



Outdoor Seating | Courthouse lawn



## APPENDIX

This chapter houses additional information including summaries for all project meetings and public engagement efforts, and the past planning documents such as the Community Needs Assessment.



**Union County Comprehensive Plan  
Steering Committee Meeting #1 Summary  
April 7, 2020 | 5:00 – 7:00  
Virtual Go-To Meeting**

MEETING SUMMARY

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**A. INTRODUCTION**

The first Union County Steering Committee was held on Tuesday, April 7 at 5:00PM. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the Stay-at-Home mandate, the meeting was held as a virtual Go-To meeting. Participants were invited to join the call from a conference call number and/or video link. The project team kicked off the meeting by introducing the American Structurepoint staff members that will be working on the Union County project. Following that, steering committee members could introduce themselves using the chat features or speaking during the meeting. Members from the Union County Area Planning, Union County Community Foundation, and Union County Economic Development Corporation attended the meeting. The project team followed up with members that weren't able to participate in the meeting with digital copies of the meeting materials and a follow-up survey. The first portion of the meeting concluded with an explanation of "Comprehensive Planning 101" and discussion related to the steering committee's expectations for the planning process.

Overall, attendees feel the planning process and final plan focus on:

- Expanding and capitalizing on Tourism as many people visit Brookville Lake and Whitewater State Park each summer.
- Outlining how Union County is unique.
- Providing specific action steps for implementation.
- Empowering local leaders to make big moves.
- Improving arts, culture, and placemaking throughout the County.
- Aligning with the Community Foundation efforts.

**B. PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The project team explained how their planning approach focused on a community-driven planning process and an asset-based approach. The goal is to facilitate a planning process that is meaningful, relevant, and inclusive, while providing opportunities for the community to be informed, heard, and empowered. Additionally, the project team strives to create a document that reflect the interests of the community and outlines measurable action steps to assist in implementation. The project team

outlined the tentative project schedule while recognizing the challenges around the COVID-19 outbreak and public engagement. Because Union County received a planning grant from the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), a draft of the final plan has to be submitted to OCRA by the end of September.

#### **C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

An essential part of a steering committee kick-off meeting is making sure the members understand their role and responsibilities as steering committee members. The purpose of a steering committee is to guide the development of the plan and act as a soundboard for ideas before sharing information with the general public. There will be 3 meetings throughout the planning process. Additionally, members will be asked to review draft deliverables, attend and encourage others to participated in public engagement opportunities, and complete the online surveys.

#### **D. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

The project team recognized that we are in a unique situation with social distancing and the Stay-at-Home mandates. The project team is committed to evaluating and exploring new methods of engagement. Traditional public engagement tools including public meetings, online surveys, social media campaigns, and the project website. The project team expressed interested in using an app called Poll Everywhere and interactive mapping to gather feedback during video meetings. The first public engagement meeting is expected to take place in mid-June.

#### **E. NEXT STEPS**

The project team will be working to collect and analyze existing conditions data, finalizing the project website, and preparing for the next upcoming steering committee meeting in May. The committee was asked to read the steering committee handbook, tell their friends and family about the planning process, and help identify potential social media partners.

It is expected that members may feel uncomfortable about speaking out during a conference/video call. For this reason, a follow-up survey was sent to committee members with open-ended questions regarding assets and challenges. The following sections offers a brief summary of the feedback collected.

- Words like quaint, rural, and old-fashioned were used to describe Union County today.
- When asked to described their community vision for 2040, participants provided the following ideas:
  - Economically sound with a home-town feel and housing to support the needs of Union County.
  - Union County as a place to live, work, and place with things to do, nice subdivisions, recreational amenities at Whitewater State Park, reliable internet, family-friendly activities, and thriving school districts.
  - A community that can grow with water and sewer services outside of town limits.
- Participants identified low crime, education, natural resources, affordable housing, local businesses, small-town atmosphere, safety, and friendliness as things that make Union County great.

- The Union County Foundation, local churches, and the Union County Public Library were organizational-based assets in Union County.
- The courthouse, public parks, and Brookville lake are place-based assets in Union County.
- The low cost of living and community events held by the school district were other things identified as community assets.
- Improvements are needed related to downtown, including improved water quality, internet service, and housing conditions.
- County leadership and communication between entities were identified as challenges.
- Other challenges noted include:
  - There is limited transportation options for specific population including bus transit.
  - The ownership of land by the federal and state government creates a tax base problem for the county.
  - Union County needs more housing.
  - The Economic Development Corporation could use additional staff.
  - Utility infrastructure needs to be expanded outside of town limits for growth.
  - Placemaking efforts are lacking and needed to attract people to the county.
  - Union County needs to enhance and expand the parks and recreation opportunities that exist.
  - Union County needs more housing, has a lot of low-income housing, and struggles with housing quality.

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## Virtual Meeting Etiquette



- If you are not speaking, please mute your phone/computer. This will allow everyone to hear the presenter better.
- After each section, there is a question slide. Please save your questions till then. This will avoid people talking over each other.
- If you are having trouble seeing my screen or hearing me, please let me know.
- There is a chat feature for questions or comments if you prefer that option.

2




## AGENDA

- Introduction
- Comprehensive Planning 101
- Project Overview
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Communication and Engagement
- Next Steps

3



## Introduction

American Structurepoint was hired to facilitate the comprehensive planning process.

- Hailey Woods – Project Manager
- Grant Kleinhenz – Planning and Economic Development Group Leader
- Philip Roth – Senior Planner
- Alex Varney – Associate Planner



4

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## Your turn! Using the chat feature tell us...



- Your name and background
- Your day job or the organization you are representing in this process
- Your favorite thing about Union County

5



## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

6



## Comprehensive Planning 101

What are we doing here?

### What is a comprehensive plan?



- A guidance document for future growth and development over the next 10 – 20 years.
- Serves as a roadmap for effective decision-making in both private development projects and community initiatives for the public good.
- Key components include a snapshot of current conditions, a vision for the future, and recommendations of how to achieve the vision and goals.
- Union County received a planning grant through Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) which means we have to meet their deadline and requirements.

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## What will the plan cover?



### Indiana Code 36-4-500

- A statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction.
- A statement of policy for land use development.
- A statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.



### OCRA Requirements

- Topics include:
  - Land Use
  - Government and Fiscal Capacity
  - Public Facilities and Services
  - Placemaking
  - Economic Development
  - Housing
  - Transportation
  - Agriculture
  - Natural Resources
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Historic and Archeological resources
  - Hazard Mitigation



### Union County Planning Process

- Public Engagement will help us identify:
  - Community Assets
  - Community Challenges
  - County-wide Vision Statement
  - County-wide Goals

10

## What are the benefits?



- It's a tool to help engineer change by encouraging favorable development.
- The plan provides justification for community decision-makers to support or deny future projects or initiatives.
- Funding opportunities! A comprehensive plan show that your community is being proactive and has put forth effort toward achieving a common vision.

10

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## Discussion Questions



- Who has been involved in a planning process before?
- What was your experience like?
- What are your expectations for this planning process?

11



**QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?**

12

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# Project Overview

How will we get this done?

## Planning Approach



Community-driven planning process

## Asset-based Approach



16

## Our goals for the project



A process that is meaningful, relevant, inclusive, and equitable.

A process that provides opportunities for your community to be represented, informed, heard, empowered.

A plan that reflects the interests of Union County residents, businesses, and leaders.

A plan that outlines measureable action steps to assist in the implementation of the comprehensive plan.

15

## Project Schedule



### Phase 0: Project Initiation

**MARCH – APRIL**

Internal Project Kick-off  
Data Transfer  
Establishing Steering Committee  
Project Website and Branding



### Phase 1: Information Gathering

**APRIL – JUNE**

Current Conditions Assessment  
Steering Committee Meeting #2  
Stakeholder Meetings  
Public Open House and Survey



### Phase 2: Draft Plan Development

**JULY- AUGUST**

Draft Goals, Objectives, Strategies  
Steering Committee Meeting #3  
Public Open House and Survey  
First Draft of Comp Plan



### Phase 3: Implementation

**SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER**

Public Review Draft  
FINAL Draft Plan  
OCRA Submission  
FINAL approval from OCRA

16

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## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

17



## Roles and Responsibilities

How will you be contributing to the planning process?

## Your Role



- You will be asked to:
  - Share your knowledge about the community
  - Review and comment on draft deliverables
  - Help advertise and participate in public engagement opportunities
  - Participate in the adoption of the final plan

19

## Your Responsibilities



- 3 steering committee meetings (Maximum of two hours each)
- Reviewing draft deliverables (Varies in time commitment)
  - You will be the first to see many of the key elements of this plan. It's your job to review and provide feedback so we can get the information to a good place BEFORE sharing it with the public.
  - You will help develop the preliminary vision statement and goal statements. You will review our recommendations for strategies before we take it to the public.
- Attending and encouraging others to participate in public events
- Completing online surveys

20

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## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

21



## Communication and Engagement

How will we engage the public?

## Public Engagement Tools



- Public Meetings and Online Survey
  - Community Assets and Challenge Identification and Draft Vision and Goals
  - Preliminary Recommendations
- Social Media Campaign
  - Does your organization or company have a social media account that could help us?
- Project Website
  - Monthly Project Updates
  - Links to the surveys
  - Links to draft deliverables
  - Meeting materials and summaries
  - Contact us page

23

## Project Website



- Our team is working on developing a website that will serve as the clearinghouse for all things related to this project.



24

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## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

25



## Next Steps

What will the project team be working on?

## What will the project team be doing?



- Collecting and analyzing existing conditions data
- Finalizing the project website
- Preparing for our next meeting in Mid- May.
- Exploring unique ways to engage the public while practicing social distancing

27

## What can you be doing?



- Follow up Survey!
  - Please share with me your big ideas and help identify Union County's assets and challenges.
- If you haven't done so already, review the steering committee handbook.
- Telling your friends and family about the planning process.
- Helping us identify social media partners.
  - If you manage or know someone who has a social media account that would help us spread the word, please send me an email.

28

4/7/2020

**THANK YOU!**

Any final questions or comments?

Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions, comments, or ideas to share with us!

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Group Leader  
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**Union County Comprehensive Plan**  
**Steering Committee Meeting #2 Summary**  
**May 19, 2020 | 5:30 – 7:00**  
**Virtual Go-To Meeting**

MEETING SUMMARY

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**A. OVERVIEW**

The second Union County Steering Committee was held on Tuesday, May 19 at 5:30PM. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the Stay-at-Home mandate, the meeting was held as a virtual Go-To meeting. Participants were invited to join the call from a conference call number and/or video link. There were 6 people attending the meeting.

**B. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The project team started the meeting off by outlining the topics that would be covered within Chapter 2 of the final document. Chapter 2: General Background would serve as an existing conditions report. The project team collected and analyzed data related to demographics, economic base, and anchor institutions. Some preliminary data points and key findings were shared with the committee including population trends, age structure, labor force, commuting trends, industry breakdown, and job available. A member of the committee expressed concerns about how the 2019 estimates differed from the estimates used in a recently published Needs Assessment by the Union County Foundation. Our project team was pulling data from ESRI Business Analyst, while the Needs Assessment was using Indiana Stats. The project team revised the data to align with the estimates published by Indiana Stats.

**C. VISION & GOALS**

The project team explained the purpose and difference between a vision statement, goal statements, objective or policy statements, and strategies. A key component to a developing a vision statement is identify core values. The committee discussed what the County values today, and what the County should value in the future. Key takeaways from the discussion include:

- Existing values
  - Close-knit community
  - Small town charm
  - Environmental/recreational assets
  - Low taxes – affordable cost of living
  - Schools

- Future values
  - Agritourism
  - Tourism
  - Healthy, active lifestyles
  - Environmental stewardship
  - Diversifying the population

The project team had prepared a madlib exercise for developing a vision statement to show the committee. The committee liked the idea and suggested using it to gather feedback at the public meeting and on the survey. The madlib read,

*“Union County will be a community comprised of \_\_\_\_ people, \_\_\_\_ businesses, and \_\_\_\_ places. Known for its \_\_\_\_, Union County values \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. We are committed to investing in \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_ to ensure a \_\_\_\_ framework for quality growth and development.”*

#### **D. COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT**

By the second committee meeting, the Union County Comprehensive Plan project website was live. The project team showed the committee how to use the website and asked them to share the link with friends and family. During this discussion, members of the committee expressed concern about the lack of participation from other committee members and the public. The plan of action developed was to draft a letter to encourage participation and share an FAQ document with the committee as another attempt to gain interest in the project.

#### **E. NEXT STEPS**

The project team shared their next steps for the upcoming weeks including hosting stakeholder meetings, and preparing for the first public engagement opportunity. The committee was asked to share an advertisement on social media about the upcoming meeting and to be on the lookout for an email asking them to review the existing conditions report.



**UNION COUNTY**  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2  
MAY 19, 2020 | 5:30 – 7:00PM  
VIRTUAL GO-TO MEETING

## Virtual Meeting Etiquette



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## AGENDA

- Existing Conditions
- Vision and Goals
- Communication and Engagement Update
- Next Steps

3

## Project Schedule



### Phase 0: Project Initiation

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4

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## Existing Conditions

Where are we now?

## Document Organization



- Chapter 1 – Executive Summary
- Chapter 2 – General Background
- Chapter 3 - Comprehensive Planning Committee
- Chapter 4 – Analysis by Subject Matter
  - Land Use
  - Government and Fiscal Capacity
  - Public Facilities and Services
  - Placemaking
  - Economic Development
  - Housing
  - Transportation
  - Agriculture
  - Natural Resources
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Historic and Archeological resources
  - Hazard Mitigation

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## What topics are covered in Chapter 2?



### Demographics

- Population
- Age Structure
- Educational Attainment
- Income
- Poverty
- Households
- Housing Units

### Economic Base

- Total Labor Force
- Commuting Trends
- Unemployment Rate
- Industry Breakdown
- Major Employers

### Anchor Institutions

- Libraries
- Hospitals/clinics
- Community Centers
- Schools
- High Education Facilities
- Religious Institutions

7

## Comparison Communities

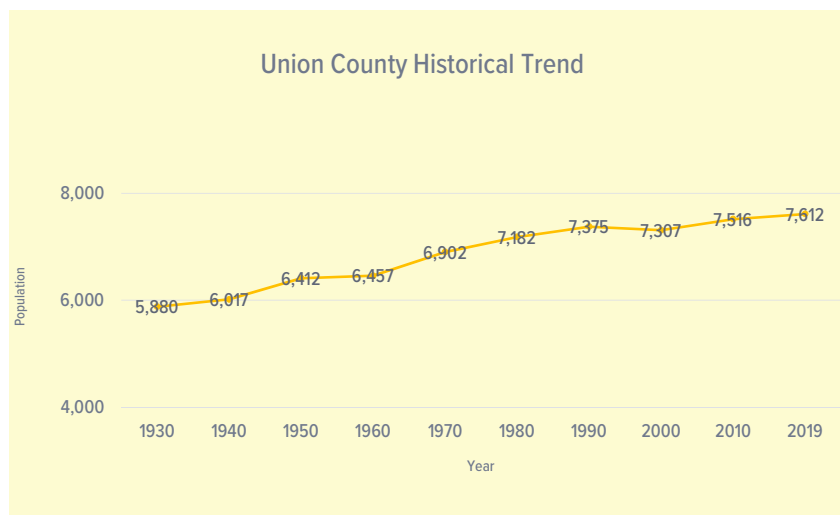


- Comparison communities are used to compare and contrast the unique behaviors and trends within Union County.
  - Union County, Town of Liberty and West College Corner
  - Franklin County and Brookville
  - Rush County and Rushville
  - Indiana

8

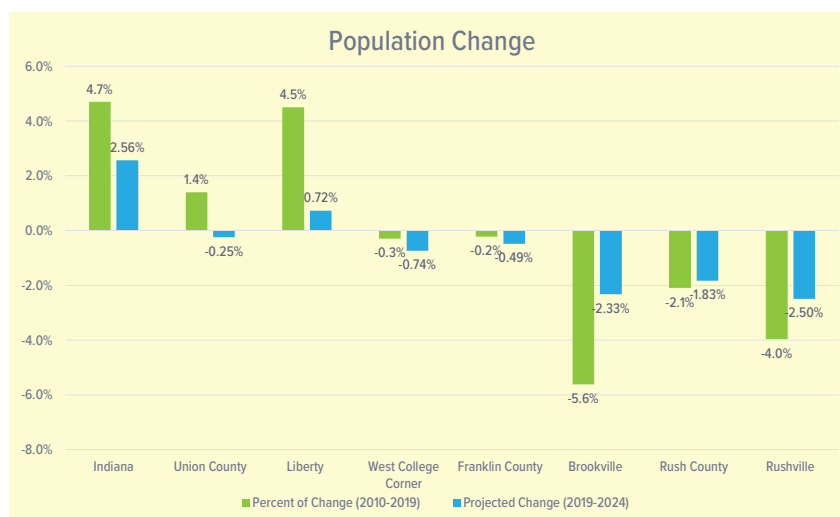
## Population Trends

- Union County is the second smallest county in Indiana.
- Union County has grown only 24 percent over the course of 70 years. (1930 – 2000)
- Since 2000, the County has increased less than 5 percent.



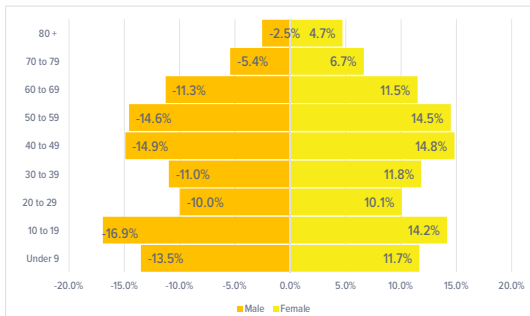
## Population Trends

- Union County and Liberty were the only two geographic areas to experience a positive change from 2010 – 2019
- Liberty's growth aligns with the State of Indiana
- Liberty is the only area projected to see growth in the future.
- Union County's population is estimated to decrease by only 20 people



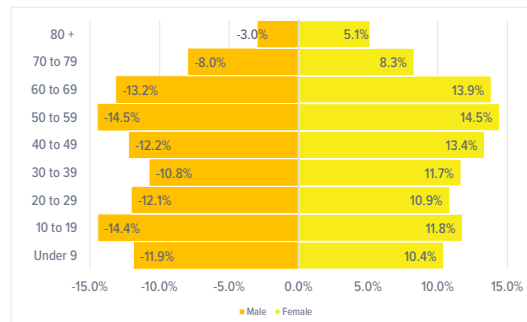
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## Age Structure



2010 Population Pyramid

## 2019 Population Pyramid



11

## Other Topics explored

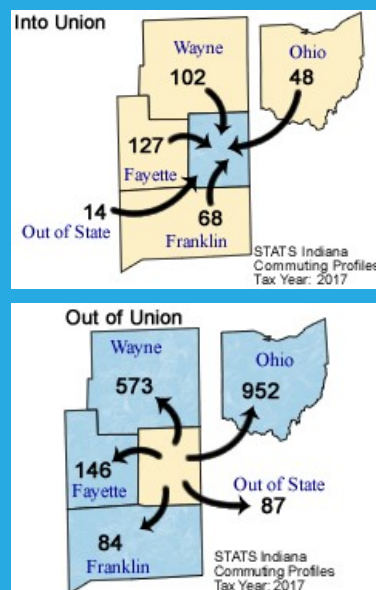


- **Education –**
  - Union County education levels closely reflect those of the State of Indiana.
  - Town of Liberty (18.2 percent) and West College Corner (18 percent) have a much higher percentage of their populations with less than a high school education.
- **Income –**
  - Union County has a lower median household income and slower rate of growth compared to peer communities.
- **Households –**
  - Trends and future projections reveal Union County is expected to hold steady in the number of households for the next couple of years.
- **Housing –**
  - 60 percent owner-occupied housing units, with 31 percent being renter-occupied, and 9 percent vacant.
  - Percentage of rental occupied units has increased by 5 percent since 2010.
  - West College Corner (46.5 percent) and Liberty (41.8) had an relatively high number of renter-occupied units in 2019.

12

## Economic Base Summary

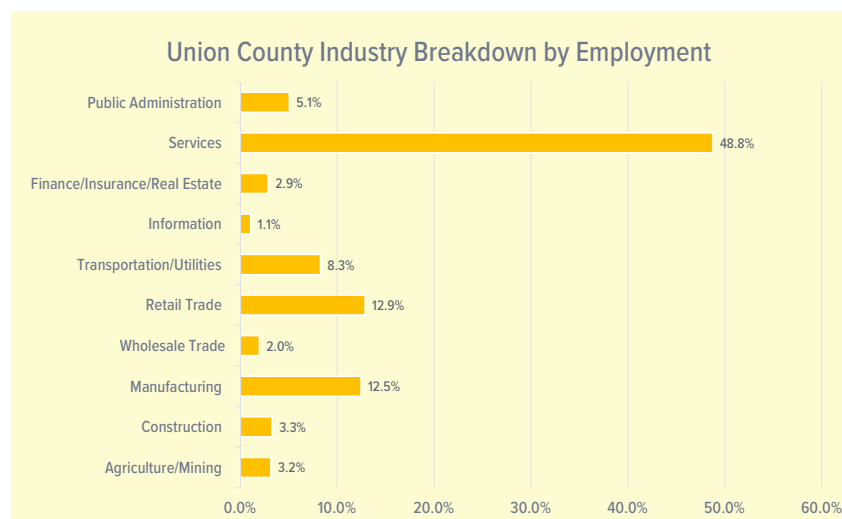
- As of 2019 Union County has a total labor force of 3,577 workers, meaning roughly 47 percent of the total population is active in the workforce.
- Union County is exporting nearly 40 percent of its workforce outside of the County, primarily to Ohio to the east and Wayne County to the north.
- With an unemployment rate of 2.5 percent, Union County has lower unemployment rate than the State of Indiana (4.4 percent), and below the federal standard of 3.5-4.5 rate.



13

## Industry Breakdown

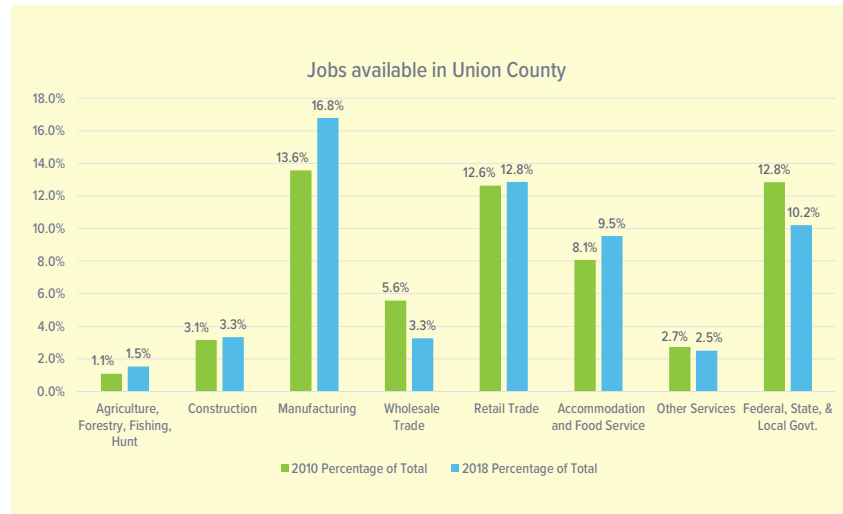
- Most workers are employed within the service, manufacturing, or retail industry.
- The service industry is comprised of professional, educational, healthcare, social assistance, accommodations, and food services.



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## Jobs available

- There were 1,323 jobs available in Union County in 2018.
- The manufacturing industry held the highest percentage of jobs with 16.8 percent.
- Compared to 2010 data, manufacturing is the only industry that has experienced a significant increase in the number of jobs available.
- The number of jobs available within federal, state, or local government has decreased by over 2 percent



## Anchor Institutions Summary



- Inventory of the facilities offered in Union County.
  - Libraries
  - Hospital/clinics
  - Community centers
  - Educational institutions
  - Religious facilities
- Important to read this section to make sure we didn't leave anything out or misstate something.

## Key Trends Identified



- Union County is small but holding steady.
- Many residents are approaching retirement age in the next 10 years.
- Renter-occupied housing is becoming more, and more popular.
- Union County is exporting a significant amount of its workforce.

17


## Existing Conditions Part 2 (Chapter 4)




- Coming Soon!
  - Land Use
  - Government and Fiscal Capacity
  - Public Facilities and Services
  - Placemaking
  - Economic Development
  - Housing
  - Transportation
  - Agriculture
  - Natural Resources
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Historic and Archeological resources
  - Hazard Mitigation


18

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# QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?



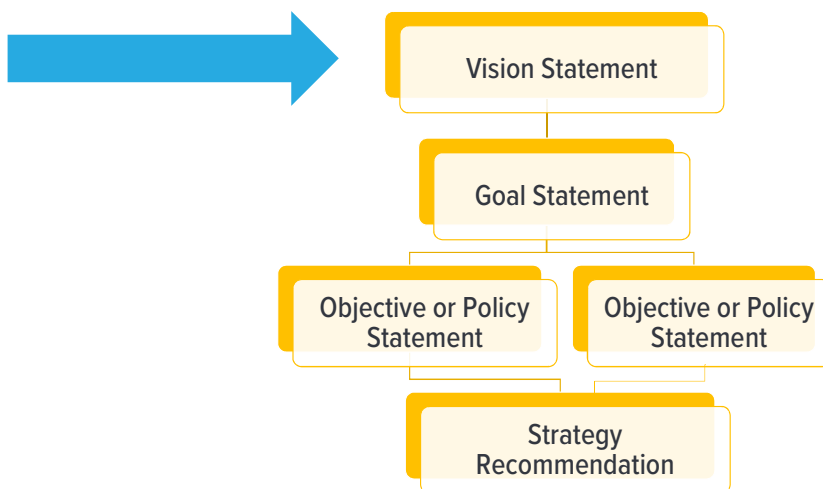
19



## Vision and Goals

Where do we want to go?

## Hierarchy



## What is a vision statement?

- A vision statement describes a shared image of what leaders and residents want their community to become over the next 10 to 20 years in the future.
- **It is not about what Union County is today but what the community wants to become.**
- The statement will be forward thinking and written in a positive, affirmative and inspirational style.
- It should be short in length. (Two –three memorable sentences)



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## Key Components to a Vision Statement



- Core Values (Both existing and future)
- Qualities or resources that make the community unique or contribute to the identity
- Attributes that we want to preserve
- Attribute that we want to improve

## Examples of Core Community Values



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • Sustainability                                 | • Efficient transportation                |
| • Healthy, active lifestyle                      | • Public Transit Options                  |
| • Environmental stewardship                      | • Pedestrian Connectivity                 |
| • Strong economic Base                           | • Quality services and infrastructure     |
| • Diverse Population                             | • Recreational Opportunities              |
| • Premier Educational System                     | • Vibrant arts and culture                |
| • Life-long learning Opportunities               | • Rural landscape                         |
| • Workforce Development Programs                 | • Responsible Governance                  |
| • Balanced pattern of growth                     | • Collaboration and inclusion             |
| • Livable Neighborhoods                          | • Meaningful participation and engagement |
| • Diverse housing options                        |   |
| • Thriving Businesses and Commercial Development |   |

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## What are Union County's core values?



- Sustainability
- Healthy, active lifestyle
- Environmental stewardship
- Strong economic Base
- Diverse Population
- Premier Educational System
- Life-long learning Opportunities
- Workforce Development Programs
- Balanced pattern of growth
- Livable Neighborhoods
- Diverse housing options
- Thriving Businesses and Commercial Development
- Efficient transportation
- Public Transit Options
- Pedestrian Connectivity
- Quality services and infrastructure
- Recreational Opportunities
- vibrant arts and culture
- Rural landscape
- Responsible Governance
- Collaboration and inclusion
- Meaningful participation and engagement

## Are there items on this list that the County may not value today but should in the future?



- Sustainability
- Healthy, active lifestyle
- Environmental stewardship
- Strong economic Base
- Diverse Population
- Premier Educational System
- Life-long learning Opportunities
- Workforce Development Programs
- Balanced pattern of growth
- Livable Neighborhoods
- Diverse housing options
- Thriving Businesses and Commercial Development
- Efficient transportation
- Public Transit Options
- Pedestrian Connectivity
- Quality services and infrastructure
- Recreational Opportunities
- Vibrant arts and culture
- Rural landscape
- Responsible Governance
- Collaboration and inclusion
- Meaningful participation and engagement

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## Vision Statement Discussion



- What attributes do we want to keep?
  - Examples *could* be- Rural character, premier recreational opportunities, small-town feel, etc.
- What attribute do we want to improve?
  - Examples *could* be – Neighborhood blight, Lack of desire to change, Lack of transparent decision-making, etc.

27

## MadLib Activity

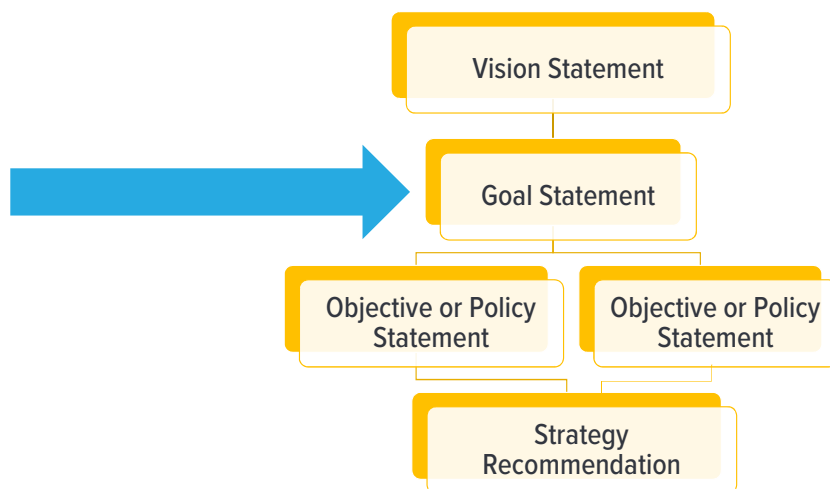
- Adjective- describes something
- Noun- person, place, or thing
- Verb- action

Union County will be a community comprised of \_\_\_\_\_ people,  
[ADJECTIVE]  
 \_\_\_\_\_ businesses, and \_\_\_\_\_ places.  
[ADJECTIVE] [ADJECTIVE]

Known for its \_\_\_\_\_, Union County values \_\_\_\_\_,  
[NOUN OR VERB] [NOUN OR VERB] [NOUN OR VERB]  
 and \_\_\_\_\_.  
[NOUN OR VERB]

We are committed to investing in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and  
[NOUN OR VERB] [NOUN OR VERB]  
 \_\_\_\_\_ to ensure a \_\_\_\_\_ framework for quality growth and  
[NOUN OR VERB] [ADJECTIVE]  
 development.

## Hierarchy



## What are goal statements?



- Goal Statements describes what the community wants to accomplish. Each statement works to identified the **desired outcome or condition** focused on a big idea.
- The goals are organized by subject matter or topic.
  - Land Use
  - Government and Fiscal Capacity
  - Public Facilities and Services
  - Placemaking
  - Economic Development
  - Housing
  - Transportation
  - Agriculture
  - Natural Resources
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Historic and Archeological resources
  - Hazard Mitigation

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## Goal Statements



- There are 1 – 4 goal statements per subject matter.
- There are 12 subject matters = 29 DRAFT goal statements.
- Keep in mind, there are BIG IDEAS, it is not intended to be specific or measurable.
- Details comes into play when we add in the objectives and strategies.
- Review each statement and let us know:
  - Do you agree?
  - Did we miss something or leave out an important topic?
  - Is there planning “jargon” that you don’t understand?

31



## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

32



## Communication and Engagement

How will we engage the public?

### Project Website

- The website is live! Please share with friends and family.
- [Unioncountycompplan.com](http://Unioncountycompplan.com)



5/20/2020

## Social Media Campaign

- Shared with the Development Corporation and Foundation.
- The project team will send a new flyer each month that outlines suggested posts.
- Have you thought of other people/organizations that could help us?

**UNION COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**MAY SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN**

**PARTNERS**  
Union County Development Corporation  
Union County Foundation

**EVENTS**  
Coming Soon

**FACEBOOK**

5/5 The Union County Comprehensive Plan is underway! Visit [www.unioncountycanplan.com](http://www.unioncountycanplan.com) to learn more!

5/12 The Union County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee is hard at work sharing ideas about the future. Please visit [www.unioncountycanplan.com/head-up](http://www.unioncountycanplan.com/head-up) now to review the summary of the last Steering Committee Meeting.

5/19 The Union County Project Team is working to finalize details about the first public engagement opportunity! Be sure to check [www.unioncountycanplan.com/get-involved](http://www.unioncountycanplan.com/get-involved) for information on how you can get involved!

**CALENDAR**

M	T	W	T	F
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

**TWITTER**

5/7 The Union County Comprehensive Plan is underway! Visit [www.unioncountycanplan.com](http://www.unioncountycanplan.com) to learn more!

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35

## First Public Engagement Opportunity!


- Week of June 15<sup>th</sup> – *Hopefully* an in-person opportunity with online survey!
- What will we be doing?
  - Providing information
    - Project overview
    - Existing Conditions
  - Asking for their feedback
    - Identifying assets and challenges
    - Vetting vision statement
    - Showing off refined goal statements
- We need your help!!
  - Where could we hold it?
  - Is there an event we could attend?
  - How do we advertise?
    - Newspaper? Flyers? Utility bill inserts, postcards around town?

36



# QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

37



## Next Steps

What will the project team be working on?

5/20/2020

## What will the project team be doing?



- Sending follow-up survey to the committee
- Hosting stakeholder interviews
- Revising the vision statement and goals statements based on feedback gathered
- Planning for the first public engagement opportunity

39

## What can you be doing?



- Use the social media campaign flyer to advertise the project
- Complete the follow up survey
  - **Please complete by Tuesday, May 26. (1 week from today!)**
- Review the Existing Conditions Report- Part 1 document
  - **Provide all comments by Friday, June 5. (THIS IS YOUR ONLY OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THIS CHAPTER BEFORE WE MOVE FORWARD WITH PLAN DEVELOPMENT.)**

40

5/20/2020

**THANK YOU!**

Any final questions or comments?

Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions, comments, or ideas to share with us!

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**Union County Comprehensive Plan**  
Stakeholder Interviews Summary  
July 10, 2020

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Over the course of two days, the project team conducted a series of stakeholder interviews. Because of the social distancing and stay-at-home state orders, these interviews were held over the phone. Each interview lasted 30 – 60 minutes. Participants represented various backgrounds ranging from elected and appointed officials, local business owners and residents, and members of the economic development corporation board. The discussion for each interview was slightly different based on the participant’s background. The following section outlines the key takeaways from stakeholder outreach.

**1. As a representative of \_\_\_\_\_, what do you value most about Union County?**

- Union County is a small community with friendly people but it can be a double edged sword.
- Safety – quiet and everyone knows each other
- Small, safe place to live, send children to school with close proximity to bigger cities.
- For the most part, people of Union County recognize that we need to focus on what we are good at but it needs to pay the bills.
- Small town, community pride, and a good school system
- Hometown roots

**2. What do you think the County as a whole value? What should they value in the future?**

- The community values consistency, they don’t want it to change.
- There are two “groups” of people in Union County. The people who were born and raised here and then the outsiders that moved in. The born and raised aren’t always welcoming to the outsiders. This needs to change.
- There is a value perception. An example was a hair dress tried to raise her prices by \$5, the customer said they wouldn’t pay that in Union County but drove to Richmond to pay the same price instead.
- Today the community values old-fashioned family values. In the future, we should value housing development, and trail connectivity (specifically mentioned a trail to Whitewater State Park).
- The community should be looking at how to diversify the tax base and we should be planning for more residential development.
- The community should recognize that we can’t always stay small, we need to collect more revenue.
- Union County should value arts and culture, parks and recreation, and work to promote the county more in the future.



**3. What is the one thing that gets residents worked up about? What are they passionate about? What gets the community excited?**

- The residents don't really get worked up about anything but they are passionate about helping others in times of need.
- Some residents gets worked up about the idea of a new jail and how we would pay for it.
- The community feels the State Park facilities should contribute to taxes. Most of the public safety services are overwhelmed by runs to the parks and campgrounds in the summer.
- Union County is passionate about family values and very patriotic.
- Union County residents can get worked up about all the low income housing in the county.
- The community gets excited for local sports, patriotism, Christianity, hunting, and their family.

**4. A comprehensive plan is a guidance document for growth and development for the next 10-20 years. What is your big idea for the future of Union County?**

- Don't overburden the tax payers, and prioritize what we need in regards to the budget.
- Accurately plan for improvements based on "real" accounting verses the political game of accounting.
- Utilities are the key to getting more residential development.
- The new jail / fire department facility could be located on the edge of town, along US 27.
- 27 acres near the high school is prime location for residential development if the county can get utilities extended.
- Housing development
- Sustainable population
- Update fire, police, and jail facilities
- Community gathering space such as a convention center or reception hall
- Broadband connectivity is needed for businesses to thrive

**5. As you look ahead over the next 10-20 years, what are 3 important challenges and opportunities you anticipate for Union County? Do you have advice or suggestions on how to address them?**

- **Challenges**
  - i. Workforce isn't available to pass down family businesses
  - ii. Broadband Connectivity
  - iii. Lack of modernized, digital property tax records.
  - iv. Lack of payment options online, residents have to pay in-person
  - v. Tax deficiencies
  - vi. Insurance rates for employees
  - vii. Need younger people in government but the jobs don't pay enough



- viii. Major erosion problems are causing issues with roadways and agricultural land
- ix. Job opportunities

- **Opportunities**

- i. Federal Reserve rates are low making borrowing money more affordable.
- ii. Alternative energy sources- solar farms
- iii. Recreational land could provide a good location for a convention center / community gathering place.
- iv. Development surrounding lake
- v. Industrial area outside of Liberty for small business employment

6. Where should development and/or redevelopment efforts be focused?

- The 27 acres east of Liberty for housing
- The 30 acres southeast of Liberty that the redevelopment commission owns for small business development

7. What types of development do you think Union County needs more of?

- Union County is already a bedroom community so more residential is needed.
- Small business that employ 20-30 workers
- Dining destinations
- New 4-H fairgrounds- current location is too small (County owns land south of Liberty along the highway that could work.)
- Community gathering space / reception hall
- Retail in the downtown- something other than the insurance companies
- Nice single-family homes
- Industrial development for jobs

8. What are the transportation and utility issues in Union County?

- We've done 54 miles of road in 4 years so our roads are pretty good.
- A good portion of the roads that are left to fix are owned by the state.
- There is a subdivision to the north of Liberty that has water issues.
- From a utility provider perspective, Union County's process for getting permit is quick and easy but we (the business) is looking to relocate within Union County for more space for their equipment and can't find it.

9. What is the single most important thing Union County could do to improve economic development and/or workforce development?

- The county needs a grant writer and education of what's available.
- Promoting what we have and updating our county website.
- Attracting businesses that have a decent starting wage.



10. How would residential best be engaged during this planning process?

- Community events
- The challenge is that the people that want to be involved are already burnt out for taking on too much and get seeing progress
- Using the Community Foundation and local church to promote
- Free food as an incentive to attend events
- Don't know- it's very hard to reach uninterested residents
- Social media and flyers
- The saying about promoting is "7 times, 7 different ways" is true for our community.



Union County Comprehensive Plan  
Public Meeting and Online Survey Engagement Summary  
July 16, 2020

The first public engagement opportunity was a planning workshop that occurred on Tuesday, June 30 at the Union County Public Library from 4:30 – 6:30PM. Following the public planning workshop, an online survey was available for people to complete until July 14. Both engagement opportunities were advertised through email blast, postcard advertisements, and social media posts.

The planning workshop was setup in an open house format. Community members were asked to sign-in and provided instructions for the exercises before visiting a series of stations at their own pace. There were 7 stations setup intended to provide the participant information about the project and encourage feedback. The stations included:

1. Welcome Station – Participants were greeted by the project team and asked to sign-in.
2. Project Overview & Existing Conditions – Participants were introduced to comprehensive planning and provided information of demographic and socioeconomic data.
3. Community Strengths & Challenges – Participants were asked a series of questions that encouraged them to expand upon the strengths and challenges that were identified in a previous study completed by the Union County Foundation.
4. Community Values – Participants were asked to identify 5 things they thought the community values today, then were asked to identify things they should value in the future.
5. Vision Statement – Participants completed a madlib (fill in the blank) exercise for a draft vision statement.
6. Development Mapping – Participants were asked to identify specific location for future residential, commercial, and recreational uses.
7. Goal Statements – Participants were provided the draft goal statements and asked to vote if they agreed or disagreed with the statement. If they disagreed, the project team encouraged them to provide a comment explaining why.

While attendance was a challenge for the planning workshop, the online survey did pretty well with 83 responses. It is likely participation challenges spurred from the COVID-19 pandemic. The online survey provided many of the same input opportunities including questions about community values, filling out the madlib vision statement, identifying elements that need to be preserved and elements that need to be improved, and asking respondent to agree or disagree with the vision statement. The following sections outline the key takeaways from the planning workshop and online survey.

**What does Union County value today? The top 5 identified include:**

1. Livable Neighborhoods
2. Rural Landscape
3. Recreational Opportunities
4. Premier Educational System
5. Responsible Governance



**What should Union County value in the future? The top 5 identified were:**

1. Strong Economic Base
2. Diverse Population
3. Sustainability
4. Vibrant Arts and Culture
5. Diverse Housing Options

**What attributes or characteristics do you want to preserve? Nearly all of the responses can be summarized into 3 attributes including:**

1. Small town feel – sense of community
2. Rural Character
3. Recreational Assets

**What attributes or characteristics do you want to improve? The most reoccurring responses were focused around:**

1. Unwillingness to accept change / take risks
2. Lack of diversity and inclusion
3. Closed door decision-making
4. Appearance of the community – beautification projects
5. Inadequate housing supply

#### **Vision Statement Mablilb Exercise –**

Participants were provided a fill in the blank draft vision statement. The project team selected the most popular word choices to form the following statement. This statement will be shared with the steering committee for suggested revisions before it is finalized.

“Union County will be a community comprised of DIVERSE people, LOCALLY-OWNED businesses, and WELCOMING places.

Known for its RECREATIONAL ASSETS, Union County values its LIFELONG RESIDENTS, FARMING IDENTITY, and SMALL TOWN CHARM.

We are committed to investing in EDUCATION, HOUSING, and INFRASTRUCTURE to ensure a SUSTAINABLE framework for quality growth and development.”

#### **Goal Statements –**

The comprehensive plan will cover 11 topics ranging from land use and transportation to natural resources and parks and recreation. Each topic has 1 – 4 goal statements. Participant were asked to review each statement and then tell us if they agree, disagree, and didn’t have enough information to answer. Nearly all the goal statements received positive feedback. There were only 3 statements that



had more than 20% of respondents indicate that they disagreed. The project team will review the following statements to identify how the goal should be revised to gain community consensus:

- Focus development and redevelopment within, or nearby, town limits in order to utilize existing infrastructure and services and preserve the rural character of Union County.
- Coordinate community enhancement projects, blight removal programs, and arts and cultural initiatives to enhance the quality of life for Union County residents.
- Expand public transit and alternative modes of transportation to enhance mobility and accessibility for all Union County residents.

*To review the full summary of the public planning workshop and online survey data, please refer to the summary boards on the following page.*

# WELCOME!



## STEP 1:

Sign-in and introduce yourself to the project team!

## STEP 2:

Visit each station at your own pace and in any order that you choose!

## STEP 3:

Read instructions at each station to know what to do.

## STEP 4:

If you have a questions, please find a Project Team Member!

### WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

- A guidance document for future growth and development over the next 10 – 20 years.
- Serves as a roadmap for effective decision-making in both private development projects and community initiatives for the public good.
- Key components include a snapshot of current conditions, a vision for the future, and recommendations of how to achieve the vision and goals.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FACILITATING THE PROCESS?

- The County has selected a consulting team, American Structurepoint, to help conduct the planning process and prepare all materials and documents necessary for the final plan.

### WHO ARE THE PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS HERE TODAY?





**WHAT TOPICS WILL THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COVER?**

Land Use  
Government  
Public Facilities and Services  
Placemaking  
Economic Development  
Housing  
Transportation  
Agriculture  
Natural Resources  
Parks and Recreation  
Historic & Archeological Resources  
Hazard Mitigating



**PHASE 1:  
INFORMATION  
GATHERING**

Existing Conditions  
Assessment

Steering Committee Meeting  
#1 and #2

Stakeholder Meetings

Public Open House and  
Online Survey



**PHASE 2:  
DRAFT PLAN  
DEVELOPMENT**

Draft Goals, Objectives,  
Strategies

Steering Committee  
Meeting #3

Public Open House and  
Survey

First Draft of Comp Plan



**PHASE 3:  
COMMUNITY-DRIVEN  
IMPLEMENTATION**

Public Review Draft

FINAL Draft Plan

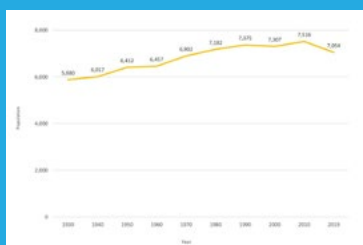
OCRA Submission

FINAL approval from OCRA

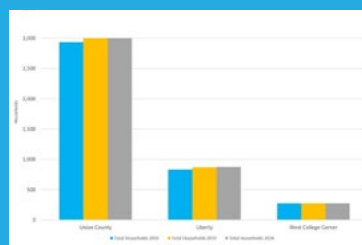
## PROJECT OVERVIEW



## EXISTING CONDITIONS



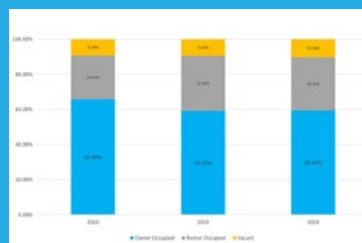
UNION COUNTY POPULATION TREND



NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS



POPULATION CHANGE (2010-2019)



UNION COUNTY HOUSING OCCUPANCY

**2.5%**  
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

**3,577**  
TOTAL WORKERS

**1,921**  
WORKERS ARE LEAVING  
UNION COUNTY FOR  
WORK

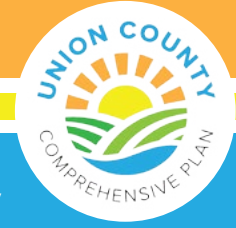
**383**  
WORKERS ARE COMING  
INTO UNION COUNTY FOR  
WORK

ECONOMIC BASE



EMPLOYED BY INDUSTRY

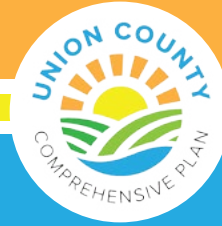


**EXISTING****Community Values**

Instructions: What do you perceive to be Union County's core values TODAY? Place a dot sticker next to the TOP 5 community values.

Healthy, active lifestyle	10
Environmental stewardship	7
Strong economic Base	9
Premier Educational System	18
Life-long learning Opportunities	9
Workforce Development Programs	7
Livable Neighborhoods	38
Thriving Businesses and Commercial Development	9
Rural Landscape	38
Efficient transportation	4
Public Transit Options and Pedestrian Connectivity	8
Quality public services and infrastructure	7
Recreational Opportunities	33
Vibrant arts and culture	0
Responsible Governance	16

# FUTURE Community Values



Instructions: Are there items on the list that the County may not value today but should in the FUTURE? Place a dot sticker next to the value.

Healthy, active lifestyle	18
Environmental stewardship	11
Strong economic Base	29
Premier Educational System	10
Life-long learning Opportunities	8
Workforce Development Programs	15
Diverse housing options	17
Thriving Businesses and Commercial Development	13
Rural Landscape	4
Efficient transportation	4
Public Transit Options and Pedestrian Connectivity	8
Quality public services and infrastructure	13
Recreational Opportunities	12
Vibrant arts and culture	18
Responsible Governance	14

# VISION STATEMENT



## BOARD #1

Instructions: Read the statement below then use board #2 to complete the exercise.

**Adjective-** describes something | **Noun-** person, place, or thing | **Verb-** action

Union County will be a community comprised of 1 people,  
2 businesses, and 3 places.  
[ADJECTIVE] [ADJECTIVE]

Known for its 4, Union County values 5,  
6, and 7.  
[VERB OR NOUN] [VERB OR NOUN]

We are committed to investing in 8, 9, and  
10 to ensure a 11 framework for quality growth and  
 development.  
[VERB OR NOUN] [ADJECTIVE]

# VISION STATEMENT



## BOARD #2

Instructions: Read the madlib statements on board #1. Write your suggested word on a post-it note then place it next to the corresponding number area.

1	Hardworking, old-fashion, friendly, active, welcoming, diverse, like-minded, diverse, honest, supportive, diverse, caring and helpful, kind-hearted, hardworking, compassionate, diverse, caring, welcoming, diverse, diverse, reasonable, mix, caring and working, nice, friendly
2	Limited, few, family-owned, locally-owned, thriving, family-owned, family-owned, thriving, vibrant, efficient, equitable, small businesses honest, thriving, thriving, thriving, productive, variety of, standard and novel, thriving, successful, mixed, successful, thriving, booming
3	Beautiful, rural, recreation, great eating, fun, desirable , comforting small, unique, beautiful, diverse, welcoming, welcoming, safe, fun, wholesome, beautiful, inviting, healthy eating restaurants pristine, inclusive, quality, interesting, welcoming, beautiful, spectacular
4	Farming, parks, schools, natural assets, beauty, parks, proximity to Whitewater State Park, old-fashioned charm, character, progression, small town feel, small town feel, community, community spirit, community, friendliness, small town charm, small town feel, tenacity, general landscape and culture, small town feel
5	Christianity , welcoming, farming, closeness, inclusiveness, honesty, sustainability, diversity, inclusiveness, local businesses, people cooperation, people, education, hard work, transparency, faith, people, families, kids of the community
6	laid back, friendly, strong community support, natural resources, family, diversity, integrity, creativity, equity, innovation, connected community, education, businesses, open mindedness, conservative traditions, inclusiveness, family, heritage, communitiy sports
7	good moral compass, small town feel, farming, respect, hard work, compassion, inclusion, diversity, welcoming atmosphere , individuality, opportunities, kindness, christian worship, sustainability, community, core infrastructure, contributing neighbors, families
8	Children, children, housing, small businesses, families, our people, education, our diversity, people, small business owners, protecting the environment, digital infrastructure, infrastructure under ground, digital infrastructure above ground, people, people longevity, schools
9	Farming, improvement, infurstructure, the community, businesses, our businesses, sustainability, people, education, ideas, historical preservation, programs for our youth, affordable single family homes in new subdivisions, places, processes people, housing
10	School, community, economy, students, our youth, humankind, diverse employment, environment, safety, the future, tourism, getting rid of trashy areas, automatic trolleys, processes, maintenance, local culture, businesses
11	Educational, strong, Greater, positive strong, secure, foundational, solid, open-minded, sustainable, secure, strong, open-minded, strong, responsible, sustainable, sustainable

# COMMUNITY STRENGTHS



In 2019, the Union County Foundation launched a community-wide Needs Assessment. In total, 359 people contributed their input to this needs assessment. This effort identified 6 strengths. Answer each question on a post-it note. Place it on the board under the appropriate question.

PEOPLE	SCHOOL SYSTEM	COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS	LOCAL BUSINESSES & AMENITIES	STATE PARKS & NATURAL BEAUTY	LOW COST OF LIVING
What attributes make the people in Union County great?	What elements of the school system are great?	Which organizations are the most active within the community?	What are your favorite businesses and amenities?	How could we enhance the state parks and natural beauty in Union County?	Would you trade low cost of living for a higher quality of life with more amenities?
Safety School System Willingness to help Groups play and work together	Safety Small- everyone knows everyone Teachers Sports	Union County Foundation Public Library	Lake Lakeside Restaurant Gym Ainsley State Park	Have more things to do around the lake (Restaurants and Cabins) More advertisement for the State Parks	Yes, as long as safety wasn't lost. Yes

UNION COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
PLANNING WORKSHOP | SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY



# COMMUNITY CHALLENGES



In 2019, the Union County Foundation launched a community-wide Needs Assessment. In total, 359 people contributed their input to this needs assessment. This effort identified 4 key challenges. Answer each question on a post-it note. Place it on the board under the appropriate question.

LACK OF HIGH PAYING JOB OPPORTUNITIES	LACK OF AMENITIES, RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, AND ACCESS TO RETAIL AND BUSINESSES	POPULATION LOSS	DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE
What specific industries or trade skills are needed in Union County?	What kind of amenities, recreational opportunities, and retail/businesses would you like to see in Union County?	In your opinion, what is the #1 thing Union County should be doing to attract and retain residents?	What type of resources or facilities are needed in Union County?
Online skills and jobs Tech skills Child care	More place to eat around the lake More cabins around the lake Water Park Develop Union County Park	Water and Sewer outside of town Infrastructure for the industrial park Improve downtown	Convention Center/Community Gathering Space Recreation

# DID WE MISS SOMETHING?



Instructions: Are there other community strengths and challenges that weren't noted? Share your thoughts on a post-it note and place it on the board.

## STRENGTHS

## CHALLENGES

None

None

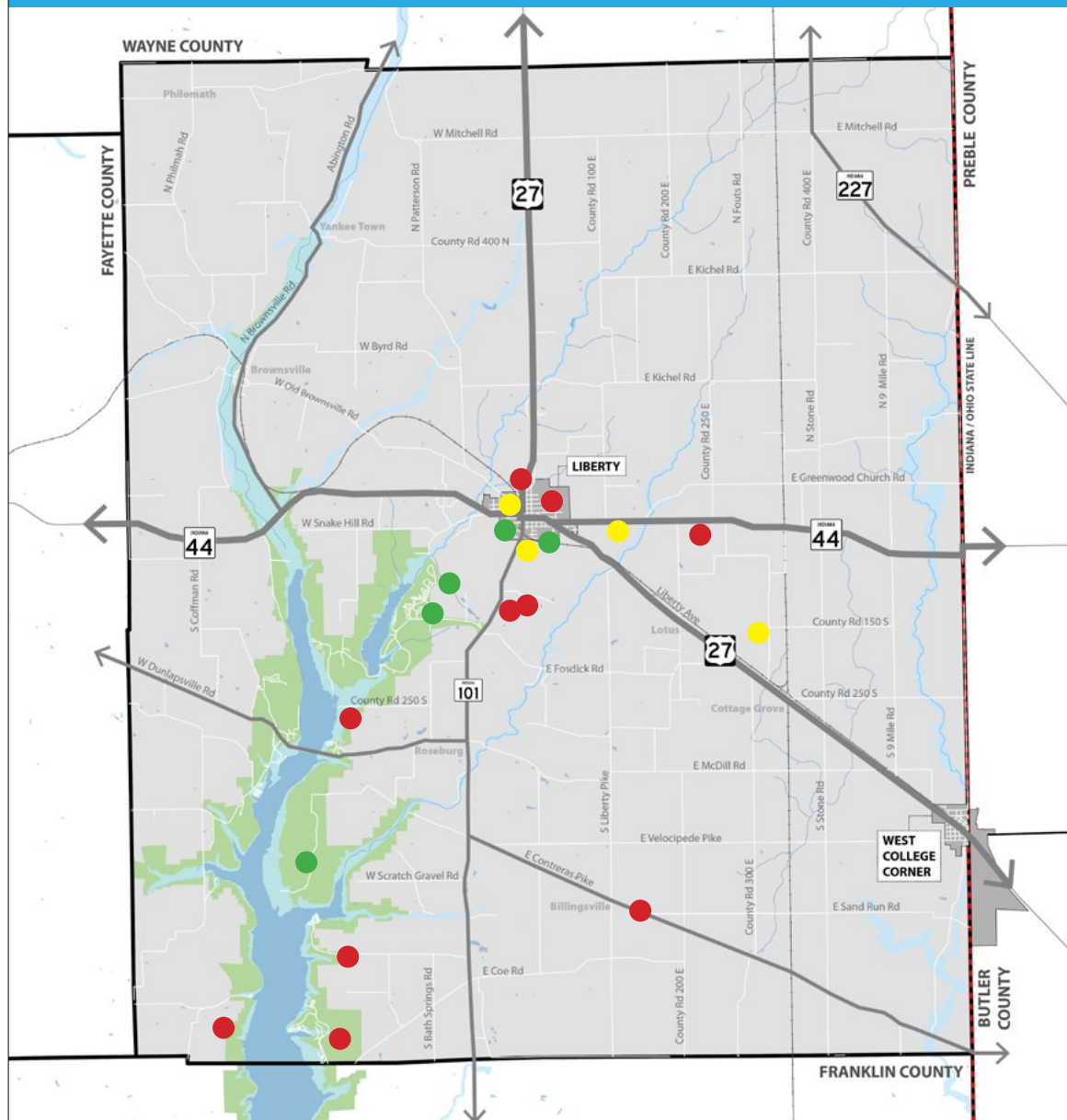


# FUTURE DEVELOPMENT



Instructions: What would you like to see more of?  
Show us where by placing a dot sticker on the map.

- **YELLOW** stickers for Housing
- **GREEN** stickers for Parks and Recreation
- **RED** stickers for Retail, Dining, and Offices



# GOAL STATEMENTS



Instructions: Use a dot sticker to let us know if you agree or disagree with each goal statement. If you disagree, please explain why by writing a comment on a post-it note.

GOAL STATEMENT	CONSENSUS		
	AGREE	DISAGREE	I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO ANSWER / COMMENTS
<b>LAND USE GOAL #1</b> Promote a balanced development pattern to meet the needs of the community by providing and maintaining a range of land use types.	69%	4%	26%
<b>LAND USE GOAL #2</b> Focus development and redevelopment within, or nearby, town limits in order to utilize existing infrastructure and services and preserve the rural character of Union County.	69%	23%	8%
<b>GOVERNMENT GOAL #1</b> Increase public awareness of the services and programs available by improving communication methods through the use of modern technology.	100%	0%	0%
<b>GOVERNMENT GOAL #2</b> Improve the fiscal health of the County by increasing its capacity to provide services in a sustainable way.	83%	4%	13%
<b>GOVERNMENT GOAL #3</b> Build the next generation of elected and appointed leaders.	90%	5%	5% This should be done through our school system and elected leaders.
<b>GOVERNMENT GOAL #4</b> Ensure that all administrative processes, procedures, and regulations continue to reflect the vision and values of the larger Union County community.	88%	0%	12%

UNION COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
PLANNING WORKSHOP | SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY



# GOAL STATEMENTS



Instructions: Use a dot sticker to let us know if you agree or disagree with each goal statement. If you disagree, please explain why by writing a comment on a post-it note.

GOAL STATEMENT	CONSENSUS		
	AGREE	DISAGREE	I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO ANSWER / COMMENTS
<b>PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOAL #1</b> Provide necessary public utilities (water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer) in all urbanized areas of the County, and strategic location near Brookeville Lake, in order to promote strategic growth and development.	82%	4%	14%
<b>PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOAL #2</b> Maintain high-quality public facilities and services to meet the health, safety, educational, and leisure needs of all Union County residents.	87%	0%	13%
<b>PLACEMAKING GOAL #1</b> Coordinate community enhancement projects, blight removal programs, and arts and cultural initiatives to enhance the quality of life for Union County residents.	70%	20%	10%
<b>PLACEMAKING GOAL #2</b> Continue developing an active tourism section by promoting Union County's unique recreational and agricultural assets.	85%	5%	10%
<b>PLACEMAKING GOAL #3</b> Create a county-wide brand and identity to promote a positive and appealing community image for residents, businesses and visitors.	85%	5%	10%

# GOAL STATEMENTS



Instructions: Use a dot sticker to let us know if you agree or disagree with each goal statement. If you disagree, please explain why by writing a comment on a post-it note.

GOAL STATEMENT	CONSENSUS		
	AGREE	DISAGREE	I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO ANSWER / COMMENTS
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL #1</b> Leverage tourism as a valuable source of employment, income, and investment to supplement farming, manufacturing, and other key industry sectors.	75%	10%	15%
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL #2</b> Increase the County's capacity to acquire property for redevelopment or economic development purposes.	72%	11%	17%
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL #3</b> Improve the local economy through supporting existing businesses, attracting new businesses and industries, and providing opportunities for lifelong learning and workforce development programs.	86%	4%	10%
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL #4</b> Attract and retain residents through supporting local businesses and promoting high-quality housing, amenities, and education.	95%	5%	0%
<b>HOUSING GOAL #1</b> Offer diverse housing options that are safe, well-maintained, and affordable to people in all stages of life.	75%	16%	9%
<b>HOUSING GOAL #2</b> Improve neighborhood pride by encouraging reinvestment, preserving the existing neighborhood character, and fostering a safe and healthy environment.	95%	0%	5%

# GOAL STATEMENTS



Instructions: Use a dot sticker to let us know if you agree or disagree with each goal statement. If you disagree, please explain why by writing a comment on a post-it note.

GOAL STATEMENT	CONSENSUS		
	AGREE	DISAGREE	I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO ANSWER / COMMENTS
<b>TRANSPORTATION GOAL #1</b> Plan for and maintain a safe and efficient transportation network that promotes connectivity and enhances mobility.	82%	0%	18%
<b>TRANSPORTATION GOAL #2</b> Expand public transit and alternative modes of transportation to enhance mobility and accessibility for all Union County residents.	69%	22%	9%
<b>AGRICULTURAL GOAL #1</b> Minimize land use conflicts by protecting prime agricultural areas from scattered development and urbanization.	57%	14%	29%
<b>AGRICULTURAL GOAL #2</b> Support the growth of agricultural uses and agricultural-related businesses as a viable sector of the local economy.	57%	13%	30%
<b>AGRICULTURAL GOAL #3</b> Preserve the rural character and related qualities that support country living in Union County by retaining farmland.	84%	10%	6%
<b>HAZARD MITIGATION GOAL #1</b> Protect the people and unique places of Union County through hazard mitigation and emergency management planning.	77%	0%	23%

# GOAL STATEMENTS



Instructions: Use a dot sticker to let us know if you agree or disagree with each goal statement. If you disagree, please explain why by writing a comment on a post-it note.

GOAL STATEMENT	CONSENSUS		
	AGREE	DISAGREE	I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO ANSWER / COMMENTS
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES GOAL #1</b> Preserve valuable natural resources and scenic areas that contribute to Union County's rural character.	82%	0%	18%
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES GOAL #2</b> Recognize the economic, health, cultural, and ecological value of natural environment, and the importance of community stewardship.	95%	0%	5%
<b>PARKS AND RECREATION GOAL #1</b> Improve the County's capacity to provide and maintain adequate public parks and open spaces.	74%	13%	13% We should continue to let the state provide our park and recreational facilities.
<b>PARKS AND RECREATION GOAL #2</b> Coordinate with Indiana Department of Natural Resources to expand and enhance the state-owned park and recreational facilities.	74%	13%	13% We've tried to coordinate and its not much help.
<b>HISTORIC &amp; ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES GOAL #1</b> Preserve structures and areas that are historical and/or archeological significant to the community.	82%	4%	14%
<b>HISTORIC &amp; ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES GOAL #2</b> Capitalize on historical landmarks and special places through placemaking efforts such as educational signage, preservation programs, and special community events.	88%	4%	8%

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**Union County Comprehensive Plan  
Steering Committee Meeting #3 Summary  
September 3, 2020 | 5:30 – 7:00  
Virtual Go-To Meeting**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

---

**A. OVERVIEW**

The third Union County Steering Committee was held on Thursday, September 3 at 5:30PM. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the Stay-at-Home mandate, the meeting was held as a virtual Go-To meeting. Participants were invited to join the meeting from a conference call number and/or video link.

**B. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The project team started the meeting off by providing a progress report of the development of each chapter within the draft plan. Chapter 2: General Background was sent to the steering committee for review and comments. The project team received feedback from 6 individuals. Feedback primary focused on the industry data and major employers section of the report.

**C. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ROUND 1 – KEY FINDINGS**

The project team discussed that the public meeting was not well attended but the online survey received a good amount of participation with 83 responses. Survey results indicated that Union County residents value the livable neighborhoods, rural landscape, recreational opportunities, premier education, and responsible governance. Furthermore, residents wanted to improve the county's unwillingness to accept change, lack of diversity and inclusion, closed-door decision making, appearance of the community, and inadequate housing supply. The project team used the survey results for the madlid exercise (*fill in the blank*) to create the draft vision statement that read:

*"Union County will be a community comprised of DIVERSE people, LOCALLY-OWNED businesses, and WELCOMING places.*

*Known for its RECREATIONAL ASSETS, Union County values its LIFELONG RESIDENTS, FARMING IDENTITY, and SMALL TOWN CHARM.*

*We are committed to investing in EDUCATION, HOUSING, and INFRASTRUCTURE to ensure a SUSTAINABLE framework for quality growth and development."*

The steering committee provided feedback on the vision statement and suggested the following:

- Updating lifelong residents to caring residents
- Focusing on their rural identity rather than farming
- Incorporating their commitment to placemaking efforts include high quality amenities to attract residents and businesses.

#### **D. PLAN DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION**

Prior to the meeting, the project team completed the first draft of the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies for the steering committee to review. Because of the volume of information, the project team created a survey to walk the committee through their review of the content. The presentation focused on making sure the committee understood the purpose of implementation strategies. A significant portion of the discussion focused on future development strategies. The project team explained the various economic development tools available to Union County and the steps that the County would need to take to attract residential development.

#### **E. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ROUND 2**

The steering committee determined a date and time for the upcoming public meeting. The project team prepared an example of a virtual public open house to show the committee. It was decided to facilitate both an in-person meeting at the library and a virtual meeting to gather as much participate as possible.

#### **F. NEXT STEPS**

The project team asked the steering committee to review and provide any comments on the goals, objectives, and strategies by September 11. The project team will be preparing for the second round of public engagement opportunities starting on September 17, and then will begin revising the draft plan elements based on the feedback they received from the committee and general public.



## Virtual Meeting Etiquette



- If you are not speaking, please mute your phone/computer. This will allow everyone to hear the presenter better.
- After each section, there is a question slide. Please save your questions till then. This will avoid people talking over each other.
- If you are having trouble seeing my screen or hearing me, please let me know.
- There is a chat feature for questions or comments if you prefer that option.

9/3/2020



## AGENDA

- Existing Conditions
- Public Engagement #1– Key Findings
- Plan Development Discussion
- Public Engagement #2
- Next Steps

3

## Project Schedule



### Phase 0: Project Initiation

**MARCH – APRIL**

Internal Project Kick-off  
Data Transfer  
Establishing Steering Committee  
Project Website and Branding



### Phase 1: Information Gathering

**APRIL – JUNE**

Current Conditions Assessment  
Steering Committee Meeting #2  
Stakeholder Meetings  
Public Open House and Survey



### Phase 2: Draft Plan Development

**JULY- AUGUST**

Draft Goals, Objectives, Strategies  
*Steering Committee Meeting #3*  
Public Open House and Survey  
First Draft of Comp Plan



### Phase 3: Implementation

**SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER**

Public Review Draft  
FINAL Draft Plan  
OCRA Submission  
FINAL approval from OCRA

4



## Existing Conditions

Where are we now?

## Document Organization



Chapter 1 – Executive Summary

Chapter 2 – General Background – **DONE!**

Chapter 3 - Comprehensive Planning Committee

Chapter 4 – Analysis by Subject Matter – **IN DRAFT FORM.**

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

9/3/2020

## Chapter 2 Review

- Sent to the steering committee on July 13
- Comments due by July 20
- Received comments from 6 individuals




7


## What did they say?

1. Concerns about the job data provided by the US Census Bureau
  - Many of the industry categories did not have a reported number
  - Updated with more accurate, complete set of data from ESRI Business Analyst
2. Concerns about the top employers
  - The economic development corporation provided a new list.
3. Spelling / grammar error
4. Photo Swap




8





# QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?



9



## Public Engagement Results

What did we hear?

9/3/2020

## Public Meeting


- June 30 4:00-6:00PM at the Union County Public Library



## Online Survey

- Available from June 30 – July 14
- 83 people completed the survey
- Similar activities as the meeting
  - Community Values
  - Vision Statement
  - Agree/Disagree voting on goal statements
  - Public meeting and survey results summary has been published on the project website

**COMMUNITY SURVEY!**



**Weren't able to join us at the planning workshop?**

Complete the online survey by July 14 to share your big ideas and help craft a vision for the future of Union County!

[WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/UNIONCOVISION](http://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/UNIONCOVISION)

Let's explore the opportunities of Union County together!  
UNIONCOUNTYCOMPLAN.COM



## What did we hear?



- **What does Union County value today? The top 5 identified include:**
  - Livable Neighborhoods
  - Rural Landscape
  - Recreational Opportunities
  - Premier Educational System
  - Responsible Governance
- **What should Union County value in the future? The top 5 identified were:**
  - Strong Economic Base
  - Diverse Population
  - Sustainability
  - Vibrant Arts and Culture
  - Diverse Housing Options

13

## What did we hear?



- **What attributes or characteristics do you want to preserve?**
  - Small town feel – sense of community
  - Rural Character
  - Recreational Assets
- **What attributes or characteristics do you want to improve? The most common responses were focused around:**
  - Unwillingness to accept change / take risks
  - Lack of diversity and inclusion
  - Closed door decision-making
  - Appearance of the community – beautification projects
  - Inadequate housing supply

14

9/3/2020

## MadLib Activity

- Adjective- describes something
- Noun- person, place, or thing
- Verb- action

Union County will be a community comprised of \_\_\_\_\_ people,  
[ADJECTIVE]  
 \_\_\_\_\_ businesses, and \_\_\_\_\_ places.  
[ADJECTIVE] [ADJECTIVE]

Known for its \_\_\_\_\_, Union County values \_\_\_\_\_,  
[NOUN OR VERB] [NOUN OR VERB] [NOUN OR VERB]  
 and \_\_\_\_\_.  
[NOUN OR VERB]

We are committed to investing in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and  
[NOUN OR VERB] [NOUN OR VERB]  
 \_\_\_\_\_ to ensure a \_\_\_\_\_ framework for quality growth and  
[NOUN OR VERB] [ADJECTIVE]  
 development.

## Vision Statement

- It is not about what Union County is today but what the community wants to become.
- The statement will be forward thinking and written in a positive, affirmative and inspirational style.

“Union County will be a community comprised of **DIVERSE** people,  
**LOCALLY-OWNED** businesses, and **WELCOMING** places.

Known for its **RECREATIONAL ASSETS**, Union County values its  
**LIFELONG RESIDENTS, FARMING IDENTITY, and SMALL TOWN CHARM.**

We are committed to investing in **EDUCATION, HOUSING, and INFRASTRUCTURE** to ensure a  
**SUSTAINABLE** framework for quality growth and development.”

## What did we hear?



- There were only 3 goal statements that had more than 20% of respondents indicate that they disagreed.
  - Focus development and redevelopment within, or nearby, town limits in order to utilize existing infrastructure and services and preserve the rural character of Union County.
  - Coordinate community enhancement projects, blight removal programs, and arts and cultural initiatives to enhance the quality of life for Union County residents.
  - Expand public transit and alternative modes of transportation to enhance mobility and accessibility for all Union County residents.

17



# QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

18

9/3/2020



# Plan Development

Goals, Objectives, Strategies

## Chapter 4 – Analysis by Subject Matter



- 12 Subject Matter sections
  - **Overview** – Intended to introduce the topic
  - **What do we have?** – Intended to outline the existing conditions or on-going efforts related to that topic
  - **What did we hear?** – Intended to highlight what the public had to say about the topic
  - **Where do we want to go?** – Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

## Hierarchy – Where do we want to go?



21

## What are they?



- **Objectives** follow the goal statement by identifying a course of action to achieve the goal. In some instances, a policy statement is needed to provide operational guidance. **Policy Statements** describe the County's commitment to something, how they will respond to certain circumstances, or their stance on a specific issue.
- **Strategies** are concrete initiatives that are intended to carry out an idea, goal, or objective that has been identified within the plan. These will be ranked as a high, medium, or low priority.

22

9/3/2020

## How does it all come together?



- **Goal** - Increase public awareness of the services and programs available by improving communication methods through the use of modern technology.
- **Objective** – Regularly report progress and accomplishments to residents, while providing opportunities for them to express questions and concerns.
  - **Strategy** - Restructure the operation and maintenance of the county's government website to better facilitate the dissemination of the information.

23

## Homework!



- There are two ways to review the NEW content!
  - Provide comments in the PDF and send it back to me via email.
  - Complete the survey that I will send out after this meeting.
  - Your review is due by **Friday, September 11.**

24

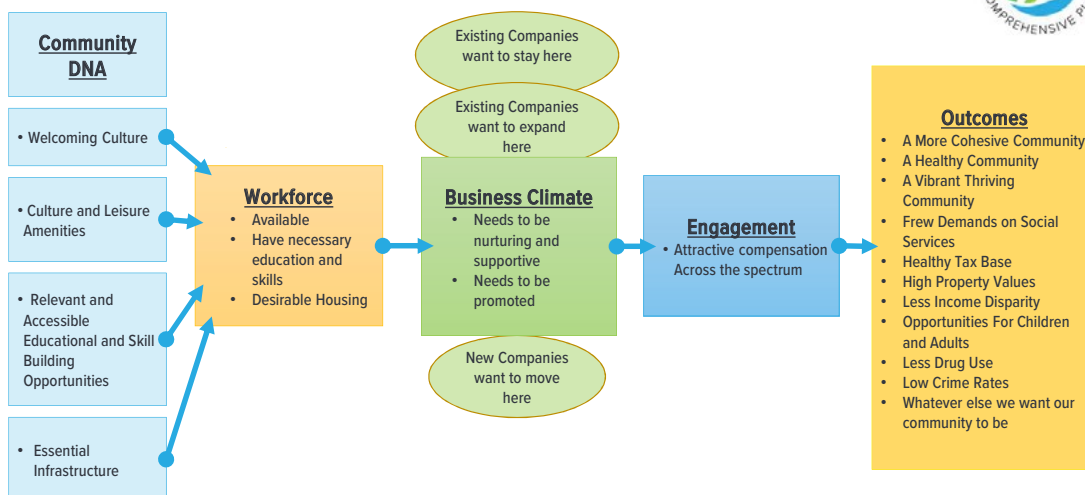
## Future Development Strategies



- Key Areas:
  - Residential Development (East of Liberty by High School)
  - Lakefront Development (In partnership with Army Corp and INDR)
    - Where specifically?
  - Whitewater Industrial Park (Along US 27)
  - New Fairgrounds (South of Liberty)
  - Community Center
    - Where specifically?
- Anywhere else?

25

## Economic Development Tools



26

9/3/2020

## Housing



- Need
  - Housing Study – something to show potential developers
- Land
  - Available
  - Price
  - Infrastructure (water, sewer, electric, fiber, transportation, gas)
- Incentives
  - Land, infrastructure
- Interest
  - Developer
  - Builder
  - Workers
  - Materials

27



## Communication and Engagement

How will we engage the public?

## Public Engagement Opportunity #2



- Thursday, September 17 or Monday, September 21.
- What will we be doing?
  - Reviewing future development scenario
  - Reviewing and prioritizing strategies
- We need your help!!
  - Where? **Public Library** again? **Virtual?**
  - <https://seekbeak.com/v/3pzOdDyLjM2>
  - Is there an event we could prepare postcards for?

29



**QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?**

30

9/3/2020



## Next Steps

What will the project team be working on?

### What will the project team be doing?

- Revising the goals, objectives, and strategies based on your comments.
- Preparing for the second (and final) round of public engagement.
- Draft plan development – writing chapter 3 and finishing chapter 4.



## What can you be doing?

- PLEASE review the goals, objectives, and strategies by Friday, September 11.
- Help us advertise for the public meeting and online survey.



33

# THANK YOU!

Any final questions or comments?

Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions, comments, or ideas to share with us!

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Union County Comprehensive Plan  
Public Engagement Opportunity #2 Summary  
September 17 – October 5, 2020

The second set of public engagement opportunities were conducted in three different ways; an in-person planning workshop, virtual public open house, and an online survey. The planning workshop occurred on Thursday, September 17 at the Union County Public Library from 4:30 – 6:30PM. The virtual public meeting was live from 5:00pm on September 17 through September 21. The online draft plan strategies survey was available from September 17 – October 5. The engagement opportunities were advertised through email blast, postcard advertisements, and social media posts.

The in-person planning workshop and virtual meeting were setup in an open house format to provide the opportunity to visit each station at their own pace. There were 6 stations setup intended to provide the participant information about the project and encourage feedback. The stations included:

- Welcome – Participants were asked to sign-in and provided instructions. Virtual participants were also directed to the project website for more information.
- Project Overview – This station outlined the comprehensive plan topics and the planning process by illustrating the tasks that will be completed throughout each phase.
- Vision Statement – Participants were asked to review the draft vision statement and then provide feedback by answering two questions.
- Key Focus Areas – This station outlined 5 key focus areas that were identified through the first round of public input. Participants could share additional ideas through an open-ended comment box.
- Expectations – Participants were asked to share the #1 thing they wanted to get out of the planning process.
- Draft Plan Strategies – This station answered the question, “what are strategies?” and then directed the participant to complete the online survey. The survey asked respondents to review the strategy statement and then rank the strategy as a low, medium, or high priority.

The following section is intended to summarize the public feedback gathered through the second set of public engagement opportunities.

**Vision Statement**

“Union County will be a community comprised of DIVERSE people, LOCALLY-OWNED businesses, and WELCOMING places.

Known for its RECREATIONAL ASSETS, Union County values its CARING RESIDENTS, RURAL IDENTITY, and SMALL TOWN CHARM.

We are committed to investing in high-quality AMENITIES, EDUCATION, HOUSING, and INFRASTRUCTURE to ensure a SUSTAINABLE framework for population growth and strategic development.”



1. Does this vision statement reflect the community values of Union County?
  - a. Yes – 76%
  - b. No – 16%
  - c. I don't have enough information to answer – 8%
2. Do you feel this statement is aspiration and forward thinking?
  - a. Yes – 84%
  - b. No – 8%
  - c. I don't have enough information to answer – 8%
3. Do you feel this vision statement is realistic and achievable for Union County in the next 10-20 years?
  - a. Yes – 80%
  - b. No – 12%
  - c. I don't have enough information to answer – 8%

#### **Draft Strategies**

Participants were asked to help us prioritize the strategy by marking it a low, medium, or high priority. It is important to note that majority of the strategies were ranked as a high priority. Because of this, the project team worked with community leaders to narrow down the list of high priorities. The purpose of prioritizing is to help focus the county's efforts. If everything was ranked a high priority, it would not be as helpful and could become overwhelming during implementation. The following tables show how each strategy was ranked during the public engagement sessions.

	Strategy Statement –	Low	Medium	High	I don't have enough information to answer.
LAND USE	Increase the County's capacity to properly administer and enforce local zoning and building regulations.	14%	36%	27%	23%
	Update Union County's zoning resolution to align with the comprehensive plan and remove barriers for implementation	9%	32%	45%	14%
	Provide development incentives to encourage redevelopment in strategic growth areas as identified on the future land use map.	0%	18%	73%	9%



GOVERNMENT & FISCAL CAPACITY	Strategy Statement –	Low	Medium	High	I don't have enough information to answer.
	Restructure the operation and maintenance of the county's government website to better facilitate the dissemination of the information	5%	20%	70%	5%
	Establish a central clearinghouse and information center for all development applications, permitting, and inspections.	5%	20%	70%	5%
	Consider providing training for current staff, or hiring a part-time grant writer	5%	40%	50%	0%
	Establish a non-reverting fund to allow the building inspector to send out violation letters and, when necessary, remove unsafe structures.	15%	30%	55%	5%
	Reallocate funds as necessary to ensure that zoning and permitting fees are able to be used for the interpretation, administration, and enforcement of local regulations	20%	25%	45%	10%
	Partner with the school corporation to educate and engage residents of a young age about local government and leadership positions.	10%	25%	65%	0%



	Strategy Statement –	Low	Medium	High	I don't have enough information to answer.
PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES	Become an Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IDEC) Broadband Ready Community to incentivize the development and expansion of technology-focused infrastructure.	5%	16%	63%	16%
	Develop and maintain a capital improvement plan to identify long-term transportation and utilities projects and priorities.	16%	26%	47%	11%
	Explore partnering with Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to provide supplemental public safety services to the Whitewater Memorial State Park and Brookville Lake Complex.	16%	37%	42%	5%
	Evaluate each community services (fire, police, EMS) by completing an inventory of necessary improvements, needed equipment, and/or additional staffing.	0%	42%	47%	11%
	Secure additional funding to begin the development of Union County Park.	21%	21%	47%	11%
	Digitize the location of existing and proposed public utilities using GIS.	21%	21%	26%	32%
	Utilize the Jail and Public Facilities Study to continue moving the project forward.	11%	32%	32%	26%
	Explore how Union County can utilize residential TIF's as an incentive to encourage development	11%	11%	42%	37%



	Strategy Statement –	Low	Medium	High	I don't have enough information to answer.
PLACEMAKING	Explore establishing an organization or committee dedicated to promoting Union County and advertising local events and festivals.	11%	42%	37%	11%
	Create a gateways and wayfinding signage master plan.	26%	32%	32%	11%
	Create a media relations and marketing plan for the promotion of Union county that incorporates both online platforms and paper methods.	21%	21%	42%	16%
	Develop an art competition program to encourage community participation in planning for public art installations.	42%	26%	26%	5%
	Implement a blight removal program to identify and prioritize the key areas of concerns, unsafe structures, and vacant lots.	21%	21%	53%	5%
	Create a tourism guide that provides relevant information about the recreational and agricultural assets available in Union County.	32%	26%	37%	5%
	Complete a Community Center Feasibility Study that evaluates the market, design options, and provides a detailed construction, operational, and maintenance cost analysis.	32%	21%	37%	11%



	Strategy Statement –	Low	Medium	High	I don't have enough information to answer.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Partner with the Indiana Office of Tourism Development to create a strategic plan for tourism in Union County	0%	29%	59%	12%
	Develop a robust website for promoting tourism in Union County.	0%	53%	47%	6%
	Select communities in Indiana or around the country to benchmark for how to model tourism in Union County	12%	41%	41%	12%
	Complete and maintain an inventory of prospective properties and means of acquisition.	13%	25%	56%	6%
	Conduct a business survey annually to identify the issues, opportunities, and strategies for improving the business environment in Union County.	12%	29%	53%	6%
	Provide opportunities for citizens to be engaged through boards, commissions, and committees.	12%	29%	53%	6%
	Identify and promote businesses and agencies that can develop apprenticeships, mentoring and internships programs.	12%	29%	53%	6%
	Work with businesses to identify education and skill gaps and identify options for filling those gaps.	6%	29%	47%	18%
	Consider creating a resident and workforce recruitment and retention plan.	0%	35%	53%	12%
	Identify potential properties, incentives, and developers / builders for development.	6%	41%	41%	12%


**UNION COUNTY**  
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

HOUSING	Strategy Statement –	Low	Medium	High	I don't have enough information to answer.
	Partner with a local agency to develop an owner-occupied rehabilitation program to support those with limited incomes and to stabilize households	12%	29%	47%	12%
	Assess current regulatory processes to ensure appropriate, effective codes and enforcement are in place.	12%	47%	41%	6%
	Update the Housing Study to identify specific housing types, number of units, and price points to promote development that aligns with market demand.	6%	35%	53%	6%
	Continue to evaluate the availability of economic development tools and incentives, and state and federal grants opportunities for assisting in promoting and rehabilitating residential development.	6%	29%	59%	6%

TRANSPORTATION	Strategy Statement –	Low	Medium	High	I don't have enough information to answer.
	Develop and maintain a capital improvement plan to identify long-term transportation and utilities projects and priorities.	12%	53%	29%	6%
	Explore how Union County can capitalize on and connect to nearby regional trail systems such as the Whitewater Gorge Trail and Cardinal Greenway.	18%	29%	41%	12%
	Partner with the Town of Liberty to develop and implement a complete streets policy.	12%	24%	41%	24%
	Conduct a feasibility study for a trail connection from Whitewater Memorial State Park to Liberty.	24%	12%	53%	12%
	Enroll in ARIES crash database for the purpose of monitoring high crash locations and prioritizing improvements.	35%	29%	24%	12%



	Strategy Statement –	Low	Medium	High	I don't have enough information to answer.
AGRICULTURE	Educate the public about best practices for land management related to erosion through the creation and dissemination of an information packet.	41%	24%	12%	24%
	Explore alternative energy production by educating the public on the topic, determining desirable locations, and initiating discussions with service providers.	29%	35%	24%	12%
	Complete an inventory of grant opportunities and resources available to farmers in Union County.	29%	29%	35%	6%

	Strategy Statement –	Low	Medium	High	I don't have enough information to answer.
NATURAL RESOURCES	Work with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the Army Corp of Engineers to create a management and recreational-use plan for the Whitewater Memorial State Park and Brookville Lake Complex.	0%	29%	53%	18%
	Identify and designate environmentally sensitive areas in order to limit negative impacts from development and to maintain environmental quality.	18%	29%	47%	6%


**UNION COUNTY**  
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PARKS AND RECREATION	Strategy Statement –	Low	Medium	High	I don't have enough information to answer.
	Develop suggested itineraries for visitors interested in spending the days, or multiple days in and around Union County.	35%	35%	24%	6%
	Increase outreach regarding events, facilities, and programs through social media platforms and the county website.	6%	63%	25%	6%
	Create opportunities for the public to regularly share their ideas about potential programs, venues, and experiences	24%	24%	47%	6%
	Continue moving the Union County Park forward and regularly update the public on the progress.	6%	18%	65%	12%

HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES	Strategy Statement –	Low	Medium	High	I don't have enough information to answer.
	Identify and evaluate local districts and landmarks that embody important elements of the county culture, history, or architectural history.	29%	41%	18%	12%
	Install interpretive signage for all historic and archeological areas and/or structures.	24%	41%	24%	12%
	Create a self-guided landmark walking tour to showcase Union County's historical areas and structures.	24%	41%	24%	12%

HAZARD MITIGATION	Strategy Statement –	Low	Medium	High	I don't have enough information to answer.
	Continue to evaluate and update the County's emergency management plan as needed.	6%	56%	31%	6%
	Develop a notification system to respond to any emergencies that should be communicated to the community.	6%	29%	59%	6%

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# Union County Foundation

## Community Needs Assessment



February 2020



**UNION COUNTY  
FOUNDATION**  
Building a Strong Community.

# Table of Contents

## 1. Introduction

Page 3

## 2. Data Collection Methodology

Page 4

## 3. County Profile

Page 5

## 4. Community Feedback

Page 10

## 5. Summary of Issues Raised

Page 16

## 6. Next Steps/ Recommendations

Page 17

## 7. References

Page 18

## Introduction

The Union County Foundation (UCF) reached out to Transform Consulting Group (TCG) to assist with engaging the community and gathering feedback to inform their Lilly Endowment GIFT VII community leadership development work. As part of their GIFT VII initiative, the Lilly Endowment awarded planning grants to community foundations to help them better understand opportunities and challenges in their community and determine which opportunities to pursue with additional implementation grant funding.

With surveys and community discussions advertised through social media, websites, emails, attendance at community events, and word of mouth, the Union County needs assessment incorporates the feedback of 359 community members from across the county. This report also includes countywide assessments and available public data. This report presents preliminary findings of the top issues in the county and is for the Foundation's internal use as they move forward with their GIFT VII planning activities.



UCF Community Needs Assessment | Page 3



# Data Collection Methodology

TCG and UCF conducted a mixed methods approach of quantitative and qualitative data collection. Printed surveys were distributed at events and online versions were made available through various channels. To further engage with communities, UCF staff conducted focus group style discussions with a variety of stakeholders at local community meetings. Data was collected from June through late October of 2019.

A general survey was created for community feedback. Mid-way through collection of the survey, a few questions were added to the survey in order to collect feedback on additional areas and topics. UCF staff and board members attended multiple community events and shared the survey with various organizations across the county. The survey was marketed and shared via the UCF website, email, social media, the local newspaper and word of mouth. A total of 185 surveys were completed either online, in person, or submitted on paper<sup>1</sup>. Of these responses, 86 respondents completed the initial survey and 99 completed the revised survey with the added questions.

UCF staff and board members collected feedback through focus group style discussions at 15 community events/meetings. A total of 174 individuals were reached through these community meetings. Groups reached through these meetings include the 4H Association, local church congregations, parent groups, fire and sheriff departments, library staff, senior citizens, and cross-sector community meetings/gatherings. In total, 359 people contributed their input to this needs assessment for Union County.

In addition to the community feedback collected, TCG reviewed various countywide assessments and available public data for its analysis and completion of this report and the county profile section.

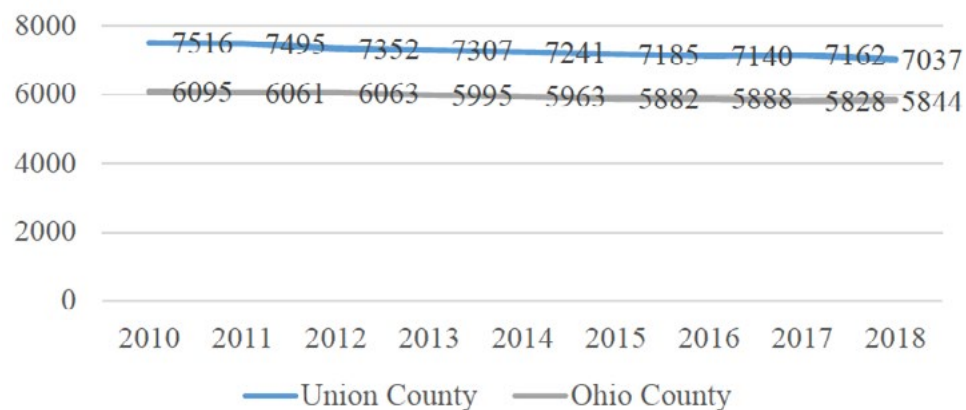
1. 190 responses were received, but 5 were duplicate submissions (identical name and responses).

# County Profile

## POPULATION

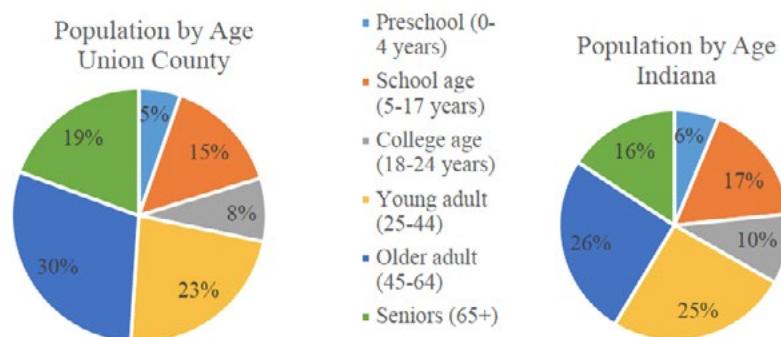
As of 2018, Union County's population was 7,037<sup>2</sup>. This represents a -6.4% change from 2010. Based on population size, Union County is the second smallest county in the state, followed by Ohio County. Ohio County has seen population loss in the last several years as well, but the decline has not been as drastic (-4.4%) as in Union County.

*Figure 1: Union County Population Trend*

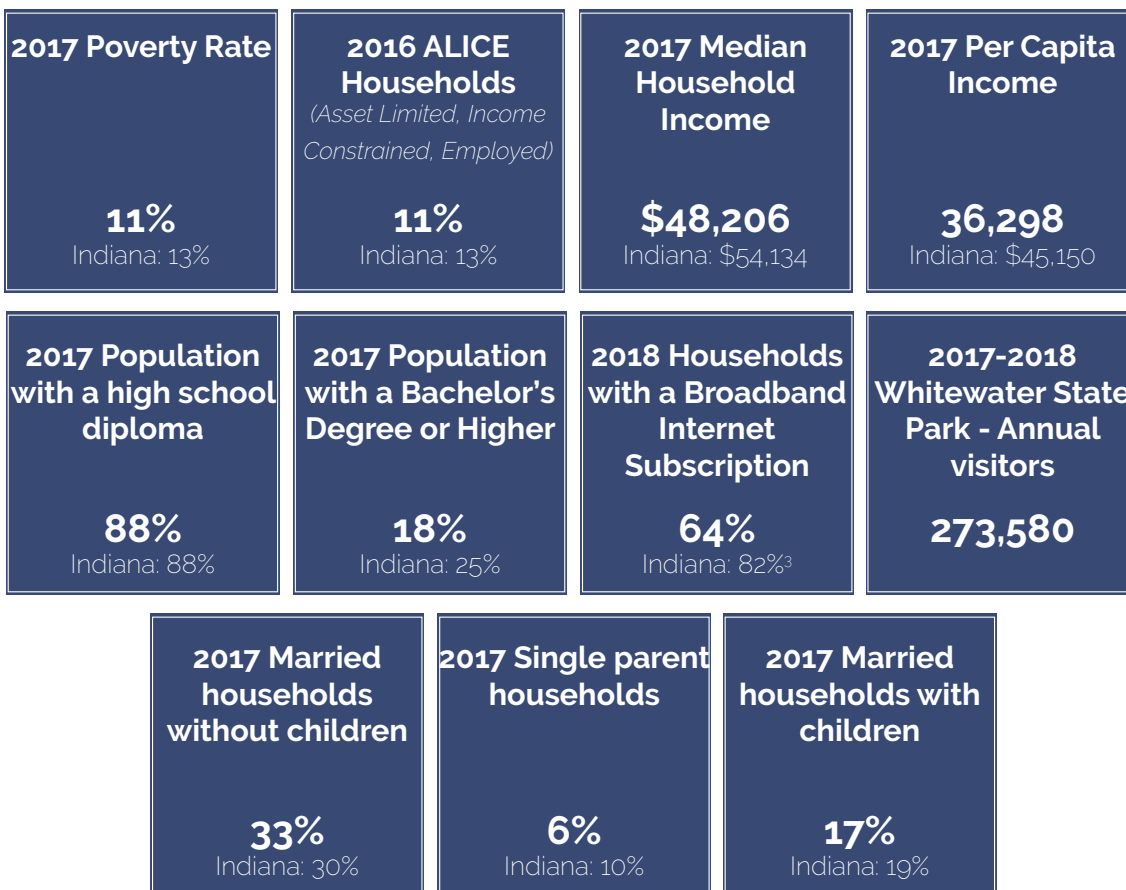


The median age of Union County residents is 44.1, which is older than the state median of 37.9. The highest percentage of residents are older adults, followed by young adults, seniors, school age, college age, and preschool age. Population composition by age in Union County is similar to the state composition.

*Figure 2: Population by Age; Union County vs. Indiana*



2. U.S. Census Bureau; Indiana Business Research Center

**POPULATION/COUNTY CHARACTERISTICS****HOUSING**

In 2018, there were an estimated total of 3,259 housing units in Union County. Of those, 64% were owner occupied. The median monthly rent for Union County is \$504<sup>4</sup>.

**WORKFORCE**

Union County has a **3% unemployment rate**<sup>5</sup>, which is the same as the state unemployment rate. This demonstrates an improvement from the 2014 Union County unemployment rate of 6%. A total of 3,386 Union County residents are employed<sup>6</sup>:

- Of those, 634 (19%) work within Union County;
- 2,752 (81%) work outside of the county;
- An additional 617 individuals work within Union County, but live elsewhere.

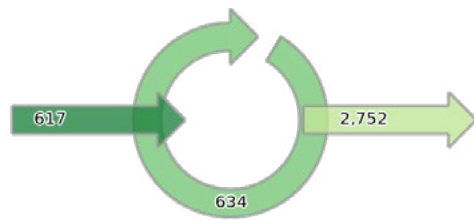
<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-year estimates

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates

<sup>5</sup> STATS Indiana, using data from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2017)

**Figure 3: Inflow-Outflow of Employees**

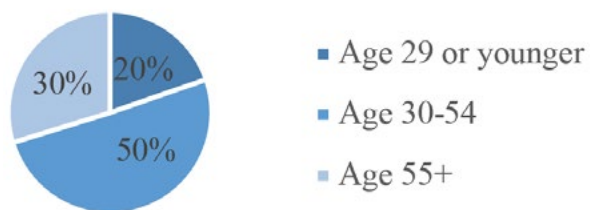


The top three places Union County residents were employed as of 2017 include:

1. Richmond (13%);
2. Liberty (13%); and
3. Oxford (13%).

Half of individuals who are employed in Union County are between the ages of 30-54. One-third of the workforce is made up of individuals over the age of 55 and a fifth of the workforce is under 29.

**Figure 4: Union County Workforce by Age**



The North American Industry Classification System classifies businesses and jobs by Industry. The top industry sectors within Union County in 2017 were:

- Education Services (19%);
- Manufacturing (16%);
- Retail Trade (15%); and
- Health Care and Social Assistance (10%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2017).

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH

As of 2017, it was estimated that 18% of children under the age of 18 in Union County live in poverty, which decreased from 22% in 2014<sup>7</sup>. Approximately one-third of students received free lunch and an additional 11% receive lunch at a reduced price. It is estimated that one Union County student experienced homelessness in 2017 and 16% of children between 2013-2016 were food insecure.

In 2018, 72% of students in grades 3-8 passed English/Language Arts ISTEP+ and 68% passed Math ISTEP+. The county high school graduation rate was 90%, which is similar to the state rate of 88%.

In Union County, there are 448 children under the age of 6<sup>8</sup>. Most households with children under the age of 6 are married-couple households. One-quarter of households with children under the age of 6 in Union County are single-parent households<sup>9</sup>.

7. Source: 2019 Indiana Kids Count Data Book: Indiana Youth Institute.

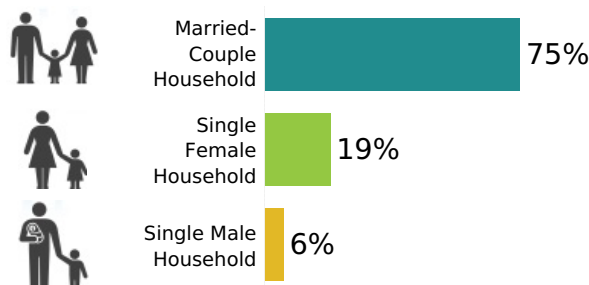
8. Puzanachera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2018). Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2017. Online: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B23008.

9. U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S1101.

Approximately 68% of children in Union County under the age of 6 are in need of child care because all parents in the home are working. There is only one known child care program in the county, which is a Level 3 in the Paths to QUALITY rating system<sup>10</sup>. The annual cost of tuition for high-quality care in the county is \$7,843<sup>11</sup>.

**Figure 5: Household Composition**

What is the structure of family households with own children under 6 years old?



## HEALTH

Hospitals are required to complete a community health needs assessment (CHNA) every three years. Reid Health's most recent CHNA was completed in 2016 and includes Union County data. This assessment identified three priority community health needs: Substance Abuse, Mental Health & Mental Disorders; Access to Health Services; and Exercise, Nutrition & Weight<sup>12</sup>.

### Substance Abuse, Mental Health & Mental Disorders

- In Union County, the mental health provider rate (providers/100,000 population) in 2015 was **14**. This was the lowest rate within Reid's service area of other surrounding counties. For example, Wayne County's rate was 476 and Fayette County had a rate of 60.
- Approximately **11%** of Union County's population was found to experience frequent mental distress, characterized by poor mental health for at least 14 of the last 30 days. This percent is similar to the other counties in Reid's service area.
- According to 2010 data, approximately 30% of mothers in Union County smoked during pregnancy. This rate was higher than the other counties in Reid's service delivery area. Approximately 20% of all adults in Union County smoked in 2014.

### Access to Health Services

- Union County's primary care provider rate (providers/100,000 population) was 69 in 2013, which was higher than any other county in Reid's service area and higher than Indiana's rate of 67. However, according to the Indiana Indicators Dashboard, this rate dropped to 28 by 2019, which represents a **41%** decrease<sup>13</sup>.
- The Union County dentist rate (dentists/100,000 population) was **13** in 2014, which was the lowest in Reid's service area.

10. Early Learning Indiana, 2018; Family and Social Services Administration Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, May 1, 2017 - April 30, 2018; Indiana Department of Education, 2018

11. Early Learning Indiana, 2018

12. 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment. Reid Health, 2016

13. County Health Rankings 2015-2019; Area Health Resource File/American Medical Association. Accessed at indianaindicators.org

- According to the Indiana Indicators Dashboard, **11%** of adults in Union County are uninsured and **6%** of children are uninsured<sup>14</sup>.

#### Exercise, Nutrition & Weight

- According to data from the Indiana Indicators Dashboard, **14%** of adults in Union County have diabetes and Union County's adult obesity rate is **33%**<sup>15</sup>.

### **TOURISM**

Two of the main tourist attractions in Union County are Brookville Lake and Whitewater Memorial State Park. In 2017-2018, Whitewater State Park had an annual estimate of 273,580 visitors<sup>16</sup>. It is estimated by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources that the impact of State Park visitors on local communities is approximately \$623 million. As a result, more than 14,000 private sector jobs are created across the state.



<sup>14</sup>. County Health Rankings 2015-2019, Small Area Health Insurance Estimates. Accessed at [indianaindicators.org](http://indianaindicators.org)

<sup>15</sup>. County Health Rankings 2015-2019, CDC Diabetes Interactive Atlas. Accessed at [indianaindicators.org](http://indianaindicators.org)

<sup>16</sup>. Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

# Community Feedback

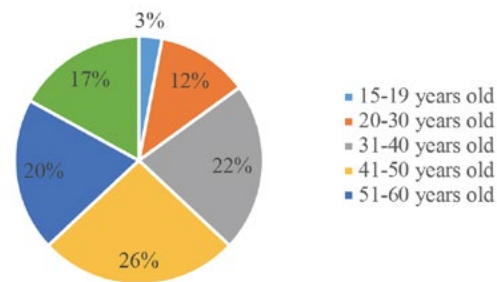
Responses to the community survey were collected from June through late October 2019. Mid-way through collection of the survey, a few additional questions were added to the survey in order to collect feedback on additional areas and topics. A total of 185 surveys were completed either online, in person, or submitted on paper<sup>17</sup>. Of these responses, 86 completed the initial survey and 99 completed the revised survey with the added questions.

The survey was distributed throughout the county online and made available in print. The link to the survey was shared through UCF emails and social media and included in the local newspaper. Print surveys were distributed at community events. The majority of respondents (76%) were residents of Union County. Approximately 10% were former residents of Union County and 11% reported being graduates. Approximately 13% of respondents reported being employed in the county and 3% were business owners<sup>18</sup>.

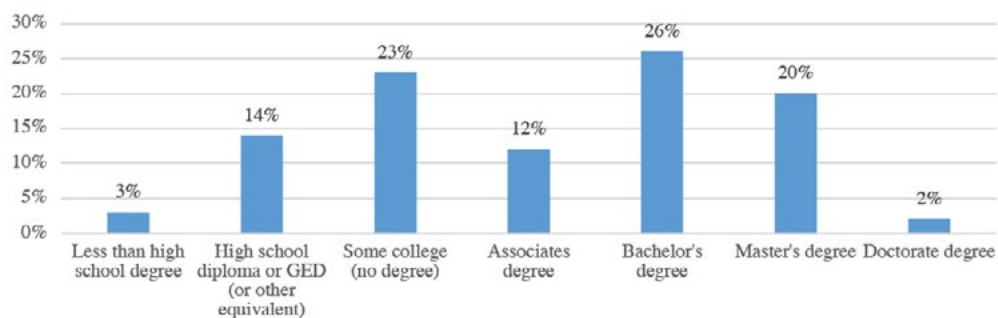
A quarter of total survey respondents were between the ages of 41-50. The next most represented age groups included those between 31-40 years old and 51-60 years old.

The updated survey, which received 99 responses, asked for additional demographic information. Of these respondents, four-fifths were female. Almost all respondents (98%) identified as white/Caucasian. There was a diverse distribution of respondents by education level (see Figure 7).

**Figure 6: Age of Respondents**



**Figure 7: Education Level of Respondents**



<sup>17</sup> 190 responses were received, but 5 were duplicate submissions (identical name and responses).  
<sup>18</sup> Respondents were able to select more than one answer choice, so total percent may equal more than 100%.

The initial survey was mainly qualitative in nature. When asked what respondents loved about Union County, the following themes/responses were most common:

- Small-town atmosphere and close-knit community;
- Local businesses and community recreational activities and events;
- Natural beauty of the community and the state park;
- Quality of the local school system;
- Location-Union County is close in proximity to many larger towns and cities.

“ I love how close everyone is. It makes me smile to know that my community is so supportive and loving to everyone that lives here and that everyone is treated like family. ”

When asked about the strengths of the community, many respondents shared similar responses:

- The people and community;
- The school system;
- Community organizations that served as assets, including the library, UCF, and local churches;
- Local businesses and amenities;
- State park and natural beauty;
- Affordability, low cost of living.

### Strengths of the Community



People



School system



Community organizations



Local businesses & amenities



State park & natural beauty



Affordability, low cost of living

“ ...The people of Union County are its biggest strength! Also, our location to the parks and larger cities can be viewed as an asset. The Foundation has done an outstanding job of helping our citizens, businesses (non-profits) succeed. ”

When asked to reflect on the weaknesses of the community, the following responses/themes were most common:

- Lack of amenities, recreational opportunities, and access to retail and businesses;
- Not enough jobs, especially high-paying jobs;
- Poor economic development and a blighted downtown;
- Lack of resources and funding in the county to address social and community issues;
- Housing availability, and specifically a diversity in options. Many expressed that there was low-income housing available, but not as many options for middle-class families;
- Drug use;
- Community in general is not open to change, new ideas, and diversity. Many in the community stick to the status quo and are not open to growth opportunities;
- Poor leadership in the community and a lack of collaboration/cooperation between community leaders.
- Infrastructure.

“ I think our biggest weakness is the lack of jobs needed to draw people to and keep people in our community. ”

When asked about the greatest challenges faced by the community, respondents shared similar feedback:

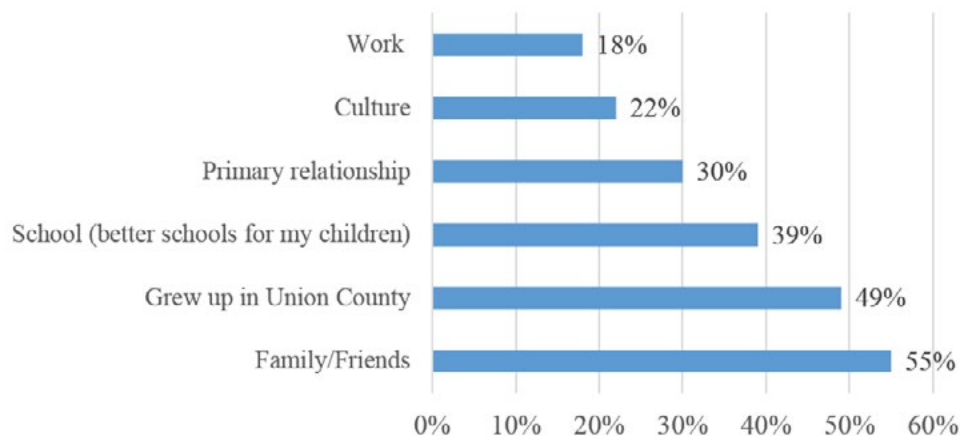
- Drug and substance use;
- Difficulty in retaining and attracting residents, especially young people and those with children;
- A lack of job opportunities;
- A lack of resources in the community and comments about the overall poor state of the local economy.

“ Our community does not draw educated, motivated workers, whether singles or families. This means that we will not grow. We need to entice our graduates to want to return to UC and build businesses and invest their skills in our community. ”

Mid-way through data collection, the survey was updated to include additional questions that focused on specific community issues/topics. The following survey questions were answered by 99 respondents who completed the survey after this update.

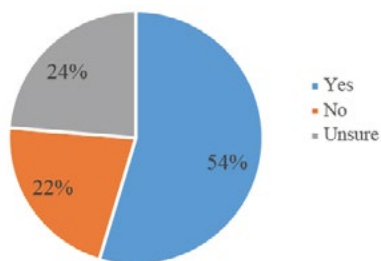
When asked why they had chosen to stay in or move to Union County, most respondents indicated wanting to be close to family or friends in the area. Almost half reported growing up in Union County. Other common reasons for staying in or moving to Union County included wanting better schools for their children, staying due a primary relationships (such as a spouse), the culture of the county, and work.

**Figure 8: Why have you chosen to stay or move to Union County? Select all that apply**



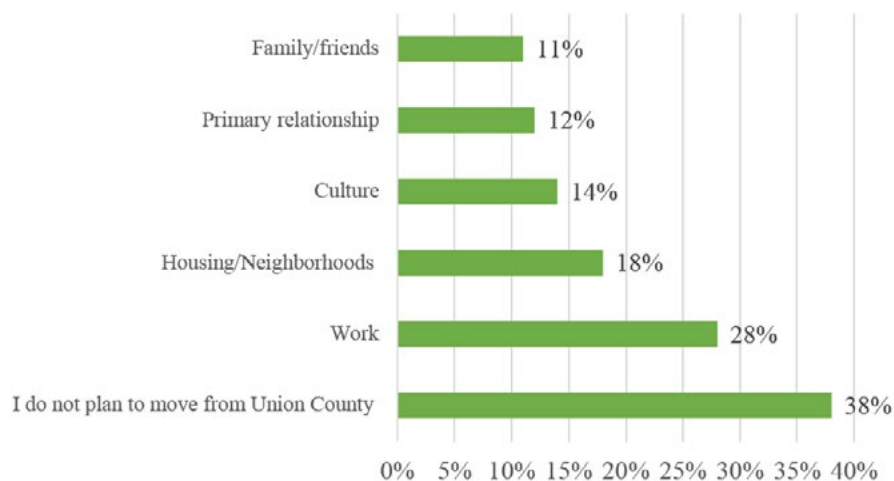
Most respondents indicated feeling extremely connected (22%) or very connected (38%) to the County. Over half of respondents reported that they thought they would be living in Union County in five years, while a quarter of respondents were unsure and a fifth of respondents did not think they would be living there in five years.

**Figure 9: Do you think you'll be living in Union County in five years?**



Respondents were also asked why they might choose to leave and move out of Union County. Over one-third indicated that they had no intention to move. Other respondents cited work, wanting nicer housing and neighborhoods, more cultural opportunities/activities, or moving because of a primary relationship or to be closer to family and friends.

**Figure 10: If you moved out of Union County, why do you think you would leave? Select all that apply**



Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with a number of items in Union County on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 indicating "not happy at all" and 5 indicating "very happy"). The items with the highest average satisfaction rating include:

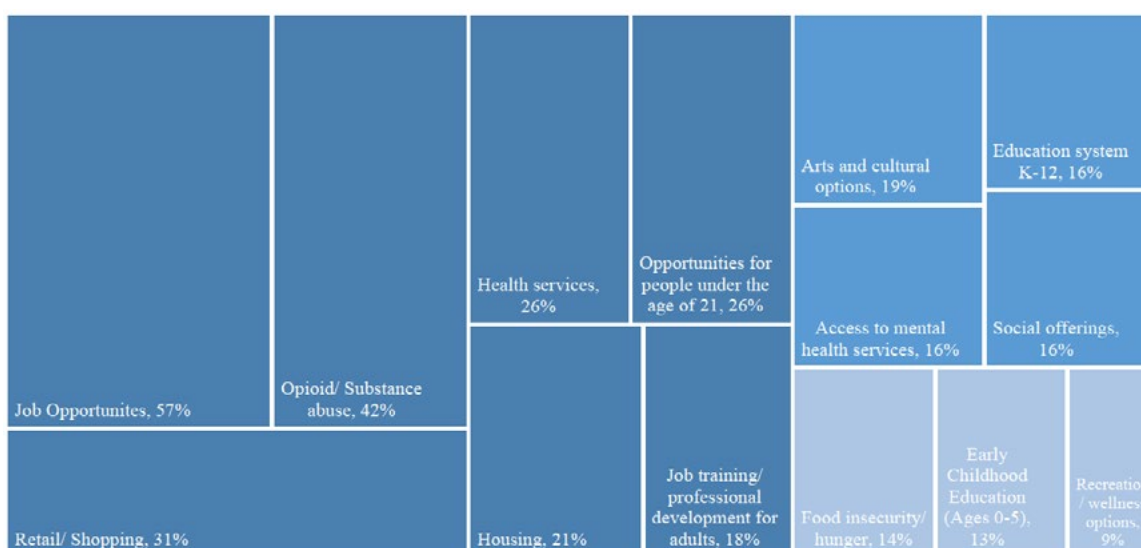
- Family-friendliness
- Your neighborhood
- Public safety
- K-12 Education system

The items with the lowest average satisfaction rating include:

- Job opportunities
- Retail/shopping
- Job training/professional development opportunities for adults
- Arts and cultural options

When asked to select the top 3 issues facing Union County, the most commonly reported issues were job opportunities, opioid/substance abuse, and retail/shopping.

**Figure 11: Please select the top 3 issues facing Union County (select up to 3)**



When asked how much of an impact respondents thought they could have in making Union County a better place to live, most responded either a moderate (40%) or small (26%) impact. Only 16% thought they could make a big impact and 6% thought they could make no impact at all.

The initial survey also asked how the Foundation can best serve the community and what respondents wanted and needed from the Foundation. The following responses/themes were most common:

- Many respondents expressed that they were pleased with what the Foundation was already doing;
- Need for increased communication, especially about what the Foundation does. Many respondents said that they didn't know what the Foundation did;
- The Foundation should act as a convener around big projects and new initiatives, including providing education to the community;
- The Foundation should support businesses or projects that would bring more jobs to the community;
- The Foundation should provide funding for youth activities.

“ The foundation can help guide future development through support of initiatives that further the community's comprehensive plan.  
Be a voice at the table for inclusion.  
Advocate for bold change.  
Challenge the status quo. ”

The survey also asked how the Foundation can best assist those interested in various leadership roles within the community. Respondents expressed the following suggestions:

- Create more opportunities for residents to provide feedback and have a voice;
- Bring the community together and do more outreach to recruit leaders and community members to participate in community initiatives;
- Provide trainings, workshops, and open community meetings;
- Support, encourage and foster new leaders- new leaders are not always supported in the community and it seems to be the same core group of leaders involved in many initiatives;
- Provide internships and leadership opportunities for youth;
- Provide incentives and support to leaders and community members (child care during meetings, pay, etc.).

“ By letting people like myself know I can be a community leader - I had no clue before this. ”

## DISCUSSIONS AT COMMUNITY MEETINGS

UCF staff and board members collected feedback through focus group style discussions at 15 community events/meetings. A total of 174 individuals were reached through these community meetings. Groups reached through these meetings include the 4H Association, local church congregations, parent groups, fire and sheriff departments, library staff, senior citizens, and cross-sector community meetings/gatherings.

The feedback at these community meetings aligned closely to the feedback received through the survey. For example, the strengths and what people love about Union County included the small close-knit community, proximity to the State Park, and the county's centralized location. Challenges and weakness identified included a lack of job opportunities, lack of recreational activities (especially for youth), drug use, and poor communication from community leaders.

During these discussions, community members encouraged the Foundation to:

- Continue providing funding to support community needs;
- Act as a centralized source for community communication and initiatives;
- Support and recruit leaders; and
- Provide training/education to leaders and community members.



# Summary of Issues Raised

## **JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND TRAINING/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

A reoccurring theme in the survey responses and community discussions was the lack of job opportunities, especially high-paying opportunities. This is further demonstrated by the outflow of Union County residents working outside of the county. Survey respondents suggested that the Foundation support businesses or projects that would bring more jobs to the community.

## **LACK OF AMENITIES, RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, AND ACCESS TO RETAIL AND BUSINESSES**

Many individuals who provided feedback for this assessment expressed a lack of recreational opportunities and access to retail and businesses. Many respondents referred to vacant storefronts and the desire for a more vibrant downtown area. Respondents also expressed dissatisfaction with opportunities available for youth and suggested the Foundation fund more youth activities.

## **DRUG AND SUBSTANCE USE**

One of the most pressing community challenges identified by respondents was the substance use epidemic. Respondents expressed a lack of services and resources for those struggling with substance use as well as a need for more prevention programming and education.

## **DIFFICULTY IN RETAINING AND ATTRACTIN RESIDENTS**

Many respondents indicated that, for Union County to succeed and grow, the community needs to explore solutions and strategies to retain and attract residents, especially young adults and families with children. This challenge is further demonstrated by the population decline seen in Union County over the last several years. Respondents suggested that increasing job opportunities and community amenities would help to attract visitors and residents.

# Recommendations/ Next Steps

Of the issue areas identified through this needs assessment, UCF has chosen to focus on **population loss and the difficulty in retaining and attracting residents**. In the next phase of the GIFT VII planning grant, UCF will develop strategies to address this issue.

In January and February of 2020, UCF collected additional feedback from the community through community discussions and luncheons to inform their strategy.

In March of 2020, UCF will apply for additional funding from Lilly Endowment to implement the identified strategies. UCF will also continue to work with community partners to raise overall awareness of the needs of Union County residents and encourage collaboration in the County to improve quality of life.



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