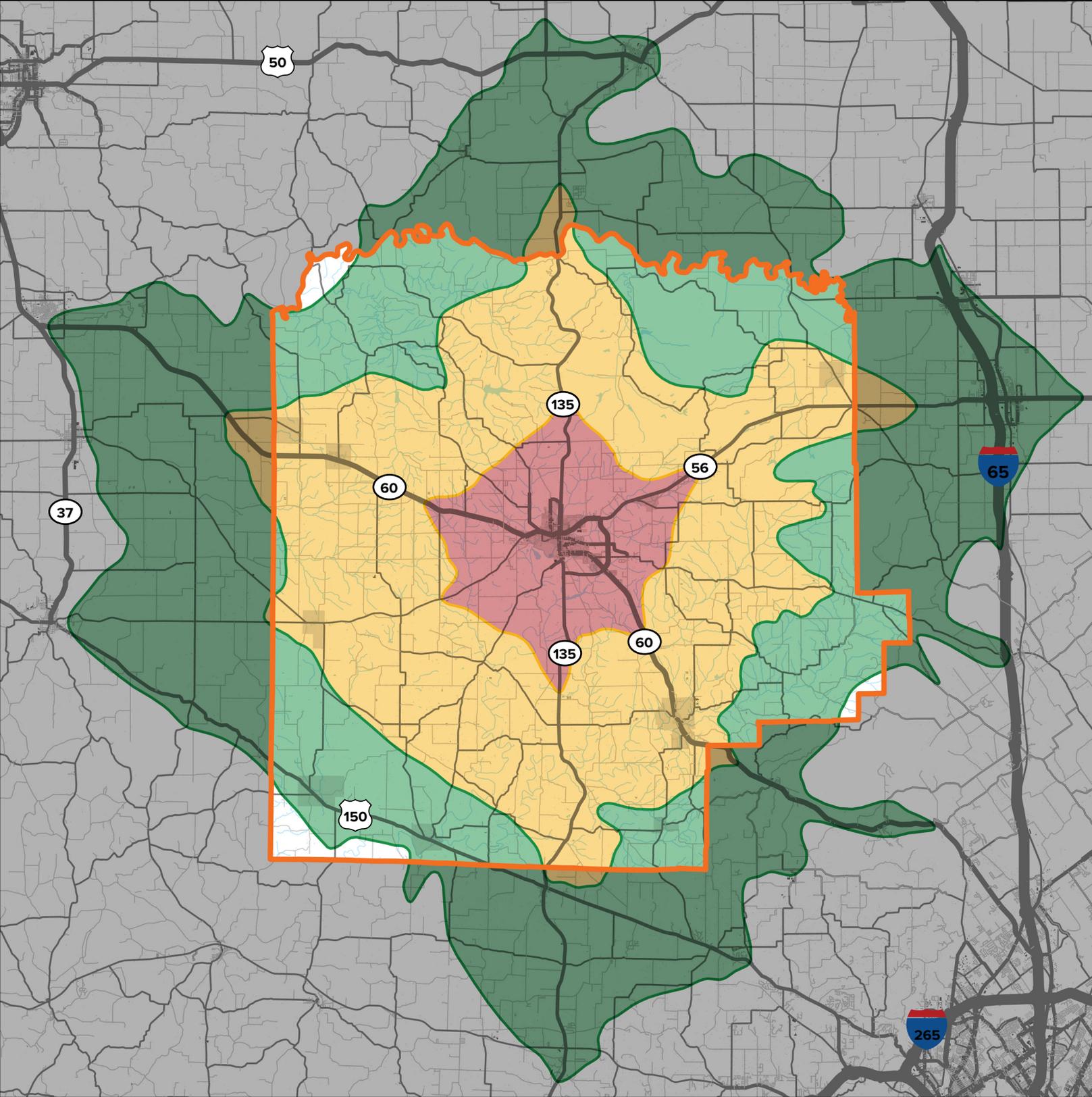
With the expansion from the 10-minute drive time trade area, the category for total retail trade is now a leakage. Categories previously surplus are now leakage, including furniture and home furnishing stores, health and personal care stores, food services and drinking places, restaurants and other eating places, and full-service restaurants.

## 30-Minute Drive Time Trade Area

The retail categories within the 30-minute drive time trade area that have the highest leakage are:

- Total retail trade, including food and drink
- Electronic shopping and mail-order houses
- Non-store retailers
- Food and beverage stores
- Food services and drinking places

Now, when including the population of the whole County, the largest category for leakage is total retail trade, including food and drink. This leakage is likely because the largest incorporated place within the 30-minute drive time trade area is Salem and, therefore, will have the most retail options. That said, the retail options provided in Salem are not enough to support the entire County's demand because it is a smaller city.



### Legend

- Washington County Boundary
- 10 Minutes
- 20 Minutes
- 30 Minutes



# Washington County Retail Gap Trade Areas Map

Retail Category	10-Minute Drive Trade Area	20-Minute Drive Trade Area	30-Minute Drive Trade Area
<b>Total retail trade including food and drink</b>	-79,699,781	6,637,869	128,374,327
<b>Motor vehicle and parts dealers</b>	-75,258,541	-61,697,292	-50,982,358
<b>Furniture and home furnishings stores</b>	-801,207	1,558,412	4,591,863
<b>Electronics and appliance stores</b>	2,388,942	4,468,984	8,458,891
<b>Building materials and garden equipment and supplies dealers</b>	-371,731	2,201,727	6,711,521
<b>Food and beverage stores</b>	3,666,849	10,724,063	47,233,760
<b>Health and personal care stores</b>	-1,503,056	1,969,184	-6,912,978
<b>Gasoline stations</b>	2,384,579	8,400,188	-11,581,349
<b>Clothing and clothing accessories stores</b>	4,262,562	9,924,297	24,639,592
<b>Sporting goods, hobby, musical instruments, and bookstores</b>	779,049	2,692,786	6,691,028
<b>General merchandise stores</b>	-30,442,493	-26,115,858	-17,671,604
<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b>	-7,633,869	-7,157,776	-9,205,793
<b>Non-store retailers</b>	24,021,855	46,405,929	89,629,590
<b>Electronic shopping and mail-order houses</b>	26,769,937	48,689,759	90,064,503
<b>Food services and drinking places (alcoholic beverages)</b>	-1,192,720	13,263,225	36,772,166
<b>Special food services</b>	-366,070	-305,754	3,919,385
<b>Drinking places (alcoholic beverages)</b>	110,159	-230,506	1,344,009
<b>Restaurants and other eating places</b>	-936,809	12,605,814	31,508,772
<b>Full-service restaurants</b>	-2,356,773	4,259,183	17,024,584
<b>Limited-service restaurants</b>	1,249,129	7,067,404	11,000,553
<b>Cafeterias, grill buffets, and buffets</b>	-927,814	-799,158	-1,002,544
<b>Snack and non-alcoholic beverage bars</b>	1,098,649	2,078,385	4,486,179

Source: Claritas, LLC.

## BUILDING PERMITS

Building permits are government approvals to construct a new building or expand or remodel an existing building. They are required before construction begins to ensure that any new construction follows regulations, including building standards, land use, and environmental protection.

Permit Type	Number of Permits 2022-present
Frame Permit	74
Frame Waiver Permit	66
Manufactured/Modular Permit	114
Approved Variances	4
Plats	0
Confined Feeding Operations (CAFOs)	1
Manure/Compost Building	3

Source: Washington County, Indiana.

## RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

The majority of residential growth permitted since 2022 has been modular or manufactured homes. In many cases, manufactured homes are single-detached dwelling units built in a factory and then transported to a location to be installed on a foundation. Manufactured homes can be a more affordable alternative to homeownership than traditional single-detached dwelling homes. No plats were recorded with the County, and additionally, there are a number of approved subdivisions where construction has not occurred for several years.

## COMMERCIAL GROWTH

The majority of commercial permits are for agricultural purposes. Confined feeding operations (CAFOs) are large-scale agricultural facilities that confine animals in small areas to raise them for meat, eggs, and milk. These land uses are preferred to be far away from adjacent uses because they can create nuisances.



# RECREATION AND TOURISM

## SALEM SPEEDWAY

The Salem Speedway is a 0.555-mile oval track with 33-degree banks located west of Salem in Washington County. It hosts several races from April to November during its season but holds events year-round. The track has an audience capacity of 6,000 and runs the ARCA and USAC racing series.

According to Claritas cell phone data, the speedway receives about 442,500 visits yearly. The most popular times to visit are September and August. The busiest day of the week is Saturday, followed by Sunday, and the most common time to visit is from 3 PM to 6 PM.

## CORNUCOPIA FARM

The Cornucopia Farm is a family-friendly attraction located northeast of Salem along SR 56. It offers activities such as corn and soybean mazes, pumpkin picking, hayrides, candle making, and a petting zoo. The farm welcomes visitors in September and October for fall festivities. A restaurant operates on-site, and visitors can purchase farm goods at the farm market.

The Claritas cell phone data states that Cornucopia Farm receives about 83,100 visits yearly. The most popular months to visit are September, August, and October. Sunday is the busiest day of the week, followed by Saturday, and the most common time to visit is from 3 PM to 6 PM.

## LM SUGAR BUSH

LM Sugar Bush is a 140-acre farm west of Salem that produces maple syrup and hosts a yearly maple syrup festival. The festival is held annually on the last weekend of February and the first weekend of March. It features several food vendors, maple syrup production tours, live music, and interactive activities for children. LM Sugar Bush is also a destination for school field trips where students can learn how maple syrup is made.

The cell phone data from Claritas shows that the farm receives about 3,800 visits each year. The most popular months to visit are February, April, and March, which align with the festival dates. Sunday is the busiest day to visit LM Sugar Bush, and the most common time to visit is 12 PM to 3 PM.

## BECK'S MILL

Beck's Mill is a grist mill that was first operational in 1808. The Mill is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Beck's Mill operated from 1808 to around the 1950s, when it sat idle for about 50 years. The Mill became operational again in 2006 and is open to the public for a \$5.00 admission fee.

Claritas data states that the Mill receives around 80,300 visitors yearly. The most popular months to visit are September, October, and August. Sunday, followed by Saturday, are the busiest days of the week for Beck's Mill, and weekday visits are consistent between the days. The most common time to visit is from 3 PM to 9 PM.

## DEAM LAKE

Deam Lake is a state recreation area overseen by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. The lake offers activities such as fishing, boating, swimming, camping, picnicking, hiking, and hunting. The lake is human-made and spans 194 acres. Cabins are available for rent, and there is an equestrian campground.

The Claritas cell phone data shows that Deam Lake receives around 114,000 visitors annually. May and March are the most popular months to visit. Saturday is by far the busiest day of the week, followed by Sunday; weekdays are not as popular. Most visits occur between 9 AM and 3 PM.

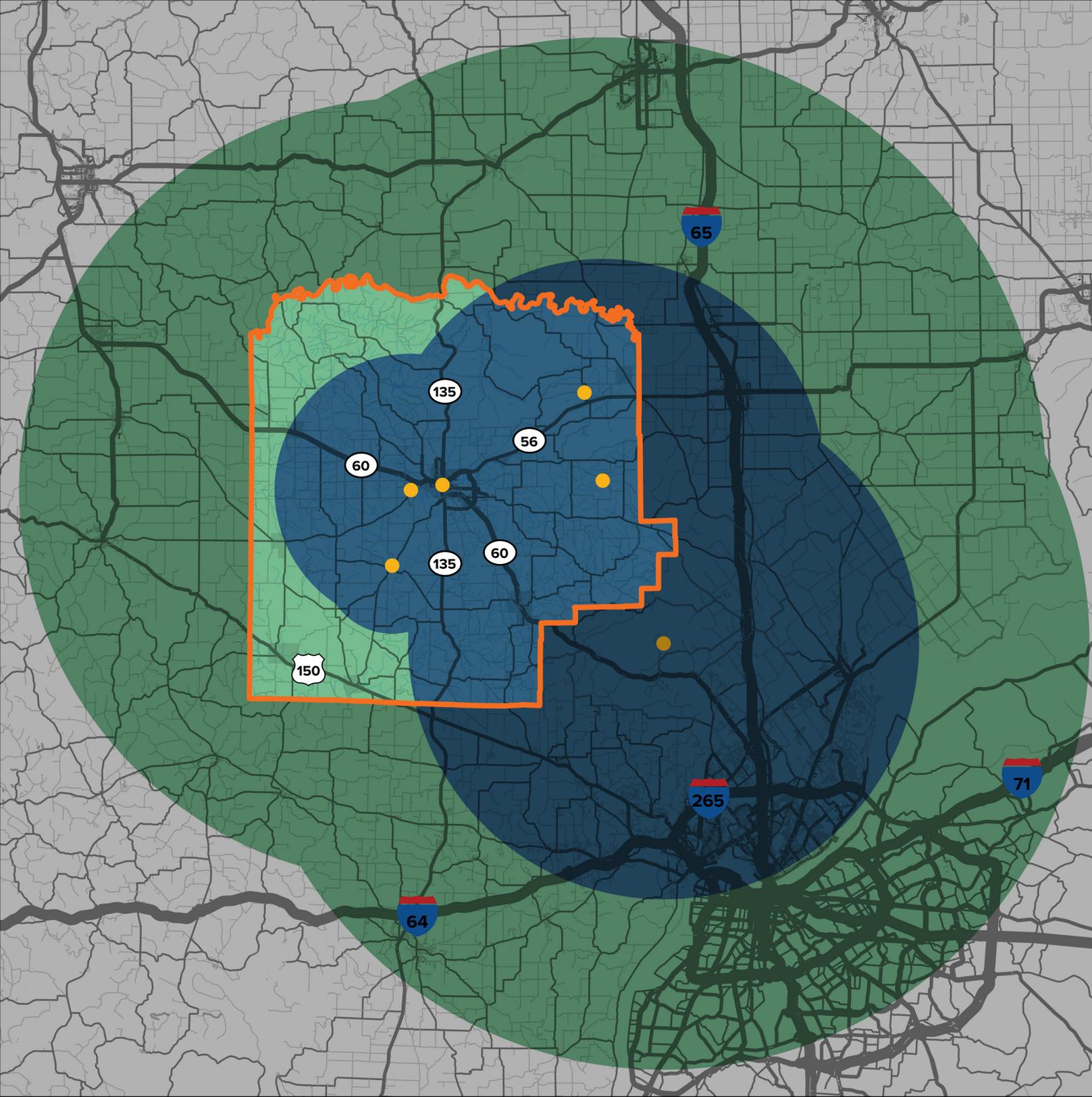
## DOWNTOWN SALEM

The Salem Downtown Historic District is a national historic district at the center of Washington County. Several buildings within the downtown area are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Hay-Morrison House, Washinton County Courthouse, Washington County Jail and Sherrif's Residence, and the First Baptist Church. The Downtown square is also home to several local restaurants and businesses.

The cell phone data from Claritas recorded 2.4 million visits in one year, an average of about 215,700 visits per month. September, August, and October see the most visitors throughout the year. Saturday, followed by Friday, are the two busiest days downtown. The most popular time of day to visit is 9 AM to 3 PM.

Location	35% of Visitors	70% of Visitors
Salem Speedway	8 miles	23 miles
Cornucopia Farm	5 miles	14 miles
LM Sugarbush	13 miles	26 miles
Beck's Mill	4 miles	8 miles
Deam Lake	15 miles	25 miles
Downtown Salem	4 miles	15 miles

Source: Claritas, LLC.



- Legend**
- Washington County Boundary
  - Cell Phone Data Locations
  - 35% of Visitors
  - 70% of Visitors



# Washington County Cell Phone Data Map

## ADDITIONAL OUTDOOR RECREATION

### DELANEY CREEK PARK

Delaney Creek Park is the only park property owned by Washington County. The park is located northeast of Salem. The park offers opportunities for modern and primitive camping, picnicking, hiking, and cast-line fishing. The park is home to a Knobstone Trail trailhead. The beach and picnic area are available for visitors to use.

### LAKE SALINDA

Lake Salinda is an 88-acre surface lake owned by the city of Salem. The lake has boat launches as well as walking/running paths. Shelters at Lake Salinda can be rented at no cost, and restrooms and grills are available.

### ELK CREEK LAKE

Between Salem and Scottsburg, Elk Creek Lake is a 48-acre lake with a trailhead along the Knobstone Trail.

### KNOBSTONE TRAIL

The Knobstone Trail is the longest hiking trail in Indiana, traversing 58 miles. The northmost point of the trail is Delaney Park, and the southmost point is Deam Lake. The trail passes through the Jackson-Washington State Forest, the Elk Creek Fish and Wildlife Area, and the Clark State Forest.

## ADDITIONAL HISTORIC/HERITAGE SITES

### JOHN HAY CENTER

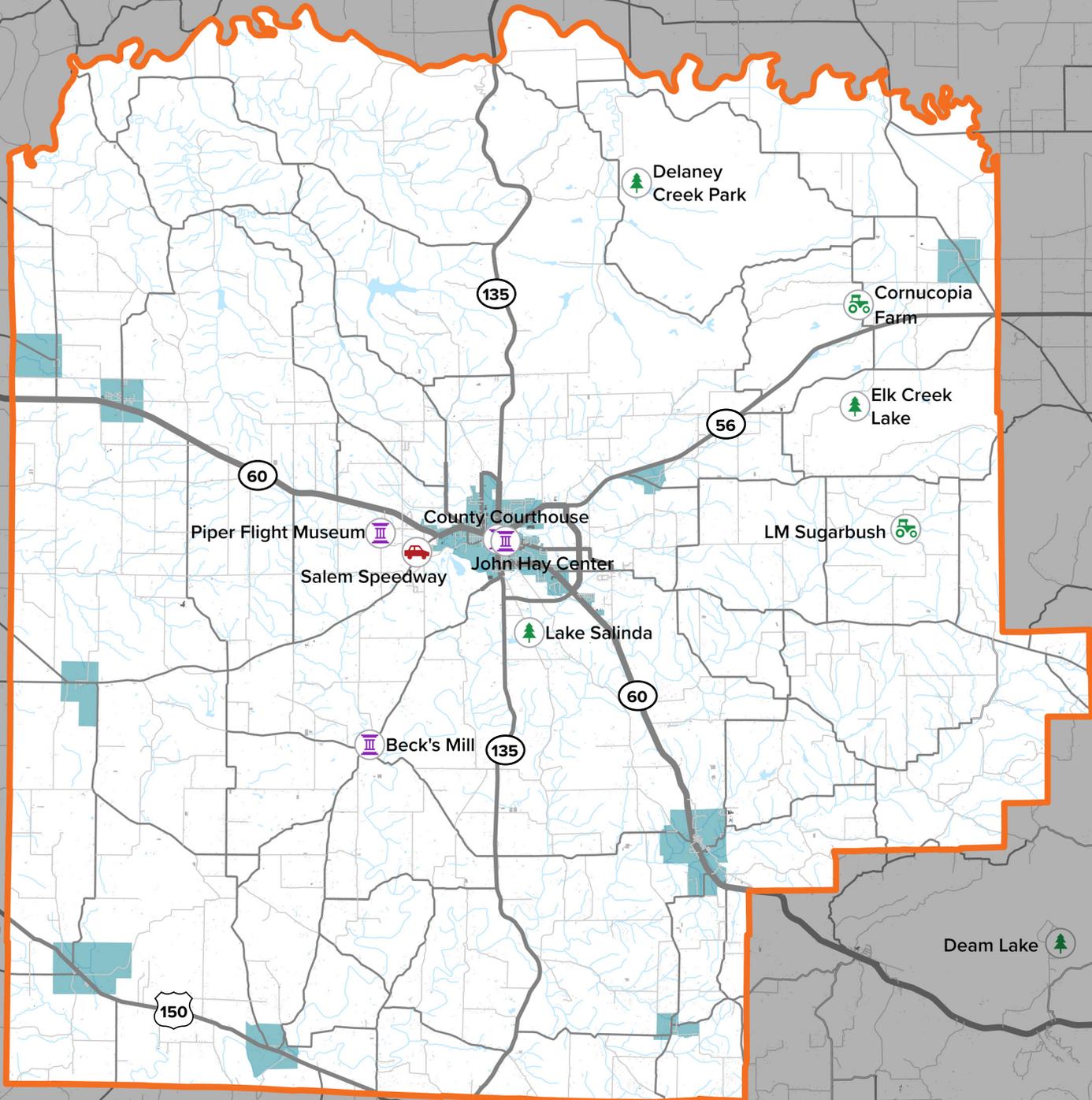
The John Hay Center has multiple buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. It is committed to preserving and remembrance of Washington County's heritage. The John Hay Center comprises the Stevens Memorial Museum, the Genealogical Library, the Pioneer Village, the birthplace of John Hay, the Depot Railroad Museum, the Monon Railroad Historical-Technical Society, and an amphitheater.

### WASHINGTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The Washington County Courthouse is within the Salem Downtown Historic District and on the National Register of Historic Places. The courthouse is faced with limestone from the surrounding area. It features a five-story clock tower with a conical roof and is still used today for official County business.

### PIPER FLIGHT MUSEUM

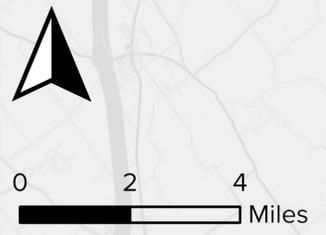
The Piper Flight Museum is at the Salem Municipal Airport and houses three Piper aircraft, a flight simulator, and a display room. Admission is free. The museum also has one of the largest collections of aircraft educational materials available to students and educators in the Midwest at no charge. The museum can also be rented as an event venue.



- ### Legend
- Washington County Boundary
  - Incorporated Places

#### Tourism and Recreation

  - Historic Site
  - Outdoor Recreation
  - Speedway
  - Agritourism



# Washington County Tourism and Recreation Map

## STATUS OF ENTREPRENEUR ECOSYSTEM

### WASHINGTON COUNTY INDIANA FARMERS AND MERCHANTS FAIR

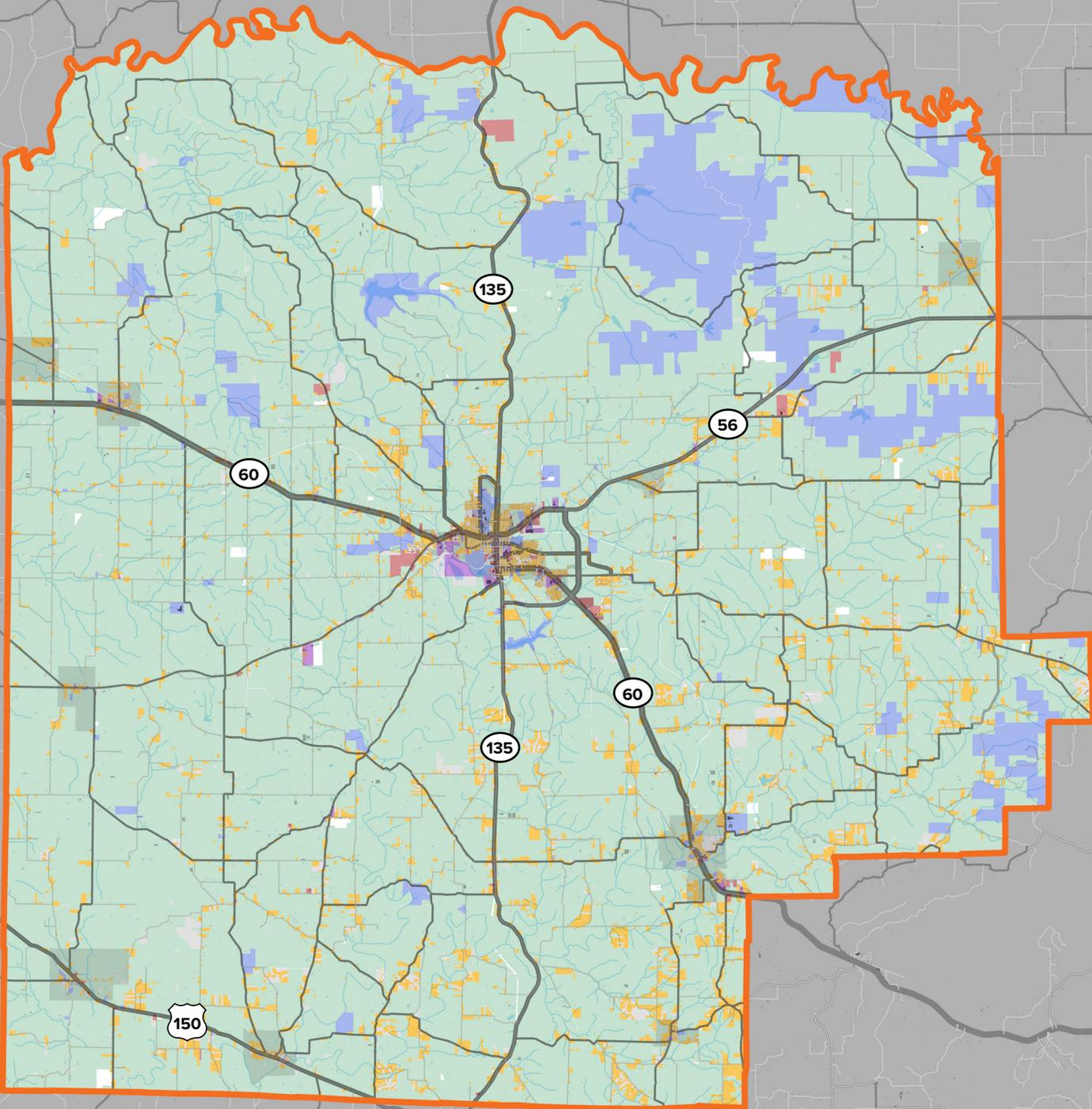
The Farmers and Merchants Fair is held at the County Fairgrounds. It provides an opportunity for local farmers and merchants to sell their goods. The fair is free to the public and advertised on Facebook. The fair often has food and beverage vendors to encourage people to come out.

### WASHINGTON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Washington County Chamber of Commerce has resources available to Washington County business owners to facilitate their success. The chamber promotes local businesses to residents to help with client/customer acquisition. The chamber also posts job postings to help residents find jobs with local businesses. The chamber also makes several outreach efforts, including advertising events at local businesses, providing information about living and working in Washington County and connecting businesses and residents with volunteering opportunities. The chamber is a membership-based organization. The chamber also works with the Indiana Small Business Development Center to provide assistance and resources to new businesses.

### IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Ivy Tech Sellersburg Campus offers courses in entrepreneurship focusing on mindset, lean marketing, enterprise, financial foundations, and new venture development and launch. The institution also offers an Entrepreneurship Toolkit with free resources on how to grow a new business.

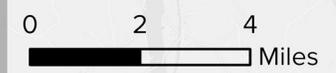


### Legend

 Washington County Boundary

### LandUse

-  Agricultural
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Institutional
-  Residential
-  Utilities
-  Vacant



# Washington County Land Use Map

# LAND USE

## LAND USE MAP

While most of the County's land is used for agricultural purposes, residential parcels are interspersed along roadways. Almost all of the commercial and industrial land in Washington County is in or around Salem. There are a few large swaths of institutional land in the north and east parts of the County.

## LAND USE CALCULATIONS

Over 85% of all land in Washington County is used for agricultural purposes. The next largest land use categories, in order, are 6.9% institutional, 5.4% residential, 1.5% vacant, 0.4% Commercial, 0.2% Industrial, and 24 acres used for utilities.

Land Use	Area in Acres	Percentage
Agricultural	277,244.5	85.6%
Commercial	1,165.5	0.4%
Industrial	531.4	0.2%
Institutional	22,417.8	6.9%
Residential	17,591.7	5.4%
Utilities	23.7	0.0%
Vacant	4,846.7	1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>323,821.3</b>	



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# INFRASTRUCTURE

## TRANSPORTATION

### FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) uses the functional classification system to group roadways according to the type of service they are intended to provide. Guidelines are provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to classify roadways. For most vehicular trips, the vehicle will climb up and then back down the functional classifications. A trip will likely begin on a local road and then continue onto a collector, then an arterial, and potentially an interstate; then, as the driver approaches the destination, they may continue onto an arterial, then a collector, and end on a local road.

## Interstates

While no interstates travel through Washington County, the nearest one is I-65 to the east of the County. I-65 provides connections to Indianapolis to the north and Louisville to the south.

## Principal Arterials

The principal arterial that travels through the County is SR 60. The road travels northwest-southeast, crossing through New Pekin, Salem, Campbellsburg, and Saltillo. Following SR 60 southeast ultimately leads to an I-65 interchange in Sellersburg, IN, a suburb of Louisville.

## Minor Arterials

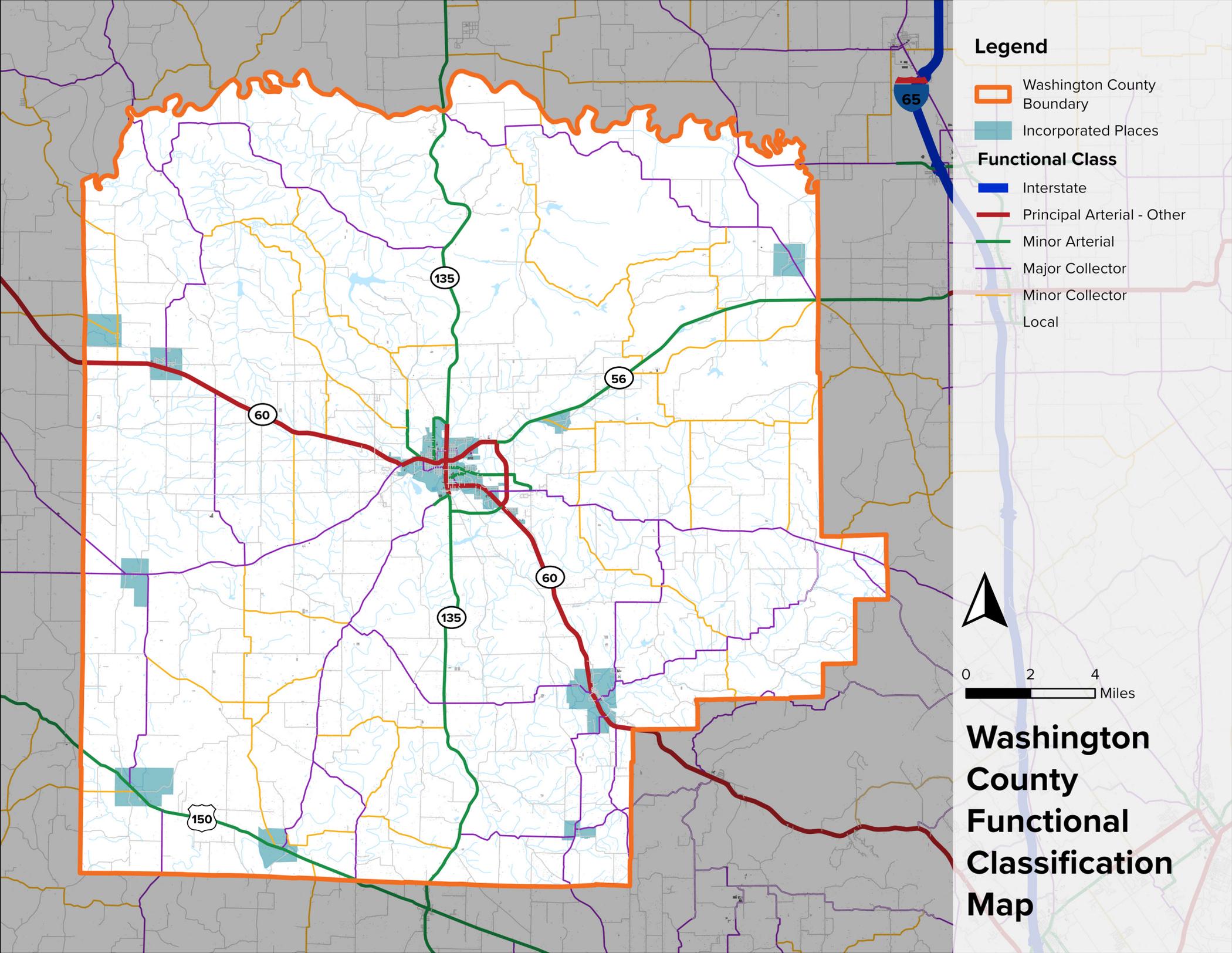
The minor arterials in Washington County are US 150, SR 135, and SR 56 between Scottsburg and Salem. SR 135 is the major north-south roadway for the County, passing through Salem. US 150 passes through the County's southwest corner and connects with Fredericksburg and Hardinsburg. SR-56 provides a connection between Salem and I-65.

## Collectors

The collector streets primarily fill gaps between the arterial streets. These connections are used primarily for trips within the County, not by people passing through.

## Local Roads

Local roads are often the first and last road classification used for a trip. A person will likely begin their journey on a local road that connects to their residence and then ultimately use a local road to reach their destination from an arterial or collector.



**Legend**

- Washington County Boundary
- Incorporated Places

**Functional Class**

- Interstate
- Principal Arterial - Other
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local



0 2 4 Miles

**Washington  
County  
Functional  
Classification  
Map**

## TRAFFIC VOLUMES

The roadways with the highest average annual daily traffic (AADT) are South Main Street in Salem and SR 56 through Salem. Other more heavily traveled routes included SR 60, SR 56, and SR 135. Fewer trips are being made on SR 135 north of Salem and SR-56 between Salem and Paoli.

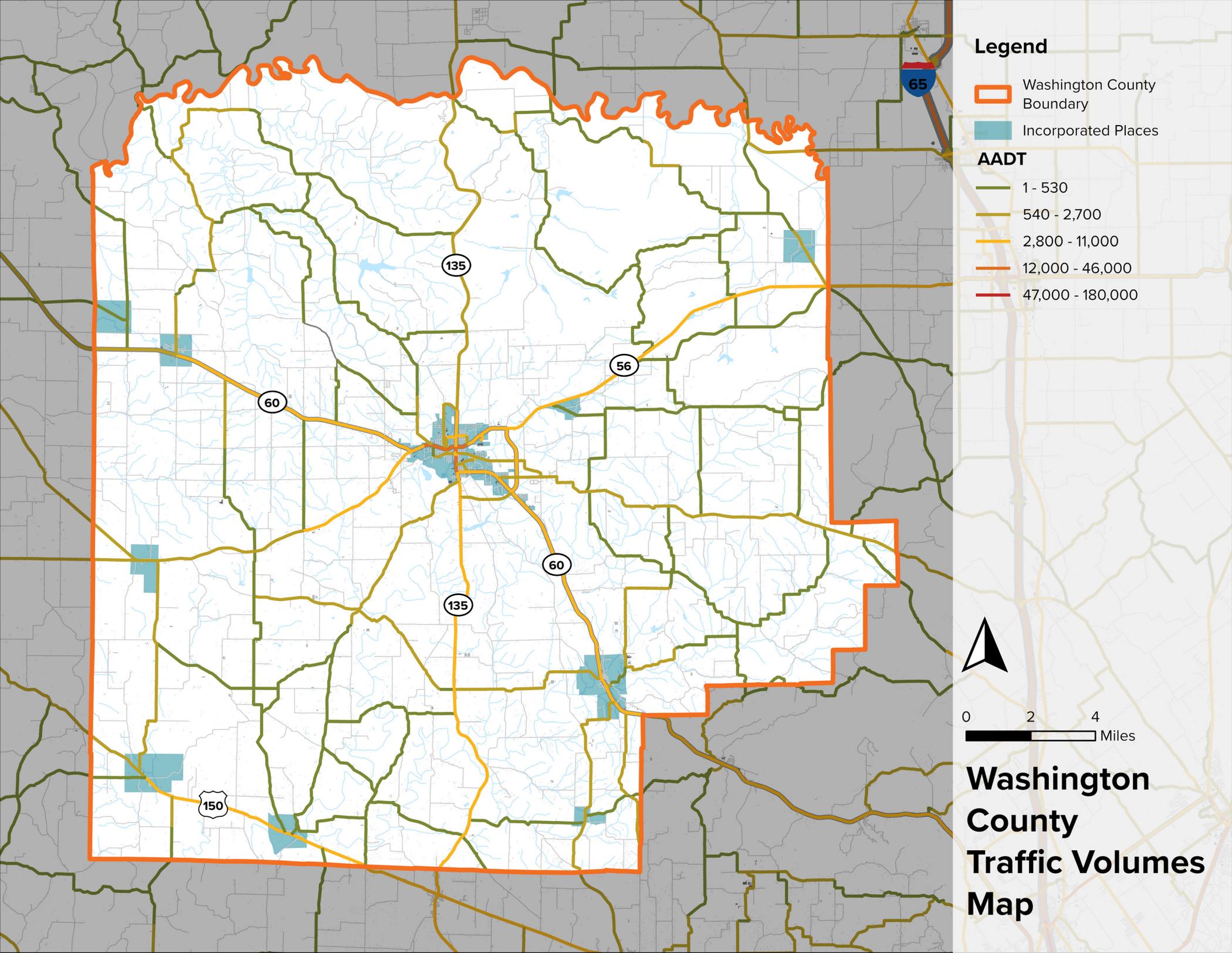
## ELECTRICITY AND BROADBAND

In a post-COVID world, internet connectivity at the individual level is as important as ever. According to the State of Indiana's broadband coverage map viewer, all Washington County has broadband coverage, either wired or wirelessly, by at least one provider at speeds of 25Mbps download and 3Mbps upload.

Internet providers in Washington County include Blue River Networking, Jackson County REMC, Tele-Media, Frontier, and Spectrum.

## WATER AND SEWER

The city of Salem and the towns of New Pekin and Campbellsburg provide water and wastewater utilities to residents and the surrounding areas. Outside those water and sewer districts, residents are served by either East Washington Rural Water or Posey Township Water.



**Legend**

 Washington County Boundary

 Incorporated Places

**AADT**

-  1 - 530
-  540 - 2,700
-  2,800 - 11,000
-  12,000 - 46,000
-  47,000 - 180,000



0 2 4 Miles

**Washington County Traffic Volumes Map**



# ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

## TOPOGRAPHY

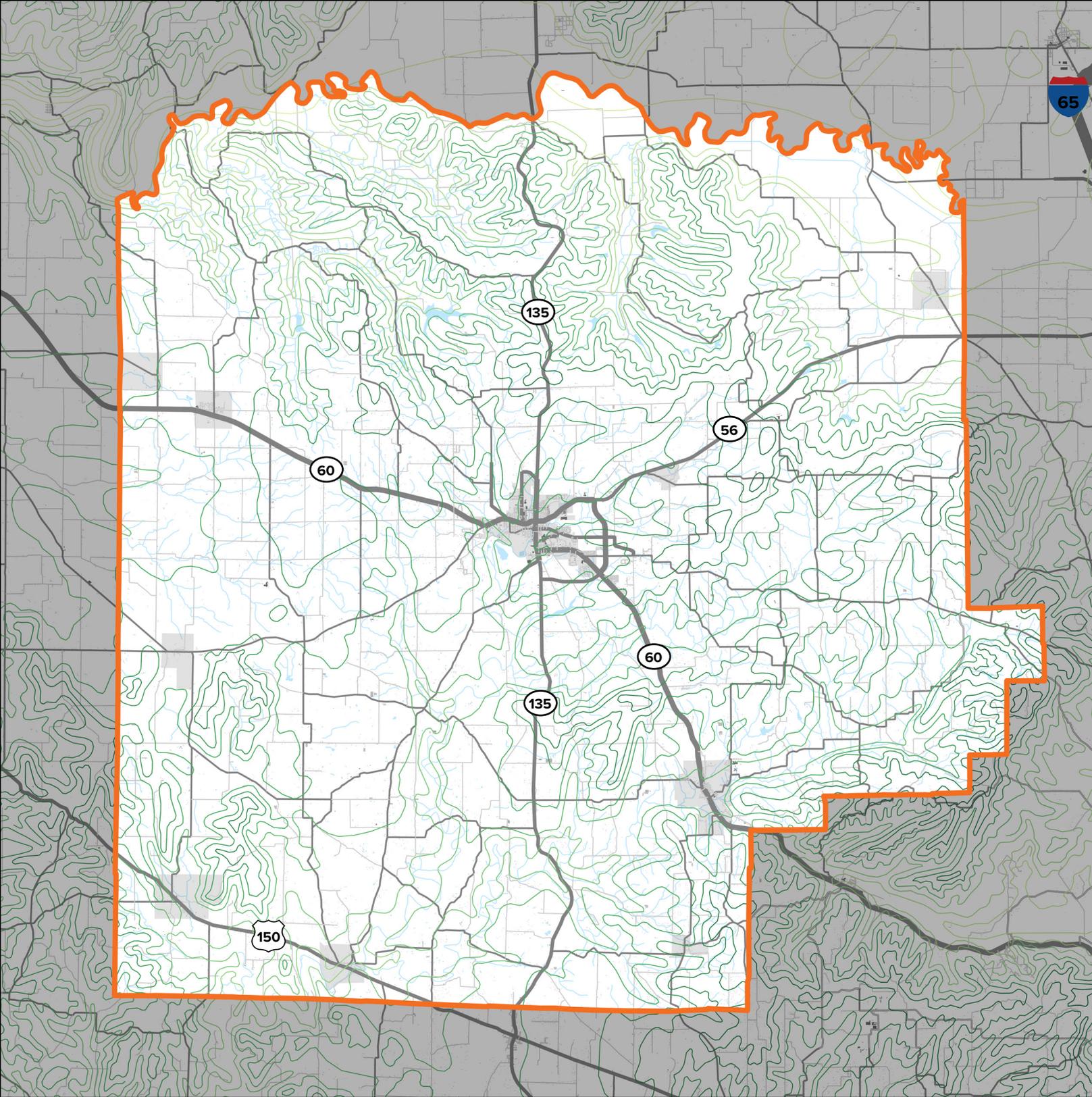
Elevation above sea level ranges from 450 feet to 1,000 feet throughout the County. Rolling hills are characteristic of Washington County. The majority of elevation changes are in the north and east parts of the County. The southwest portion is relatively flat. Steep elevation changes can impede development in some areas.

## SOIL

The dominant soil type in Washington County is Crider-Bedford-Baxter. The Baxter series of soil types is known for being gravelly silt loam that drains well and has moderate to moderately slow permeability. The soil is mostly used for growing tobacco, small grains, corn, hay, fruits, vegetables, and pasture. The Baxter soil type is often associated with hilly areas.

## FLOODPLAIN AND WETLANDS

The most significant sections of floodplain in Washington County are along the Muscatatuck River, which forms the County's northern boundary. These floodplains follow a few branches that extend into the County. Most of the areas affected by floodplains are primarily agricultural or institutional land. One strip of floodplain runs through the city of Salem. The majority of wetlands in the County are near the northeast corner.

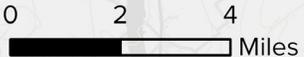


**Legend**

-  Washington County Boundary
-  WashingtonCountyMask

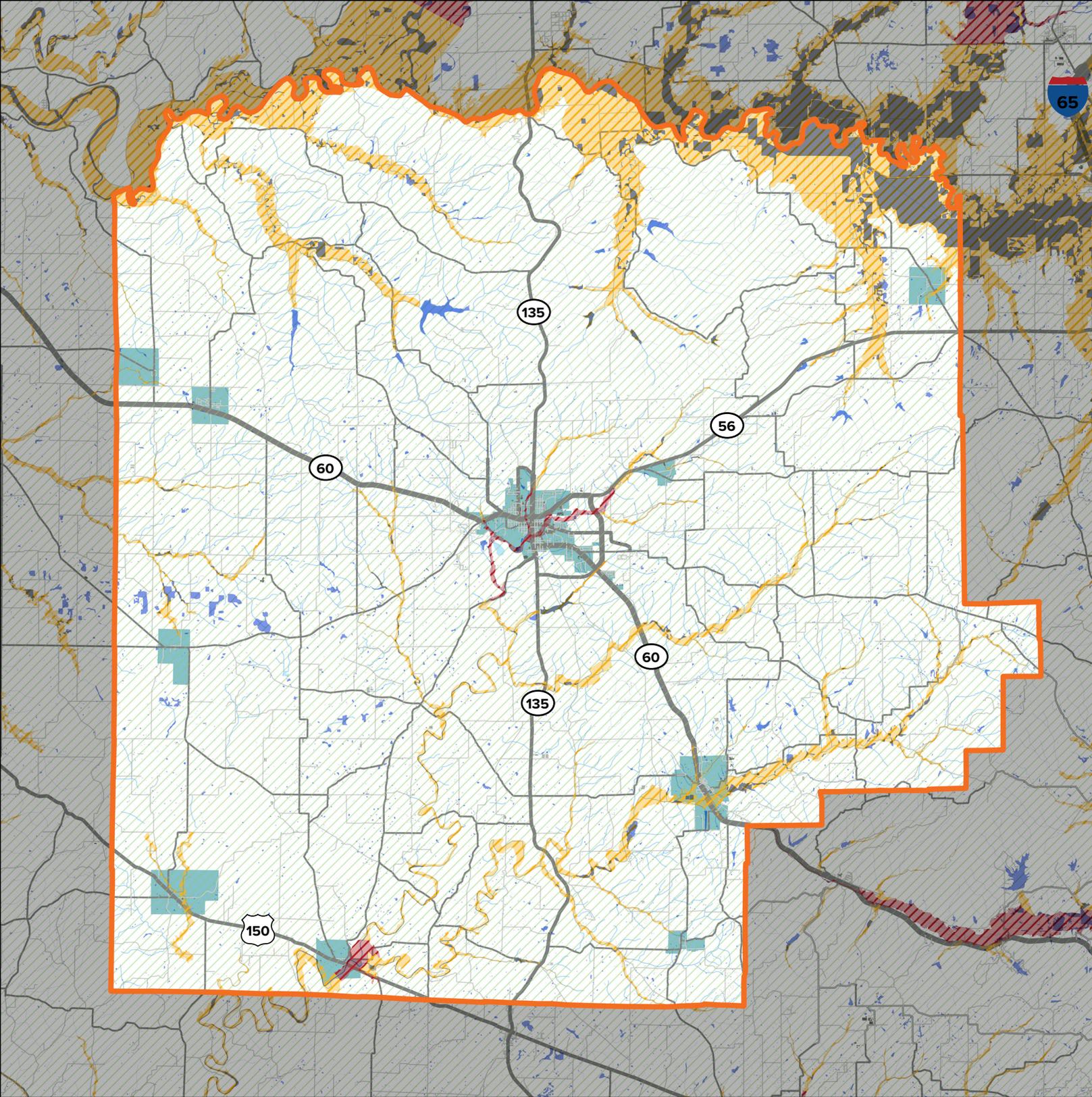
**Elevation**

-  450
-  500
-  550
-  600
-  650
-  700
-  750
-  800
-  850
-  900
-  950
-  1000

0 2 4 Miles

# Washington County Topography Map



**Legend**

- Washington County Boundary
- Incorporated Places
- Flood Zone**
  - A
  - AE
  - X
  - Wetlands

0 2 4 Miles

# Washington County Floodplain Map

**WASHINGTON**  
C O U N T Y  
*Indiana*



AMERICAN  
**STRUCTUREPOINT**  
INC.