ORANGE COUNTY

Quality of Place & Workforce Attraction Plan

November 6, 2019

FINAL

Acknowledgments

Prepared for:

Orange County, Indiana

ORANGE COUNTY
Quality of Place & Workforce Development Plan

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Quality of Place & Workforce Development Plan

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Introduction

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Introduction

Founded in 1816, Orange County Indiana has been an established county in Indiana for over 200 years and has had lasting impacts on Indiana's history. The county's unique characteristics, topography, and developments provide a change of pace when compared to other Indiana communities. Identifying and enriching a sense of place in Orange County is important as the county continues to grow and change.

How do you experience place?

The people, the places, the sights, the sounds, the smells; each individual experience leaves an impression that helps you form your opinion on how you feel in a certain location. Think about your best vacation memory. What experiences helped form a lasting impression on you?

Each individual experience in a location represents an emotional response to external influences, many of which are the result of the physical environment. Experiences can elicit good memories by being positive and uplifting or they can leave a lasting negative impression.

Think about the experiences you have driving around Orange County. What are the most positive aspects of the community? If someone were visiting Orange County right now who wanted to invest significant money in opening a new business would they get a good first impression? Do you enamor visitors enough on their first visit to entice them to visit again?

Downtown Orleans - (Source: HWC)

Quality of Place is a term and concept that conveys different meaning to different groups of individuals. A recent Inside Indiana Business article highlighted common things communities are doing to distinguish themselves economically. That article pointed out that many communities often make the mistake of following trends that may not be authentic to their character or desires. The article stated: "In an attempt to woo targeted industries, cities and towns sometimes market their communities as something they're not. Worse yet, they try to be something they're not, spending resources trying to compete with markets that are not their natural peers."

From (What Makes Up Quality of Place? Posted: Dec 06, 2018 4:54 PM EST Updated: Dec 07, 2018 7:00 AM EST By Tim Cook and Katie Culp, CEO, President, KSM Location Advisors; Inside Indiana Business (http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/story/39602181/ what-makes-up-quality-of-place)

> *"A major Gallup survey identified "quality of place" as the single most important source of civic satisfaction. The more beautiful, welcoming and diverse the city, the happier and more prosperous its residents will be."*
>
> - Richard Florida

From (Richard Florida's article 10 rules for a city's 'quality of place') Published Online: March 14, 2014; Updated June 5, 2017; By Richard Florida, Special to the Globe and Mail; The Globe and Mail Canada (https://www.theglobeandmail.com/ opinion/columnists/richard-floridas-10-rules-for-a-citys-quality-of-place/article17496710)

The amounts of information about how to be successful at community and economic development through quality of place efforts are endless. Regardless of the list to which Orange County subscribes, attracting residents, businesses and jobs is fundamentally about people. Quality places attract productive people and innovative ideas. If you can authentically create a place that people value then you will leave a hopeful impression that increases the chances people will want to live in, and visit your community. This same place will leave residents feeling invigorated and engaged, ready to pitch in and help make an investment in their community.

According to the Inside Indiana Business article referenced above, some of the most common quality of place characteristics that communities should assess include:

- **Density:** *Are businesses, amenities, and housing options concentrated in a central area? Conversely, is there too much density?*
- **Diversity:** *Is there a diverse population that will enhance workforce options for employers and contribute to a richer culture?*
- **Accessibility and transportation:** *Is it easy to move to and from key destinations within the area, whether it be places of employment, restaurants, parks, or shopping?*
- **Cultural attraction:** *Does the community have cultural amenities that appeal to a wider demographic, and more specifically to the community's target demographic?*
- **Cost of living:** *How expensive is it to own a home, rent, purchase necessities, or own a car?*

Quality of Place and Workforce

Regardless of how an individual or group of individuals defines quality of place it is, arguably, the single most important factor in determining the vitality and future potential of a community. This makes quality of place the most critical component of retaining and attracting a quality workforce in any community. Workforce Attraction in Orange County is dependent on high quality communities there can be no expectation to make fruitful gains towards workforce attraction efforts without first addressing deficiencies that detract from quality of place.

The ability to attract a workforce is dependent on having a community that will provide the amenities, assets and lifestyle that valued workers seek. Therefore, Orange County's capacity for economic development success and influencing workforce attraction efforts is directly related to its ability to create and maintain the quality of place that modern workers expect. Having ample employment opportunities alone is an insufficient measure of the overall economic success of a community.

Housing, for example, is a major factor of Quality of Place. Communities that struggle to provide safe and attractive housing options will also struggle to attract workforce opportunities. As a result, the workforce will often reside where housing is available and commute for employment. This can drain community vitality because the life of any community is where people live and spend their personal time.

Downtown Orleans - (Source: HWC)

Understanding This Plan

This plan defines the key quality of place factors identified for Orange County to lead discussion and planning efforts. Included with each factor are follow-up efforts that can help enhance local efforts to retain and attract people in its communities. Successful implementation of these ideas will help lift the overall appeal of Orange County as a choice place to live and visit. To define key quality of place elements unique to Orange County the project team researched best practices and case study examples from successful quality of place efforts in locations across the United States. The basic findings from the research were assembled and organized into a list of shared attributes found among the most successful quality of place efforts. A summary of the findings is presented below. This list represents the key components of Quality of Place identified for the Orange County community:

Cultural Amenities

- *Cultural amenities are the resources that define the character of a specific place and group of people. Cultural Amenities add value to a community, creating a sense of place. Communities with a strong sense of place attract people, opportunity, and investment.*

Dining

- *Dining is a key factor in the success of commercial areas/corridors. Local restaurants and diverse cuisine create a unique dining experience and define a sense of place.*

Healthcare

- *Healthcare directly impacts the quality of a place. Access to healthcare services ensure the wellbeing of residents while advancing medical workforce development.*

Housing

- *Housing is an essential component of human life and a fundamental building block in the definition of a place. Communities with a strong sense of place provide affordable shelter for residents, workforce, and guests while maintaining the quality of the existing housing stock.*

Jobs

- *Jobs refers to employment opportunities and the supporting workforce of a place. Quality places bolster strong job prospects, a skilled workforce, and heightened wages and benefits.*

Recreation/Sports

- Recreation/Sports are the facilities that keep communities active. Vibrant places have access to a variety of resources from sports fields to parklands to swimming pools.

Retail/Shopping

- Retail/Shopping refers to the commercial activity of a place. Quality places support business diversity which provide access to quality goods from a variety of vendors, catering to both residents and visitors.

Safety

- Safety refers to the welfare and protection of the public. Desirable, quality places are safe while undesirable, distressed places appear unsafe.

Schools

- Schools are the backbone of all American communities. Places with access to quality educational opportunities are more likely retain graduates and experience subsequent investment.

Transportation

- Transportation refers to the systems that connect people to places. Quality places provide the ability to easily travel within an area and connect to points of interest.

This list of key attributes were used as the basic elements to collect ideas through a series of public outreach initiatives. The key ideas and concepts presented in this report are a direct result of resident feedback. A more detailed discussion on the public outreach findings is presented later in this report.

Horseback Riders on a local trail - (Source: Orange Co. CVB)

Cyclists enjoying Orange County - (Source: Orange Co. CVB)

Purpose of Plan

This plan identifies the advantages and opportunities that Orange County can embrace to amplify its overall appeal for residents and, by extension, for new employment and economic opportunities. It relies heavily on public feedback to draw out the key aspects of the community that residents feel are their biggest bragging points. The same feedback has also helped identify some key challenges that the community must address to be able to experience the long term prosperity that everybody desires.

This plan also identifies tangible projects that the community can begin to complete to help lift overall opportunities for individual and collective benefit. These projects represent the physical and programmatic ideas that, when completed, will help Orange County slowly and intentionally progress towards more social and economic stability. No individual project will be able to adequately do this, but collectively they can transform Orange County in meaningful ways for all residents.
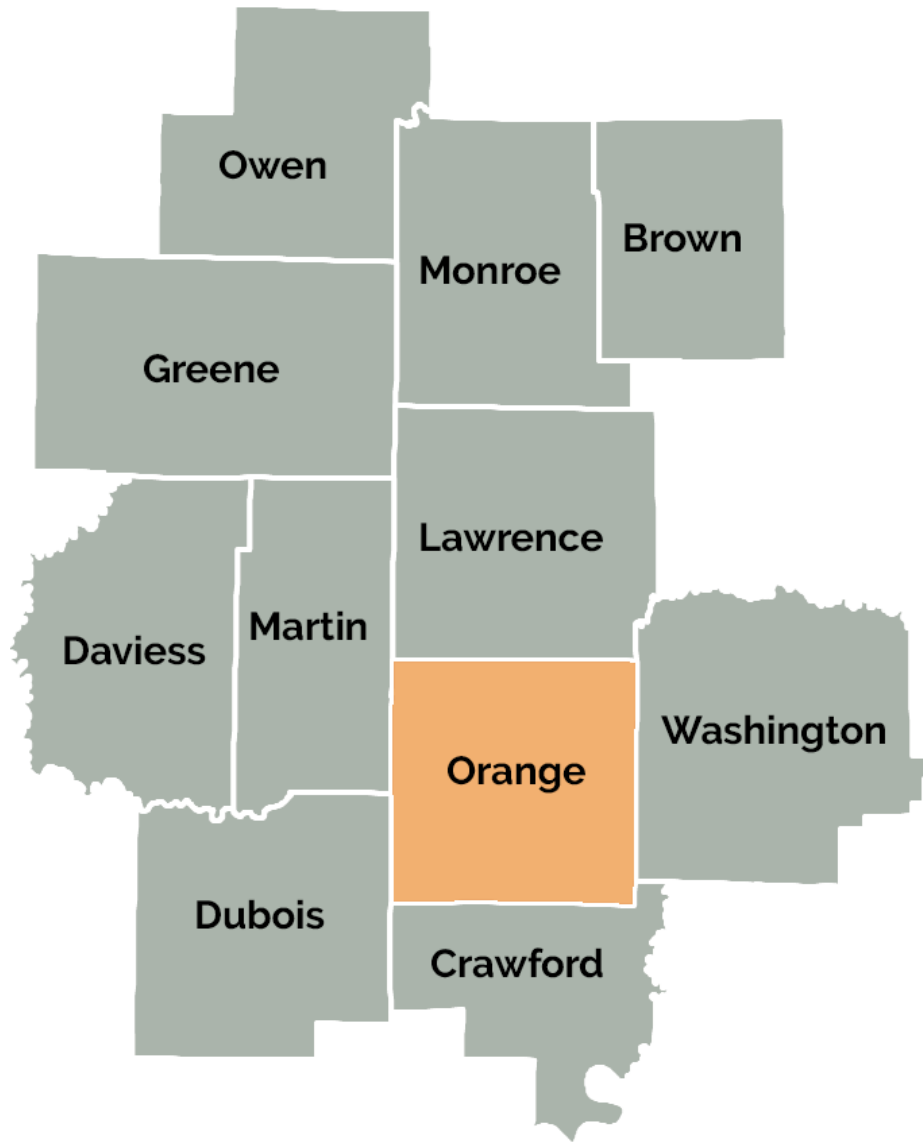

Historic County Courthouse in Paoli - (Source: HWC)

Congress Square in Orleans- (Source: HWC)

Figure 1 | *Indiana Uplands Region*

This project represents a portion of an overarching strategy for improving economic and community prosperity in the Indiana Uplands Region, which includes Orange County. The project was made possible through the generous participation of Regional Opportunity Initiatives, Inc. (ROI) through their Ready Communities Planning and Implementation Grants program. The Orange County Economic Development Partnership (OCEDP) partnered with ROI to implement this opportunity on behalf of Orange County residents. The plan provides strategies and projects that the Orange County community can collectively work to implement. It empowers community leaders and organizations to apply additional funding and organizational resources towards the completion of projects identified in the plan. It also qualifies specific community organizations and municipalities to apply for project funding through available ROI grants.

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Analysis

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Measuring Vitality

Contributing Factors

In 2011, Orange County ranked 61st of the 92 counties in Indiana based on its Community Vitality Indicators (CVIs). By 2017, Orange County had dropped to 85th of the 92 counties.

According to the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), of the 92 counties in Indiana, 54 are in absolute population decline. Indiana has struggled in recent decades as outward migration continues to exceed inward migration and the "net gain between annual births and deaths are insufficient to make up the difference." OCRA employs Community Vitality Indicators (CVIs) to help evaluate and monitor the condition of rural communities in Indiana. The following CVI's have been developed as a tool for communities to benchmark and gauge their relative vibrancy:

1. Population
2. Per Capita Income
3. Assessed Value (AV)
4. Educational Attainment Rate
5. Public School Enrollment

OCRA CVI's are based on STATS Indiana data and are regularly updated with county level demographic changes. They are an effective starting point for most counties because they come from a reliable source and offer additional comparative analysis to help communities understand whether they are gaining or losing ground relative to their state peers. CVI's are used as a starting point for this study and are presented in greater detail on the following pages.

Down But Not Out

CVI's are one of many tools that communities can use to monitor their performance over time. Many communities have successfully begun using CVI benchmarks to measure set goals and measure the effectiveness of projects and programs. Orange County's low ranking in many of the primary CVI's measured by OCRA means there is significant opportunity for improvement over time. Below are some ideas on how Orange County can utilize available information to plan for a more prosperous future:

Understand The Details
- *Pick the most important indicators for the county and look deeper into what is actually driving the statistical trends.*

Implement Specific Strategies
- *Once key trends are identified, work to determine what factors can be influenced to see long term positive change.*

Invest in Key Improvements
- *Focus community investment and economic attraction activities toward improving the most important or critical indicators first.*

Monitor Your Progress
- *Establish regular and repeated timeframes to review CVI data and evaluate the effectiveness of local investments.*

Adjust
- *Positive change takes time but may also require adjusting your course of action to see the results you are desiring.*

Demographics

Population

Orange County has experienced fluctuations in its population over time. This reduces local revenue capabilities. As people leave Orange County there is less revenue to maintain the operations of government and the provision of basic services.

Population decline affects housing too. As population declines, fewer residents remain to occupy the existing housing stock. Vacant and/or abandoned homes fall further into disrepair negatively impacting property values and the property values of adjacent homes. As this occurs, the assessed value of the community begins to plummet.
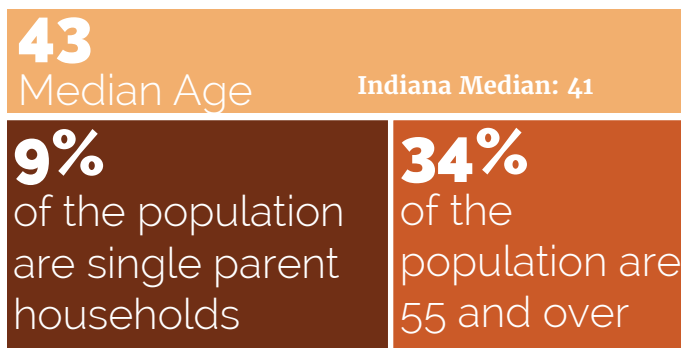
Orange County Population Over Time

	19,840	
19,306		19,531
2000	2010	2019
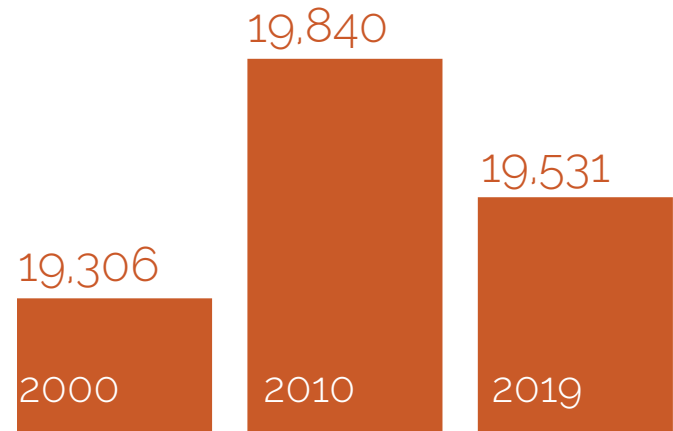
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

In 2017 Orange County Ranked 74th out of 92 counties in Indiana for population growth

Source: OCRA CVI's

43 Median Age   **Indiana Median: 41**

9% of the population are single parent households

34% of the population are 55 and over

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

Generation Distribution in Orange County

- Generation Alpha (2017 or Later) 3%
- Generation Z (1996 to 2016) 22%
- Millennial (1981 to 1998) 21%
- Generation X (1965 to 1980) 19%
- Baby Boomer (born 1946 to 1964) 26%
- Silent Generation (born 1945 or earlier) 9%
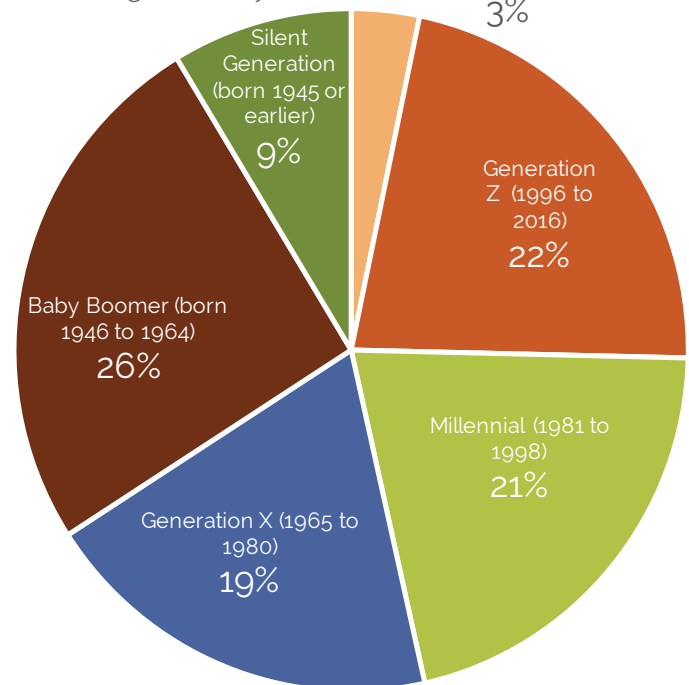
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey
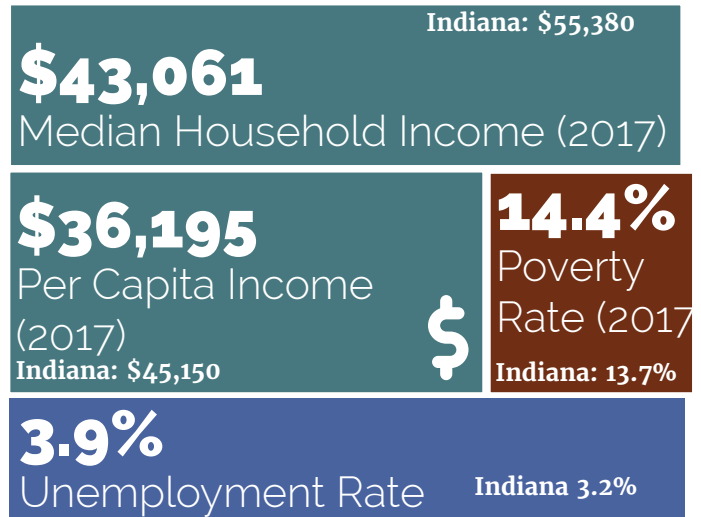
Personal Income and Employment

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), the per capita personal income for the state in 2017 was $45,150. The same source cites Orange County's per capita personal income for 2017 as $36,195, which is far below that of the state average.

The median household income in Orange county lags Indiana's median by over 10% according to STATs Indiana. The county is currently experiencing low unemployment but Orange County residents need to find much higher paying work to see a positive trend in income. This indicates a need to reconcile current labor capabilities against skills demanded by higher paying industries.

Potential exists to improve this indicator since Orange County is within the commuter shed of Louisville, Jasper, Bedford, and Bloomington. It is also within realistic driving distance to Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center and the West Gate @ Crane Technology Park, both of which are major regional employment hubs. All of these areas boast higher wage jobs, which do come at the added
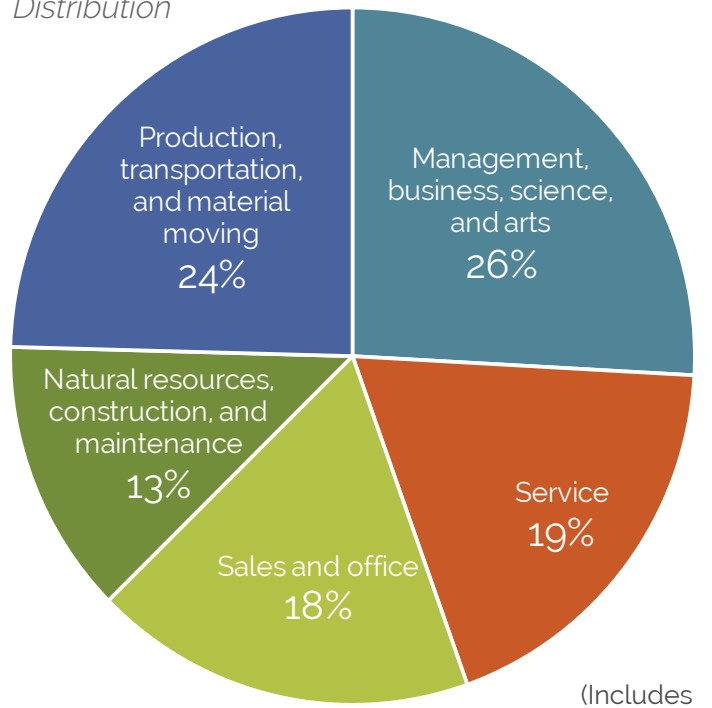
Orange County's rank for per capita market income has dropped from 77th to 85th in the state since 2011.

Source: OCRA CVI's

Indiana: $55,380

$43,061
Median Household Income (2017)

$36,195
Per Capita Income (2017)
Indiana: $45,150

14.4%
Poverty Rate (2017)
Indiana: 13.7%

3.9%
Unemployment Rate
Indiana 3.2%

Source: STATs Indiana (2017 & 2019), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Employment Distribution

Production, transportation, and material moving
24%

Management, business, science, and arts
26%

Natural resources, construction, and maintenance
13%

Sales and office
18%

Service
19%
(Includes Tourism)

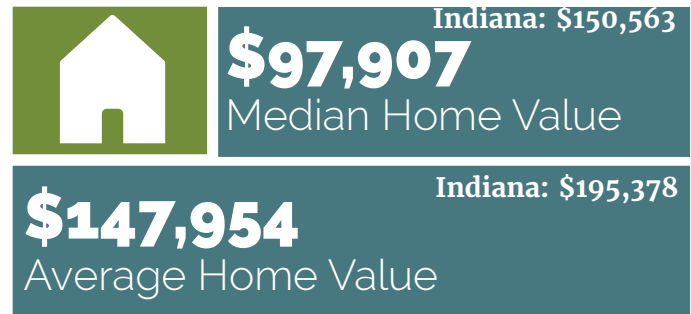*Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey*

Demographics

Assessed Value

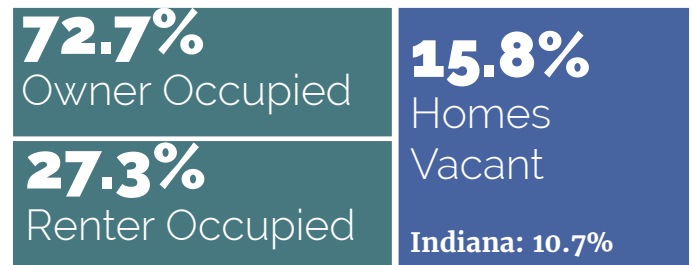expense of increased transportation costs for local residents.

Based on OCRA CVIs, Orange County's gross assessed value per capita saw a 10% increase from $59,088 in 2011 to $65,113 in 2017. While gross assessed value (AV) increased over this 6 year period, the comparative value overall is still low.

Orange County will likely continue to experience decline in its AV due to shrinking personal incomes and low property values. The value of existing homes must be raised to minimize the impacts of a low AV. Raising the value of existing homes can be done through rehabilitation of housing stock. Housing conditions can also be a factor impacting public health.

There is a large housing demand in Orange County. While it may not be immediately evident, conversations with residents indicate that Orange County has a sizable homeless population that often find shelter with friends/family/good neighbors, but lack a permanent residence. More information regarding housing in Orange county can be found in the Indiana Uplands Regional Housing Study which claims 9,600 new housing units will be needed by the year 2030.

Indiana: $150,563

$97,907
Median Home Value

Indiana: $195,378

$147,954
Average Home Value

Source: OCRA CVIs 2017

72.7%
Owner Occupied

27.3%
Renter Occupied

15.8%
Homes Vacant

Indiana: 10.7%

Source: OCRA CVIs 2017

According to the Indiana Uplands Regional Housing Study, the county's current vacancy rate is 15%.

Education and Schools

According to OCRA data, in 2011, public school enrollment was at 69.3%, ranking the county 36th of the 92 counties in the state. By 2017, enrollment dropped to 67.3%, lowering Orange County to 47th in the state.

Population decline coupled with decreased public school enrollment is rapidly diminishing the resources of school systems, hurting their success, and hinting at future consolidation(s). Although enrollment is down, the high school graduation rate has gone up. The high school graduation rate has increased from 90.5% in 2011 to 92.3% in 2017.

While there are signs of improvement, Orange County still falls just below the middle of the pack when it comes to public education in Indiana.
Higher education is also a shortfall in Orange County. Ivy Tech Community College in French Lick is the sole opportunity for higher education within Orange County. However, the community's location does offer nearby access to other higher education opportunities at I.U. Bloomington, I.U. Southeast in New Albany, and Vincennes University. In 2011, 17.5% of Orange County residents had an associates degree or higher and by 2017 the rate increased to 17.8%.

Orange County's high school graduation rate has increased from 90.5% to 92.3% in 2017

Source: OCRA CVI's

Orange County residents that had an associates degree or higher has increased from 17.5% in 2011 to 17.8% in 2017.

Source: OCRA CVI's

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Context

Background

Brief County History

Orange County, Indiana was organized in 1816 and named for Orange County, North Carolina where early settlers originated. The Town of Orleans was founded a year prior in 1815, two months after General Andrew Jackson's victory in New Orleans. Hence, the town was named Orleans. The county seat, Paoli, was platted in 1816 when the county was organized. Paoli was named for Pasquale Paoli (1725-1807), a Corsican patriot, the namesake of Paoli Ashe, son of Samuel Ashe, governor of North Carolina.

Dr. John R. Lane, a peddler of medicine, built the first resort hotel in West Baden Springs in 1851 and named it for the famous spa, West Baden, in Germany. It was originally called Mile Lick given that it was about a mile north of French Lick. Lee W. Sinclair operated the West Baden Springs Hotel in 1888 until fire destroyed it in 1901. Sinclair rebuilt a newer and larger hotel in 1902. Once completed, it boasted 708 rooms as well as one of the widest unsupported domes in the world at 208 feet in diameter. The Town of French Lick was laid out in 1857. French Lick was named after an early French settlement in the area near an animal lick. Dr. William A. Bowles established the first health resort at French Lick around 1840. The resort industry that Bowles founded in French Lick is world-famous today as the French Lick Springs Hotel.

The Orange County Courthouse sits on a gentle hill in the center of Paoli. The Courthouse is the dominant architectural feature of the community and a symbol of Orange County. The Courthouse is a two-story stone building, with twin chimney in the Federal style of architecture common in Indiana during the early 1800s. In 1933, Thomas Hart Benton, the noted American artist, included the building in his much discussed "Mural History of Indiana" painted for the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition. The mural is now displayed at the Indiana University auditorium.

Orange County Courthouse, Paoli, IN c. 1929 - (Source: Orange County Historical Society)

Figure 1 | *County Location*

Orange County
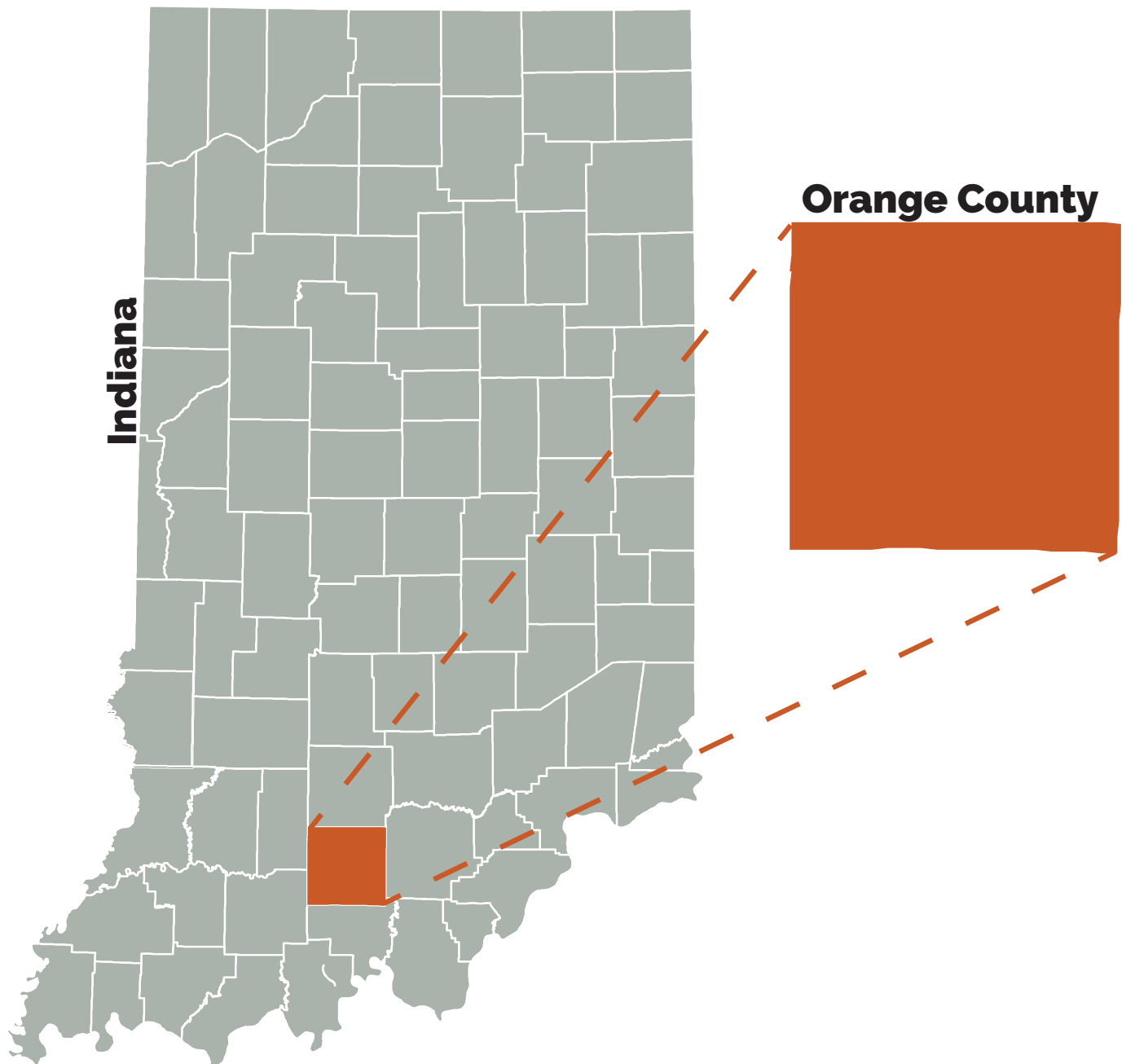
Indiana

Aside from major metropolitan areas, Orange County is a short drive from other notable Indiana communities such as Evansville, Bloomington, and Columbus. About 20,000 Hoosiers call Orange County home, yet around 1 million people visit the county each year for its scenic beauty and historic landmarks, such as the French Lick Resort. Figure 2 (to the right) shows Orange County's proximity to major population centers throughout the region.

Figure 2 | *Regional Centers*

Orange County is located in south central Indiana and situated near population centers that feed the local tourism industry. Orange County is in close proximity to several large population centers including Bloomington and Jasper. Orange County also lies a 1 hour driving distance from Lousiville, Kentucky; 2 hours from Indianapolis; and 3 hours from Cincinnati, Ohio.

Local Perspective

This plan was developed with the cooperation of more than 300 Orange County residents and stakeholder organizations. Public outreach provided an important local perspective on the greatest opportunities, assets, and struggles that the county faces going into the future. The following information is a paraphrased summary of the hundreds of individual opinions received on these topics during the plan.

Key Opportunities

Location

- *Best of both worlds, remote yet accessible. Orange County is approximately one hour driving distance from the Louisville Metropolitan area along Indiana 150. This Metro Area is home to more than 1.3 million residents. Orange County is also close to larger cities in the Uplands region such as Bloomington, Bedford, and Jasper. The southern border of the county is also within 11 miles of I-64, which averages more than 16,000 vehicles per day.*

Local Resorts

- *The French Lick Resort & Casino and West Baden Springs Hotel have greatly contributed to an overall increase in quality of place and workforce attraction since their opening. The resorts are some of the largest employers in the county and sponsor a wide variety of community projects and programs. Most importantly, they are a major catalyst for attracting more than one million visitors to the county per year. The more recent addition of the Big Splash water park has helped increase lodging and entertainment options in the county, broadening the appeal to more visitors.*

Tourism

- *Tourism in Orange County is driven by the resorts, but is not dependent on them. The county boasts a rich tapestry of unique natural, physical, and cultural features that, if built upon, could become a major economic development driver for the community. How major? The recently published 2018 Economic Impact of Tourism in Indiana report by the Indiana Office of Tourism indicated that the Indiana tourism industry employs more than 186,000 Hoosiers and has an estimated economic impact of nearly $12 billion a year. Gaining only a small percentage of this economic activity can mean huge positive economic gains for Orange County. For example, capturing only 1% of the reported economic impact benefit of tourism would equate to $12 million for ORange County. Thanks to resort related activities, Orange County already has many of the major pieces of infrastructure in place to be able to boost significant additional economic development success from an expanded tourism effort.*

Land and Building Availability

- *Orange County boasts a high number of existing buildings in historic downtown cores with available space. The Orange County section of the Indiana Uplands Regional Housing Study provides information about available and suitable development land within the county. The rural nature of the county also makes development potential a significant asset for the county. Finding ways to market these advantages for new small and large business attraction provides opportunity.*

Recent Revitalization and Development

- *Recent improvements in the French Lick and West Baden communities help point to one possible direction for expanded downtown revitalization in communities like Orleans and Paoli. Each community should identify a unique approach that honors its specific heritage and desires but should also look to recent investment in neighboring communities as an example of successful reinvestment of a historic downtown cores.*

World Class Golf Courses

- *Orange County is home to two major golf courses that have drawn international attention throughout the years. The historic Donald Ross course has a significant legacy and reputation for hosting major championship golf. The new Pete Dye designed course has already hosted multiple high level amateur and professional tournaments and has drawn significant attention within the golf world. Having these two courses in your county represents a significant opportunity to attract additional visitors to Orange County as a destination location for entertainment and leisure activities.*

Incorporated areas

- *All of the major incorporated communities in Orange County have intact historic downtowns. Each of these locations maintains an appealing identity unique from its neighbors and adds significant interest for people visiting the community. Recent investments in some communities have helped improve the appearance of the downtown buildings. Working to build each of these existing downtown cores into vibrant hubs of restaurant and local shopping activities will improve the quality of place and workforce attraction opportunities in the county.*

High Quality Natural Environment

- *The natural beauty of Orange County is visibly evident. The rolling hills, woodlands, and streams make for a captivating and inspiring experience. Numerous natural areas, lakes, and forests add to the overall appeal of the county. Each of these assets represents an opportunity to improve Orange County's appeal as a premier destination for outdoor and adventure activities like biking, hiking, and fishing, making the county a significant year-round tourism destination and providing additional local economic development opportunities.*

Tourism Benefits Orange County

Radius Indiana has completed studies assessing the tourism potential in their region, of which Orange County is a part.

Below is a summary of key local tourism benefits identified in the most recent Radius Region tourism report:

Promoting a Healthy Job Market
- *Approximately 5.1% of all jobs in the Radius Region are supported by tourism which also directly supports jobs in retail trade, transportation, and the arts.*

Contributing to the Health of the Public Education System
- *Revenue collected from Radius Region tourism is sufficient to support 3,777 Indiana public school students.*

Playing a Significant Role in the County's Industrial Make up
- *Tourism is the 7th largest industry (6th not including Government) in the Radius Region (by jobs).*

Providing Tax Revenue to Support Federal, State & Local Government
- *Radius Region tourism activity generated $487 thousand in Indiana corporate taxes, $2.5 million in Indiana personal income tax, and $12.1 million in local property taxes during 2016.*

Capturing and Retaining the Expenditures Made By Visitors
- *Of every dollar spent by visitors in the Radius Region, 73¢ in economic impact is retained in the local area.*

Historic Iron Bridge in Paoli - (Source: HWC)

Franch Lick Resort - (Source: Orange Co. CVB)

Golfers enjoying Orange County - (Source: Orange Co. CVB)

Key Physical Assets

Orange County has many physical assets within its boundaries, particularly within its incorporated communities. The Towns of Orleans, Paoli, West Baden Springs, and French Lick each have their own identities and assets which are discussed in Figures 4-6 on the following pages.

The county alone, however, boasts its own set of assets, aside from what can be found in its communities. Positioned in the foothills of Southern Indiana, Orange County is rich with wildlife, scattered lakes and scenic streams, and dense deciduous woodlands. Over half of the county is dedicated to the Hoosier National Forest. Many of the county's assets lie in its abundance of natural resources. See Figure 3 and Table 1 on the folowing pages for key county-wide assets which were identified during discussions with residents.

Pioneer Mother's Memorial Forest - (Source: HWC)

Covered Bridge at Wilstem Ranch - (Source: HWC)

Mural Celebrating Rural Heritage in Orleans - (Source: HWC)

Enjoying Rural Orange County - (Source: Orange Co. CVB)
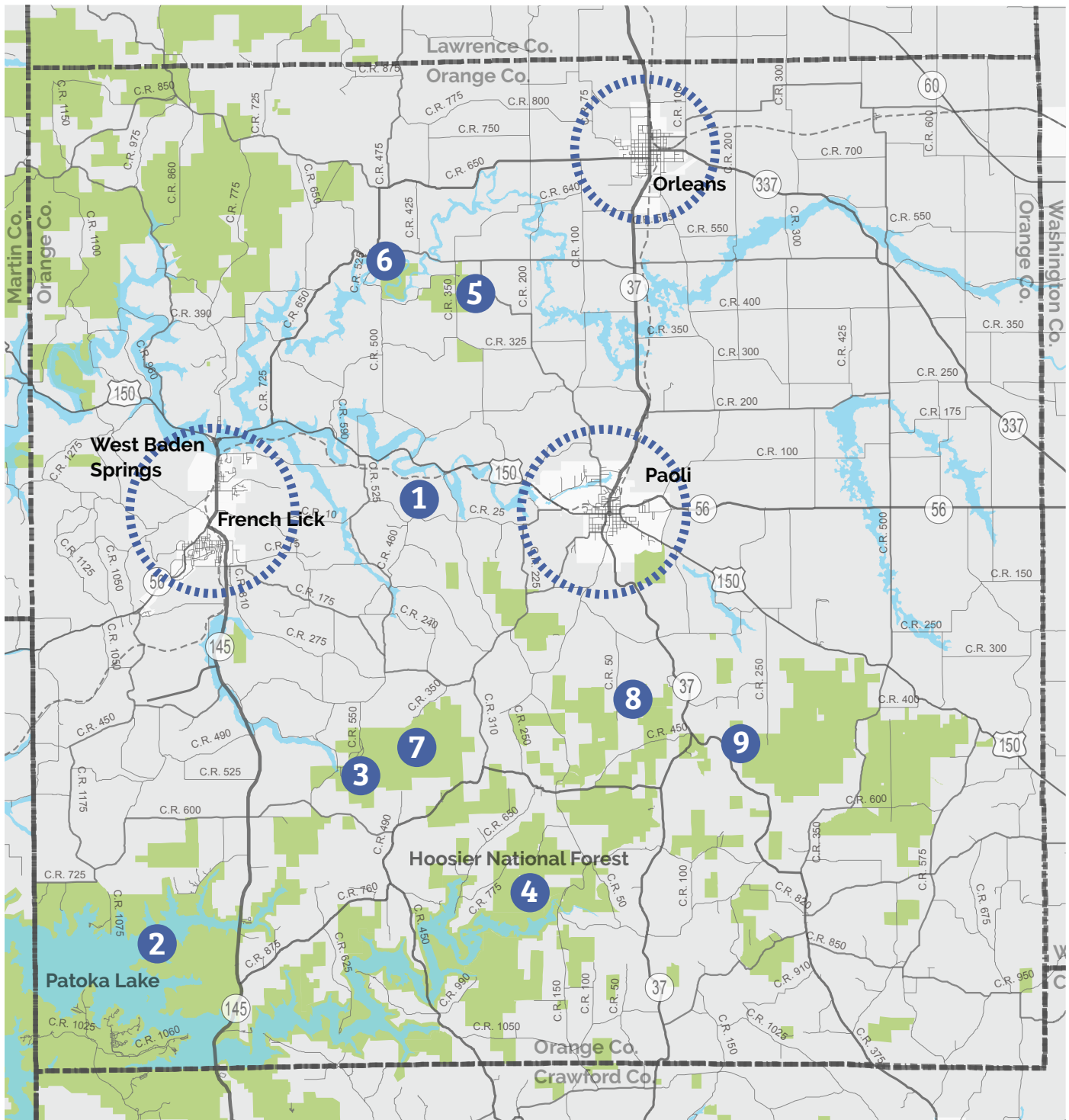
Figure 3 | *Orange County Key Assets Map*

Figure 3 above corresponds with Table 1 on the next page.

Table 1 | *List of Orange County Key Assets*

#	Asset	Details
1	Wilstem Ranch	Wilstem features lodging with a pool, zip lines and ATV tours, horseback riding, and animal encounters. Wilstem has a long history that ties back to the founding of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus.
2	Patoka Lake	Patoka Lake is the second-largest Reservoir in Indiana. Located in Southern Indiana. Patoka Lake is spread across Dubois, Crawford, and Orange counties.
3	Tucker Lake	141-acre lake, officially called Springs Valley Lake, surrounded by rolling hills and hardwood forests. Tucker Lake features primitive camping with vault toilets.
4	Hoosier National Forest	The Hoosier National Forest is 200,000 acres of land protected and managed by the United States Forest Service with a wide mix of resources for people to enjoy. A portion of the park can be found in the southern half of Orange county and the park continues to Martin, Lawrence, Crawford, and Perry Counties as well.
5	Wesley Chapel Gulf	Wesley Chapel Gulf is a 187-acre tract of land located in the Hoosier National Forest containing a large, deep, and abrupt depression that dramatically drops from the surrounding landscape.
6	The Rise of the Lost River at Orangeville	Here the Lost River, a large sinking and subterranean stream, comes to the surface at the base of a low cliff forming sizable streams.
7	Springs Valley State Fish and Wildlife Area	With Tucker Lake at its center, the Springs Valley State Fish and Wildlife Area is a recreation destination in Southern Indiana.
8	Youngs Creek Trailhead	12.7 mile trail designed for use by hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders. The trail offers shade and scenic vistas.
9	Lick Creek Trailhead	7.7 mile trail for hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders that passes through an early 19th century free African American settlement. Only a family cemetery and an old home site remain.

Table 1 above corresponds with Figure 3 on the previous page.

Figure 4 | *Orleans Assets*
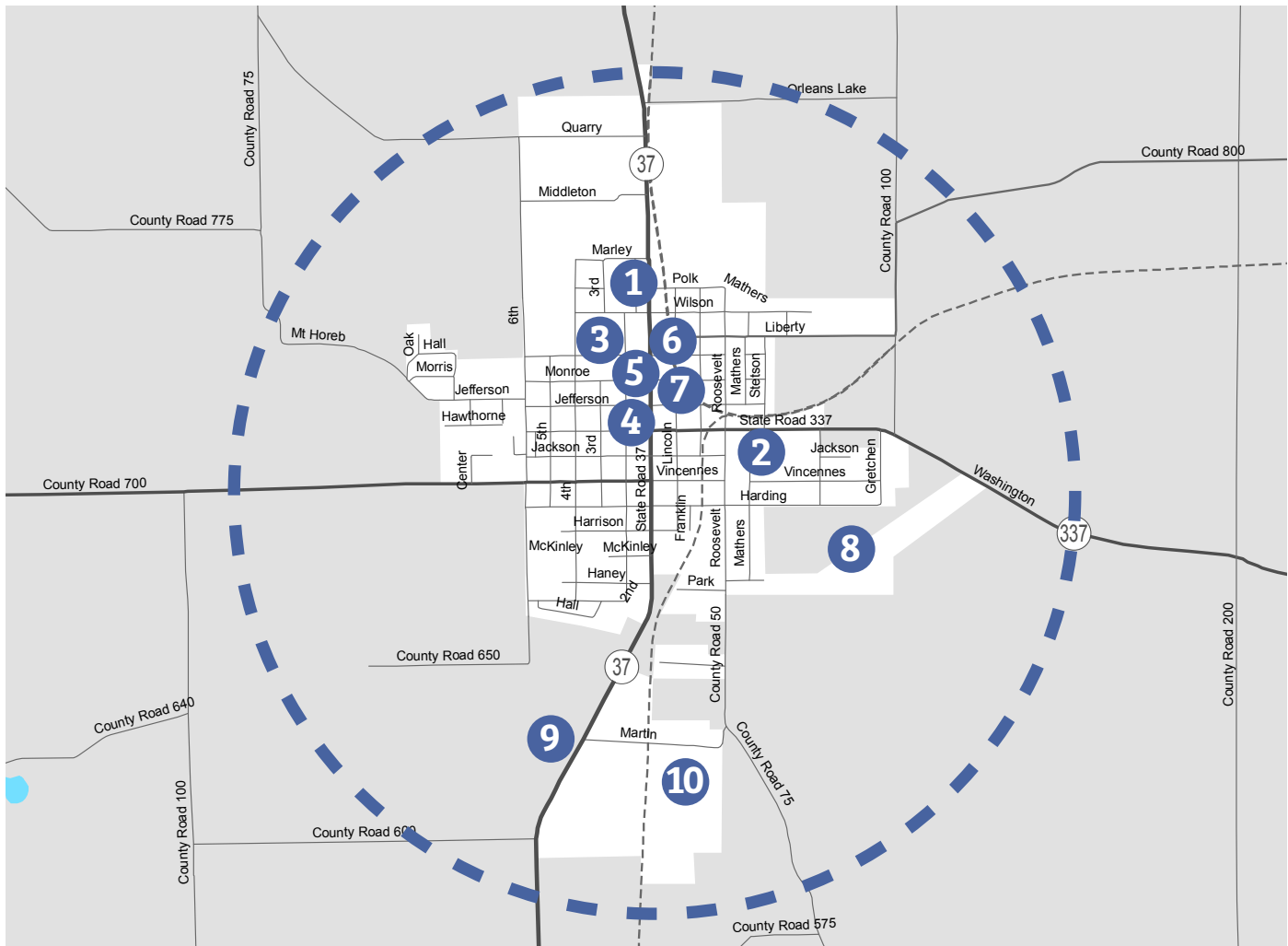
The Town of Orleans is a tight-knit community in the flat lands of northeastern Orange County. Orleans has a strong agricultural identity, evident in its well-known annual Farmer's Market. Residents of Orleans have immense pride in the park at the center of their town. The park features a fountain, gazebo, playgrounds, and well-manicured lawns.

Aside from community resources, Orleans hosts Jasper (JSI Furniture) and a White Castle Meat Processing facility at its southern edge, both of which are large employers in Orange County.

Table 2 | *Orleans Assets*

| #	Asset	Details
1	Orleans Junior/Senior High School	Orleans Community Schools
2	Orleans Elementary School	Orleans Community Schools
3	Orleans Ballpark	Baseball Field Complex (includes Little League Field)
4	Orleans Town Square Park	Active community park at the Town's center
5	Sprigler's Farm Market & Deli	Local farm market with a deli
6	Orleans Farmer's Market	Town farmer's market every Saturday May thru October
7	Orange County Public Library	Orleans Branch of Orange County Public Library System
8	Orleans Airport	Runway with capcity for small planes
9	Wesleyan/Pilgrim Camp Grounds	Local camping destination
10	Manufacturing/Industrial Node	Hosts Jasper (JSI) & White Castle Meat Processing facility

Orleans Congress Square Park - (Source: HWC)

Orange County HomeGrown - (Source: HWC)

Figure 5 | *Paoli Assets*
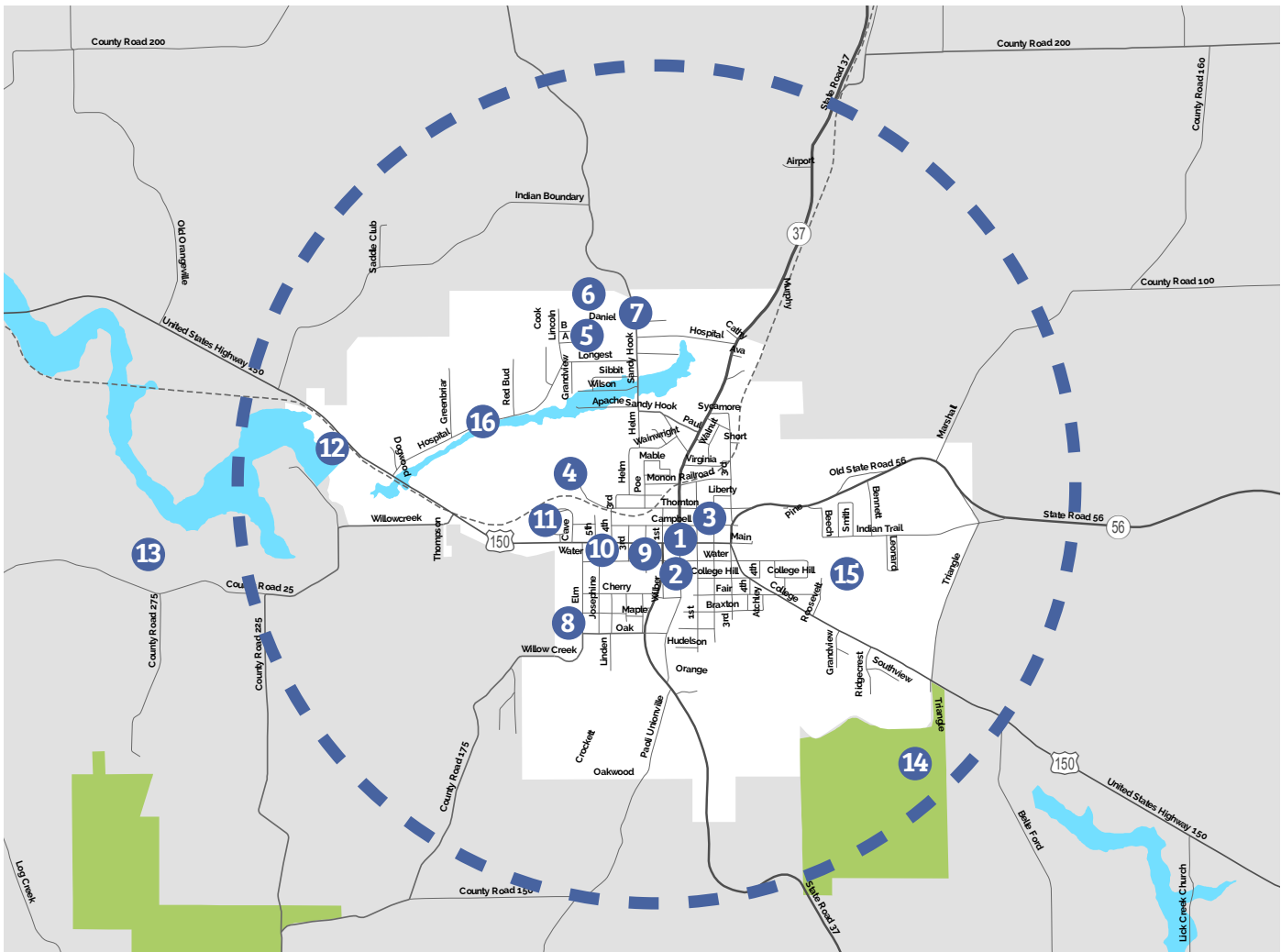
The Town of Paoli is the county seat, located at the geographical center of Orange County. The most defining feature of Paoli is the Orange County Courthouse, which serves as the symbol of the county. Other notable county resources include the IU Health Hospital and the county fairgrounds.

The most valuable assets of Paoli are its natural and recreational resources. Paoli Community Park is a large public park featuring ample parking for ballfields, trails, and countless other amenities. Additionally, Paoli is home to the largest old growth forest in the state of Indiana. Pioneer Mother's Memorial Forest is an 88 acre old growth forest encompassed by the Hoosier National Forest with accessible walking/hiking paths.

Table 3 | *Paoli Assets*

#	Asset	Details
1	Courthouse Square	Feature the Orange County Greek Revival Courthouse
2	Orange County Public Library	Paoli Branch of the Orange County Public Library System
3	Lost River Market & Deli	Local Health/Organic Foods Cooperative
4	Tomato Products Company	Miscellaneous Co-op and Event Space.
5	IU Health Paoli Hospital	Epicenter for medical service in Orange County
6	Orange County Fairgrounds	Hosts the County Fair, the 4-H organization, and local events
7	Orange County Community Center	Gathering place for local meetings, events, etc.
8	Paoli Community Schools	Paoli Jr./Sr. High School & Throop Elementary School
9	Bicentennial Park	Park adjacent to Courthouse Square featuring a gazebo
10	Marea Radcliff Rest Park	Park along Lick Creek with picnic shelters and a playground
11	Jay Cee Park	Park featuring Baseball Field and Basketball Courts
12	Paoli Community Park	Large Park with ball fields, trails, a playground, and more
13	Paoli Peaks	Seasonal resort with ski trails, terrain parks, and snow-tubing hill
14	Pioneer Mother's Memorial Forest	88 acres of old growth forest; largest old growth forest in Indiana
15	Paoli Country Club	9-hole course with a dining area and full bar service
16	Manufacturing/Industrial Node	Hosts Liner Products, Jasper Group, and Electricom Inc.

Paoli Courthouse Square - (Source: HWC)

Pioneer Mother's Memorial Forest - (Source: HWC)

Figure 6 | *French Lick/West Baden Springs Assets*

The Towns of French Lick and West Baden Springs are separate municipalities but are connected via transportation networks, corporate boundaries, and economic activities since the two communities share a sizable list of assets. French Lick and West Baden Springs were founded on a rich history that continues to fuel their growth today. Aside from being home to the historic French Lick Resort and West Baden Springs Hotel & Gardens, the area is home to the top two public golf courses in Indiana according to Golf Week Magazine's 2019 list of *Best Courses You Can Play.*
https://golfweek.com/2019/05/29/golfweeks-best-2019-best-courses-you-can-play

The Springs 4 Stadium in French Lick is the only movie theater in Orange County which attracts residents and tourists alike. Furthermore, the Ivy Tech in French Lick serves as the community college for greater Orange County.

Table 4 | *French Lick/West Baden Springs Assets*

#	Asset	Details
1	West Baden Springs Hotel & Gardens	Historic West Baden Springs Hotel
2	The Legend of French Lick Hotel	Six suite hotel in former 20-acre estate home
3	French Lick Resort	Landmark escape with dining, golf, and spas
4	French Lick Casino	Table games, slot machines, and live entertainment
5	Fench Lick Scenic Railway	Railway Museum with a scenic 20-mile historic train ride
6	French Lick/West Baden Springs Trails	Trail system connecting French Lick and West Baden Springs, linking destinations together
7	French Lick Winery & Vintage Cafe	Vineyard with tasting room, gift shop, and cafe
8	West Baden Springs Community Park	Park with baseball fields, tennis courts, a basketball court and a playground
9	The Valley Links Course	9-hole walkable, park-like golf course adjacent to French Lick resort
10	The Pete Dye Course at French Lick	No. 1 Public Course in Indiana - GolfWeek Magazine 2010-19
11	The Donald Ross Course	No. 2 Public Course in Indiana by GolfWeek Magazine 2011-19
12	Big Splash Adventure	Indoor Water Park with rooms/suites & dining/shopping
13	French Lick/West Baden Indoor Karting	Go-carts/racetracks and Family Fun Center
14	Shotz Miniature Golf	Indoor 9-hole cosmic golf, 18-hole outdoor golf, and laser tag
15	Springs 4 Stadium	Movie Theater and host of Annual Summer Kids' Film Festival
16	French Lick West Baden Museum	Museum with local history exhibits and 1,100 s.f. circus diorama
17	Orange County Public Library	Melton Branch of the Orange County Public Library System
18	Springs Valley Community Schools	School system serving French Lick and West Baden Springs
19	Ivy Tech	Community College of Orange County

Key Community Struggles

As this plan was developed, a number of residents and stakeholders voiced opinion on key challenges that the Orange County community needs to address to be able to enjoy the success that everybody desires. Each of these represents significant hurdles and many of the recommendations in later chapters will help address some of these challenges.

Attracting and Retaining Young Families

- *Young families are looking for the same things that nearly everybody desires, safe affordable communities that have the opportunities, attractions, and amenities which will allow them to live an active and engaged lifestyle. Things like parks, trails, shopping and dining all rank very high on the list of key must haves that younger families list when deciding where to live.*

- *Orange County currently boasts some of these factors but there is still a lot of work left to do to create a critical mass of the high-quality places and experiences that can result in broad appeal for attracting young families. Many of these are related to improving the overall quality of place in the county and encompass many of the recommendations in this plan.*

Transit and Transportation Access

- *One of the most recurring comments received during the public outreach process was the high need for safe and reliable access to available services within the county. Providing people with various transportation options for being able to take care of daily needs like doctors appointments and grocery shopping is a basic need in every community.*

- *This need is amplified because of the distance between communities in Orange County. Improving local transportation connections (between neighborhoods and activity centers) and regional transportation connections (between communities) is a major challenge to address.*

Quality Housing Options

- *Finding safe, high quality, and affordable housing options was the single most mentioned struggle during the development of this plan. The Indiana Uplands Regional Housing Study provides detailed information and resources regarding housing in Orange County. Many of the existing homes in the county, especially in population centers, are old and many are in need of repair.*

Distressed Town Centers

- *Even though significant investment has occurred in recent years to improve the visual and physical aspects of many of the traditional town cores, a lot of work remains. Existing residential and commercial buildings in the downtown cores are in visible disrepair.*

- *Key commercial lots and storefronts in the primary commercial districts are vacant and most of the upper story space in the existing buildings is underutilized or completely unused.*

- *The stores that are present in the downtown commercial districts are open between 8 am and 5 pm on Monday through Friday. While these are convenient hours for business owners and employees, they are less than ideal for residents and visitors who most likely do a majority of their shopping and dining out during the weekend. The combination of vacant storefronts, dilapidated buildings, closed signs during the week, and the overall lack of economic activity doesn't project a positive "Open for Business" message that will lead to increased activity and vibrancy.*

Vacant Storefront in Paoli - (Source: HWC)

Underutilized Historic Building - (Source: HWC)

Community Health

- *Many rural communities in Indiana are struggling with health related concerns and Orange County is no exception. IU Health Paoli Hospital released a Community Health Needs Assessment in November 2018 which identified the following significant community health needs in Orange County:*

    - *Access to Healthcare Services*
    - *Drug and Substance Abuse*
    - *Mental Health*
    - *Obesity, Diabetes, and Physical Inactivity*

Vacant Convenience Store at Key Intersection - (Source: HWC)

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4

Plan Strategy

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Introduction

Community Driven Recommendation Strategy

Conversation and collaboration were the two primary strategies used to help identify the recommendations contained in this plan. The project began by compiling research and ideas from previous community planning efforts into a list of ideas and factors important to the community. From there efforts turned toward listening to the needs of the community through in person conversations and through online collaboration.

All of this work helped identify the greatest needs of the community and also many great ideas that residents supported. All of these ideas and opinions were used to develop the primary recommendations of the plan. The following pages present the recommendation development process in greater detail.

Public Open House Activity - (Source: HWC)

Participants at Public Open House #1 - (Source: HWC)

Public Open House #2 - (Source: HWC)

Phase 1
Project Identification

Data Collection

The first Phase of the planning process began with Data Collection. Plans conducted by Orange County and municipalities within the county were collected and reviewed to better understand the context of Orange County and the direction of the region and its communities. These past planning efforts provided key demographic information that was used to guide the vision of the County and prioritize concepts and projects.

Client Workshop

The next step of Phase 1 was the Client Workshop. The Client Workshop was held on May 14 at 10:30 AM in Paoli, IN. The Workshop was held to identify and prioritize county–wide projects that have been previously discussed as well as any new projects/ideas that may be considered in the future. Table #1 and Figure #1 provide a brief overview of the ideas discussed at the Workshop. The meeting minutes from the Client Workshop can be found at the end of this document.

Table 1 | *Project Identification Table*

#	Project	Details
1	Extended/shifted hours for small businesses (Paoli & Orleans)	Open Sat. & Sun., Closed Mon. & Tues. to best capture tourism potential
2	Youth Sports Attraction	Capitalize on Paoli Community Park; Elizabethtown, KY Sports Park was one example mentioned
3	Density	Demand for urban living: density needed to entice developers
4	Housing Development	Subdivision w/ varied housing stock: $100-150k new home price range desired
5	Enhanced Tourism	Encourage visitors to stay longer than one night; Tourist attractions in Orleans, Paoli, etc. (tourism outside of resorts); Hotel(s) to increase tourism/annual visitors
6	Transportation Improvements/Increased Connectivity	Alternative Transportation routes (bike, walk, etc.); I-67 Corridor
7	Downtown/Façade Revitalization	Invest in historic commercial cores/business districts
8	Sewer and Natural Gas Lines/Access	Insufficient existing lot sizes to accommodate new septic systems; demand for sewer and gas network expansion
9	Gateways/Signage (County & Local)	Define how we welcome people to Orange County
10	Workforce Housing	New hotel in French Lick hiring 100 employees; no housing available
11	Strengthen and Expand Local Tourism Industry	French Lick/West Baden Springs attracts 1 million visitors annually, however, most visitors only stay in Orange County for one night

Figure 1 | *Project Identification Map*
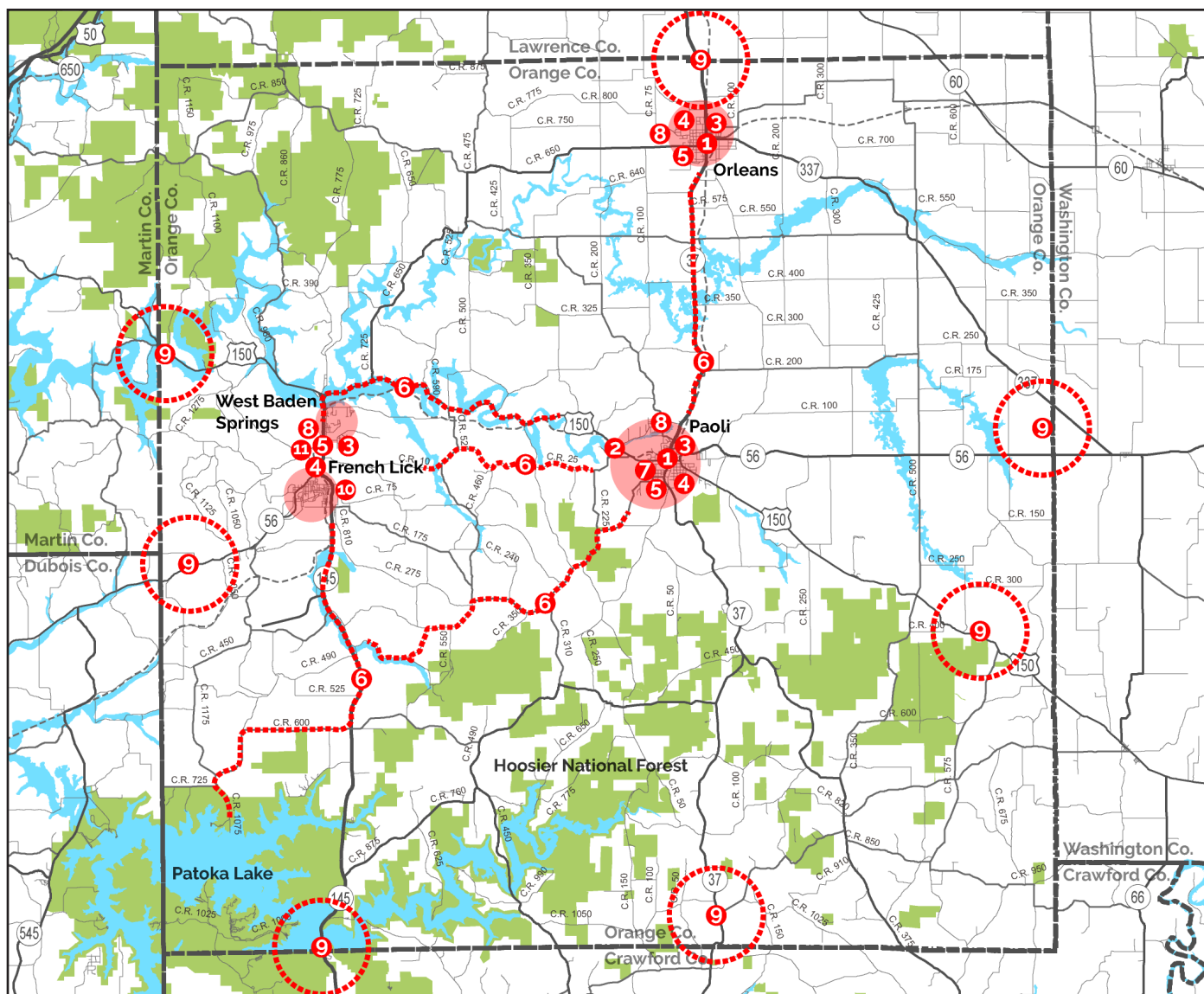
Figure #1 (above) pairs with Table #1 (previous page) to show projects that have been identified from past planning efforts in addition to project ideas that may be realized in the future. As previously mentioned, the projects listed in Table #1 and shown on Figure #1 were collected from the Client Workshop on May 14.

Public Outreach

Social Media Page

Phase 2 began with promotion of the Quality of Place and Workforce Attraction Plan via Social Media. The Orange County Economic Development Partnership (OCEDP) Facebook Page was selected as the social media platform to provide general project information and announcements throughout the planning process. The OCEDP Facebook Page was selected because it is a regularly active page and it boasts a large pool of existing followers.

Online Public Survey

The next step of Phase 2 was to launch an online public survey and promote it via the OCEDP Facebook Page. The survey asked general and specific questions in order to gauge the public perception of the County and to determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that lie ahead. The survey was opened on May 24 and closed on June 28, following the Stakeholder Roundtable Meeting.
Below is a summary of select questions from the Online Public Survey. These results have been compiled from the more than 300 total responses which were received during the month-long collection period. These have been compiled and edited with a focus on the highest rated responses for each respective question.

- *Residents agree that Orange County is a safe and affordable place with a strong sense of community that's great for young families and retirees.*
- *Residents love Orange County for its natural resources and rural setting.*
- *In terms of entertainment, residents are most passionate about community events and activities.*
- *Opportunities outside of Orange County entice residents, but proximity to family/friends keep them from leaving.*
- *Residents want projects focused on recreation and the children of Orange County.*
- *Almost all residents would like to see more youth-focused facilities and activities.*
- *Most residents agree that tourism helps Orange County grow.*
- *Residents want to promote recreational amenities in Orange County to residents and visitors.*
- *The biggest threats to the success of Orange County are drug use and brain drain.*
- *Many residents in Orange County are concerned with housing, drug addiction, and business attraction/employment opportunities.*
- *Residents feel that housing, drug addiction, and a skilled workforce are barriers to attracting new businesses to Orange County.*

Public Open Houses

Two Public Open Houses were conducted in Orange County. Public Open House #1 was held on the evening of June 3 and Public Open House #2 was held on the evening of June 12. Based on information gathered in Phase 1, ten quality of place factors were identified. These ten factors laid the groundwork for the public open houses.

Each Public Open House featured four (4) activities for the public to engage in to provide their input:

- *Attendees were each provided three tokens/chips of which they were to use to pick the top three of the ten Quality of Place factors that impact them the most by placing the tokens/chips into corresponding mason jars;*

- *Attendees were to perform a similar activity but instead asking them to provide open-ended comments for the ten Quality of Place factors rather than rank them by importance with tokens/chips;*

- *Attendees were asked where their favorite place in Orange County is. This exercise used a map, numbered stickers, and a list to spatially understand where attractions and landmarks lie within Orange County; and*

- *Attendees were asked to "Post-It!" This activity simply asked attendees to share something that they would like to see happen, change, or stay the same in Orange County. They were to write their ideas on a Post-It note and stick it to a blank board.*

Both open houses were conducted in the same fashion in attempt to collect consistent responses among different open house attendees.

Top Identified Concerns

The public open houses concluded that the public is most concerned with the following Quality of Place factors in Orange County:

- *Housing*
- *Jobs*
- *Cultural Amenities*
- *Multi-Modal Transportation*
- *Workforce Training*
- *Affordable Housing*

Youth Engagement - (Source: HWC)

Community Stakeholder Roundtable

A Stakeholder Roundtable Meeting was held on June 27 in French Lick, IN. The purpose of this meeting was to confirm and finalize the direction received during the public open house meetings and identify specific additional needs. The meeting resulted in a focus on tourism and healthcare in Orange County. Representatives from the Town of French Lick as well as the Orange County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) outlined the opportunities and challenges of tourism in Orange County. Furthermore, the focus on healthcare prompted a separate discussion between stakeholders and Southern Indiana Community Health Care (SICHC). SICHC identified healthcare challenges in Orange County, specifically the demand for enhanced public/rural transportation to healthcare services as well as the rising aging population.

Stakeholder Roundtable Venue (Photo: CVB)

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5

Recommendations

Introduction

Respondents to the Online Public Survey ranked housing, transportation, tourism, and business attraction as being the most important of ten (10) total factors that were provided. These results, coupled with the wide range of comments collected from community stakeholders and the public, lead to the three (3) Focus Area identified below.

Focus Area 1
A Place to Live *Attract and Retain Family, Friends, and Neighbors*

Focus Area 2
A Place to Visit *Welcome More Visitors*

Focus Area 3
Connect Places *Connect People with Places*

Defining the Focus Areas

Focus Area 1
A Place to Live

Housing is a common concern amongst the majority of localities in the Indiana Uplands, and Orange County is no exception. Roughly 16% of all the homes in Orange County are vacant, which has a major impact on the county's neighborhoods. Neighborhood revitalization efforts could save over 1,000 homes from falling into disrepair and subsequent demolition. Also, representatives from Southern Indiana Community Health Care have expressed concern about the lack of housing provisions for senior citizens in Orange County, such as basic aging–in–place provisions and assisted/senior living. Orange County should explore the potential for new residential development.

Existing Housing in Paoli - (Source: HWC)

A Place to Visit

Providing certain attractions will help fulfill resident desires and make the county a more attractive place for visitors to spend more time, equating to additional revenue. Over 60% of the survey responses were related to community events and activities and the lack thereof. Several respondents fondly recalled former events and programs throughout the county that have since disappeared, such as the carnival and live summer performances by local talent. When specifically asked what you would like to see in your community, many responses mentioned more community activities and amenities. Providing for these resident desires will help increase the appeal of Orange County for visitors.

Orleans Congress Square - (Source: HWC)

Focus Area 3
Connecting Places

Engagement efforts have indicated a lack of local and regional connections. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure are necessary to connect Orange County's communities. Additionally, Orange County is in close proximity to population centers yet lacks strong regional connections. Furthermore, many of Orange County's points of interest are secluded and isolated from its communities. Connections should be made between the various points of interest in Orange County, attracting the attention of residents and guests. Exploring regional trails and transit can connect Orange County to population centers, creating workforce opportunities.

West Baden Springs Trails - (Source: HWC)

A Place to Live

Why A Place to Live?

Neighborhoods are the core of Orange County society; they are the places where family and friends come together to live life. They are where you see people sitting on front porches, talking to neighbors, children playing in the yards, the places to raise children and call home.

Without healthy neighborhoods people can't thrive and when people can't thrive, communities decline. People are not attracted to declining communities. Some people may be settled there, and others stuck there, but nobody will be attracted there. Many of the previously discussed community assets place Orange County in an opportunistic position to transform itself into a regionally sought–after location for attracting new residents by focusing on creating attractive neighborhoods within its existing communities.

Below is a summary of the primary aspects that Orange County can collectively focus on to begin to inject more interest and activity within its existing neighborhoods:

- *High quality, safe, and attractive places to live.*
- *A wide variety of housing choices at various price points.*
- *Convenient walking and bicycling access to shopping, dining, attractions, and services (discussed in Connecting Places Section)*
- *Targeting community services towards cleaning up the appearance and safety of existing neighborhoods – overgrown lots, dilapidated and vacant buildings, trash and debris, abandoned and inoperable vehicles. (discussed in Connecting Places Section)*

Significant feedback was received during the planning process about the need for exceptional places to live. Many residents expressed a desire to welcome new people into their communities but continually told stories of the lack of availability of acceptable housing outside of the estate style developments happening in rural locations.

Many people shared ideas with about projects that could encourage more people to become more actively involved or that they thought would help improve residents' lives. Ultimately, much of the ideas and enthusiasm shared by residents revolved around improving their lives and the lives of their friends and family by improving their neighborhoods. And this begins by ensuring that people have a excellent place to live, regardless of their demographic or socioeconomic status.

Example of Existing Housing Stock - (Source: HWC)

Example of Existing Housing Stock - (Source: HWC)

Example of Existing Housing Stock - (Source: HWC)

To combat declining population, and begin attracting new people to the community, Orange County needs to create places where people want to live. This is not just about housing, although housing is a central component, it is about rebuilding and reinvigorating existing communities and neighborhoods. The following recommendations outline a list of projects and programs that the county and individual communities can work towards, collectively, to begin seeing incremental improvement in their ability to retain and attract residents:

House/Yard of the Month

Implement House or Yard of the Month competitions with awards, signage, and community celebration. Such an event will help generate interest among existing residents and homeowners to complete personal beautification projects.

Whether it be a fresh coat of paint or new landscaping, a House/Yard of the Month competition could encourage residents to improve the curb appeal of their properties and their community.

Community Development

Fund local block grants that allow a group of residents on a specific street or block to identify projects they would like to complete. The group of residents will then need to apply for funding for the projects. This lets residents help make improvement decisions that matter most to them.

A Place to Live *continued*

Quality Housing

Focus on quality housing projects across multiple types and price points. Improve existing housing supply first and then work to attract new high quality housing.

- *Incentivize rehabilitation of aging housing stock and neighborhood infrastructure.*
- *Homeowner assistance programs for needed housing repairs and updates. Partner with OCRA for Owner Occupied Rehabilitation (OOR) projects.*
- *Utilize tools and resources in the Indiana Uplands Regional Housing Study.*

Traditional Suburan Fourplex - (Source: StrongTowns)

Modern Midwest Duplex Housing - (Source: shutterstock)

Based on standards from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), housing expenses (i.e. rent, maintenance, utilities) should not exceed 30 % of household income. According to the Indiana Uplands Regional Housing Study, approximately 38% of Orange County's renters are paying more than 30% of their monthly incomes on housing.

Source: Indiana Uplands Regional Housing Study 2019

Housing Vacancy

Focus on rehabilitating and filling or removing vacant housing within exiting neighborhoods. According to the Indiana Uplands Regional Housing Study, vacant housing represents more than 15% of the existing housing supply in the county, which is more than 1,300 units. If successfully rehabilitated and brought to market these units equate to enough housing inventory to meet current demand for years.

- *Conduct vacant housing inventories within existing neighborhoods to pinpoint the actual number and location of vacant residential and commercial properties.*
- *Develop an overview strategy for determining how vacant properties can be evaluated for potential marketability.*
- *Individual communities should collectively work to declare properties that are deemed beyond repair as blighted and systematically work to clear the buildings to make the lots marketable for new construction.*
- *Partner with interested community organizations, owners, and investors to bring properties with repair potential back on line as habitable through focused and intentional renovation efforts.*

Establishing Partnerships

Develop partnerships to assist aging residents with necessary updates and upgrades that will allow them to safely live in their existing homes for a longer period of time.

- *Harness state resources for Aging in Place housing provisions (i.e. wheelchair ramps, bathtub bars, etc.)*
- *Work with the current owners to develop a transition plan for selling the property once they are ready to transition to another living facility.*
- *Identify interested community organizations and investors to develop plans for new Aging in Place and senior living facilities within existing neighborhoods.*
    - *These should encompass a wide variety of housing choices that run the range from over 55 lifestyle-oriented developments to assisted living and palliative care facilities.*

A Place to Live *continued*

Neighborhood Revitalization

Parkland is an essential component of a healthy neighborhood. Orange County's communities each have well developed park systems. Enhancement of parkland and their related facilities has the potential to serve as a catalyst for neighorhood revitalization efforts.

1 Orleans Congress Square

Why this Location?

Centrally located in downtown, highly visible location, adequate parking, adjacent amenities in close proximity.

Recommended Improvements

- *Enhance pedestrian safety and connections to the square*
- *Activate streetscape and adjacent uses*
- *Update permanent infrastructure for events*

2 Paoli Parks

Why this Location?

Paoli boasts four parks within its boundaries, each of which have unique opportunities for enhancement.

Recommended Improvements

- *Jay Cee Park*
  - *Implement new playground (public input)*
- *Paoli Community Park*
  - *Provision of amenities for Youth Sports Leagues*
- *Marea Radcliff Rest Park*
  - *Cleanup and activate Lick Creek for public use*
- *Bicentennial Park*
  - *Playground, drinking fountains, benches, and other site furniture*

3 West Baden Springs Community Park

Why this Location?

Adjacent amenities in close proximity, pedestrian friendly, adequate parking.

Recommended Improvements

- *Implement rain gardens in low-lying areas of the park*
- *Develop bioswale infrastructure to capture excess runoff*

4 Downtown French Lick

Why this Location?

Pedestrian friendly, adequate parking facilities, adjacent amenities in close proximity, infrastructure is updated, area is symbolic to the county,

Recommended Improvements

- *Create a Public Park in French Lick*
- *Dedication and enhancement of plaza area (North of Main & Bowles intersection)*
  - *Dedicate as a town park for the public (name and signage)*
  - *Provide playground/other facilities for children*

Figure 1 | *Parkland Enhancements*
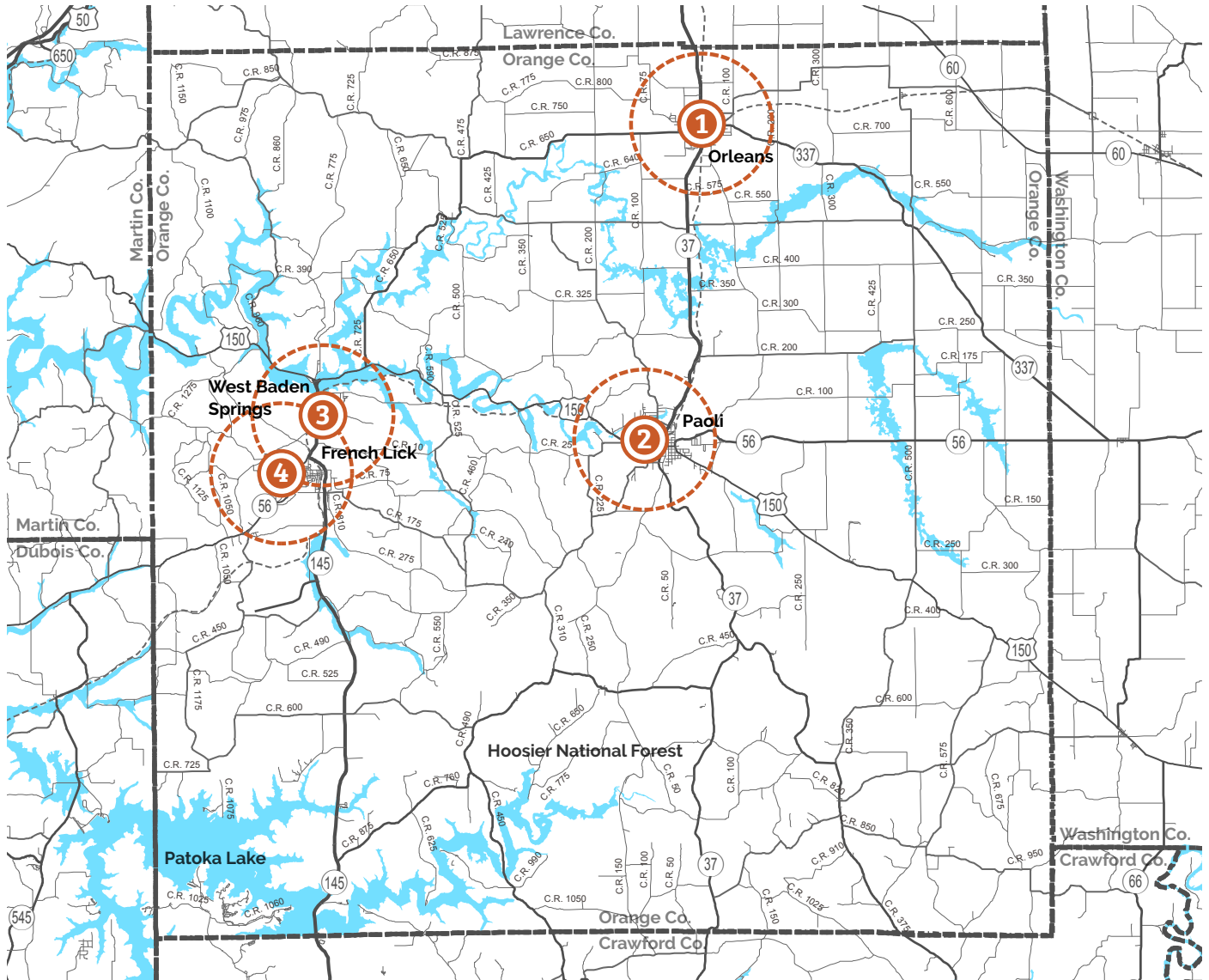
Keynotes #1–4 on the previous page correspond with Fig. 1 above.

A Place to Visit

Why A Place to Visit?

Tourism is big business in Indiana and Orange County is positioned to improve upon the benefits that more visitors can mean for the community. The county's location and existing tourism infrastructure provides significant existing assets to build from for increased tourism draw. The scenic beauty of the county and intact downtowns provide the character and charm that can generate year round tourism interest.

Making key quality of place improvements will help retain and attract residents to the county but they will also bolster the county's ability to welcome new visitors to the county. Making sure Orange County is viewed as a destination will help encourage visitors to stay a while longer. The following key projects will help Orange County and it's communities improve year round appeal for visitors.

Creating a Sense of Arrival

A sense of arrival is an emotional and mental state that accompanies the end of a visitor's travels and the beginning of their experiences within the county. The goal of this moment is to "wow" arriving visitors and to create a sense of pride within the county. To help facilitate this feeling when arriving, the county should consider implementing a range of simple infrastructure and environmental improvements throughout.

Developing a hierarchy of arrival points at the locations depicted on the map to the right is instrumental in establishing a unique yet consistent vision of the county. By employing county and community level arrival points, it informs visitors of the specific place they are about to experience. The corridors that connect the communities and key points of interest play a critical role in providing a backdrop to visitor's experiences.

Existing Point of Arrival Example in West Baden Springs - (Source: HWC)

Figure 5 | *Creating a Sense of Arrival*

Legend

- 🔵 County Level Point of Arrival Opportunities
- 🟢 Community Level Point of Arrival Opportunities
- 🟩 Existing Community Point of Arrival Examples
- ▬ Proposed Wayfinding Route and Arrival Corridor
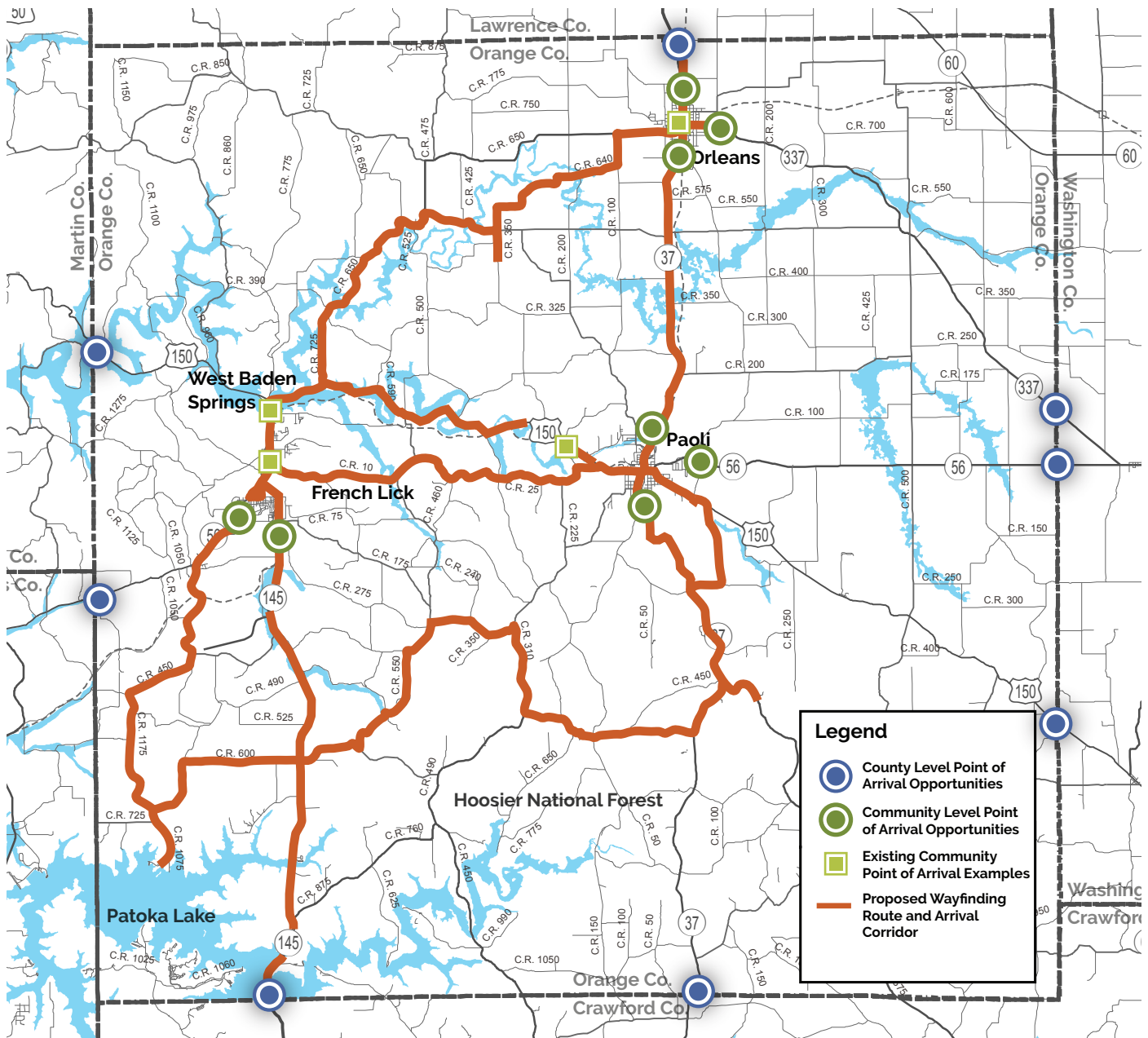
Developing a honed family of wayfinding signage is an excellent way to guide visitor's as they traverse throughout the county. Along these corridors it is crucial that the image of the county is fully represented. A clean, well landscaped, and safely accessible corridor speaks volumes of the county's commitment to hospitality and what the communities have to offer to visitors.

A Place to Visit *continued*

Create Points of Arrival & Implement Wayfinding

As previously mentioned, Orange County is full of untapped resources that have the potential to strengthen the local tourism industry. These resources are "untapped" because they are either not widely known or difficult to access.

Discuss hierarchy of county level versus community level points of arrival opportunities.

The provision of county-wide signage and wayfinding system can help direct residents and visitors to and from various points of interest throughout Orange County. Implementing this type of system could disperse the benefits of tourism throughout Orange County.

A well-defined and comprehensive county wayfinding system will create a sense of organization, improve vehicular flow and safety, establish a consistent brand for Orange County, and set a perception of quality for the county and its amenities.

Enhance Image of Corridors & Waterways

Enhancing the image of the county by maintaining corridors and waterways is imperative to preserving positive interaction with visitors. A clean, well landscaped, and safely accessible corridor and waterway speaks volumes of the county's commitment to hospitality. This commitment is important as it is the first thing that people see when visiting the county. Corridors act as the initial point of arrival for visitors entering the county and they frame their view as part of the arrival sequence. To maintain and enhance the image of the county's corridors, the following steps can be taken to ensure consistency throughout:

- *Implement volunteer county-wide corridor clean-up days*
- *Coordinate volunteer groups to assist with DNR cleanups throughout the county*
- *Expand trash pick-up to include larger and hazardous debris to encourage the community from dumping illegally*
- *Dedicate corridors as "greenways" to emphasize a commitment to beautifying the image of the county*
- *At key Points of Arrival consider implementing robust landscaping to frame the view into the county*

Another important asset in maintaining the county's image is its waterways. Patoka and Tucker Lake both are major assets for Orange County, but currently are underutilized. Public comment revealed discontent with the conditions of the recreation areas at both lakes. Residents and visitors agree the lakes are inadequately maintained and would benefit from additional programming. To address the concerns of residents, the county can take the following steps to ensure lake and water assets are utilized to their full potential:

- *Implement county-wide waterway clean-up days*
- *Encourage visitors to pick-up trash by employing additional trash receptacles*
- *Consider a trash-in / trash-out policy for areas outside of the high use zones*
- *Activate waterways by hosting events such as*
  - *Movies on the Lake – mobile projection screen*
  - *Duct Tape & Cardboard Regatta - (Hobart, IN annual event)*
  - *Rubber Duck Derby – use this opportunity to teach a message (Muncie, IN)*
  - *Floating obstacle course - (Whihala Beach - Whiting, IN)*
- *Activate waterways by encouraging people to be in the water*
  - *Provide public canoe, kayak, and boat launches at key locations*
  - *Provide canoe and kayak rentals*
  - *Host canoe and kayak paddles with local environmental groups*

A Place to Visit *continued*

Revitalize Downtown Cores

Orange County is fortunate to have historic commercial cores in its incorporated areas, but as trends and areas of investment have shifted over the years, so has the vibrancy of these central business districts.

Tourism is a major economic engine for Orange County, however, its benefits are not being realized in all of the county's communities. While tourism is obviously most beneficial to French Lick and West Baden Springs, the small businesses of Paoli and Orleans also have the potential to receive a portion of this benefit as well, through strategic placemaking efforts. Tourists that explore Paoli and Orleans are faced with few attractions that make them stay.

Downtown Orleans - (Source: HWC)

Placemaking

Placemaking is centered on creating interesting and inviting places. Unique places attract passersby and give them a reason to stop and stay for a while, ultimately capitalizing on local assets, inspiration, and potential of the community.

"A major Gallup survey identified "quality of place" as the single most important source of civic satisfaction. The more beautiful, welcoming and diverse the city, the happier and more prosperous its residents will be."

- Richard Florida

Local Businesses in Orleans - (Source: HWC)

Implement Placemaking Strategies

Goal

Create Safe & Comfortable Pedestrian Environments to Increase Tourism Appeal and Attract and Retain Businesses.

Strategy 1

Create a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment through the implementation of streetscaping, including:

- *Traffic calming elements such as, pedestrian refuge islands, well-marked crosswalks, bump-outs, and vehicular buffers between the street and sidewalk*

- *Streetscape amenities such as, enhanced landscaping, pedestrian scale lighting, and street furniture (i.e. benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, and signage)*

Strategy 2

Encourage visitors to stay longer during hot, Indiana summers by integrating shading strategies within downtown cores, such as:

- *Install more shade trees throughout the downtown and other highly visible zones within the community*

- *Integrate awnings and other shading strategies at the face of buildings and at gathering places such as outdoor cafes*

- *Place umbrellas and other overhead screening above outdoor seating*

Strategy 3

Integrate vacant storefronts by employing window displays, facades, and :

- *Encourage local events that utilize vacant buildings*

- *Install signage at windows to exhibit points of interest throughout the county*

A Place to Visit *continued*

Encourage Small and Local Businesses

The local tourism industry attracts over 1 million visitors to Orange County each year, yet massive potential is being lost. Expansion of the existing tourism industry could result in new small business development and additional entrepreneurial & employment opportunities.

Connecting tourists to Orange County's communities will likely spawn hospitality support services. Tourists demand more local shopping and dining destinations:

- *Local shops featuring items produced by local artists/artisans/craftsmen*
- *Additional restaurants*
- *Local, farm-to-table restaurant(s)*
- *Micro-brewery, distillery, winery*

French Lick Trolley Tour

The French Lick Trolley Tour is a fare system which takes riders to see more than two dozen historical points of interest in the areas immediately surrounding French Lick and West Baden Springs. Expanding the service to include historical and cultural stops in Paoli and Orleans as well as natural and recreational stops in the Hoosier National Forest could encourage investment and growth through Orange County.

French Lick Trolley Tour in Service

Focus Nodes of Activity in Key Locations

In an effort to attract visitors and maintain a high quality of place, the county should focus efforts on establishing nodes of activity in key locations. Involvement of all communities is key to the success of these efforts. Determining the kind of activity and the target audience is imperative in the selection of these key nodes.

Current trends show that by activating downtown cores and implementing a schedule of events and activities, revitalization and business retainment occurs at a greater rate than downtowns with little to no planned events or activities. By locating venues in downtown cores, and places with adjacent amenities, the benefits are compounded by providing a diverse variety of things to do and places for people to spend time and money.

Alternatively, establishing unique venues for special events is another way to attract visitors from outside the county. Known for its natural beauty, Orange County is well positioned to create a venue that incorporates the landscape as a backdrop. Positioning a venue along a waterway or tucked within a wooded area would provide a great opportunity to market new local performance events such as movies in the park, farm to table food festivals, etc.

Goal

Establish local venues at key nodes that attract visitors and supports business throughout the county.

Strategy 1

Expand and enhance community-based events by implementing a robust county-wide schedule of events that focuses on all communities

Strategy 2

Encourage visitors to participate in community events by marketing outside of the county

Strategy 3

Integrate necessary infrastructure to support events for each venue

The figure on the following page illustrates key locations for Focused Nodes of Activity and Events. Six key locations were identified throughout the county to help focus efforts in developing coordinated events and activities. As part of a larger branding and marketing effort, these events and activities could be marketed to visitors and community members from inside and outside the county. Each location was analyzed for the potential to host activities and events and a list of recommended improvements was developed to provide a base–line for future activity. A list of events was developed to provide a vision for each node.

Figure 5 | *Focused Nodes of Activity and Events*
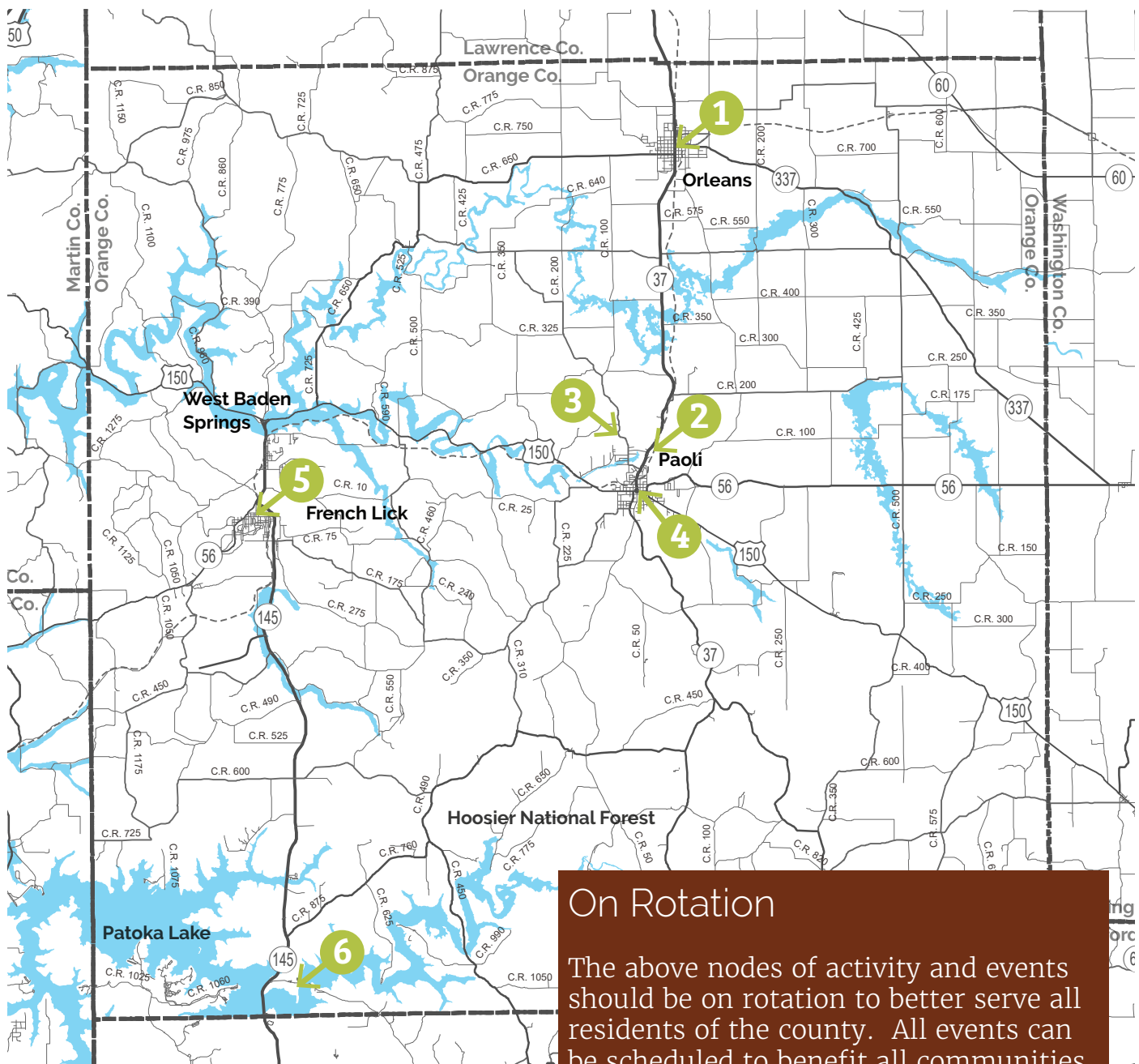
On Rotation

The above nodes of activity and events should be on rotation to better serve all residents of the county. All events can be scheduled to benefit all communities and attract associated business and visitors.

1 Orleans Congress Square

Why this Location?

Centrally located in downtown, highly visible location, adequate parking, adjacent amenities in close proximity

Recommended Improvements

- *Enhance pedestrian safety and connections to the square*
- *Activate streetscape and adjacent uses*
- *Update permanent infrastructure for events*

Event Opportunities

Festivals, Markets, Movies on the Square

2 Historic Bridge Abutment in Paoli

Why this Location?

Unique, highly visible location, cultural and historic landmark

Recommended Improvements

- *Provide access to site*
- *Provide parking facilities*
- *Infrastructure and site improvements for events*

Event Opportunities

Unique performance venue, the "Red Rocks" of Southern Indiana

3 County Fairgrounds

Why this Location?

Centrally located in county, known county/communal place, adequate parking facilities, and adjacent amenities in close proximity

Recommended Improvements

- *Enhance access to site*
- *Increase and update parking amenities*
- *Update permanent infrastructure for events*

Event Opportunities

Festivals, Markets, Fair, Carnival

4 Paoli Square

Why this Location?

Symbolic to the county, centrally located to the county, adjacent amenities in close proximity, pedestrian friendly, adequate parking

Recommended Improvements

- *Enhance pedestrian safety and connections to the square*
- *Activate streetscape and adjacent uses*
- *Update permanent infrastructure for events*

Event Opportunities

Festivals, Markets, Movies on the Square

5 Maple Street/ Downtown French Lick

Why this Location?

Centrally located in downtown, pedestrian friendly, high visibility, adequate parking facilities, adjacent amenities in close proximity, infrastructure is updated

Recommended Improvements

- *Update permanent infrastructure for events as needed*

Event Opportunities

Festivals, Markets, Downtown Movies

6 Patoka Lake

Why this Location?

Unique natural setting, water activity, adequate parking facilities

Recommended Improvements

- *Update site to increase functionality for events*
- *Update permanent infrastructure for events*

Event Opportunities

Farm to table food festivals, Farmers markets, Movies in the Park

A Place to Visit *continued*

Food Truck Festivals

Food Trucks are a temporary installment throughout Orange County during the summertime. Whether its snow cones or sliders, Orange County is no stranger to food trucks. A summer event that unites all food trucks on common ground would bring people together and boost civic pride.

- *Encourage other local businesses or vendors or crafters or artists or budding entrepreneurs open little pop-up store booths next to the trucks, like an instant mini-downtown*

- *Invite food trucks to stay late and support later shopping hours in commercial cores/ downtown*

The City of Bloomington hosts Food Truck Fridays during the summer. Bloomington credits the success of its Food Truck Fridays to the live music performances held during the event each week.

Orange County HomeGrown

The Farmer's Market in Orleans is often denoted as the Orleans Farmer's Market, however, the official name of the event is Orange County HomeGrown. This begs the question, is hosting Orange County HomeGrown in Orleans limiting its potential? Orleans is the most agriculturally dependent community in Orange County so it is fitting in that respect, but Orleans is the farthest from French Lick and West Baden Springs. In other words, hosting Orange County HomeGrown in Orleans hinders the potential benefits from tourism. Connecting tourism to local events will increase spending throughout the county. Promoting Orange County HomeGrown through amenities and attractions in French Lick and West Baden Springs will spread awareness to tourists about local events, increasing their attendance and boosting the local economy.

Summer Movie Nights

Public engagement efforts revealed a demand for entertainment in Orange County. Several public comments expressed the want for a movie theater or other similar entertainment. Orange County's night-life scene is defined by the French Lick Casino and various pub and bars, although, this excludes young families and children. Orange County has a 4 screen theater in French Lick. Given that the Springs Stadium 4 is in French Lick, most of the county's youth are not in close enough proximity to enjoy.

Orange County should explore the creation of a Summer Movie Nights event. Setting the date is crucial as it should be at a time which accommodates the most residents. Fridays at dusk from the months of May to September (weather permitting) would be ideal. A temporary/mobile projection screen should be used. Hence, a new movie will be screened in a different location, rotating between communities each week. For example, a movie could be played in Congress Square in Orleans one week and a different movie could be played in Bicentennial Park in Paoli the following week. This concept prevents favoritism to one community such as the Springs Stadium 4 does in French Lick. This addresses the lack of entertainment while boosting night-life, promoting civic pride and community involvement, and creating entertainment for all ages.

Indianapolis Summer Nights Film Series

Valparaiso Summer Outdoor Movies

Connecting Places

Why Connecting Place?

Orange County is fortunate to host a range of natural and recreational resources. The landscape, however, is both an asset and a challenge in Orange County. While the landscape offers an abundance of natural amenities for our enjoyment, it also hinders our mobility and segregates our communities and resources.

Creating physical connections and/or designating alternative routes between points of interest throughout Orange County highlights the scenic beauty while connecting assets. Making these types of connections builds awareness and triggers activity that supports community building and tourism potential.

Driving is a fast and efficient means to get around, however, sometimes there is no sense of urgency and we wish to take our time. The connections and designation of alternative routes for walking and cycling promotes a more active lifestyle while highlighting the most scenic and interesting places in the county.

Points of Interest

State roads provide a direct link between Orange County's communities, however, some of the county's best resources are found off the beaten path, along rural roadways. Designating routes for driving and cycling throughout the county would help link together various landmarks.

Designating county Auto Tour routes has the potential to capture tourists and spread the benefit throughout Orange County, beyond French Lick and West Baden Springs. (See Fig. 1 for proposed Orange County Auto Tours)

Aside from the creation of Auto Tours, there is untapped potential in Orange County regarding cycling. Bicycle infrastructure and right-of-way dedication caters to a growing demographic in the tourism industry. Bicycle tourism is on the rise and Orange County is perfectly positioned to reap its benefits.

Figure 1 | *Orange County Auto Tours*

Freeman's Corner

Orleans Farmer's Market

Orleans Congress Square

Lawrence Co.
Orange Co.

Orleans

The Rise of the Lost River at Orangeville

Wesley Chapel Gulf

Orange County Heritage Auto Tour
Approx. 35 miles (1 hr.)

West Baden Springs

West Baden Springs Hotel & Gardens

French Lick West Baden Trails

French Lick Winery & Vintage Cafe

Paoli Peaks

Paoli

Orange County Courthouse

French Lick Resort/Casino

French Lick

French Lick Scenic Railway

Wilstem Ranch

French Lick/West Baden Springs Museum

Pioneer Mother's Memorial Forest

Southern Indiana Foothills Auto Tour
Approx. 40 miles (1h 15m)

Springs Valley State Fish & Wildlife Area

Lick Creek Trailhead

Tucker Lake

Young's Creek Trailhead

Hoosier National Forest

Patoka Lake

Martin Co.
Orange Co.

Washington Co.

Orange Co.
Crawford Co.

Connecting Places *continued*

Local and Regional Transit

An essential component of a quality place is connecting people to destinations. Connectivity within Orange County's communities is functional, however, there is opportunity for improvments. Making adequate pedestrian connections is the first step. The implementation and maintenance of local sidewalk infrastructure is the ticket to an active streetscape. Activity of the street supports local businesses and builds civic pride.

While locales have inadequate sidewalk networks, Orange County and the greater region lack strong tranit connections. Connecting Orange County to population centers presents workforce opportunities and tourism potential.
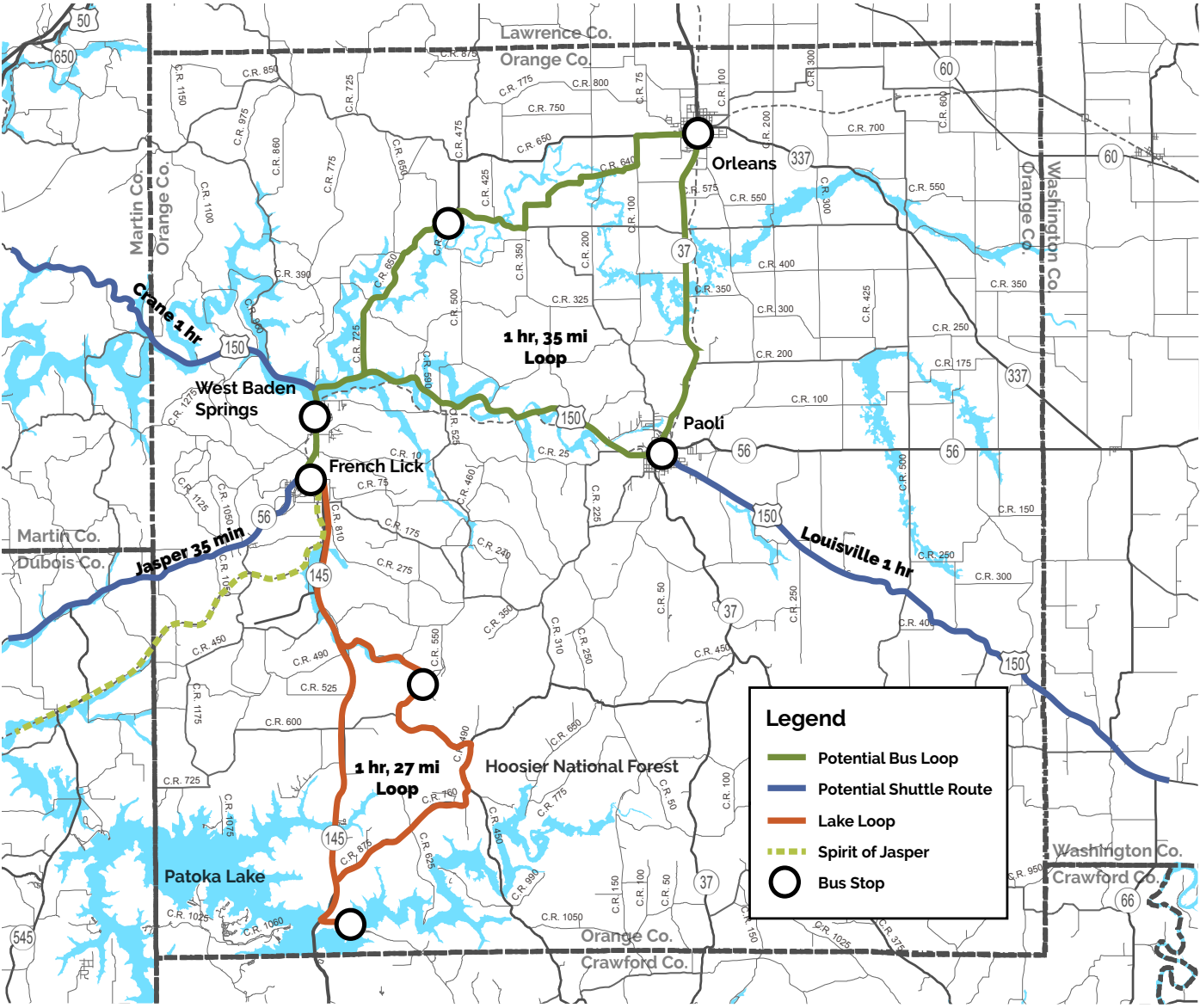
Transit

There are several unique challenges that face Orange County when it comes to transportation, however, the most pressing is the scarce workforce. The Orange County Transit Service (OCTS) provides demand response, curb-to-curb, advance reservation transportation service within Orange County. Since 1996, OCTS has offered public and Medicaid transportation to all of Orange County, but, according to representatives from the Southern Indiana Community Health Care, the reliability of OCTS has diminished over recent years due to a lack of drivers to operate the fleet.

Attracting workforce through quality of place efforts has the potential to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of OCTS. Enhancement of OCTS services could alleviate the public demand for increased transportation to healthcare services.

Aside from existing transit services, Orange County would benefit from enhanced transit connectivity. Orange County should explore a interurban transit loop as well as a recreational (lake) loop that connects people to the lakes and woodlands of the Hoosier National Forest. Additionally, the provision of daily shuttle services would connect Orange County to population centers and employment opportunities. Jasper and Louisville are both within a short drive from Orange County.

Figure 2 | *Transit Map*

Legend
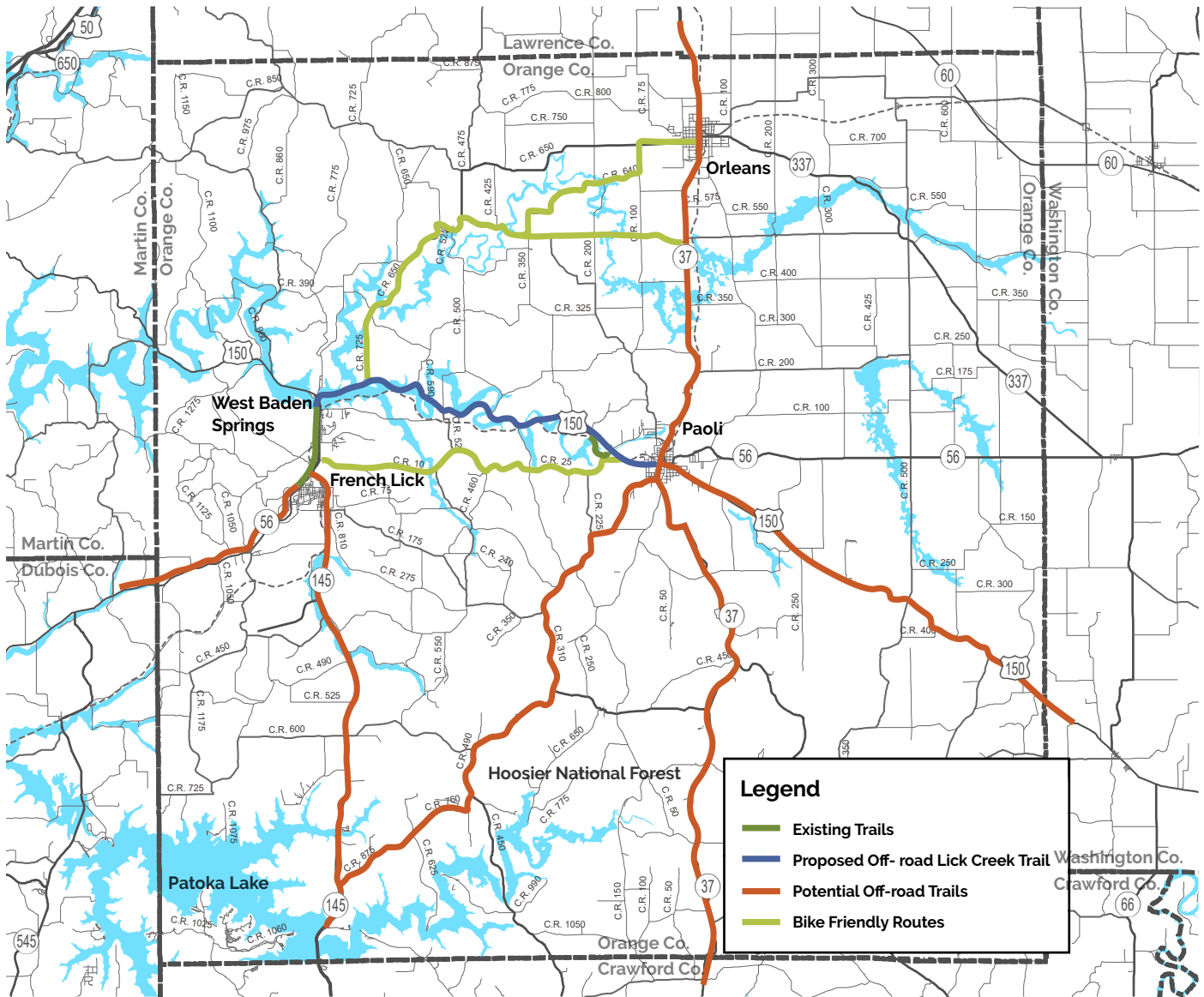- Potential Bus Loop
- Potential Shuttle Route
- Lake Loop
- Spirit of Jasper
- Bus Stop

Figure 2 | *Interconnectivity*

Legend

— Existing Trails
— Proposed Off- road Lick Creek Trail
— Potential Off-road Trails
— Bike Friendly Routes

Cycling

The foothills of Southern Indiana make biking through Orange County a challenge, even for conditioned cyclists. State highways are well maintained and have minimal changes in elevation, which is great for biking, however, they carry high speed traffic which is not great for biking. As a result, county roads are the ideal bike routes in Orange County. The low speeds and rural landscape of county roads make for a leisure and scenic cruise while simultaneously linking various natural, recreational, and cultural landmarks together. Establishing bike friendly routes throughout Orange County (see Fig. 2) addresses the desire for increased non–motorized transportation connectivity while building bicycle tourism.

Paoli is in close proximity to French Lick and West Baden Springs, yet experiences limited benefits from tourism. Orange County's tourists are currently not likely to leave French Lick and/or West Baden Springs, but if the ideal routes for bicycles were made obvious, cycling tourists may be encouraged to explore Orange County and visit its communities, like Paoli.

After cycling connections are established, amenities need to be provided. To successfully harness bicycle tourism, the following services and facilities shall be provided:

- *Bike Racks/Storage*
- *Bicycle Repair Shop/Store*
- *Refreshments (Drinking Fountains, Restaurants, Convenience Stores, etc.)*
- *Parking Facilities at Trailheads*
- *Shelter/Rest Areas along Interurban Connections*

Connecting Places *continued*

Activate Water Bodies

The desire for water activation and increased connectivity suggests the implementation of Riverwalk in Orange County. As previously mentioned, Orange County has a plethora of natural resources. Orange County features a vast array of linear water bodies, the most notable being the Lost River and Lick Creek. Since the Lost River is largely subterranean, Lick Creek is the ideal candidate for the implementation of a Riverwalk. Paoli Community Park lies adjacent to Lick Creek and features a small loop of trails that hug the creek. In other words, the trail has a starting point in Paoli Community Park. The implementation of a Riverwalk along Lick Creek would connect French Lick/West Baden Springs to Paoli (see Fig. 2).

To ensure project feasibility, the Riverwalk should be expanded in 1–2 miles segments starting at Paoli Community Park. See Figure 3 below for additional detail.

Figure 3 | *Lick Creek "River" Walk*
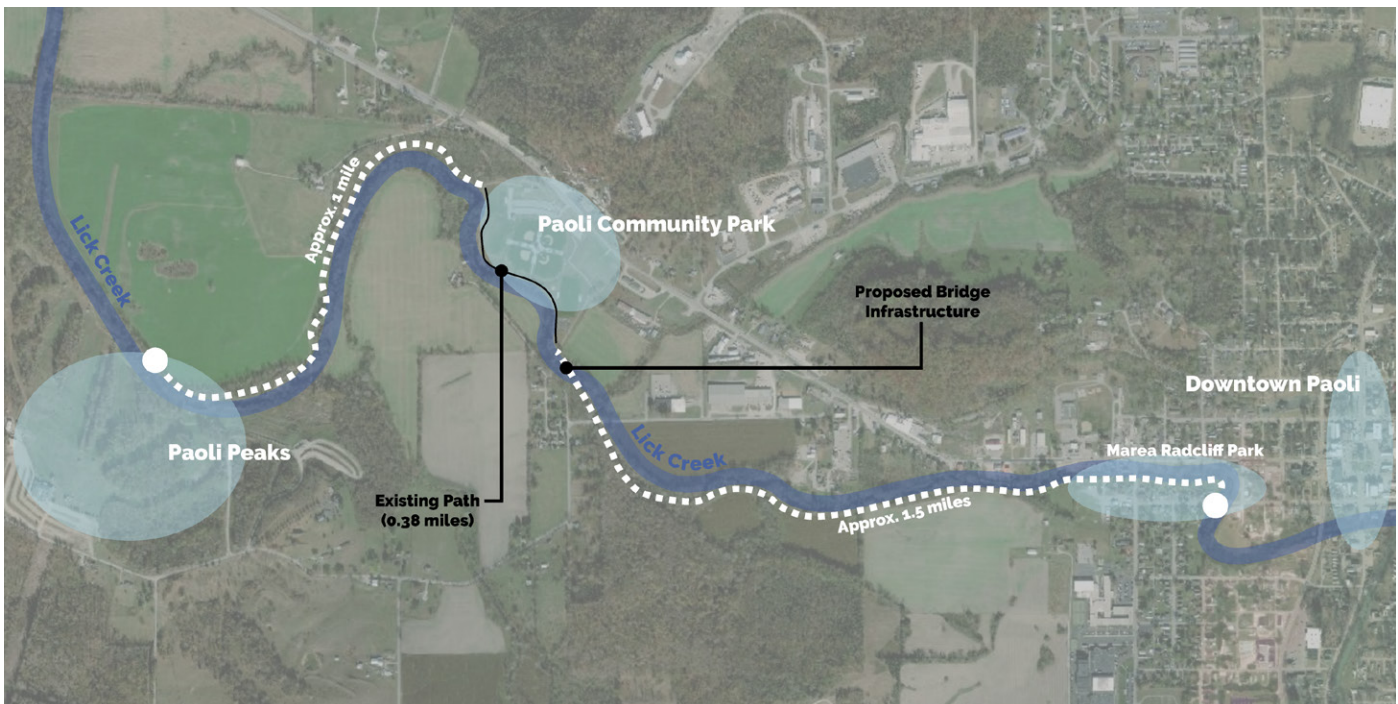
Local Connections

Connectivity is crucial in rural communities with limited access. The Towns of Orleans and Paoli are traditionally planned rural communities with small populations and gridiron street patterns. These attributes allow for efficient traffic circulation, however, this only applies to vehicular traffic. Given the rural nature of these communities, there is an inherent lack of pedestrian infrastructure.

Investing in sidewalks creates a safer environment, increases mobility, improves air quality, and leads to healthier communities. Furthermore, sidewalks can help reduce long-term costs of transportation. For example, implementing sidewalks creates safe routes to schools for children. As a result, local school systems could establish a Walking School Bus program to encourage walking (when weather permits), reducing school bus fleet expenses and creating stronger social relationships amongst Orange County's youth.

For exmaple, the form of communities can be a barrier to connectivity. Long, rectilinear blocks present pedestrian mobility challenges. Creating pedestrian paths through urban blocks can increase safety and reduce walking time for children (see Fig. 4).

Figure 4 | *Pedestrian Connectivity*

Proposed Pedestrian Connections

Elementary School
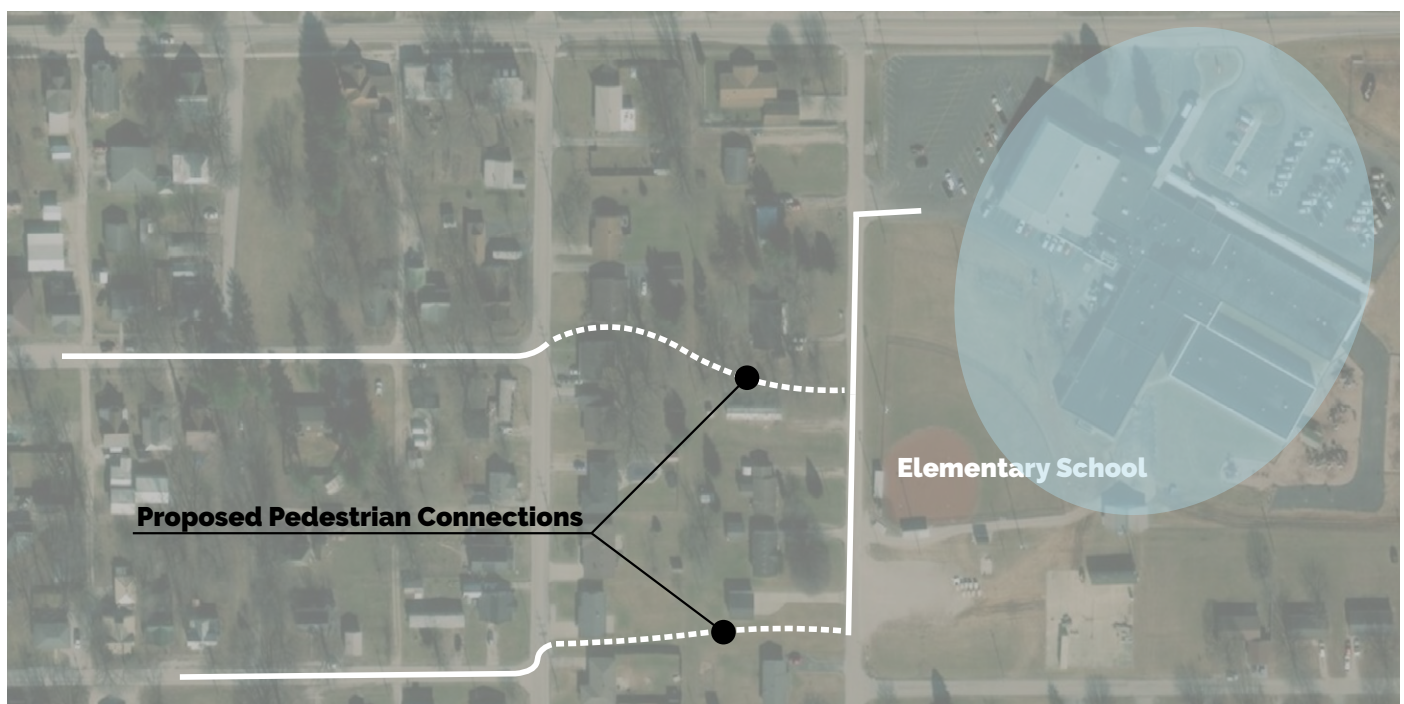
Community Focused Project List

The following pages present a list of projects that relate to the three recommendation categories presented in this chapter. Each project includes a brief description and lists potential community partners that can provide technical assistance and other resources to help identify feasible local implementation steps. For the purposes of this plan, Short term relates to 6 months to one year, medium–term relates to 1 year to 4 years and long term is considered 5 years or more.

Projects
A Place to Live

Project	Description	Community Partners	Priority
House and/or Yard of the Month Program	Implement House or Yard of the Month competitions with awards, signage, and community celebration. Such an event will help generate interest among existing residents and homeowners to complete personal beautification projects.	Local Government (Town Leaders, inspectors); County Government (Councilmen and Commissioners),	Short-term
Neighborhood Rehabilitation	Incentivize rehabilitation of aging housing stock and neighborhood infrastructure.	Private Investors, Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority (IHCDA), Habitat for Humanity, local government	Medium/Long-term
Homeowner Assistance	Homeowner assistance programs for needed housing repairs and updates. Partner with OCRA for Owner Occupied Rehabilitation (OOR) projects.	Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA)	Medium/Long-term
Vacant Structure Inventory	Conduct vacant housing inventories within existing neighborhoods to pinpoint the actual number and location of vacant residential and commercial properties.	Local Planning Departments, Building Inspectors, Neighborhood or Community Organizations	Medium-term
Market Vacancies in Orange County	Develop an overview strategy for determining how vacant properties can be evaluated for potential marketability. Enlist the help of local housing experts to make a realistic plan for removal or rehabilitation and resale of identified properties.	Local building officials, Plan Commissions, Local Contractors, Banks	Medium-term
Identify and Raze Blighted Properties	Work to declare properties that are deemed beyond repair as blighted and provide resources to systematically clear the buildings and make the lots marketable for new construction.	IHCDA, Plan Commissioners, Town/County Councils, Building Inspectors, Local Planning Departments	Long-term
Renovate Properties through Partnerships with Community Members	Partner with interested community organizations, owners, and investors to bring properties with repair potential back on line as habitable through focused and intentional renovation efforts.	Banks/Financial Institutions, Real Estate Investors, Developers, Local Contractors, Plan Commissioners	Long-term

Projects
A Place to Live *continued*

Project	Description	Community Partners	Priority
Aging-in-Place Home Upgrades	Develop a program that serves as a single resource for Aging-in-Place housing needs (i.e. wheelchair ramps, bathroom grab bars, downsizing, assisted living placement etc.)	IHCDA; Southern Indiana Community Health Care (SICHC)	Medium-term
Housing that Promotes Aging-in-Place	Identify interested community organizations and investors to develop plans for new Aging-in-Place and senior living facilities within existing neighborhoods. These facilities should encompass a wide variety of housing choices that run the range from over-55 lifestyle-oriented developments to assisted living and pallatative care facilities.	IHCDA; Southern Indiana Community Health Care (SICHC)	Long-term
Orleans Congress Square Enhancements	Enhance pedestrian safety and connections to the square, activate streetscape and adjacent uses, and update permanent infrastructure for events	Town of Orleans Planning Commission; Town of Orleans Redevelopment Commission	Medium/Long-term
Jay Cee Park Enhancements (Paoli)	Complete new playground improvements. (per public input)	Town of Paoli; Paoli Parks Director	Medium-term
Paoli Community Park Enhancements	Provision of amenities for Youth Sports League	Town of Paoli; Paoli Parks Director	Medium-term
Marea Radcliff Rest Park Enhancements (Paoli)	Cleanup and Activate Lick Creek for Public Use	Town of Paoli; Paoli Parks Director	Medium-term
Bicentennial Park Enhancements (Paoli)	Provide additional facilities on site such as drinking fountains, benches, and other site furniture.	Town of Paoli; Paoli Parks Director	Medium-term
West Baden Springs Community Park Enhancements	Implement rain gardens in low-lying areas of the park and develop bioswale infrastructure to capture excess runoff	Town of West Baden Springs: Orange Co. CVB	Medium-term
French Lick Downtown Park Dedication and Enhancements	Dedicate and enhance plaza area (North of Main & Bowles intersection) and dedicate as a town park for the public. Name the park, install signage, and provide playground/other facilities for children	Town of French Lick; Orange Co. CVB;	Medium-term

Projects
A Place to Visit

Project	Description	Community Partners	Priority
Enhancements to County Points of Arrival	Implement gateway signage, lighting, and other enhancements at points of entry to the county. At key points of arrival ,consider implementing robust landscaping to frame the view into Orange County.	County Council, Plan Commissions, Redevelopment Commissions, Business Sponsors	Short/Medium-term
Enhancements to Community Points of Arrival	Implement signage, lighting, landscaping, and other features to create sense of arrival for each of Orange County's communities.	Town Councils, Plan Commissions, Redevelopment Commissions, Business Sponsors	Short/Medium-term
Wayfinding Routes/Arrival Corridors	Create a County Wayfinding System with a consistent brand and varied signage scales. Identify prominent corridors to emphasize a commitment to beautifying the image of the county.	County Council, Plan Commissions, Redevelopment Commissions, Business Sponsors	Short/Medium-term
Volunteer County-Wide Corridor Cleanup Days	Create a Cleanup Days schedule, taking advantage of seasonal changes. Harness pool of local volunteers to rid highly-visible corridors of litter, overgrown vegetation, and other debris. (i.e. county waterways and roadways)	Local Environmental Groups, Community Sponsors and Volunteers, Town and County Appointed and Elected Bodies, Neighbors/Residents	Short-term
Cleanup of Natural Resources	Coordinate volunteer groups to assist with Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) Cleanups of natural resources throughout Orange County.	IDNR, Local Environmental Groups, Community Sponsors and Volunteers, Town and County Appointed and Elected Bodies	Short-term
Expand Waste Collection Services	Expand trash services to include regularly scheduled large and heavy trash pick-up days. Coordinate regular and repeated e-waste and hazardous material collection days with towns.	Municipal Waste Collection, Town Councils	Medium-term
Ensure Natural Resources, Including Key Water Features, are Actively Maintained	Install additional trash receptacles at key congregation locations in the county. Provide resources for regular monitoring and emptying of receptacles. Promote a trash-in / trash-out policy for areas outside of the high use zones. Host events to help maintain and clean important natural resource areas.	IDNR; Orange Co. CVB, Local Environmental Groups, Community Sponsors and Volunteers, Town and County Appointed and Elected Bodies	Short/Medium-term
Implement Placemaking Strategies	Create safe & comfortable pedestrian environments to increase tourism appeal and attract and retain businesses (see the Implement Placemaking Strategies section in the A Place to Visit chapter for specific recommendations).	County Council, Town Councils, Local Chambers of Commerce, Business and Institutional Partners	Short/Medium-term
Expand French Lick Trolley Tour System	Expand the service to include historical and cultural stops in Paoli and Orleans as well as natural and recreational stops in the Hoosier National Forest.	French Lick and West Baden Springs Resorts; Orange Co. CVB	Short/Medium-term

A Place to Visit *continued*

Project	Description	Community Partners	Priority
County-Wide Events for Residents and Guests	Expand and enhance community-based events by implementing a robust county-wide schedule of events that focuses on all communities. Encourage visitors to participate in community events by marketing outside of the county.	Orange Co. CVB, Local Main Street Organizations, Local Chambers of Commerce, Parks Departments	Short-term
Rotate Orange County HomeGrown	Alternate weekly location of HomeGrown. Dedicate space for HomeGrown in each community and provide necessary site improvements.	Orange Co. CVB, Local Main Street Organizations, Local Chambers of Commerce, Parks Departments	Short-term
Summer Movie Nights	Create county-wide Summer Movie Night event using a portable projection screen to alternate location with each screening. Encourage attendees to bring their own seating. Once popularity is established, more permanent infrastructure should be explored.	Orange Co. CVB, Local Main Street Organizations, Local Chambers of Commerce, Parks Departments	Short-term
Focused Node - Orleans Congress Square	See the pages 69-71 of the Recommendations Chapter for Project Details.	Orange Co. CVB, Town of Orleans Council, Orleans Parks Department, Orleans Main Street, Orleans Chamber of Commerce, Building and Business Owners	Medium-term
Focused Node - Historic Bridge Abutment in Paoli	See the pages 69-71 of the Recommendations Chapter for Project Details.	Orange Co. CVB, Town of Paoli Council, Paoli Parks Department, Paoli Main Street	Medium-term
Focused Node - County Fairgrounds	See the pages 69-71 of the Recommendations Chapter for Project Details.	Orange Co. CVB, Local Main Street Organizations, Local Chambers of Commerce, County Commissioners and County Council	Medium-term
Focused Node - Paoli Square	See the pages 69-71 of the Recommendations Chapter for Project Details.	Orange Co. CVB, Town of Paoli Council, Paoli Parks Department, Paoli Main Street, Paoli Chamber of Commerce, Business and Building Owners	Medium-term
Focused Node - Maple Street/Downtown French Lick	See the pages 69-71 of the Recommendations Chapter for Project Details.	Orange Co. CVB, French Lick Main Street Organization, French LickChamber of Commerce, French Lick Parks Department, Business and Building Owners	Medium-term
Focused Node - Patoka Lake	See the pages 69-71 of the Recommendations Chapter for Project Details.	Orange Co. CVB, County Government, INDNR	Medium-term

Connecting Places

Project	Description	Community Partners	Priority
Orange County Auto Tours	Utilize Orange County Auto Tours map (see Fig. 1 in the Connecting Places chapter) to designate driving routes throughout the county.	Orange County Highway Department; INDOT, Orange County CVB, Local Chambers of Commerce	Short/Medium-term
Local Bus Transit Service	Implement bus transit service that runs on a localized loop which connects Orange County's communities (see Fig. 2 in the Connecting Places chapter).	Orange County CVB, Local Chambers of Commerce, Local Businesses, Town and County Government	Medium/Long-term
Regional Shuttle Service to Population Centers	Create a regional shuttle service that connects Orange County to population centers (see Fig. 2 in the Connecting Places chapter).	Orange County CVB, Local Chambers of Commerce, Local Businesses, Town and County Government	Medium/Long-term
Transit Service to Lakes	Implement bus transit service thats connects residents and visitors to Tucker Lake and Patoka Lake.	Orange County CVB, Local Chambers of Commerce, Local Businesses, Town and County Government	Medium/Long-term
Lick Creek Trail	Develop a "Riverwalk" along Lick Creek between West Baden Springs and Paoli (see the Activate Water Bodies section in the Connecting Places chapter).	Orange County CVB, Local Chambers of Commerce, Local Businesses, Town and County Government	Long-term
Dedicate Bike-Friendly Routes	Dedicate right-of-way (see Fig. 2 in the Connecting Places chapter) that encourages cycling on Orange County's bicycle-friendly roadways.	Orange County Highway Department, Orange County CVB, Local Chambers of Commerce, Local Businesses, Town and County Government	Medium-term
Develop Interurban Multi Use Trail Network	Develop a multi use trail for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles that connects the county's communities together and connects the county to the greater region (see Fig. 2 in the Connecting Places chapter).	Orange County CVB, Local Chambers of Commerce, Local Businesses, Town and County Government	Medium-term
Install Amenities for Riders Along Cycling Routes	Cyclist amenities include but are not limited to: trailheads, bike racks/storage, shelter/rest areas, refreshments (Drinking Fountains, Restaurants, Convenience Stores, etc.)	Orange County CVB, Local Chambers of Commerce, Local Businesses, Town and County Government	Medium-term
Local Pedestrian Connections	Implement sidewalks to create safer routes to school for children (see the Local Connections section and Fig. 4 in the Connecting Places chapter).	Orange County Highway Department, Orange County CVB, Local Chambers of Commerce, Local Businesses, Town and County Government	Medium-term