



QUALITY OF PLACE & WORKFORCE ATTRACTION PLAN

WASHINGTON COUNTY, INDIANA

DECEMBER 2025



REGIONAL
OPPORTUNITY
INITIATIVES

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INTRODUCTION

As part of an overarching strategy for improving economic and community prosperity in the Indiana Uplands, Regional Opportunity Initiatives (ROI) established a grant opportunity for the 11 counties of our region to help ensure the region is ready for the opportunities ahead.

Ready Communities grants provide communities and organizations with resources to strategically develop programs and projects that build quality of place, grow regional capacity for workforce development and attraction, and improve the attributes and amenities that make the Indiana Uplands a desirable place to live, work, and play.

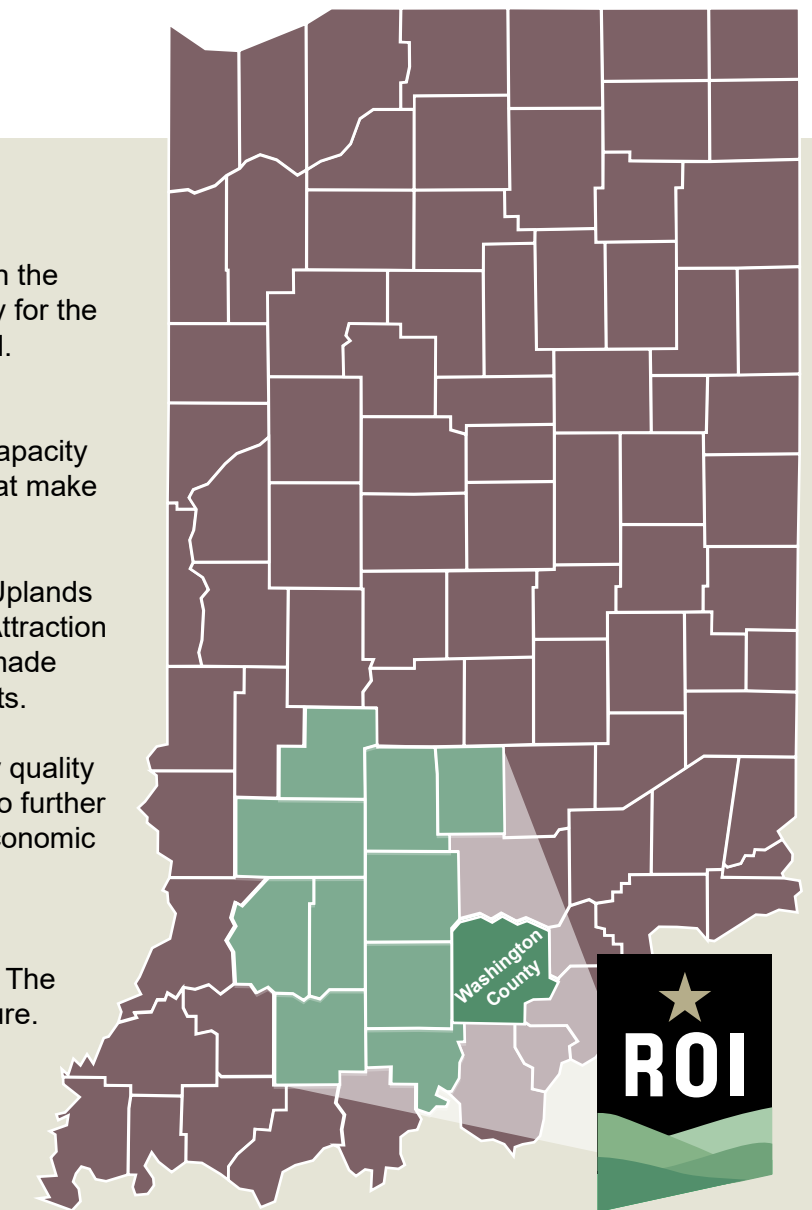
In 2019, the process began with Ready Communities Planning Grants. Each Indiana Uplands county received a \$50,000 planning grant to develop Quality of Place and Workforce Attraction Plans. Following the Ready Communities Planning Grant stage, up to \$3 million was made available for competitive quality of place and workforce attraction implementation grants.

These planning and implementation grants from ROI provided the foundation for many quality of place and workforce attraction initiatives and projects. Uplands counties were able to further utilize their plans to capitalize on funding opportunities through the state's Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI 1.0 and 2.0).

Recognizing the success of these initial planning efforts, ROI sought to reconvene our county partners to update the Quality of Place and Workforce Attraction plans in 2025. The hallmark of these plans is inclusive community input in developing priorities for the future. The consensus built around these priorities provides a roadmap for success.

What Is a Quality of Place and Workforce Attraction Plan?

A Quality of Place and Workforce Attraction Plan provides county and community leaders with a strategic plan for developing and implementing projects and initiatives to build quality of place amenities, strengthen local and regional capacity for workforce attraction, and improve residents' quality of life. Together these efforts make the Indiana Uplands a desirable place to live, work, and play.



The plan that follows was funded by a grant from the Regional Opportunity Initiatives, Inc. (ROI) and was completed as part of a wholistic strategy for improving economic and community prosperity in the Indiana Uplands counties (Brown, Crawford, Daviess, Dubois, Greene, Lawrence, Martin, Monroe, Orange, Owen, and Washington).

OUR STORY

Welcome to Washington County, Indiana—where natural beauty, deep-rooted history, and small-town charm comes together to create an exceptional place to live, work, and explore.

Nestled among the rolling hills of Southern Indiana, our county is surrounded by old-growth forests, pristine lakes, and scenic landscapes that make every day feel a little more peaceful. But our story runs deeper than our landscape. Washington County's heritage is woven into the fabric of our towns, reflected in the historic buildings, long standing family farms, restored landmarks and museums that honor the people and traditions that shaped this community. From the iconic Salem speedway to the stories of innovation such as the creation of 2% milk, the history and ingenuity continue to influence who we are today. Here, you'll also find something even more special: the warmth of a close-knit community. In Washington County, neighbors are more than just the folks next door—they're like family. It's a place where newcomers are welcomed quickly and where lifelong residents take pride in calling this community home.

Whether you're seeking a place to raise a family, launch a business, grow a career or simply enjoy a more balanced lifestyle, Washington County welcomes you home.



HISTORY

Washington County, named after former U.S. President George Washington, is located in south central Indiana, less than 25 miles from the Kentucky-Indiana border along the Ohio River. Washington County was officially established in 1814 through legislation that took land from both Clark and Harrison Counties.

The County's population grew rapidly in its early years, increasing from 250 people in 1810 to 9,039 people in 1820. This rapid growth marks the largest population increase during a single decade in the County's history.

The County's early growth was coupled with a rise in the number of local mills, distilleries, factories, general stores and tanneries. One such mill was known as Beck's Mill located in Salem, which is one of only 20 historic mills that remain standing in Indiana. Mills and other manufacturing enterprises also sprung up in Salem later, around the mid-1800s. A more well known development was the introduction of a treadwheel powered cotton mill, erected in 1825. This type of mill is famous throughout the State and region because it was the first mill with the ability to spin cotton yarn in the State of Indiana.

In the 1940s, a lesser-known but locally significant innovation took place in Salem: the invention of 2 % milk by Roy Robertson at the Salem Maid Dairy/Creamery. At the request of one of the creamery's owners and a home-economics instructor, Audra Qualkinbush, Robertson spent more than a year perfecting a process to reduce butterfat yet preserve the rich taste of milk — giving consumers a new choice between whole and skim.

Also making its mark on the region's identity is the Salem Speedway. This .555-mile paved oval racetrack, located just outside Salem in Washington County, opened in 1947 and features 33°-banked turns built "strictly for speed." Over its decades of operation the track has hosted major stock-car and sprint-car events that draw national names and touring series, reinforcing the county's visibility in motorsports.

Today, Washington County is ranked as the 7th largest County in Indiana in terms of area, at 510 square miles. The County is divided into 13 townships and has 7 incorporated areas: the City of Salem, and the Towns of Campbellsburg, Hardinsburg, New Pekin, Little York, Livonia, and Saltillo. According to STATS Indiana, Washington County was home to over 28,000 residents in 2024.



INNOVATIONS IN EARLY CHILDCARE EDUCATION

Washington County is home to three Regional Training Centers (RTCs), which serve as essential hubs for improving the quality and sustainability of early childhood education. Through the RTCs, early learning programs gain access to evidence-based resources, coaching, and professional development that strengthen the skills of educators and ensure children receive high-quality early learning experiences.

Each participating program receives comprehensive curriculum materials and hands-on training that support all areas of child development—including language and literacy, social-emotional growth, fine and gross motor skills, cognitive development, and math readiness. Educators learn how to integrate these materials into daily classroom routines, helping children build the foundational skills they need to succeed in school and beyond.

In addition to curriculum support, RTCs provide training and materials for developmental assessments and screening tools. These assessments help educators identify each child's unique needs early, allowing for timely interventions that can prevent future learning challenges. Classrooms also receive environment observations designed to enhance the physical, relational, and instructional quality of the learning space. This holistic approach ensures that both the classroom setting and educator practices foster curiosity, confidence, and positive relationships.

RTCs partner directly with site leadership teams to create individualized action plans that strengthen program sustainability. These plans are supported through ongoing coaching, targeted resources, and data-driven strategies.

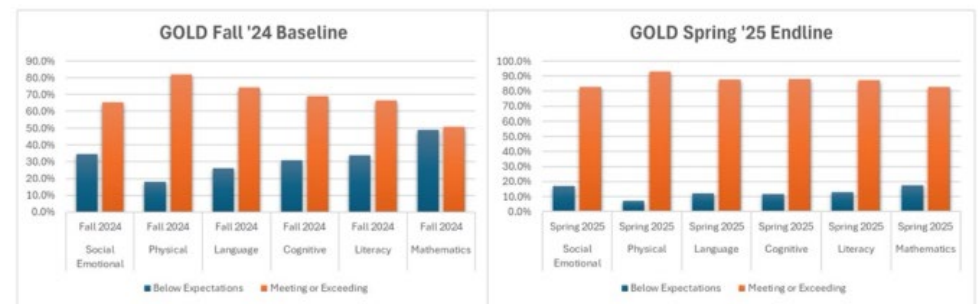
Educators benefit from regular professional development opportunities that keep them up-to-date on best practices in early education, while each classroom educator receives weekly one-on-one coaching. This personalized coaching focuses on curriculum implementation, assessment use, classroom environment, and family engagement—ensuring that improvements are meaningful and lasting.

The RTC model not only benefits young children but also creates a sustainable impact on the future workforce by investing in the professional growth of the current early childhood workforce. Skilled, confident educators are better equipped to nurture the next generation of learners, ultimately contributing to a stronger, more capable community.

Failing to invest in high-quality early learning and care carries significant costs for Washington County. Each year, the lack of adequate access results in an estimated \$7.4 million in lost economic productivity as parents struggle to find consistent care and the future workforce enters school underprepared. Additional losses include \$250,000 due to K-12 grade repetition, \$125,000 in special education services that could be prevented through early intervention, \$375,000 in juvenile correction involvement, and \$600,000 in social service dependence. Together, these costs underscore the economic and social importance of expanding and sustaining quality early learning opportunities.

By strengthening early education through the Regional Training Centers, Washington County is not just preparing children for kindergarten—it is building a stronger, more resilient community for generations to come.

24-25 Regional Training Center Child Outcomes Pre-K children



EDUCATION INFORMATION

There are three school systems in Washington County, including Salem Community Schools, East Washington School Corporation, and West Washington School Corporation. All three school corporations in Washington County operate unified, single campus systems that house their elementary, middle schools and high school facilities on one centralized site. This consolidated model supports a seamless educational transition, enhances operational efficiency, and strengthens the sense of community within each district.

Approximately 1,700 students attend Salem High School, Salem Middle School, and Bradie Shrum Elementary School. East Washington School Corporation is made up of one elementary school, one middle, and one high school serving about 1,400 students. West Washington School Corporation is located in the rural portion of the county. This school system is made up of one elementary school and one high school. Additionally, as of January 2023, West Washington was ranked 54th for graduation rate in the state of Indiana.

In terms of higher education, Washington County possess a unique geographic advantage in accessing higher education institutions, being in close proximity to several specialized and prestigious education facilities. Washington County is surrounded by four separate Ivy Tech facilities just outside its borders, and one facility located within the Community Learning Center. Indiana University Southeast, Purdue Polytechnic, and University of Louisville are all within an hour commute from the county, with the University of Louisville accepting Washington County applicants with in-state tuition rates. There is also the Prosser Career Education Center south of the county, providing technical skills and transferable college credits while still in high school. Additionally, there are a variety of pre-school and daycare options throughout the county. These range from basic child care to fully-certified education facilities.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

The following bullets provide a listing of the top employers (not including education) in Washington County including the number of employees. Most of the largest employers are concentrated in the City of Salem with the exception of two establishments. Metal Powder Products is located in Campbellsburg and United Producers is located in Little York.

- GKN Sinter Metals, Inc. - 279 employees
- Kimball International - 357 employees
- Walmart Super Center - 310 employees
- Metal Powder Products - 283 employees
- Ascension St. Vincent Salem Hospital - 129 employees

WORKFORCE INFORMATION

Washington County has an active workforce of 14,174 residents (as of 2024), out of 28,345 residents age 16 and older. This reflects a labor force participation rate of 57%. Of those participating, 3.5% (546 individuals) were unemployed—lower than the state average of 3.8% at that time. Residents not participating in the workforce may include retirees, caregivers, students, or those transitioning between jobs. The county has approximately 9,271 non-construction jobs, with trends historically reflecting broader economic fluctuations such as the 2008–2009 recession. Industries & Major Employers Key industries in Washington County include:

- Manufacturing – 13.8%
- Retail – 13.7%
- Education & Healthcare – 21.5%
- Construction – 9.3%

Manufacturing remains a strong economic driver, with increasing demand for workers trained in emerging technology, automation, and mechanical engineering. Healthcare is also a major and growing sector, driven by an aging population and continuous need for medical services. Agriculture has a long history in Washington County but currently represents less than 7.6% of the workforce due to the prevalence of small, family-owned operations.

TRAILS

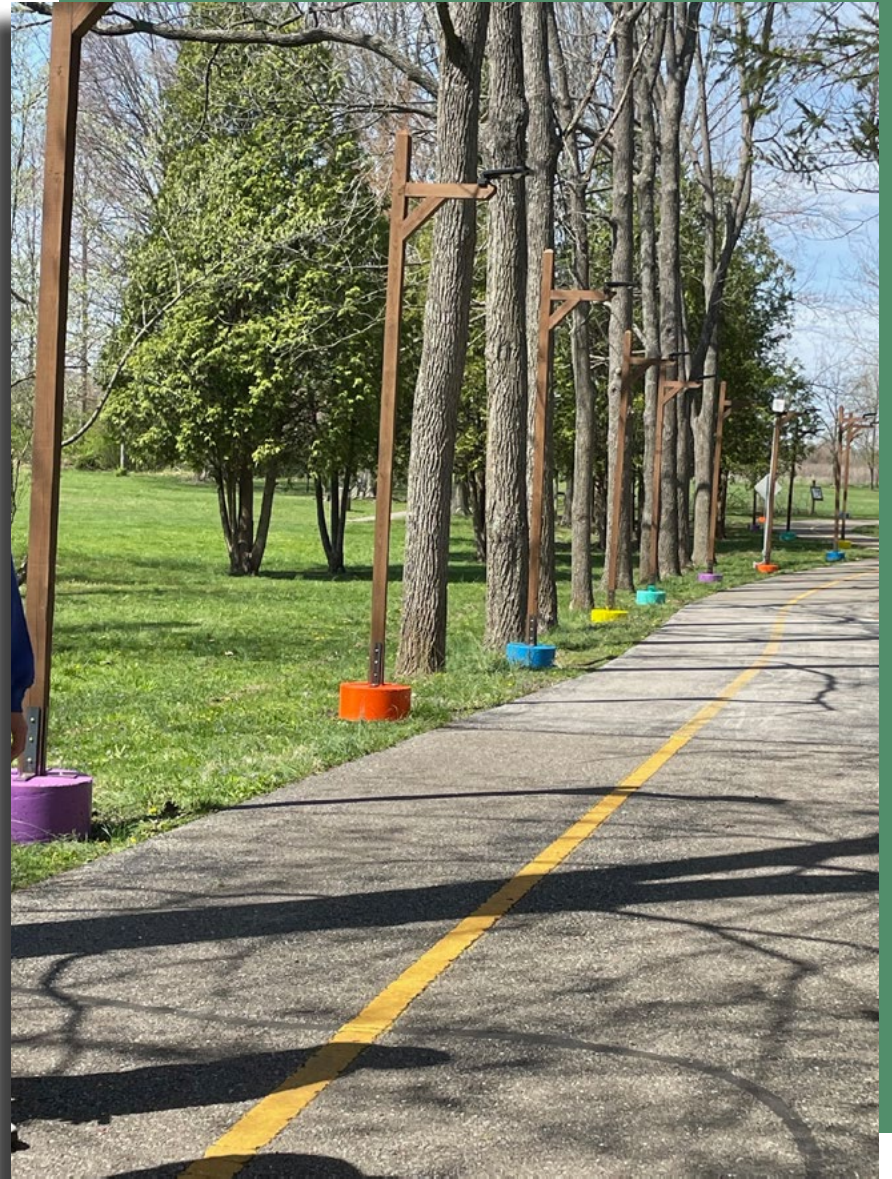
Washington County offers exceptional access to outdoor recreation with several well-known regional and local trail systems. The Knobstone Trail, Indiana's longest footpath, is a 58-mile backcountry hiking trail that passes through Jackson–Washington State Forest in Washington County, the Elk Creek Public Fishing Area in Scott County, and Clark State Forest in Clark County. This rugged trail provides hikers with scenic vistas, old-growth forests, and challenging terrain that attract outdoor enthusiasts from across the state.

In addition to the Knobstone, Washington County is expanding local trail opportunities through the growing Monon South Trail, a rail-trail corridor that will span 57 miles once fully completed. The trail now includes accessible trailheads in Salem, Campbellsburg, and Pekin, connecting communities and encouraging recreation, tourism, and active lifestyles.

- Salem: 2.7 miles completed
- Campbellsburg: 3.5 miles completed
- Pekin: 10.5 miles completed (portion extends into Clark County)

The county is also home to the Veterans Trail at Lake Salinda, a scenic 4.5-mile loop that circles the lake and offers a peaceful setting for walking, running, and enjoying nature.

Together, these trail systems highlight Washington County's commitment to outdoor recreation, quality of life, and connected communities.



NATURAL FEATURES

Washington County is home to several lakes, waterways, and natural features that provide important environmental, recreational, and tourism benefits to the area. The following summaries describe their locations and uses:

- John Hay Lake covers 210 acres in the Rush Creek Valley, 6 miles northwest of Salem. Lake access includes one boat ramp, and users can enjoy fishing, boating, kayaking, and more. The surrounding area is also known for excellent bird watching.
- The Blue River originates in Washington County northeast of Salem, Indiana, and flows south to form the natural boundary between Crawford County and Harrison County. The Blue River continues south to the Ohio River. The Blue River was designated as Indiana's First State Natural and Scenic River System, known for its water quality, paddling opportunities, and ecological significance.
- Lake Salinda is an 88-acre surface lake owned by the City of Salem, located 2 miles south of Salem on S.R. 135. Lake Salinda offers tournament fishing and is a popular fishing spot with local anglers. Lake Salinda includes one boat ramp, two shelter houses, a pavilion, restrooms, and eight grills. Recent improvements now include: – The Veterans Trail, a 4.5-mile walking and hiking trail that circles the entire lake – New camping sites, expanding recreation options for overnight stays.



These additions have transformed Lake Salinda into a multi-use outdoor destination that supports hiking, fishing, camping, and family recreation.

- Elk Creek Lake is a 48-acre lake located in Washington County between Salem and Scottsburg, offering additional opportunities for fishing and nature exploration.
- Delaney Creek Park is a major outdoor recreation area in northern Washington County. The park features an 88 acre lake and sits on 326 acres of country wilderness, offering a scenic retreat for visitors and families. Amenities include camping sites, rental cabins, fishing areas, and a public swimming beach, making it a highly visited family destination. Delaney Creek Park also serves as a key trail access point, with a Knobstone Trail trailhead located on site. This connection links visitors directly to Indiana's longest footpath and one of the state's premier hiking challenges.

QUALITY OF PLACE ASSETS

Washington County offers a rich blend of history, culture, outdoor recreation, and family-friendly attractions that contribute significantly to its quality of place. The county's unique destinations draw visitors from across the region while enhancing local pride and livability for residents.

Historic & Cultural Attractions

The John Hay Center in downtown Salem is home to several key museums and heritage sites, including:

- The Birthplace of John Milton Hay
- The Stevens Memorial Museum
- The Depot Railroad Museum

These facilities preserve and showcase the history of Washington County, featuring dozens of artifacts, historic buildings, and exhibits that tell the county's story. The Depot Museum brings Monon railroad history to life, offering visitors an immersive glimpse into the past. The Piper Flight Center Museum provides another unique experience, featuring vintage Piper aircraft, aviation models, a flight simulator, and exhibits on aviation history. The facility also offers rental space for small events.

Becks Mill is a historic grist mill built in 1808 and beautifully restored to its original operation. Located just outside of Salem, it features a scenic setting with walking paths, a spring fed water source, and educational displays about early milling. The site offers tours, events and a look into Washington County's pioneer history.

Heritage Park, created in 2020, is a charming pocket park in downtown Salem that honors significant women in Salem's history. The park features beautifully maintained gardens, and comfortable seating areas that offer a peaceful place to sit and relax. Heritage Park enhances downtown's walkability and contributes to the community's pride in its local heritage.

Agri-Tourism & Local Experiences

Washington County offers several agri-tourism destinations such as Cornucopia Farms, where visitors can purchase fresh produce, enjoy seasonal attractions including a corn maze, animal encounters, and farm activities, or stay overnight at the farm's bed and breakfast. Additional historic attractions throughout the county include Carnegie Library, Washington County Courthouse/Veterans Memorial Crown Hill Cemetery and Morgan's Trail.

Outdoor Recreation

Washington County is home to a wide variety of natural recreation opportunities, including:

- Old Mill Canoe Rental is a popular spot for floating and paddling on the Blue River.
- Cave River Valley Natural Area, located near Campbellsburg, is one of the county's most significant natural assets. Spanning 317 acres of protected natural conservancy, the park features, multiple Caves, deep valleys, scenic geological formations The property offers rugged hiking experiences and is managed by Indiana DNR as part of Spring Mill State Park.
- Wonder Valley Christian Camp in Salem is a beautiful 125-acre retreat known for waterfalls, deep wooded valleys and recreational and lodging facilities The camp provides year-round programming and is a popular destination for youth groups, church retreats, and outdoor recreation. -Salem Speedway and Thunder Valley Raceway attracts participants and spectators from across the region. Salem Speedway—known as one of the most unique and renowned short tracks in America—has hosted major racing events since 1947 and continues to hold nearly 15 racing events annually between April and November, maintaining a strong racing tradition in the community.
- Knobstone Trail is Indiana's longest hiking footpath, stretching more than 58 miles. The trail enters northern Washington county and offers scenic ridge views, deep forest and access to some of the counties most undeveloped landscapes.

2025 UPDATE

Since the completion of the 2019 Quality of Place and Workforce Attraction Plan, Washington County has experienced meaningful growth, new investment, and significant quality-of-place advancements. These developments reflect the community's ongoing commitment to strengthening local amenities, supporting families, and enhancing workforce readiness.

One of the most visible improvements is the continued expansion of outdoor recreation and trail connectivity. The Monon South Trail project has brought new energy to the region, opening up opportunities for outdoor activity, tourism, and economic development along the corridor. At Lake Salinda, the addition of the Veterans Trail has created a dedicated, accessible walking path that enhances recreation while honoring the service of local veterans.

Washington County has also invested in public spaces that celebrate the community's heritage and identity. Heritage Park, completed in 2020, added a pocket park featuring landscaped gardens, places to sit and relax, and installations recognizing significant women in Salem's history. This space has quickly become a valued downtown asset that enhances both the character and the livability of the community.

Economic development has advanced as well. E&H Tubing, a manufacturer located in the former Child Craft facility, has expanded production and created new job opportunities, contributing to the county's industrial strength and diversifying the local employment base.

Washington County has also made major strides in early childhood education and workforce readiness. Since 2019, the county has established three new Regional Training Centers for Early Childhood Education. These centers are key hubs for improving the quality and consistency of early learning across the county. By building a stronger early childhood workforce, Washington County is not only preparing children for kindergarten but also supporting a more resilient, capable workforce and community for the future.

Collectively, these developments demonstrate Washington County's progress in enhancing quality of life, creating new opportunities for recreation and community engagement, expanding workforce infrastructure, and continuing to attract private investment. These initiatives align closely with the goals of the original QPAT and provide a strong foundation for the county's next phase of growth and development.

ENGAGEMENT

The Washington County Quality of Place and Workforce Attraction Plan will provide the county and community leaders the resources necessary to strategically plan for, develop, and implement projects and programs that build quality of place, grow regional capacity for workforce development and attraction, and improve the attributes and amenities that make the Indiana Uplands a desirable place to live, work and play.

This plan was funded by a grant from the Regional Opportunity Initiatives, Inc. (ROI) and was completed as part of an overarching strategy for improving economic and community prosperity in the Indiana Uplands region (Brown, Crawford, Daviess, Dubois, Greene, Lawrence, Martin, Monroe, Orange, Owen, and Washington counties.)

Washington County completed this planning process with a goal of creating a long-term vision plan that would assist in the development of a strong quality of place and the attraction of a qualified workforce. After acceptance of the plan by the ROI, Washington County will be able to apply for a competitive implementation grants for projects or programs that align with the strategic priorities identified in this plan.

The Ready Communities Implementation Grant can be used for projects and programs such as Aesthetics and Beautification Enhancements, Connectivity Infrastructure Development, and/or Community Cohesion and Support initiatives.



Outside of the Regional Opportunity Initiative, Washington County can utilize this plan to obtain various local, state, and federal grants or other resources to complete the recommendations outlined in the plan.

QPAT WORKING SESSIONS

In September 2025, the Washington County Economic Growth Partnership established the Quality of Place Advisory Team. Consisting of five members.

- Ashley Conrad, Washington County Economic Growth Partnership
- Justin Green, Mayor of Salem
- Judy Johnson, Washington County Community Foundation
- Lindsay Jones, GKN Sinter Metals
- Dolly Bricker, Town of Pekin

This group convened four times throughout the planning process to review materials, provide feedback, and make decisions that guided the development of the updated Quality of Place and Workforce Attraction Plan.



Meeting #1

The project team introduced the overall planning process and timeline to the QPAT members. During the meeting, the group conducted a review of the 2019 plan to identify areas requiring revisions or updates, as well as opportunities to incorporate new projects and emerging priorities.

Meeting #2

Prior to this meeting, we gathered information from the County Commissioners recently completed Comprehensive Plan. The QPAT team reviewed and discussed the survey results associated with that plan and evaluated which elements should be incorporated into the update of the 2019 Quality of Place plan.

Meeting #3

The advisory team continued its work by evaluating which projects and initiatives had been completed, which remained in progress, and which should be incorporated into the updated list of priorities for the plan.

Meeting #4

The advisory team held its final meeting to confirm and finalize the strategies, priorities, and solutions developed throughout the planning process for the updated QPAT

From the results of the Comprehensive Plan, several clear themes emerged regarding the community's priorities and needs. Residents expressed a strong desire for additional family-friendly entertainment options, increased manufacturing and employment opportunities, expanded housing choices, and a broader selection of restaurants and retail establishments.

These insights reflect a community that is eager to see continued growth, enhanced quality of life, and improved amenities for both current and future residents. A total of 230 participants contributed to these survey results, providing valuable feedback that helped shape the direction of the Quality of Place and Workforce Attraction Plan. Their input served as an important foundation for identifying key areas of focus and ensuring that the updated plan aligns with the community's expectations and long-term vision.

When asked about the communities priorities for improving Quality of Place and Workforce attraction, several focus areas rose to the top based on the survey responses. Residents emphasized the importance of supporting existing local businesses and creating an environment that helps them grow, while also attracting new businesses that can diversify the local economy and expand job opportunities.

Improving health care access and services was also identified as a significant priority, reflecting the community's desire for strengthened medical resources and wellness options. Additionally, respondents highlighted the need to grow and attract manufacturing employers, recognizing manufacturing as a vital industry for stable, well paying jobs.

Another major priority was improving internet connectivity and broadband access, which is increasingly essential for education, business development, remote work, and overall quality of life. Washington County is proud to be a 1Gig community, that provides residents and businesses with high speed, reliable broadband that supports modern technology needs and future growth.

Finally, the community expressed a strong interest in developing new commercial sites, which would help accommodate future growth and make Washington County more competitive in attracting both retailers and industry.

These priorities collectively reflect the community's vision for a stronger, more vibrant economy supported by modern infrastructure, expanded services, and opportunities for both residents and businesses.

From the survey results, these were some of the strengths we saw within Washington County.

- A strong small-town feeling was one of the most commonly identified assets, reflecting the welcoming and close-knit character of the community.
- Many respondents also emphasized the county's agriculture and natural environment, noting the scenic landscapes and rural heritage as major advantages.
- Residents appreciated that homes are spread out, offering more space and privacy.
- Additionally, our school systems were highlighted as a key strength, recognized for their supportive environment and the unique one-campus structure that creates continuity and connection for students.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

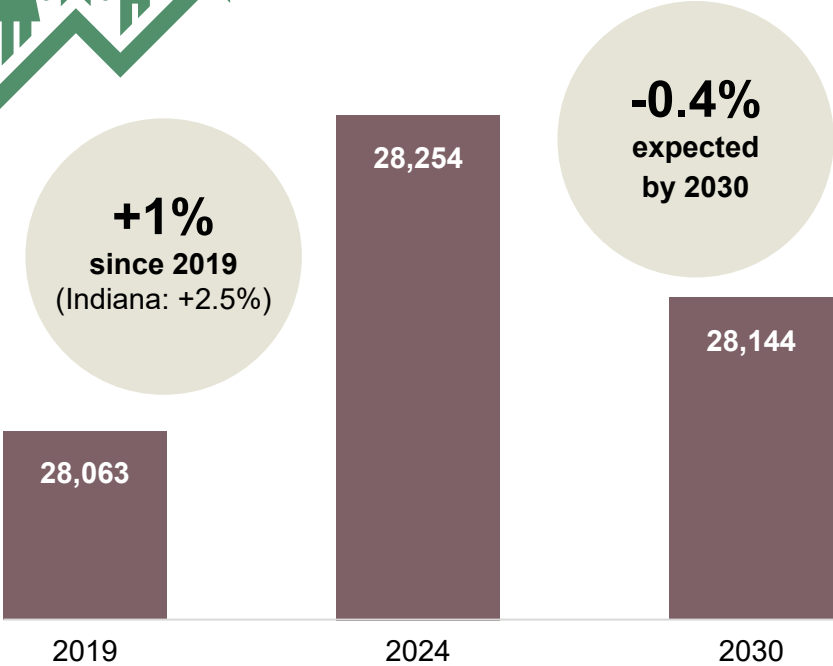
- County-wide clean-up & property improvement
- More activities for teens, seniors and families
- More housing options
- Improve health care access
- Address drug and alcohol addiction
- Expand and improve existing parks in the County
- Attract and retain talent in the County
- Support agricultural-related businesses and activities
- Grow the industrial base
- Create a workforce pipeline
- Improve access to higher education and trade schools/training
- Attract high-paying jobs
- Support local businesses
- More restaurant options

DATA PROFILE



POPULATION CHANGE

Source: Lightcast, 2024



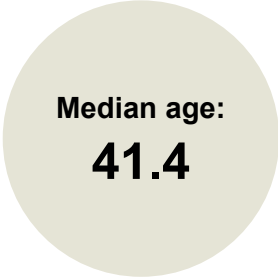
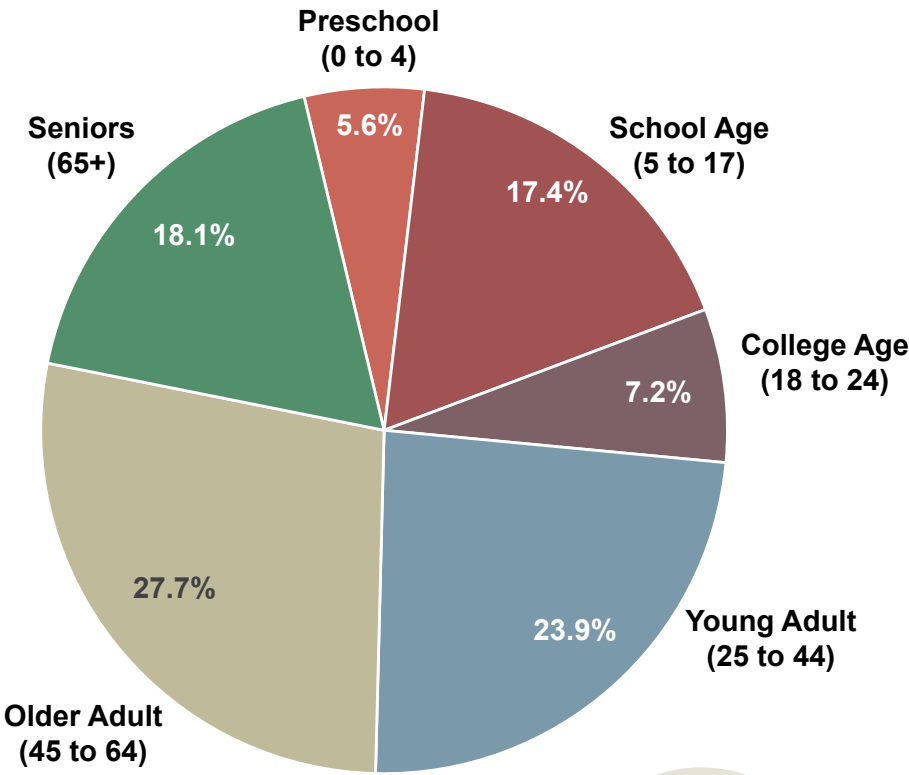
RACE & ETHNICITY

Source: Lightcast, 2024

White	95.5%
Hispanic/Latino	1.8%
African American/Black	0.8%
Asian	0.3%

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023



(Indiana: Seniors 17.5%; Older Adult 23.9%; Young Adult 25.9%; College Age 9.7%; School Age 17.0%; Preschool Age 5.9%)

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2023



\$61,358

(Indiana: \$70,051)

MEDIAN HOME SALE

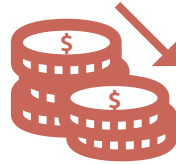
Source: Indiana Association of Realtors, 2025



\$204,000

POVERTY

Source: American
Community Survey,
5-year estimates, 2023



16.8%
AMONG CHILDREN

(Indiana: 15.7%)

13.5%
OVERALL

(Indiana: 12.2%)

CHILD CARE

Source: Transform Consulting Group, 2024



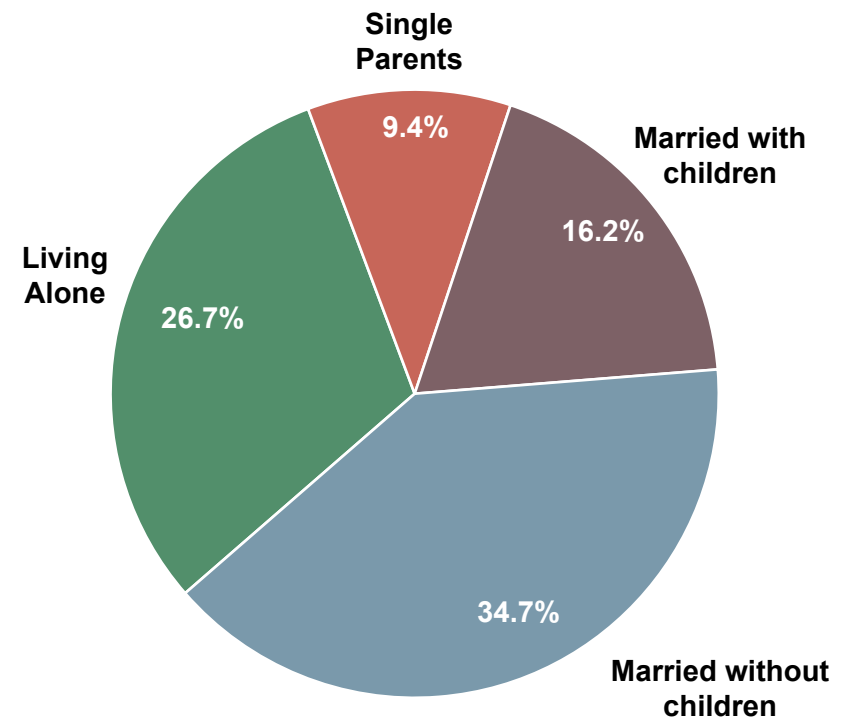
\$4,583

Average Annual Cost of
Child Care in the County

(Indiana: \$8,590, Source for Indiana data: Early Learning Indiana, 2024)

HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2023



(Indiana: Single Parents 9.0%, Married with children 17.2%;
Married without children 29.4%; Living Alone 29.8%;)



COMMUTING TRENDS

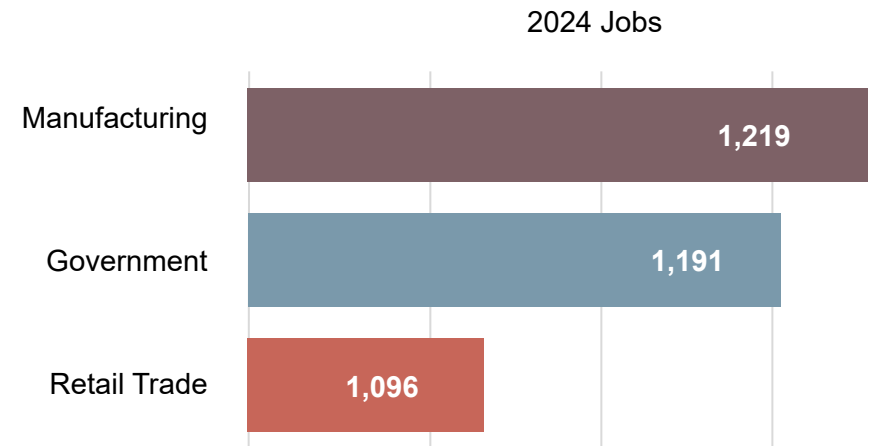
Source: Lightcast, 2024

Top Counties for Inbound Commuters	Top Counties for Outbound Commuters
Monroe	Monroe
Greene	Marion
Morgan	Putnam



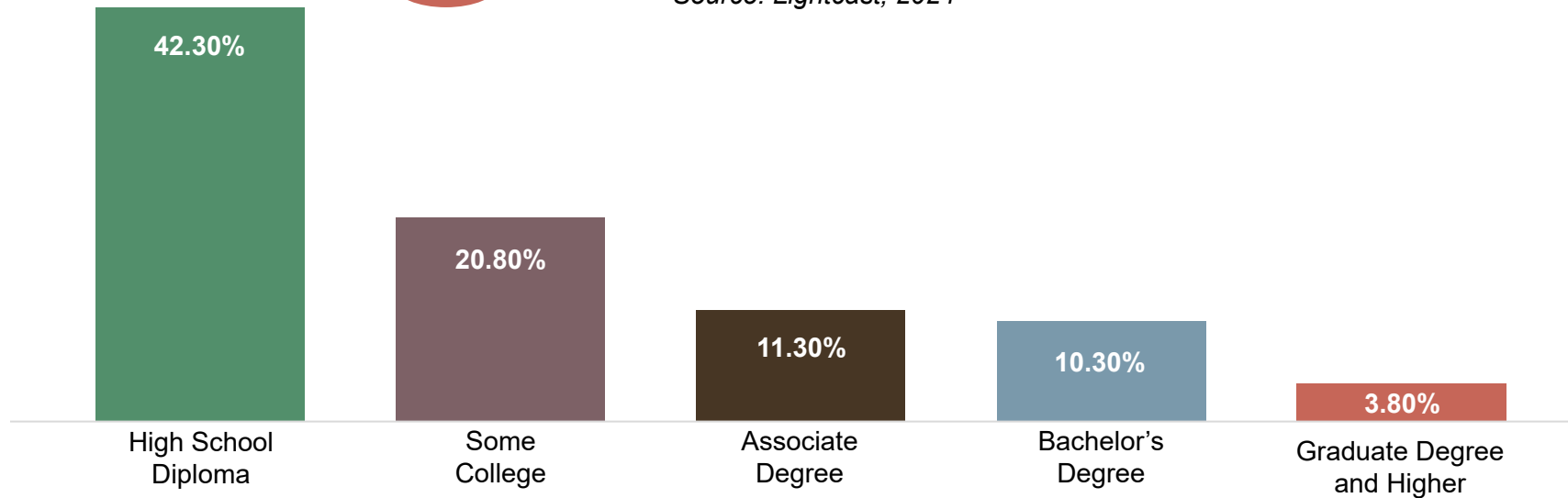
TOP INDUSTRIES

Source: Lightcast, 2024



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Source: Lightcast, 2024



CONTEXT

Over the past several years, Washington County has made significant progress in advancing both economic and workforce development. Efforts to expand housing opportunities have supported the attraction of new residents, strengthening population growth in the City of Salem and throughout the county. Infrastructure improvements along the Main Street corridor and in the downtown district have enhanced mobility, safety, and overall community appeal. Local businesses have also benefited from new programs that encourage facade upgrades and support the expansion of commercial footprints, reinforcing long-term economic vitality.

Quality of life continues to improve through notable investments in recreational assets. Park enhancements at Lake Salinda, Riley's Place, and the community ballpark have provided new spaces for families and residents to gather, exercise, and enjoy outdoor activities. Additional quality-of-place initiatives are underway, including trail development and expanded family-oriented amenities that promote connectivity and community engagement.

Health and wellness outcomes have further strengthened due to the ongoing work of local nonprofits, healthcare partners, and community clinics that provide accessible services throughout Salem and Washington County. Collectively, these accomplishments reflect a coordinated effort to build a more resilient, welcoming, and future-focused community.



PROGRESS

Washington County has demonstrated meaningful progress across several priority areas, reflecting a coordinated commitment to economic growth, community revitalization, and enhanced quality of life. Notable advancement has occurred within the local employment landscape, supported by the addition of new employers such as #&H Tubing and Sullivan Concrete Coating. These businesses contribute to a more diversified economy, strengthen the county's manufacturing and construction sectors, and create opportunities for residents to access stable, well-paying jobs close to home.

Substantial improvements have also been made in broadband and fiber connectivity, particularly in rural areas of the county. Expanded high-speed internet access supports workforce participation, remote work opportunities, modern business operations, and educational advancement. This investment ensures that residents and employers -- regardless of location -- have access to the digital infrastructure necessary for long-term competitiveness.

Housing development has continued to grow through the engagement of multiple developers working across the county. These projects are helping to address long-standing gaps in the local housing market by increasing the availability of new single-family homes, multi-family options, and diverse housing types needed to support workforce attraction and retention. As the county's population grows and employer needs evolve, these developments will play a critical role in ensuring that Washington County can accommodate.

Revitalization efforts within downtown Salem have further contributed to a renewed sense of place and community pride. Streetscape improvements, facade updates, infrastructure enhancements, and new pedestrian-focused design elements have strengthened the downtown district's accessibility, appearance, and economic potential.

Complementing this progress is the continued enhancement of Heritage Park, which offers a meaningful public gathering space honoring local history while providing gardens, seating areas, and cultural value to residents and visitors.

The county has also expanded its trail network, supporting outdoor recreation, wellness, and connectivity. Trail development now extends not only within the City of Salem but throughout the broader county, offering new opportunities for walking, biking, and nature-based recreation. These amenities contribute to overall health outcomes, support tourism, and reinforce Washington County's emphasis on accessible outdoor experiences.

In addition, community-wide communication and coordination have improved with the creation of a centralized community calendar. This resource allows nonprofits, government entities, and partner organizations to share and promote meetings, events, and activities in a single, accessible location. The calendar strengthens public engagement, improves transparency, and supports collaboration across multiple sectors.

Collectively, these accomplishments demonstrate Washington County's progress toward building a more vibrant, connected, and opportunity-rich community. By advancing economic development, strengthening infrastructure, expanding housing options, and enhancing quality-of-life amenities, Washington County continues to position itself for sustained growth and long-term success.

PROGRESS

SUCCESS STORIES

Since 2019, Washington County has experienced notable success in strengthening its quality of place, with trail development emerging as one of the most transformative areas of progress. Recognizing that high-quality recreational amenities play a crucial role in both population retention and attraction, local leaders have prioritized the expansion of trail systems throughout Salem and the broader county. These efforts have positioned Washington County as a community committed to enhancing health, wellness, outdoor recreation, and overall livability.

The development of new and improved trail networks has provided residents with greater access to safe, convenient, and enjoyable outdoor spaces. Trails have become key assets for walking, biking, hiking, and nature exploration -- activities that serve individuals across all ages, interests, and abilities. By investing in these amenities, Washington County is not only improving the daily experience of current residents but also strengthening its appeal to prospective families, young professionals, and retirees seeking communities with strong recreational infrastructure.



Population retention and attraction have become increasingly important priorities for rural communities. Washington County's trail initiatives directly support these goals by offering the types of amenities that modern workers and families value. Access to outdoor recreation in consistently ranked as a leading factor in relocation decisions, and the county's investment in trails demonstrates a forward-thinking approach to competitiveness, community development, and workforce support. These enhancements reinforce the message that Washington County is a place where residents can enjoy both economic opportunity and a high quality of life.

PROGRESS

The health and wellness benefits of expanded trail access are equally significant. Trails offer low-cost, accessible opportunities for physical activity, social connection, and stress reduction -- improving community well-being and supporting long-term public health outcomes. By encouraging active lifestyles and providing inclusive recreational spaces, Washington County is creating an environment where residents can thrive physically and mentally. These resources have become essential for promoting wellness, particularly for families, seniors, and individuals seeking safe, convenient ways to stay active.

Additional trail systems are already planned, with the goal of connecting larger segments of the county and expanding the reach of outdoor amenities. As these projects progress, they will create interconnected corridors that link neighborhoods, parks, natural areas, and key community destinations. This connectivity enhances mobility, strengthens tourism potential, and promotes regional collaboration. It also supports a broader vision of creating a countywide network that encourages outdoor recreation as a daily accessible activity for all residents.

The continued emphasis on all-ages, family-focused recreation ensures that Washington County's trail development supports community engagement and social cohesion. Trails provide spaces where children can play, families can explore together, and community members can enjoy meaningful interactions in shared public environments. These experiences contribute to a strong sense of place and reinforce the identity of Washington County as a welcoming and vibrant community.

Collectively, the trail expansions and related quality of place improvements represent a major success for Washington County

since 2019. By investing in recreational infrastructure that enhances livability, supports wellness, and promotes long-term population stability, the county has demonstrated its dedication to building a stronger and more resilient future. These accomplishments underscore the central role that quality of place initiatives play in economic development and community vitality -- and they highlight Washington County's commitment to creating a place where residents and visitors alike can live, work, play, and prosper.

PROGRESS

Washington County's future depends on its ability to strengthen the local workforce, grow the population, support families, and create a high quality of life that encourages people to stay, work, and invest in the community. The 12 Big Ideas identified through the planning process reflect what residents, businesses, and community leaders consistently emphasized as the county's most urgent needs. Together, they form a unified strategy that supports economic development, expands opportunities for youth and families, and improves overall health and well-being.

A central priority is diversifying and expanding housing options. Washington County does not currently have enough modern, attainable homes to meet demand, and much of the existing housing stock is aging. Without a broader mix of apartments, townhomes, starter homes, and senior-friendly options, the county cannot attract or retain the workforce needed to support existing employers or welcome new investment. Addressing housing shortages also helps local families find options that fit their budget and stage of life, ultimately supporting population growth and long-term economic stability.

Strengthening career pathways and workforce alignment is equally essential. Employers across Washington County are struggling to fill open positions, while students often leave the county for opportunities they cannot find locally. Indiana's new graduation pathways require meaningful career exploration, work-based learning, and collaboration with industry. Improving connections between schools, businesses, and community organizations will prepare students for in-demand careers, support young adults in staying and working locally, and ensure businesses have the skilled workforce they need to grow.

Investing in a Youth Center responds directly to community concerns about the lack of safe, consistent, and engaging spaces for kids and

teens. Residents repeatedly expressed the need for more educational, recreational, and social opportunities for young people. A Youth Center would strengthen family stability, support healthy development, provide year-round activities -- including STEM programming -- and foster a sense of belonging. This investment also contributes to future workforce readiness by helping youth build skills, relationships, and confidence that carry into adulthood.

Washington County also prioritizes business development and entrepreneurship as a driver of long-term economic growth. Supporting small businesses, growing local industry, and attracting new employers helps create jobs, strengthens the tax base, and increases the availability of goods and services for residents. These efforts also align with goals to improve Main Street and downtown areas, modernize agricultural operations, and expand opportunities for innovation.

Expanding entertainment, recreation, and tourism is another key priority because families want more things to do locally, and visitors represent a major opportunity for economic growth. Increasing high-quality recreational spaces, enhancing parks and trails, and developing community events and attractions helps improve quality of life, boosts local spending, and supports the county's desire to be a welcoming and vibrant place to live. Investments in beautification and community infrastructure also makes Washington County more appealing for new residents and businesses.

ASSETS

Natural & Outdoor Assets

- Knobstone Trail
- Veterans Trail
- Monon Trail access
- Beck's Mill
- Lake Salinda with a new walking trail
- Delaney Creek Park
- Cave River Valley natural conservancy
- Wonder Valley Camp (waterfalls, deep valleys, forest)
- Scenic rural landscapes and strong agricultural environment

Community & Cultural Assets

- Heritage Park (women's history, gardens, seating)
- Downtown Salem historic district
- Community events such as On The Bricks events
- Washington County Fairgrounds
- Museums, historic sites, and local attractions
- Strong small-town character and community pride

Infrastructure & Development Assets

- JF Helsel Industrial Park
- Available commercial and industrial development sites
- Countywide 1-Gig broadband connectivity
- Transportation access to regional markets
- Ongoing utility and road infrastructure improvements

Business & Workforce Assets

- Strong agriculture and manufacturing base
- Local business support
- Workforce and training opportunities through Ivy Tech and industry partners
- Growing entrepreneurship and small business ecosystem

Quality of Life & Educational Assets

- Affordable cost of living
- Safe, family-friendly environment
- Homes and neighborhoods with spacious layouts
- Expanding housing options with new developments underway
- Ascension St. Vincent Salem providing local healthcare access
- Three unified one-campus school systems with strong community support

ASSETS

AESTHETICS AND BEAUTIFICATION

Previous Plan Solutions

- Improve all community Main Streets and Downtown Salem.
- Improve the appearance of Washington County through policy development, property improvements, and beautification efforts.

Previous Workshop Brainstormed Solutions

- New pavement city wide/sidewalks
- Clean up housing areas that are trashy
- Enhance and improve Perkin Park theater area
- Historic building facelifts/remodels

CONNECTIVITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Previous Plan Solutions

- Strengthen the County's infrastructure by investing in community services. (This solution includes action items that fit both here and under Housing & Utilities Infrastructure)

Previous Workshop Brainstormed Solutions

- Parking
- Connect Monan Trail in Pekin to park
- Sidewalk to connect out of city destinations
- Connect all trails through county

ARTS, CULTURE, ENTERTAINMENT & RECREATION

Previous Plan Solutions

- Increase the amount of high-quality recreational spaces that are safe, maintained, and accessible to our residents.
- Create more activities and opportunities that help to develop the educational, social, and life skills of the County's youth.

Previous Workshop Brainstorm Solutions

- Businesses on Monon trail
- Pool
- Bowling
- Gaming
- Family entertainment center
- Large event center
- River front attractions
- Additional "sit down" restaurants
- Youth Center
- Find Angel Investor for micro brewery on square

ASSETS

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Previous Plan Solutions

- Attract and retain population to expand the existing workforce.
- Improve and create diverse educational opportunities ranging from early education to college and trade schools.
- Attract and grow small, and large businesses, and entrepreneurship in Washington County.
- Support the viability of agricultural businesses in the County.
- Bi-monthly meetings with Superintendents
- Hire a grant writer for county
- Examples: Childcare, Pre-K, K-12, Postsecondary (tech and traditional college/university); Internships and apprenticeships; Workforce resources for businesses; Innovation and maker spaces; and Resident and workforce attraction efforts, etc.

HOUSING & UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE

Previous Plan Solutions

- Attract diverse housing developments that provide options ranging from more affordable starter homes, to homes for aging residents, to rental options.
- Multi generational center, apartments, innovation center
- Evergreen Cafe- place for retired people
- Examples: Housing (and all the many things that encompasses), Water/Sewer, Waste Management (trash/recycling), Energy, etc.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Previous Plan Solutions

- Promote healthy lifestyles through increased access to recreational assets and health programs.
- Support the prevention and recovery of drug and alcohol addiction through programs and facilities.
- Examples: Hospitals, Clinics, Mental Health, Substance Abuse Resources, Wellness Programs, Social Services, Aging/Senior Services, Emergency Response Services, etc.

PRIORITIES

As shared in the Engagement section of the plan update, the initial prioritizing of big ideas took place through an online community survey, vetted and shared with the public during the 2019 engagement process. Each big idea was evaluated by factors such as community support, resources available and impact to the community. From there a ranking as a Tier 1, 2, or 3 priority was designated for each big idea to determine if it was a short, medium or long-term priority. Recommendations or actions listed under each priority are not listed by priority but instead are organized by identifying policy or programmatic related recommendations first, then small capital projects, followed by larger capital projects.

The 2025 Quality of Place (QPAT) committee determined that the identified 2019 big ideas were still the guiding priorities for this important work and were carried over into the updated 2025 plan.



PRIORITIES

Objective 01

Attract and retain population to expand the existing workforce.

STATEMENT:

To create new opportunities for local residents and employers, Washington County needs to attract skilled professionals that will not only participate in the local economy, but drive it forward. Those who will start and expand businesses, and will recognize Washington's true worth, while investing in the county. Washington County already has many of the small-town America characteristics that city weary residents are looking for, it's just a matter of enhancing the existing characteristics and promoting the County.

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

Outlined in the existing conditions report, nearly 50% of Washington County's population are residents aging from 55-75 years old (these individuals are known as baby boomers). As this age group retires, the County's workforce will start shrinking if the younger generation isn't available to replace the individuals who are retiring. Unfortunately, the County is facing, and will continue to face, an ongoing challenge of the younger generation leaving the community to pursue higher education, better job opportunities, and an improved quality of life (brain drain).

PRIORITIES

Objective 02

Improve and create diverse educational opportunities ranging from early education to college and trade schools.

STATEMENT:

A skilled workforce starts with a strong educational foundation, as well as the opportunity to obtain skills beyond high school. According to the US Census Bureau, Washington County's educational attainment beyond high school is below the national average. In order to be competitive with its surrounding neighbors, Washington County will need to improve and create diverse education opportunities.

In terms of higher education, a college degree is not a requirement for success, but some form of an additional skill set is necessary. Whether it's providing vocational training for high school students or employers providing continuing-educational opportunities for their employees, education should be a top priority for Washington County.

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

Not only is education essential for building a robust workforce, it is one of the top selling points for families looking to relocate. Higher educational attainment can be linked to higher income, which could help to lower the poverty rate. Early education programs are essential for the County's youth and bring peace of mind to parents. Finally, if manufacturing is to be maintained or even expanded, emphasis on science and engineering will be required to follow shifts in production methods. If education is a priority, individuals and the economy as a whole will reap the benefits.

PRIORITIES

Objective 03

Attract and grow small businesses, large businesses, and entrepreneurship in Washington County.

STATEMENT:

Small businesses provide the amenities and services residents enjoy along with employment, while large businesses can provide job opportunities with the possibility of advancement for Washington County residents. Small businesses are generally owned and operated by locals, and tend to serve the local market. While small businesses employ fewer people and sometimes have lower wages because of their size, they are much more invested in their community and care about its future. In contrast, a large business may be able to pay substantially more and offer opportunities for advancement, but could be less invested in the community's residents. Thus, striking a balance between the two is necessary to ensure economic success.

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

Supporting the growth of local businesses improves quality of life and economic resilience. Attracting large businesses creates better opportunities. Additionally, as Washington County works to expand industry (particularly in those not highly concentrated, such as information and financial professions), it could lead to a great probability of attracting a skilled, younger workforce.

PRIORITIES

STATEMENT:

In celebration of the state's rich agricultural heritage and in recognition of the long dedication by Hoosier families to the trade, Indiana created the Hoosier Homestead Award in 1976. This award is given to families who have owned, operated, and passed down the same farms within the family for over 100 years. Nearly fifty Washington County residents are recognized as recipients of this award. Farmland makes up 212,000 acres of the total 331,000 acres in Washington County.

Agriculture is engrained in the identity of Washington County, and should continue to be supported as a viable business opportunity. Recently, food production has come to the forefront of public discussion, with many consumers taking a pointed interest in how (and where) their food is produced and how it arrives on their table.

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

With agriculture being so integral to Washington County, any measures to support the viability of agriculture will have an enormous impact on many individuals and the very fabric of the community. Additionally, the time is right to act, as consumers begin to examine the production of their food on a closer level and as agritourism has expanded and allowed farmers to increase the amount of visitors to their business.

Objective 04

Support the viability of agricultural businesses in the County.



PRIORITIES

Objective 05

Improve Main Street
and Downtown Salem.

STATEMENT:

Downtowns are the traditional centers of American communities, often rich in local history and culture. Especially in rural communities, downtowns also tend to act as the face for the community, as it is often the most developed. Improvement can be anything from streetscaping elements such as landscape planters and sidewalks to enhance public gathering places or building facades. Simple programming of a public space can generate a much larger impact with its ability to attract people into the downtown. There aren't any improvements too small or too big for the town centers of rural communities, as every impact will be felt.

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

Community centers such as Downtown Salem can serve as the primary gathering space for governmental services, small business, and social gatherings. With their central location and access to major state roads, community Main Streets offer the most convenient location in terms of travel time for County residents. This also makes them perfect locations for community investment, where any impact can be felt by the greatest number of people.

PRIORITIES

STATEMENT:

Parks remain one of the top assets that contribute to a higher quality of life because of the wide-range of benefits they bring to a community. It is imperative that Washington County's residents have access to safe, high-quality recreational spaces. This doesn't mean having access to acres of open space, but instead having access to unique experiences throughout the county. These unique experiences can be created through programming of space and capitalizing on the county's natural features, all of which contribute to sense of place.

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

Parks raise quality of life by bringing healthy living, opportunities for physical and mental well-being, and entertainment. These spaces also act as an economic catalyst, increasing demand for the spaces around them, and encouraging other forms of recreation and entertainment to capitalize on their high levels of visitor traffic. They serve as a unique gathering place for youth. Also, since the geographic size of the county presents challenges for those who don't own a vehicle, parks are key.

Objective 06

Increase the amount of high-quality recreational spaces that are safe, maintained, and accessible to our residents.



PRIORITIES

STATEMENT:

Washington County completed a housing study in August 2016 that outlined the need for additional single-family, multi-family, and senior housing. The Indiana Uplands released a regional housing study in 2019 with an update in 2023 to reflect post-pandemic realities. Having multiple housing options available within a community keeps the housing market healthy and vibrant. A diversity in residents ensures that any market changes that effects one group in particular will not disrupt the entire community and ensures that the housing market can quickly recover. This also allows residents to remain in the community if they need to adjust their housing situation, such as older residents downsizing as they reach retirement. The lack of diverse housing options and aging, existing housing stock could be tied to population growth.

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

If Washington County hopes to continue to attract new residents and businesses, availability of transition and starter housing will be essential. Rental units are desirable for young professionals as they offer flexibility. Additionally, those working toward home ownership may need temporary residence in the interim. The lack of variety in housing options could be a major limitation on any growth and may stunt any momentum that the county is able to generate.

Objective 07

Attract diverse housing developments that provide options ranging from more affordable starter homes, to home for aging residents, to rental options

PRIORITIES

Objective 08

Strengthen the County's infrastructure by investing in community services.

STATEMENT:

Infrastructure serves as a general term that encompasses many utilities and services that provide the basic needs for Washington county's residents. These services include utilities such as the internet access, water, sewer and electric, transportation facilities such as roads, sidewalks, and trails, and other community services such as fire protection and law enforcement.

Utilities make up the baseline necessities needed for most developers and businesses to operate. Improving the infrastructure and community services offered in Washington County act as an incentive for residents and businesses looking to relocate or open a new business. On the flip side, the lack of appropriate infrastructure can limit a company or developer's ability to locate or build in an area.

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

Lack of infrastructure such as high-speed internet has become an essential part of resident's everyday lives. If Washington County does not have the infrastructure to support broadband, it will likely miss out on economic development opportunities. Additionally, infrastructure and community services play a role in the quality of life of residents. The county's comprehensive plan outlines bike, sidewalk or trail connection - while it may seem like only a walking path, it can also be considered an alternative mode of transportation and a recreational amenity. While these services may be described as a baseline necessity, these amenities can be used to enhance and improve the county for new and current residents.

PRIORITIES

Objective 09

Create more activities and opportunities that help to develop the educational, social and life skills of the County's youth.

STATEMENT:

As part of the overarching ideas of retaining talent, this big idea focuses on the existing youth in the County through development of programs aimed at improving education, social, and life skills. The intention of this idea is to provide opportunities for youth to get involved in the community at an early age and prepare them for life after high school whether it be college or entering the workforce.

Youth is defined as the period of time when an individual is between childhood and adult age. This is the formative time where individuals develop their brain and start to create an identity for themselves. Falling behind in education, social and/or life skills during this age can cause a chain reaction for later in life.

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

Providing activities and opportunities for Washington County's youth can help get them engaged and feel connected to the community and other people their age. Additionally, this will likely increase the chances of them staying in Washington County when they get older. By involving the community's youth in decision making processes as well as various community organizations and groups, our youth can take on the role of a full community member.

PRIORITIES

STATEMENT:

Cleaning up Washington County was a common theme discussed during initial conversations with the county during this planning process. Ideas related to improved appearance of the County included property improvements, trash clean-up along corridors as well as general beautification efforts such as gateway development or landscaping projects.

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

A clean community is not just about picking up a few pieces of litter from the street, but a matter of public pride and image. Most homeowners care about the appearance of their home, and even more so for the community they live in. The only barrier to clean communities is the perceived challenge, and the feeling of tackling a huge problem alone. With the County taking the lead and providing the resources and direction to facilitate community cleanups, residents can begin a targeted and systematic approach in renewing Washington County's beauty.

Objective 10

Improve the appearance of Washington County through policy development, property improvements, and beautification efforts.

PRIORITIES

Objective 11

Promote healthy lifestyles through increased access to recreational assets and health programs.

STATEMENT:

Efforts to improve health and wellness start with providing access to programs and facilities that residents can utilize to lead a healthy life. These include not only recreational assets but access to a wide variety of health care professionals and other types of programming.

A healthy lifestyle encompasses actions and decisions being made throughout the entire day. Wellness involves what residents eat, to how they have fun and even how someone moves from one place to another. Improving long-term community health is not limited to one program or method.

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

Improving community health starts by having access to several different types of facilities for care and exercise along with programs to support lifestyle changes and drawing awareness to the opportunities that are available. Wellness courses open to the public, providing signage for alternative methods of transportation, and increasing food health awareness through schools are just a few examples of things that could be done to promote healthy lifestyles. A good place to start is exploring ways to encourage healthy living in schools and community spaces.

PRIORITIES

STATEMENT:

Like many communities through the country, addiction and recovery were frequently discussed as a challenge in Washington County. The CDC has identified 220 at risk of outbreak for HIV and/or Hepatitis C as a result of the opioid epidemic. Washington County was ranked as 57th.

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

The effects of drug abuse not only harm the user but has a secondary effect on all those around them. Children, friends, and family must all deal with the side effects of addiction and endure the emotional toll it takes on their loved ones. To better equip individuals seeking help through the long recovery process, facilities and program must be established to provide them the knowledge and resources they need.

Objective 12

Support the prevention and recovery of drug and alcohol addiction through programs and facilities.

SOLUTIONS

Washington County's long-term economic vitality depends on its ability to attract new residents while retaining current ones—particularly working-age individuals and families. As highlighted in the Priority 01 analysis, the County faces an aging population, workforce replacement challenges, and ongoing out-migration of younger residents. Addressing these issues requires intentional strategies that strengthen quality of place, housing availability, workforce readiness, and community awareness. By building on Washington County's existing strengths—its small-town character, strong schools, outdoor amenities, and an engaged business community. The county can create an environment where people choose to live, work and invest for the long term.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Population change within working-age demographics
- Workforce participation and labor force stability
- Number of leadership or civic engagement participants
- Housing units added or planned that support workforce needs
- Engagement metrics from marketing and outreach efforts

PARTNERS

Washington County Economic Growth Partnership; Washington County Tourism; Washington County Chamber of Commerce; Local employers and manufacturers; Washington County School corporations; Housing developers and financial institutions; Community and nonprofit organizations; Washington County Community Foundation; Washington County Parks & Recreation

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Regional development organizations
- State workforce and housing programs
- Indiana economic development and planning resources

Objective 01

Attract and retain population to expand the existing workforce.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

1.1 Strengthen community leadership to retain and attract working age residents.

- 1.1.1 Support or expand leadership development opportunities for emerging leaders, young professionals, and residents interested in civic engagement through partnerships with local chambers, schools, employers, and community organizations.
- 1.1.2 Create clear pathways for residents—especially young adults and new residents—to serve on boards, committees, and community initiatives, increasing long-term community investment.

1.2 Improve awareness and promotion of Washington County's assets as a place to live, work and raise a family.

- 1.2.1 Develop coordinated marketing and storytelling efforts that highlight Washington County's workforce opportunities, housing options, outdoor recreation, schools, and quality-of-life amenities.
- 1.2.2 Improve welcome and orientation materials for new residents and employees, including digital and print resources that connect individuals to housing, recreation, schools, childcare, and community activities.

1.3 Support workforce attraction and retention through housing diversity, quality of place investments and employer collaboration.

- 1.3.1 Collaborate with local employers, developers, and public partners to support diverse housing options that meet the needs of the workforce, including families, young professionals, and aging workers.
- 1.3.2 Align workforce attraction efforts with quality-of-place initiatives such as trails, parks, downtown vitality, and community events to support long-term retention.

SOLUTIONS

Access to diverse, high-quality educational opportunities is essential to building a skilled and sustainable workforce in Washington County. Education and training—ranging from early learning to career, technical, and post-secondary pathways—support both workforce readiness and long-term economic stability. By strengthening coordination among schools, employers, and training partners, the County can better align educational opportunities with local workforce needs and support residents at every stage of learning.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Participation in career and technical education programs
- Number of students earning certifications, dual credits, or workforce credentials
- Enrollment in adult education and post-secondary training programs
- Employer participation in education and workforce partnerships
- Availability and utilization of early education and childcare services

PARTNERS

Washington County Economic Growth Partnership; Washington County school corporations; CAST Washington County; Community Learning Center; Ivy Tech Community College; Indiana University Southeast; Purdue Polytechnic; Washington County Community Foundation; Local employers and manufacturers; Childcare and early education providers

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Regional Opportunity Initiative (ROI)
- Align Southern Indiana
- On My Way Pre-K
- Paths to QUALITY
- State and regional workforce and education programs

Objective 02

Improve and create diverse educational opportunities ranging from early education to college and trade schools.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

2.1 Strengthen collaboration among school corporations, employers, and workforce partners to align education with local workforce needs.

2.1.1 Work with CAST (Creating Avenues for Student Transformation) and local partners to expand tutoring and academic support programs for students with identified learning needs.

2.1.2 Support regular collaboration among Washington County school corporations and employers to align curriculum, career pathways, and skill development with workforce demand.

2.2 Expand access to career, technical, and post-secondary education opportunities for students and adults.

2.2.1 Expand career and technical education opportunities, including trade certifications, dual-credit programs, and workforce-aligned credentials for high school students.

2.2.2 Partner with institutions such as Ivy Tech and the Community Learning Center to increase access to post-secondary education, adult education, and skills-based training.

2.2.3 Support professional development and continuing education opportunities for adults and incumbent workers to encourage career advancement and retention.

2.3 Support early education and childcare capacity as a foundational component of workforce participation and educational success.

2.3.1 Work with childcare providers, early education programs, and regional partners to expand early childhood education and childcare capacity to support working families.

SOLUTIONS

A diverse and balanced business environment is essential to Washington County's economic stability. Small businesses enhance quality of life and local services, while larger employers provide job opportunities and career advancement. Entrepreneurship supports both by creating new businesses and driving innovation. Supporting growth across all business types helps ensure a resilient local economy.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Number of new businesses started or expanded
- Private investment attracted
- Commercial and industrial site utilization
- Participation in business support or mentorship programs
- Job creation and wage growth

PARTNERS

Washington County Economic Growth Partnership; Washington County Chamber of Commerce; Purdue Polytechnic Institute; Community Learning Center; local entrepreneurs and small businesses; county and municipal governments

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Opportunity Zone programs
- Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC)
- Regional Opportunity Initiative (ROI)
- Indiana Small Business Development Center
- Advancing Indiana Municipalities (AIM)

Objective 03

Attract and grow small businesses, large businesses, and entrepreneurship in Washington County.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

3.1 Promote and leverage available incentives and development tools to attract business investment.

3.1.1 Promote the use of Opportunity Zones alongside other local, state, and regional incentives to attract new business investment.

3.2 Strengthen technical assistance, mentorship, and resource access for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

3.2.1 Partner with Purdue Polytechnic Institute, the Community Learning Center, and other organizations to provide technical assistance, mentorship, and business development resources for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

3.2.2 Support the development of business incubator, maker space, or co-working opportunities where feasible to encourage entrepreneurship and collaboration.

3.3 Improve visibility and readiness of commercial and industrial sites to support business attraction and expansion.

3.3.1 Market shovel-ready and improved industrial and commercial properties to site selectors, developers, and prospective businesses.

3.4 Support industry diversification through targeted business recruitment and entrepreneurship development.

3.4.1 Target business attraction efforts toward industries that complement and diversify the existing economic base, with a focus on high-growth and higher-wage sectors.

SOLUTIONS

Agriculture is a foundational part of Washington County's economy, identity, and land use. Supporting the long-term viability of agricultural businesses helps preserve working farmland, strengthen the local economy, and maintain the County's rural character. As consumer interest in locally produced food, agritourism, and farm-to-table experiences continues to grow, Washington County has opportunities to support farmers through education, market access, and diversification. By strengthening connections between agriculture, local markets, tourism, and community partners, the County can help agricultural businesses remain competitive, adapt to changing demands, and continue contributing to the community.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Participation in agricultural education and training programs
- Number of farm-to-table or local food initiatives
- Farmers market activity and vendor participation
- Agritourism-related events or uses
- Agricultural business retention and diversification

PARTNERS

Washington County Fairground Board; Washington County Extension Office, Purdue Extension; Local farmers and agricultural businesses; Washington County School corporations; Washington County Chamber of Commerce

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Purdue Extension Office
- Regional Opportunity Initiative (ROI)
- State and regional agricultural programs

Objective 04

Support the viability of agricultural businesses in the County.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

4.1 Support agricultural education, business planning, and succession efforts for local farmers.

4.1.1 Continue to promote agricultural education opportunities for farmers, including financial planning, succession planning, diversification, and business management training.

4.2 Expand market opportunities for locally produced agricultural products.

4.2.1 Support farm-to-table initiatives and partnerships that connect local producers with restaurants, schools, and community institutions.

4.2.2 Encourage the development and expansion of farmers markets and agricultural cooperatives to increase access to local products.

4.3 Promote agritourism and agricultural uses through supportive policies and community partnerships.

4.3.1 Promote agritourism and agricultural uses through local zoning ordinances and supportive policies.

4.3.2 Work with local schools to bring local agricultural products to their cafeterias

4.4 Strengthen agricultural visibility through events, facilities, and community programming

4.4.1 Assist the county fairgrounds and related partners in implementing long-range plans that enhance agricultural programming, events, and facilities.

4.5 Support local farming co-operatives that highlight Washington County agricultural products such as beef.

4.6 Construct a local farmer's market in a highly visible or active area to promote Washington County agricultural products.

SOLUTIONS

Main Streets and downtown areas serve as community gathering places and economic anchors for Washington County's towns. Investing in these areas supports local businesses, encourages community engagement, and enhances quality of life for residents. Improvements such as public programming, walkability, connectivity, and public amenities help create welcoming spaces that attract visitors and encourage residents to spend time downtown. By strengthening Main Streets and Downtown Salem through coordinated improvements and partnerships, Washington County can support vibrant town centers that reflect community identity and support long term economic vitality.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Number of downtown events and programs
- Pedestrian traffic and downtown usage
- Completion of infrastructure and amenity projects
- Business participation and occupancy
- Community engagement and feedback

PARTNERS

Salem Main Street; Town of Pekin; City of Salem; Local businesses and community organizations

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA)
- Indiana Main Street Program
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
- Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)

Objective 05

Improve all community Main Streets and Downtown Salem.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

5.1 Expand community programming and events to increase downtown activity and engagement.

5.1.1 Expand regular downtown programming such as community events, family activities, arts programming, and shop-local initiatives.

5.2 Improve public amenities and infrastructure to support safe, accessible, and connected downtown areas.

5.2.1 Implement public amenities, including Wi-Fi, to support events and public use of downtown spaces.

5.2.2 Improve pedestrian safety and accessibility through enhanced crosswalks, sidewalks, and connections between downtowns and key destinations such as schools and parks.

5.2.3 Support the development of new or improved public green spaces in downtown areas to encourage gathering and recreation.

5.3 Strengthen partnerships to support long-term Main Street and downtown revitalization efforts.

5.3.1 Collaborate with Main Street organizations, municipalities, and community partners to coordinate planning, funding, and implementation efforts.

SOLUTIONS

High-quality recreational spaces play a vital role in improving quality of life, supporting physical and mental well-being, and strengthening community connection in Washington County. Rather than focusing solely on the quantity of parkland, this objective emphasizes creating accessible, well-maintained spaces that offer diverse recreational opportunities for residents of all ages. By enhancing existing parks, expanding programming, and improving connections between recreation assets, the County can better utilize its natural features while ensuring recreational spaces serve as welcoming gathering places that contribute to community health, engagement and long term livability.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Number and condition of recreational facilities
- Participation in parks and recreation programs
- Completion of park and trail improvement projects
- Connectivity between recreation assets
- Community feedback and usage trends

PARTNERS

Washington County Parks & Recreation; Salem Parks & Recreation; Washington County YMCA; Washington County Council and Commissioners; Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR); Local municipalities and community organizations

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
- Regional Opportunity Initiative (ROI)
- Indiana Office of Tourism Development (IOTD)

Objective 06

Increase the amount of high-quality recreational spaces that are safe, maintained, and accessible to our residents.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

6.1 Enhance and maintain existing parks and recreational facilities to meet community needs.

- 6.1.1 As municipal parks expand or amenities are added, evaluate the need for additional staffing, funding, or maintenance resources.
- 6.1.2 Increase acreage and availability of park and gathering spaces as land or opportunities become available.

6.2 Expand recreational programming and activities for residents of all ages.

- 6.2.1 Expand recreational programming for families, youth, teens, and seniors, including sports leagues, camps, fitness classes, festivals, and community events.
- 6.2.2 Expand indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities and family engagement.

6.3 Improve connectivity between recreational assets through trails and multi-use facilities.

- 6.3.1 Improve existing parks by upgrading amenities and developing interpretive signage that highlights local history and natural features.
- 6.3.2 Support long-term recreation initiatives, including trail connectivity projects, large-scale recreation facilities, and destination amenities as funding and partnerships allow.

6.9 Develop a multi-use trail network connecting the former CSX railroad line, the Knobstone Trail and major destinations such as John Hay Lake, Elk Creek Lake, Lake Salinda, Delaney Park and the YMCA.

6.10 Build a splash pad or water park. Construct a large multi-purpose recreational facility that could house indoor sports, birthday parties, and other indoor activities at the Washington County Fairgrounds.

SOLUTIONS

A diverse housing supply is essential to meeting the needs of Washington County's residents and supporting long-term economic growth. Housing options that serve young professionals, families, aging residents, and renters help attract and retain workforce, support aging in place, and stabilize neighborhoods. This objective focuses on encouraging a mix of housing types by aligning zoning, infrastructure, incentives, and partnerships. By supporting both new development and reinvestment in existing housing stock, Washington County can expand housing availability.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Number and condition of recreational facilities
- Participation in parks and recreation programs
- Completion of park and trail improvement projects
- Connectivity between recreation assets
- Community feedback and usage trends

PARTNERS

Washington County Parks & Recreation; Salem Parks & Recreation; Washington County YMCA; Washington County Council and Commissioners; Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR); Local municipalities and community organizations

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
- Regional Opportunity Initiative (ROI)
- Indiana Office of Tourism Development (IOTD)

Objective 07

Attract diverse housing development that provide options ranging from more affordable starter homes, to homes, for aging residents, to rental options.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

7.1 Align zoning and land use policies to support diverse housing development and protect long-term investment.

7.1.1 Review and update county zoning ordinances to support diverse housing types while protecting existing and future property investments.

7.2 Encourage homeownership and reinvestment in existing housing stock.

7.2.1 Continue promoting residential properties that are suitable for new housing development or redevelopment.

7.2.2 Explore incentives such as residential tax abatements to encourage homeownership and housing investment.

7.2.3 Partner with local lenders to create programs that support first-time homebuyers and recent graduates.

7.3 Support new housing development that addresses rental, workforce, affordable, and age-in-place needs

7.3.1 Pursue funding opportunities to support owner-occupied housing repairs and rehabilitation in targeted communities.

7.3.2 Support multi-family and mixed-housing developments that address rental and workforce housing needs.

7.3.3 Coordinate infrastructure extensions to support new housing developments, including affordable and age-in-place options.

7.3.4 Utilize land banking and partnerships with nonprofit housing organizations to expand affordable housing opportunities.

SOLUTIONS

Reliable infrastructure and community services are essential to supporting quality of life, economic growth, and public safety in Washington County. Investments in transportation, utilities, broadband, and emergency services directly affect residents' daily lives and the County's ability to attract and retain businesses and workforce. This objective focuses on improving connectivity, safety, and service capacity while planning for future growth. By coordinating infrastructure investments with land use planning, regional partners, and available funding opportunities, Washington County can strengthen essential services and ensure infrastructure systems are positioned to meet both current and long-term needs.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Miles of sidewalks and trails added or improved
- Broadband coverage and service speed improvements
- Emergency service response capacity and coverage
- Infrastructure investments supporting growth areas
- Coordination with regional infrastructure initiatives

PARTNERS

Washington County Plan Commission; Washington County Commissioners and County Council; Our Southern Indiana Regional Development Authority; Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT); Local municipalities; Internet service providers; Volunteer fire departments

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA)
- Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)
- Regional Opportunity Initiative (ROI)
- Blue River Services / SITS
- Regional water and transit planning organizations

Objective 08

Strengthen the County's infrastructure by investing in community services.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Strategy 8.1: Improve pedestrian connectivity and safety through sidewalks, trails, and walkable infrastructure.

- 8.1.1 Consider sidewalk requirements within new subdivision developments through updates to the county subdivision control ordinance.
- 8.1.2 Extend sidewalks near schools and residential areas to improve connectivity and pedestrian safety.
- 8.1.3 Complete and enhance pedestrian and trail connections, including the Salem Walking Path and Lake Salinda Trail.

8.2 Strengthen emergency and community services to ensure long-term effectiveness and coverage.

- 8.2.1 Evaluate the structure and organization of volunteer fire districts to improve service longevity, efficiency, and coverage.
- 8.2.2 Encourage Volunteer Fire Departments (VFD) to utilize the 2024 VFD report.

8.3 Expand and modernize utility and broadband infrastructure to support growth and accessibility.

- 8.3.1 Work with local internet service providers to close service gaps and improve broadband access and speeds.
- 8.3.2 Expand sewer and water infrastructure capacity in areas appropriate for future growth in coordination with regional partners.
- 8.3.3 Collaborate with regional partners to improve access, safety, and connectivity along key transportation corridors.

8.4 Work with the RDA to improve water service throughout the County.

8.5 Work with the RDA to improve access to I-65 by providing safety enhancements and potentially widening State Road 60.

8.6 Consider the development of public transit or a commuter system to employment centers in and outside of the county.

SOLUTIONS

Providing meaningful opportunities for youth is essential to building a strong future for Washington County. When young people have access to leadership development, career-ready skills, and safe places to gather, they are more likely to feel connected to their community and prepared for adulthood. This objective focuses on expanding existing youth programs, strengthening partnerships with schools and community organizations, and creating welcoming spaces that support personal growth. By investing in youth-focused education, recreation, and engagement opportunities, Washington County can help develop skills, confidence, and community pride among its next generation.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Participation in youth leadership and skills programs
- Availability of youth-focused recreational spaces
- School and community partnership engagement
- Youth attendance and program utilization
- Feedback from youth, families, and educators

PARTNERS

Washington County School Corporations; Future Farmers of America (FFA), Washington County YMCA; Community Learning Center; 4-H Junior Leaders; Washington County youth-serving organizations

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA)
- Regional Opportunity Initiative (ROI)
- Youth development and workforce readiness programs

Objective 09

Create more activities and opportunities that help to develop the educational, social, and life skills of the County's youth.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

9.1 Expand leadership development and skill-building opportunities for youth through existing programs and organizations.

9.1.1 Expand and promote leadership development opportunities through programs such as Future Farmers of America (FFA), 4-H, and other youth organizations.

9.2 Strengthen partnerships with schools to support career readiness and life skills development.

9.2.1 Work with local school corporations to integrate career-ready and life skills programming into educational and extracurricular offerings.

9.3 Increase access to safe, engaging spaces for youth recreation and social interaction.

9.3.1 Expand youth-focused spaces, including hangout areas, game rooms, and structured programming.

9.3.2 Support the development of youth recreational and community centers throughout the County that provide safe, inclusive places to gather and socialize.

SOLUTIONS

A clean, attractive community plays a critical role in quality of life, economic development, and community pride. Maintaining well-kept public spaces, corridors, and properties helps create a positive first impression for residents, visitors, and potential investors. Addressing litter, blighted properties, and underutilized spaces encourages reinvestment while strengthening community identity. These solutions focus on practical, achievable improvements—such as coordinated clean-up efforts, property maintenance, public art, and gateway enhancements—that support long-term beautification and stewardship throughout Washington County.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Number of community clean-up events conducted annually
- Reduction in reported litter and nuisance complaints
- Number of properties improved, cleaned, or redeveloped
- Installation of new gateway, wayfinding, or beautification features
- Increased participation from residents, volunteers, and local organizations
- Visible improvement in key corridors, downtowns, and community entry points

PARTNERS

Washington County Council; Washington County Commissioners; Washington County Code Enforcement /Staff; Washington County Tourism, Salem Main Street; Washington County Parks & Recreation; Salem Parks & Recreation; Local Municipalities; Local Artists; Community Volunteers and Civic Groups

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA)
- Indiana Office of Tourism Development (IOTD)
- Indiana Arts Commission
- Our Town – National Endowment for the Arts
- Regional Opportunity Initiative
- Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)

Objective 10

Improve the appearance of Washington County through policy development, property improvements, and beautification efforts.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

10.1 Promote community-wide beautification and clean-up initiatives to improve the visual appearance of public spaces and corridors.

- 10.1.1** Support and organize recurring community clean-up days in high-visibility areas, including State Road 56 and other major corridors.
- 10.1.2** Partner with local organizations, schools, and volunteer groups to expand participation in clean-up and beautification efforts.

10.2 Strengthen property maintenance and appearance through policy development, reporting mechanisms, and enforcement.

10.3 Enhance Washington County's identity and sense of place through gateways, wayfinding, landscaping, and public art.

- 10.3.1** Design and implement a countywide wayfinding and gateway signage program to reinforce community identity.
- 10.3.2** Install landscaping and streetscape enhancements at key community entry points, corridors, downtowns, and parks.
- 10.3.3** Expand public art installations in visible public spaces, including Downtown Salem and community parks, in partnership with local artists.

10.4 Reduce blight and support redevelopment of underutilized or deteriorated properties.

- 10.4.1** Identify blighting, vacant, or underutilized properties in priority areas such as downtowns and major intersections.
- 10.4.2** Support redevelopment, clean-up, or demolition efforts for dilapidated properties to encourage reinvestment and improve appearance.

SOLUTIONS

Promoting healthy lifestyles in Washington County requires expanding access to recreation, nutrition education, preventive care, and wellness resources. While healthcare services remain essential, long-term community health outcomes are strongly influenced by opportunities for physical activity, healthy eating, and mental well-being. These solutions focus on practical, community-based approaches that support residents of all ages by strengthening partnerships, improving access to information and facilities, and encouraging healthy behaviors that enhance overall quality of life.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Install bike racks at parks, downtown areas, and public facilities to promote bicycling.
- Support initiatives that encourage walking, biking, and use of recreational trails.

PARTNERS

Washington County Health Department; St. Vincent Salem Hospital; Purdue Extension Office; Local Farmers & Farming Cooperatives; Align Southern Indiana; Washington County Parks & Recreation; Salem Parks & Recreation; Local Schools; Healthcare Providers

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH)
- Regional Opportunity Initiative (ROI)
- Purdue Extension Nutrition Education Programs
- Indiana Department of Health Community Grants

Objective 11

Promote healthy lifestyles through increased access to recreational assets and health programs.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

11.1 Increase access to health, nutrition, and wellness education resources.

- 11.1.1 Encourage the use of local food resources at local businesses and community events.
- 11.1.2 Create a centralized physical or online location to share information on health-related programs offered in the county.
- 11.1.3 Partner with Purdue Extension to offer free or low-cost exercise, nutrition, and diet education programs for families.
- 11.1.4 Work with schools and Purdue Extension to increase nutrition and physical activity education for youth.

11.2 Expand opportunities for physical activity and active transportation.

- 11.2.1 Install bike racks at parks, downtown areas, and public facilities to promote bicycling.
- 11.2.2 Support initiatives that encourage walking, biking, and use of recreational trails.

11.3 Strengthen partnerships to improve access to healthcare and mental health services.

- 11.3.1 Support Align Southern Indiana's efforts to make Washington County a trauma-informed community.
- 11.3.2 Work with partners to help attract primary care providers and specialized medical practices.
- 11.3.3 Identify potential partners and funding opportunities to support the development of mental health facilities and services.

SOLUTIONS

Substance abuse places a significant strain on individuals, families, and the broader Washington County community. Addressing addiction requires both compassionate recovery support and proactive prevention efforts that reduce long-term impacts on public health, safety, and quality of place. These solutions focus on strengthening community-based programs, improving access to recovery services, supporting re-entry and mentorship opportunities, and coordinating efforts among healthcare providers, law enforcement, and social service organizations to create a more resilient and healthy community.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Number of individuals participating in recovery or mentoring programs.
- Availability and utilization of prevention and education programs.
- Number of partnerships supporting addiction prevention and recovery.
- Progress toward establishing or expanding local treatment facilities.
- Reduction in repeat substance-related offenses over time.

PARTNERS

Ascension St. Vincent Salem Hospital; Washington County Health Department; Washington County Sheriff's Department; Align Southern Indiana; LifeSpring Health Systems; Local Nonprofit and Social Service Organizations; Law Enforcement Agencies

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Regional Opportunity Initiative (ROI)
- Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA)
- Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA)
- Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH)
- Federal Substance Abuse Prevention Grants

Objective 12

Support the prevention and recovery of drug and alcohol addiction through programs and facilities.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

12.1 Expand access to recovery, mentoring, and re-entry support services.

- 12.1.1** Implement a "Life After Drugs" mentoring and resource connection program to support individuals in recovery and re-entry.
- 12.1.2** Identify partners to provide case management, peer support, and wraparound services for individuals recovering from substance use disorders.

12.2 Strengthen prevention efforts through education, partnerships, and enforcement.

- 12.2.1** Create a recovery program that is conveniently accessible for individuals currently struggling with addiction, paired with prevention programming aimed at youth and families.
- 12.2.2** Support prevention initiatives and educational efforts led by Align Southern Indiana and other regional partners.
- 12.2.3** Work with law enforcement to establish fair and consistent substance abuse enforcement policies, with a focus on first-time offenders and diversion opportunities where appropriate.

12.3 Increase availability of local treatment and rehabilitation facilities.

- 12.3.1** Work with local organizations and healthcare providers to develop an affordable or free addiction treatment facility serving Washington County residents.
- 12.3.2** Pursue funding opportunities to support counseling services, outpatient treatment, and long-term recovery programming.



**REGIONAL
OPPORTUNITY
INITIATIVES**

Regional Opportunity Initiatives (ROI) would like to thank all of our county and community partners who participated and devoted many hours to updating the Quality of Place and Workforce Attraction Plans. Meaningful conversations, problem-solving and innovation took place throughout the course of this process. Your continued partnership and collaboration make the Indiana Uplands a region on the move.

We would also like to extend gratitude to all of the residents who participated in townhall meetings and submitted their thoughts on the direction and priorities of their community through the survey tool. This level of engagement steered the local committees in their work.

ROI looks forward to assisting stakeholders throughout the region as the plans' priorities are implemented. Together the Indiana Uplands will continue to build a vibrant and prosperous future for our residents.