



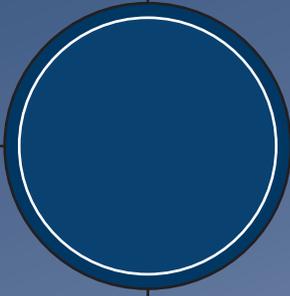
# Comprehensive Plan

## Steuben County, Indiana

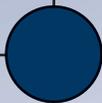


2006





Steuben County  
Comprehensive Plan



June 2006



# Preface

---

## Overview

Steuben County undertook the comprehensive planning process as a positive step towards creating a better future for the community. The existing comprehensive plan (called the Steuben County Master Plan) had become outdated and under utilized because of its age. It was time for the community to reevaluate its vision for the future of the County.

A new Comprehensive Plan was needed since Steuben County is seeing an increase in growth pressure. The high quality of life, lakes, other natural resources, educational system and other positive aspects of the County make Steuben County a desirable place to live. The Comprehensive Plan will help identify ways to manage that growth.

The increased need for high quality, high paying jobs within the County limits was another reason to create a new Comprehensive Plan. Global changes in the economy have decreased the number of manufacturing jobs available in the United States. Communities need to find unique ways to attract alternative employers who offer the same high quality, high paying jobs to local residents. The Comprehensive Plan will explore ideas to address the need for more employment opportunities in the County.

A new Comprehensive Plan was also needed to address the increased interest in protecting Steuben County's natural resources. Most residents realize how valuable the lakes, waterways and other environmental features are to their way of life. They realize these resources can be damaged with uncontrolled growth and poor environmental practices. The Comprehensive Plan will address ways to protect and enhance these environmental features.

The Comprehensive Planning process started in the summer of 2005. The County sought broad public input through interest group meetings and public workshops. Citizens were surveyed and asked to participate in roundtable discussions.

A vision for Steuben County's future emerged through various meetings and workshops and an extensive study of the County and its surroundings by the planning consultant. This vision underpins the goals,

objectives and implementation measures that are outlined in this document.

Drafts of the Comprehensive Plan were reviewed by a steering committee. The final outcome of this comprehensive planning process is a document that is user-friendly and full of attainable goals that were created by residents of Steuben County.

Periodically, the Plan should be reviewed, evaluated, and updated to reflect changing trends, outlooks, and thinking. In this way, it will remain a relevant guide to the future growth and development of Steuben County.

## The Vision and Guiding Principles

The essence of what this Comprehensive Plan is striving to accomplish is in Part 2: Plan Essence. The vision for Steuben County is in Chapter Two followed by seven chapters, each one dedicated to one of seven guiding principles. The guiding principles include:

- **Manage Growth (Chapter Three)**
- **Strengthen the Local Economy (Chapter Four)**
- **Nurture Environmental Quality (Chapter Five)**
- **Foster Convenient Circulation (Chapter Six)**
- **Serve Community Needs (Chapter Seven)**
- **Improve Image and Identity (Chapter Eight)**
- **Reinforce Relationships (Chapter Nine)**

The vision, guiding principles, objectives, and implementation measures in the Plan Essence will effectively and specifically guide decisions for policies, programs, and projects. The buy-in to the vision, commitment to the guiding principles, and pursuit of the objectives and implementation measures will result in a significant positive change for Steuben County.

# Preface

## Table of Contents

### **Comprehensive Plan**

Overview .....	iii
The Vision and Guiding Principles .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	iv
General Acknowledgments .....	vi
Specific Acknowledgments .....	vi
Comprehensive Plan Mandate .....	vii
Steuben County’s Fulfillment of Mandate .....	vii
Beneficiaries .....	iii
Limitations of a Comprehensive Plan .....	viii

### **PART 1: FOUNDATION**

#### **Chapter One: Community Profile ..... 3**

Demographics .....	4
Public Input and Notice .....	4
Interest Groups .....	4
County Leadership .....	4
Public Workshops .....	4
Public Hearing .....	5
Conclusion .....	6

### **PART 2: PLAN ESSENCE**

#### **Chapter Two: Vision of Steuben County ..... 9**

Steuben County’s Vision for the Future .....	10
--	----

#### **Chapter Three: Manage Growth ..... 11**

Introduction .....	12
Manage Growth Goal .....	12
Objective 1: .....	12
Objective 2: .....	12
Objective 3: .....	13
Objective 4: .....	13
Residential Land Uses .....	14
Commercial and Office Land Uses .....	14
Industrial Land Uses .....	14
Environmentally Sensitive Areas .....	14
Parks and Open Space .....	15
Institutional Land Uses .....	15
Future Land Use Map Interpretation .....	15
Future Land Use Map District Description .....	16
Future Land Use Map .....	17

#### **Chapter Four: Strengthen the Local Economy ..... 19**

Introduction .....	20
Strengthen the Local Economy Goal .....	20
Objective 1: .....	20
Objective 2: .....	20
Objective 3: .....	21
Objective 4: .....	21
Objective 5: .....	21
Objective 6: .....	21
Objective 7: .....	21
Alternative Agricultural Practice .....	22
Organic Products .....	22
Cranberry Production .....	22
Entrepreneurship Options .....	22
Indoor Sports Complex .....	22

#### **Chapter Five: Nurture Environmental Quality ..... 25**

Introduction .....	26
Nurture Environmental Quality Goal .....	26
Objective 1: .....	26
Objective 2: .....	26
Objective 3: .....	27
Objective 4: .....	27
Floodplain Management .....	28
Riparian and Littoral Corridor Management .....	28
Soil Quality and Mangement .....	28
Water Quality .....	28
Wetland Conservation .....	29
Woodlot and Forest Management .....	29

#### **Chapter Six: Foster Convenient Circulation ..... 31**

Introduction .....	32
Foster Convenient Circulation Goal .....	32
Objective 1: .....	32
Objective 2: .....	33
Objective 3: .....	33
Objective 4: .....	33
Interstate 69: .....	34
The Indiana Toll Road 80/90: .....	34
Half-Mile Grid: .....	34
Street Hierachy .....	34
Roadway Improvements .....	35
Classification System .....	36
Transportation Plan .....	37

#### **Chapter Seven: Serve Community Needs ..... 39**

Introduction .....	40
Serve Community Needs Goal .....	40
Objective 1: .....	40
Objective 2: .....	40
Objective 3: .....	41
Objective 4: .....	41

# Preface

---

**Chapter Eight: Improve Image and Identity..... 43**

Introduction ..... 44  
Improve Image and Identity Goal ..... 44  
Objective 1: ..... 44  
Objective 2: ..... 44  
Objective 3: ..... 45  
Objective 4: ..... 45  
Objective 5: ..... 45  
Gateway Profile ..... 46

**Chapter Nine: Reinforce Relationships ..... 47**

Introduction ..... 48  
Reinforce Relationships Goal ..... 48  
Objective 1: ..... 48  
Objective 2: ..... 48  
Objective 3: ..... 49  
Objective 4: ..... 49  
Active Citizens ..... 50

**Chapter Ten: Directions ..... 51**

Implementation Strategy ..... 52  
Comprehensive Plan Maintenance ..... 52

**PART 3: APPENDIX**

**Appendix A: Demographics ..... 55**

Population ..... 56  
Population Distribution ..... 56  
Commuting Patterns ..... 57  
Median Household Income ..... 58  
Educational Attainment ..... 58  
Unemployment Rate ..... 59  
Median Home Value ..... 60

**Appendix B: Public Workshop..... 61**

Liabilities ..... 62  
Assets ..... 64  
Needs ..... 65  
Dreams ..... 66  
Community Values Exercise ..... 67

# Preface

---

## **General Acknowledgments**

Many people worked hard and contributed to developing the Steuben County Comprehensive Plan.

Steuben County wishes to thank the businesses and residents that participated in the public workshops and interest group meetings. The collective input was integral to setting the vision and goals outlined in this document.

## **Specific Acknowledgments**

Additionally, the County would like to thank the following people who provided significant support and time to this project:

### **County Commissioners**

Ron Smith  
F. Mayo Sanders  
James Crawl

### **County Council**

William Booth  
Paul Sparks  
Linda Hansen  
Ronald Parker  
John Hughes  
Danny Putnam  
Donelda Hantz

### **County Plan Commissioners**

Roy Aaron  
John F. Brooks  
John DeMarco  
Tom Eickholtz  
Larry Gilbert  
Kim Kepler  
August “Bud” Kurtz  
Linda Hansen  
James Crawl

### **Board of Zoning Appeals**

John DeMarco  
August “Bud” Kurtz  
Craig Halsey  
Doug Smith  
Willie Ingledue

### **County Plan Director**

Mark Sanborn

### **County Surveyor**

Larry Gilbert

### **Highway Engineer**

Dave Somerlott

### **Legal Counsel**

Don Stuckey

### **Steering Committee**

William Bryan  
Bob Howard  
Brenda Burch  
Julie Cole  
Don Farrington  
Jill Boggs  
Jim Getz  
John DeMarco  
Paul Herbig  
Ron Smith  
Ron Sullins  
Sue Wiggins  
Larry Gilbert  
Velda Dose  
June Julian

### **Primary Planning Assistance**



# Preface

---

## Comprehensive Plan Mandate

The State of Indiana, through Indiana Statutes, Title 36, Article 7, as amended, empowers communities to plan with the purpose of improving the health, safety, convenience, and welfare of the citizens and to plan for the future development of their communities to the end:

1. That highway systems [and street systems] be carefully planned;
2. That new communities grow only with adequate public way, utility, health, educational, and recreational facilities;
3. That the needs of agriculture, industry, and business be recognized in future growth;
4. That residential areas provide healthful surroundings for family life; and
5. That the growth of the community is commensurate with and promotive of the efficient and economical use of public funds” (IC 36-7-4-201).

Indiana statutes state that communities may establish planning and zoning entities to fulfill this purpose (IC 36-7-4-201). A Plan Commission is the body responsible for maintaining the Comprehensive Plan, which is required by State law to be developed and maintained (IC 36-7-4-501).

Indiana Code 36-7-4-502 and 503 state the required and permissible contents of the Plan. The required Plan elements are listed below.

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

## Steuben County’s Fulfillment of the Mandate

Throughout the planning process and within the Comprehensive Plan, all State of Indiana minimum requirements have been met or exceeded. Some of the highlights include:

- The *Steuben County Comprehensive Plan* reflects analysis of the community, existing land uses, development trends, land use suitability, economic feasibility, and natural land features.
- Public involvement provided the foundation for this Comprehensive Plan. This public input exceeded the criteria required by the State by providing several opportunities for people to share their thoughts. The result of the input is highlighted in this document with specific results contained in Appendix B.
- The *Steuben County Comprehensive Plan* has an overall theme of improving the health, safety, and welfare of residents and contains the State required Plan elements in the Plan Essence section.
- The *Steuben Comprehensive Plan* contains several extra components that exceed those required by the State. For instance, the Plan includes environmental protection, parks and recreation, and growth management content.

# Preface

---

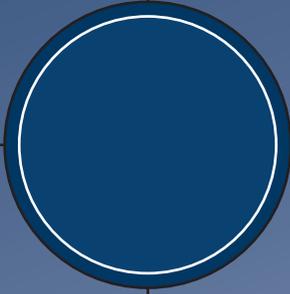
## **Beneficiaries**

The Comprehensive Plan is designed to benefit the community as a whole, as opposed to any single property owner. As a result, from time to time, implementing this Plan will adversely affect a single property owner or small group of property owners. However difficult or controversial, the greater good of the community will be served through the implementation of the Plan. No community has ever successfully improved itself without some controversy, opposition, or adverse affects on small numbers of property owners.

The County has committed to implement, to the extent possible, this Plan with the greater good of the community in mind. As a check and balance, each project, program, or policy that results from this Plan will first be evaluated to confirm the end result will move the community forward.

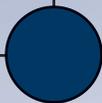
## **Limitations of a Comprehensive Plan**

It is important to keep in mind this Plan is not enforceable in itself and should not be mistaken as a zoning ordinance or as a substitute for other regulatory ordinances. As the primary means of implementing the Comprehensive Plan, the County will maintain a zoning ordinance and subdivision control ordinance. The County will also use department policies, along with its capital, intellectual, political, and functional resources to influence the successful achievement of this Plan.



# Part 1

Foundation





Chapter

1

Community Profile



# Community Profile

---

## **Demographics**

The Constitution requires the federal government to administer a census every ten years to allocate the number of U.S. Representatives to each state. Both governments and private agencies also use the data gathered from the census to evaluate demographic changes in towns, cities, counties, states, and the country as a whole. The demographic data collected by the census may be used to help understand where a community has been and where it is now. That same data can also be analyzed to create estimates and projections to help predict the future of the community.

Steuben County's recorded population in 2000 was 33,214 residents. The population grew by 21% from 1990 to 2000. These numbers include only residents who claim Steuben County as their primary residence. The population during the summer and on peak weekends increases significantly.

Steuben County has had a decrease in the number of citizens driving into the County to work. During the last few years, the number has decreased by almost 300 people. However, the number of Steuben County residents driving out of the County for employment decreased during that same period.

The average wage per job within the County is \$26,956 per year. This is well below the state's average of \$34,689 and the average of the surrounding counties. This low rate could be attributed to Steuben's low cost of living, low industrial wages and the tourism economy. The greater the tourism market in an area, the greater the need for service jobs. These types of jobs do not typically pay as well as other types of jobs outside the service field.

The unemployment rate of Steuben County is 5.7% and is slightly above the current rate in Indiana. The unemployment rate for the County has increased 2.5% from 2000 to 2004. This increase was felt by the surrounding counties and the State as well.

Steuben County has a higher high school graduation rate than Lagrange County, Noble County, Branch County (Michigan), Williams County (Ohio) and the State of Indiana. Its percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher (15.5%) is higher than all

of the surrounding counties but lower than the State's rate of 19.4%.

Additional demographic information, including data, charts, graphs and descriptions of the data may be found in Appendix A.

## **Public Input and Notice**

In order to gather information from the residents and employees of Steuben County, three different sets of meetings were held. Specific meetings were held to obtain input from the County leadership, interest groups and the general public. A summary of each of these meetings can be found below.

### **Interest Groups**

The first meeting was actually an all day series of meetings with interest groups from around the County. Invitation letters were sent to over 200 individuals asking for their participation. The groups were made up of people with interests in agriculture, real estate, development, business, industry, public service, schools, economic development, the environment, tourism and the lakes. This series of meetings divided the individuals into five groups allowing each interest group to independently express the concerns and issues they see in Steuben County.

### **County Leadership**

The second meeting was attended by County leaders. Invitation letters were sent to all County leaders with an interest in community planning. The leadership was given a brief overview of the scope of the comprehensive planning project and asked to share their experiences of working in the County. They were also asked to explain any trends they saw happening within the community and the surrounding region. Finally, they were encouraged to share any advice or guidance they could offer for the project.

### **Public Workshops**

The third type of meeting was a set of two public workshops aimed to gather information from the general public. One public workshop was scheduled during the lunch hour and a second workshop was set in the evening to maximize the amount of people who could attend. The public workshops were advertised in the local paper as per the requirements established

# Community Profile

---

by the State of Indiana for notification of a public meeting. Articles were written advertising the meetings in the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette and the local Evening Star paper. The Steuben County Plan Director spoke on the radio the morning of the public workshops explaining the need for public involvement in the planning process. Finally, over 300 postcards were mailed out to random Steuben County residents asking them to participate in one of the public workshops and invite their friends, co-workers and neighbors to attend as well. Finally, a mass e-mail was sent out to members of the Lakes Council and others that had shown interest in the Plan Commission's activities.

The public workshops were attended by 61 people. After a brief explanation of the need for a new Comprehensive Plan and their role in the process, the participants were asked to complete a community values survey. They were asked to rate their opinions and feelings on various topics, such as farmland protection, property rights, the location of new development, local employment and services, and tourism. The survey was used to encourage participants to think of the issues that may influence a community's values. It also was utilized by the County to provide insight into Steuben County's values. A copy of the survey questions and the results are located in Appendix B.

The second part of the public workshops required participants, in small group discussions, to identify the community's liabilities, assets, needs, and dreams. Their comments were recorded, and at the conclusion, they were asked to vote on the needs they believed were most important for the future of Steuben County. The following needs (in no particular order) rated the highest among participants:

### *Identification of Major Needs for Steuben County*

- Protection of environmental areas, especially the lakes
- More industry and higher paying employment opportunities
- Strong Plan Commission and Comprehensive Plan
- Minimize truck traffic off of the Interstates

For a complete list of the needs identified in the public workshops, as well of a listing of the liabilities, assets and dreams, please refer to Appendix B.

Residents who were unable to attend one of the public workshops were encouraged to send in their comments or suggestions about the future of the County. A follow-up article was written in the local paper to summarize the public workshops and solicit more public input.

### **Public Hearing**

Two informal public and interest group presentations were offered prior to the formal adoption process. These meetings allowed interested parties to ask questions and offer content changes. The steering committee then met to consider the public and interest group comments, make changes and ultimately to recommend the document for adoption.

The Steuben County Plan Commission then held a legally notified public hearing on June 7, 2006. Again, the public was offered opportunity to ask questions and offer comments. The Plan Commission certified the Comprehensive Plan at the conclusion of the public hearing in compliance with state statutes.

# Community Profile

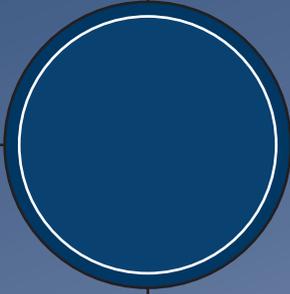
---

## Conclusion

A summary of the primary community issues, as determined through the County leadership involvement, interest group input, the public input process, and demographic research, is listed below:

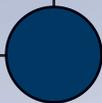
- Protect the natural resources of the County
- Manage the impacts of growth
- Promote economic development in appropriate places
- Focus growth and development near municipalities
- Farmland management
- Expand tourism
- Effectively utilize park facilities
- Maintain a road management system
- Mitigate the impacts of interstate commerce on tourism, the environment and quality-of-life
- Focus on “branding” of Steuben County to improve its image and to increase economic development opportunities.

The remaining chapters (Plan Essence) address these important issues by outlining a vision, goals, objectives, and implementation measures for long range planning and implementation.



# Part 2

Plan Essence





Chapter

2

Vision for Steuben County



# Steuben County's Vision

---

## Steuben County's Vision for the Future

A vision can be explained as the manner in which one sees or conceives of something in the future. For Steuben County, it is the manner in which the collective community sees the future of the County. It is a shared ideal of what the future should be for the County.

Ten years after the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, it is Steuben County's vision to clearly note the following accomplishments:

- Achieve a positive branding of the County.
- Maintain the natural quality of the lakes and waterways.
- Increase in the number and quality of jobs available in the County.
- Increase in the number of jobs that require skilled labor or higher educational attainment
- Improve the sustainability (the ability to not rely on another community's vitality, goods and services) of the County.
- Increase the quantity of speciality crops produced in the County.
- Increase the educational attainment of the general population.
- Increase the variety and affordability of housing.
- Maintain or improve the quality of police and fire protection.
- Achieve orderly growth that has not had an adverse effect on the natural environment.
- Increase the number of tourism destinations, including year-round and upscale amenities.
- Increase the overall quality-of-life for residents.

Chapter

3

Manage Growth



# Manage Growth

---

## Introduction

Most communities have to address two types of growth-related issues. The first is how to address population changes over time. The second is how to address development pressures. However, Steuben County has to also address a third type of growth, seasonal influx of residents and tourists.

The population of Steuben County has steadily increased during the last 40 years. This population growth has increased the need for housing, commercial establishments, employment opportunities and services to be provided by the County.

Unique development pressure has been evident within the County as well. With the lakes and high quality-of-life available in the community, Steuben County has developers and many property owners who are always trying to get more homes or bigger homes on the lake.

The final growth-related pressure on the County is the seasonal migration of residents and tourists that occurs in the summer months and peaks on summer weekends. This increase in population puts an extraordinary strain on government resources and businesses that have to adjust significantly to these ebbs and flows.

The key for the County to manage growth is to find a way to balance the need to accommodate the desires and demands of those who choose to live and visit the County with the need to minimize and mitigate the negative impacts that may result from such accommodations.

The remainder of this chapter contains the goal, objectives, implementation measures (IM), and elaboration on specific components of managing growth.

## Manage Growth Goal

Manage growth by providing orderly development of land which protects the County's natural resources and improves the overall quality-of-life for residents.

### Objective 1: Direct growth where it is most likely to have a positive impact on the community.

**IM 1.1** Focus growth near municipalities where infrastructure and services are already provided and have the available capacity.

**IM 1.2** Require cluster designed residential developments that create shared common space and provide habitat preservation when development is proposed in appropriate rural areas.

**IM 1.3** Allow incentives to developers and landowners who cluster developments while protecting and enhancing environmental features.

### Objective 2: Manage residential development in the County.

**IM 2.1** Require driveway separation or frontage roads to limit the number of driveway curb cuts onto county roads.

**IM 2.2** Update the Building Codes, Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Control Ordinance to ensure they require standards that will provide quality housing for residents.

**IM 2.3** Disallow the placement of single-wide mobile homes on properties other than those zoned for such uses.

**IM 2.4** Establish policies that require new residential properties to connect to public utilities when located within reasonable proximity to infrastructure.

# Manage Growth

---

**IM 2.5** Update the Subdivision Control Ordinance regulations to tighten standards for the subdivision of land to help discourage residential sprawl.

**Objective 3: Utilize planning tools to benefit the community.**

**IM 3.1** Maintain and utilize the Steuben County Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Plan, Future Land Use Map and other planning documents.

**IM 3.2** Maintain and utilize the Steuben County Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Control Ordinance and other County ordinances.

**IM 3.3** Update the Zoning Ordinance regulations to allow for more unique projects such as mixed use zoning, cluster zoning, infill development and the preservation of natural areas that offer benefits to the community.

**IM 3.4** Apply strict standards when reviewing projects or requests that deviate from the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

**IM 3.5** Review and update the Comprehensive Plan and all ordinances regularly to assure they are up to date and are meeting the community's needs and values.

**IM 3.6** Encourage local municipalities (cities and towns) to advance their growth management strategies to support compact development such as infill housing and redevelopment within their corporate limits.

**IM 3.7** Require mandatory training for Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals members.

**IM 3.8** Create a visioning audit to identify ecological resources, open spaces, agricultural districts, buffer zones, green ways and wildlife areas.

**Objective 4: Protect property values and rights.**

**IM 4.1** Buffer residential and other sensitive land uses from new commercial and industrial developments.

**IM 4.2** Protect existing agricultural operations from the encroachment of incompatible development.

**IM 4.3** Utilize moderate intensity zoning districts (transitional zones) between high intensity and low intensity zoning districts.

**M 4.4** Require affordable housing to be compatible with surrounding properties.

# Manage Growth

---

The following sections provide the background and essential information necessary to allocate and distribute land uses throughout the community such to manage growth. The information in these sections also denote strategies that will contribute to an appropriate regulation of development.

## **Residential Land Uses**

Steuben County wishes to provide housing opportunities for people with different incomes, needs, and desires. Steuben County also recognizes housing needs change as people age and their household size grows or diminishes. A mix of housing is important so residents are able to find housing that enables them to live in Steuben County throughout their lives.

The County is fortunate to have a lot of shore line around the lakes that establishes an attractive place for housing. A recent trend is the demolition of older, smaller lake front houses and replace them with much larger houses with as big a footprint as will fit on the building site. These newer homes can sometimes seem out of character for the area. For this reason, the County will prepare zoning regulations to assure that lake properties stay in character with their heritage.

The County will promote residential developments in or near municipalities and lake communities. These developments should be aesthetically pleasing, non-monotonous, and durably constructed. Steuben County will work to limit residential development on properties far removed from municipal services.

## **Commercial and Office Land Uses**

Commercial and office uses in a community provide employment opportunities, goods and services, and other amenities. They also reflect a community's economic vitality. Steuben County will strive to make sure commercial zoning and development stay concurrent with population growth and market demand.

Steuben County will also strive to contain commercial and office development in or near municipalities and in rural commercial districts located strategically in the County. The County should strive to promote professional planning of all commercial districts. Commercial development shall be cohesive and

without multiple curb cuts onto major roads. Also, districts should be designed for pedestrian access between adjacent commercial and office uses to limit the need to drive and park at multiple destinations.

## **Industrial Land Uses**

Industries are generally considered important elements within a community. They provide communities with jobs and a diversified tax base. However, industrial developments can generate transportation conflicts, land use conflicts, pollution, reduced aesthetics, noise, and other ill effects if not properly planned and regulated.

Steuben County will mitigate the potential negative effects of these developments through effective planning, growth management and development standards. For example, the County will require increased architectural design standards for all industrial buildings that abut the interstate and major arterial streets. These features can greatly increase the aesthetics of an area at a minimum expense to the landowner.

Steuben County will strive to retain and attract industries that can benefit from locations along the interstate and highways. However, these land uses shall only be allowed in areas zoned and planned for industrial development. Areas adjacent to industrially zoned ground should also be carefully planned so neither land use is negatively affected. Significant effort shall be made to protect lake areas from encroachment of industries.

## **Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

Environmentally sensitive areas include lakes, ponds, streams, wetlands, floodplains, riparian corridors, woodlots, and critical habitat for threatened and endangered species. These areas are local amenities, which make living in the community a more enjoyable, aesthetically appealing and healthier experience. Protection of environmentally sensitive areas and critical wildlife habitats are essential to the quality-of-life in Steuben County.

New commercial or industrial growth should not be allowed in any area unless it is in a municipal or regional waste district. Similarly, new subdivisions

# Manage Growth

---

with more than 10 home sites shall follow the requirements of minor exempt subdivisions and shall not be approved unless served by a municipal or regional waste utility.

The following are the most important factors regarding protection of environmentally sensitive areas:

- Protect the water quality of the lakes, streams and watersheds;
- Protect the local groundwater supply;
- Conserve woodlots for plant and animal habitat;
- Protect and preserve the native vegetation and natural drainage within the 100-year floodplain;
- Conserve open space and wetlands;
- Increase the buffering around wetlands; and
- Minimize development practices that encroach into or destroy environmentally sensitive areas.

## Parks and Open Space

Access to parks, recreation, and open space is essential to a high quality-of-life, good health and community spirit. To ensure these amenities exist, Steuben County will encourage a targeted variety of parks and recreation facilities throughout the County.

Steuben County currently has under-utilized park land, including two waterfront properties. The park land is under-utilized because there are limited amenities on the site and limited scheduled activities throughout the year. The opportunities on the County's properties will be studied and planned for greater utilization.

Off-street pedestrian and bicycle paths are becoming an essential component of any park system. They can be utilized for exercise and recreation purposes, or used as an alternative to driving an automobile.

Bicycle paths should be constructed to link together communities, parks, residential subdivisions, community focal points and other significant destinations. One project is already underway linking Pokagon State Park and Angola with a pedestrian path.

## Institutional Land Uses

Institutional uses within a community include schools, libraries, administrative offices, post offices, community centers and churches. In Steuben County, many institutional uses are provided within local

municipalities for their residents. However, there still is a need for some institutional uses to exist throughout the County. For instance, schools, fire stations and churches tend to provide a value to rural populations. For this reason, an institutional district will be established to provide a zoning classification for these types of uses.

## Future Land Use Map Interpretation

The Future Land Use Map (on page 17) designates the general distribution of land uses which will help manage growth and advance sustainable development for the overall County. A description of each land use category can be found on page 16. These descriptions as well as the map depictions are intended to be conceptual.

Specifically, the map depicts the community's land use goals in a conceptual manner. It should not be construed as a precise location of land use districts. It should be used as a foundation for support and influence when land use decisions are being made and zoning map changes are planned.

When interpreting the map, density numbers should be read to be an average of all projects in that subdistrict. As with other components of the map, density should be considered conceptual. Generally, higher density has been assigned close to existing municipalities or lake communities where infrastructure and services are more easily expanded to handle the needs of new residents.

Furthermore, the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Control Ordinance will be the primary method used to implement the concepts and goals represented on the map. However, zoning districts are intended to generally, not specifically, reflect the proposed future land uses.

Developers should not use the future land use map to claim right to a certain density. The Comprehensive Plan is a "broad brush" approach at future land use planning. Each development proposal should be reviewed with consideration of the Comprehensive Plan in addition to site features, context, design standards, and development standards.

# Manage Growth

---

## Future Land Use Map District Description

The next page contains the Future Land Use Map for Steuben County. The following statements briefly describe each land use category identified on the map.

*Conservation:* Natural areas dedicated for ecological preservation or habitat protection, typically owned by the State of Indiana or by a land trust.

*Conservation Agriculture:* Land used or dedicated to low impact agricultural uses, hobby farms and rural residential development. These areas are in close proximity to surface water and necessitate that improvements are made with sensitivity to nature.

*General Agricultural:* Land used or dedicated for agricultural operations such as crop production, the raising of animals, equestrian facilities, tree farms, vineyards and confined feeding operations.

*Parks and Recreation:* Land used or dedicated for existing public recreation areas or areas that have strong potential for such use. It also includes RV parks, golf courses and natural areas with trails.

*Conservation Residential:* Land used or dedicated for residential estates, conservation subdivisions and large lot subdivisions. In some cases, hobby farms can be compatible land uses.

*Medium Density Residential:* Land used or dedicated for single family detached subdivisions with two to four dwelling units per acre.

*Lake Residential:* Land used or dedicated for lake cottages and homes. These areas are often adjacent to a lake, canal or inlet and are substantially unique from traditional subdivision development.

*High Density Residential:* Land used or dedicated for single family detached subdivisions with four to eight dwelling units per acre; or multifamily developments (duplexes, townhomes, apartments and condominiums) with six to twelve units per acre.

*Village Mixed Use:* Land used or dedicated for unincorporated villages that have been platted with small lots and are suitable for commercial and residential uses.

*Neighborhood Commercial:* Land used or dedicated for small-scale commercial uses that serve the immediate neighborhoods or lake communities.

*Office Commercial:* Land used or dedicated for professional offices, hospitals, institutions, commercial services, general offices and office-serving commercial.

*General Commercial:* Land used or dedicated for medium to large scale commercial uses including retail, services, entertainment, restaurants, gas stations, hotels and offices.

*Business Park:* Land used or dedicated for low impact industrial, flex space, distribution, warehousing, office and logistics operations. Environmental sensitivity and aesthetic expectations are higher in comparison to industrial areas.

*Industrial:* Land used or dedicated for a variety of industrial uses. Manufacturing, assembly, processing raw goods, flex space, outdoor storage, construction trades, and distribution facilities are common uses.

**FUTURE LAND USE  
MAP PLACEHOLDER**

# Manage Growth

---

Chapter

4

Strengthen the Local Economy



# Strengthen the Local Economy

---

## Introduction

With the loss of manufacturing jobs in the United States, many communities are needing to find new industrial jobs or alternative jobs that are able to offer good pay and benefits to employees. Steuben County needs to replace its lost manufacturing jobs in a way that allows residents to maintain or improve their lifestyle. High paying jobs allow residents to maintain a high quality-of-life and add value to the economy.

Steuben County has a strong seasonal tourism market. The lakes provide a great incentive to attract people to visit Steuben County in the summer. Pokagon State Park and the local amusement centers also provide summertime activities. To help the local tourism industry grow, Steuben County needs to expand the tourist draw earlier into the year and try to extend it into the spring, fall and winter.

The remainder of this chapter contains the goal, objectives, implementation measures (IM), and elaboration on specific steps related to strengthen the local economy.

## Strengthen the Local Economy Goal

Strengthen the local economy to provide the best quality-of-life for Steuben County residents.

### Objective 1: Improve human capital.

**IM 1.1** Work with the local high schools, community college and local technical/vocational training center to prepare students and displaced workers to work in today's job market.

**IM 1.2** Strive to improve the quality-of-life for young adults by creating more amenities for them to attend; thus encouraging them to stay in the community.

### Objective 2: Elongate the tourism season.

**IM 2.1** Work with a regional or national vender to develop a lodge that offers accommodations and activities year-round.

**IM 2.2** Establish one or more indoor amenities such as a water park, sports complex or ice skating rink.

**IM 2.3** Develop new outdoor winter activities that are complementary to the Pokagon Toboggan hill or that provide new recreational opportunities for local residents and tourists.

**IM 2.4** Work to attract or develop a yearly-sanctioned event held during the off-season, such as a winter festival or fall exposition.

**IM 2.5** Create one or more yearly competition events held on off-season weekends, such as an adventure race, cutting edge motor sport event or judged art show.

**IM 2.6** Bring one or more regional retail destinations into the County.

**IM 2.7** Develop a nature preserve to be used for economic development and eco-tourism.

# Strengthen the Local Economy

---

## **Objective 3: Promote orderly development of industrial and commercial properties.**

- IM 3.1** Encourage industry and businesses to develop in areas already zoned for those uses and where services are in place.
- IM 3.2** Manage the rezoning of land for industrial and commercial uses to areas near transportation corridors, established utilities and where they do not impact adjacent land uses.

## **Objective 4: Foster entrepreneurship and small business development in the County.**

- IM 4.1** Support the establishment of an entrepreneurship program as part of a vocational program in local high schools and within an adult continuing education program.
- IM 4.2** Create an entrepreneurship center possibly tied in with Ball State University, Indiana University, Purdue University, Tri-State University or Northeast Incubator Center.
- IM 4.3** Develop relationships with existing employers to help expand their current production levels, thus creating opportunities for new jobs.
- IM 4.4** Help existing employers develop new products and services, thus expanding opportunities for skilled workers.
- IM 4.5** Assist existing employers diversify their businesses by finding multiple uses for their products and services.
- IM 4.6** Help existing businesses produce more products with the same number of employees thus allowing the employers to be paid higher wages.
- IM 4.7** Help attract business that supply products and services to existing business thus reducing delivery costs and providing new jobs.
- IM 4.8** Work with a developer to construct an office building suited to entrepreneurs and small businesses.

- IM 4.9** Work with the SBC, SBDC, Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Board and other agencies to leverage the most sophisticated economic development support system. write out letters

## **Objective 5: Create a critical mass of similar commerce.**

- IM 5.1** Inventory existing products and services produced and sold in the County.
- IM 5.2** Work to attract similar and complementary products and services.
- IM 5.3** Work with a critical mass of similar businesses to streamline and coordinate their inventory, shipping procedures and advertising campaigns.

## **Objective 6: Encourage local agricultural operations to diversify.**

- IM 6.1** Develop a task force to analyze the organic farming needs in the region and across the country.
- IM 6.2** Assist local farmers in converting their farming operations to meet the requirements of organic farming.
- IM 6.3** Help local agricultural interest explore alternative crops and operations.
- IM 6.4** Create an agri-tourism market in the County.

## **Objective 7: Improve the essential infrastructure that serves business.**

- IM 7.1** Assure that high speed internet service is available and affordable in all commercial, industrial, urbanized and highly populated area in the County.

# Strengthen the Local Economy

---

The following sections provide background and essential information relating to strengthening the local economy.

## **Alternative Agricultural Practice**

All businesses need to periodically review their products and services to verify they are still meeting market demands and maximizing profits. Agricultural production is no exception to this concept. The local farmers of Steuben County need to decide if the current products they are producing are the highest and best use of their land.

The changes in agriculture in the United States to a consumer-driven industry creates niches and market opportunities for Steuben County's farmers from grains, oilseeds, livestock, specialty and organic crops. Farmers can diversify and create niche businesses: including truck farms, hunting preserves, agri-tourism, 'u-pick' operations, direct-to-consumer sales, "farm stay" bed and breakfasts, and more.

With the high quality-of-life offered in the County, farmers will soon be experiencing conflicts from development if they haven't already. In order to maintain the agricultural vitality, agricultural land needs to continue to be utilized for farming operations and not developed into residential and commercial subdivisions.

Farmers need and deserve to be able to make a good living from farming operations. Niche farming, 'u-pick' operations, organic products and alternative crop production may help some farmers find higher profits and new markets.

## **Organic Products**

Agricultural products that can be produced organically include produce, grains, meat, dairy, eggs, cotton, flowers, and processed food products. Organic farmers are not allowed to use synthetic pesticides or fertilizers. The challenge is to develop biological diversity in the field to disrupt the habitat for pests.

Steuben County farmers need to discover what types of crops are needed in local and regional stores that sell organic products. Local farmers may need assistance when switching over to organic crops from

traditional crops. For example, organic farmers are required to maintain a buffer zone to prevent contamination from conventional fields. Revenues may be temporally lost while making the conversion and taking the necessary steps to prevent contamination.

## **Cranberry Production**

It has been discovered that Steuben County is suited for the production of cranberries. It is likely the only county in Indiana suited for such a unique crop in the Midwest. Although the potential for significant production of cranberries may be limited, it could be a lucrative niche crop. It could also be unique enough to help brand the County and establish a themed annual festival.

## **Entrepreneurship Options**

An entrepreneurship center in Steuben County would offer many services and benefits to the business community. These center can offer educational programs, technical assistance and research assistance to new entrepreneurs, new managers and existing business staff. This training can include enhancing the creative potential of the entrepreneur, allowing the person to reinvent an existing business to become more productive or allowing a start-up venture to get off the ground successfully.

## **Indoor Sports Complex**

The mild summer weather and 101 lakes allow for many outdoor activities for visitors and residents of Steuben County. During the other 3 seasons, the colder weather limits outdoor activities and causes a decrease in the tourism draw of the County. Steuben County needs to research the possibility of building an indoor sports complex. An indoor court/field could be built for volleyball, basketball, soccer or the like. An activity center could also include a rock-climbing wall, ropes course or conference center. The specific activity or activities offered inside the complex would be determined by inventorying similar centers and sports fields in the region and seeing which sports are most popular and which would benefit most from such a facility.

The complex could offer organized events such as sports tournaments and free-time use of the facilities as

## **Strengthen the Local Economy**

---

well. Classes and lessons could be offered to teach people of all ages new skills. The sports complex could be utilized by schools as an addition to their physical fitness curriculum or sports programs and possibly be built integrally into a school. The complex could be rented out by corporations or organizations for their gatherings.

The complex could be managed by the Parks Department as a year-round family center. Funds to maintain the facility could be generated through entrance fees, class tuition and special event rental of the complex.

# **Strengthen the Local Economy**

---

Chapter

5

Nurture Environmental Quality



# Nurture Environmental Quality

---

## Introduction

Clean water, clean air, minimizing flooding and protecting scenic landscape are some of the reasons for nurturing environmental quality. Steuben County has a unique terrain with flat lands for crop production, rolling hills that add character, forests that serve as wildlife habitats and water bodies for recreation and scenic views. By maintaining existing natural areas and encouraging new natural features, Steuben County will enhance quality-of-life throughout the community.

Many would say the greatest environmental feature of Steuben County is its lakes. Water, air and noise pollution are a constant threat to the lakes and property owners surrounding them. The community believes that protecting the lakes is an important activity in nurturing the environment, improving quality-of-life for residents, enhancing the experience for visitors, and maintaining the tourism economy in the County.

Air and noise pollution from interstate and local truck traffic are also a concern. Idling trucks at truck stops produce both air and noise pollution, as do trucks on the interstate. However, it is these same interstates that provide commerce and efficient distribution of goods to the community. Steuben County would like to minimize the impacts from the interstates and truck traffic without impairing the benefits.

The remainder of this chapter contains the goal, objectives, implementation measures (IM), and elaboration on specific steps related to nurturing environmental quality.

## Nurture Environmental Quality Goal

Promote an ecologically healthy community through the preservation of natural and man-made environmental features and amenities within Steuben County.

### Objective 1: Protect the water quality in the streams, lakes, and their watersheds.

- IM 1.1** Maintain an active relationship with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding activities permitted on the lakes.
- IM 1.2** Reduce discharges from non-point source pollutants through education, storm water management and the reduction of impervious surfaces.
- IM 1.3** Reduce discharges from point source pollutants through education, monitoring, enforcement and incentives.
- IM 1.4** Restrict the encroachment of pollution sources in environmentally sensitive areas.
- IM 1.5** Develop strong storm water control regulations to work with the site's natural ecosystem, aiding in the return of storm water from developed areas back to its natural course of flow.
- IM 1.6** Disallow land uses that are most likely to pollute or impair surface water when located within determined proximity to streams, major ditches and lakes.

### Objective 2: Reduce air and noise pollution from traffic.

- IM 2.1** Explore options to minimize noise from idling trucks at truck stops.
- IM 2.2** Restrict new truck stops from developing unless "Truck Stop Electrification" systems are installed or other anti-idling measures are implemented such that there are no adverse effects to the environment.
- IM 2.3** Ensure smooth traffic flow on truck routes and other high-volume road corridors.

# Nurture Environmental Quality

---

**IM 2.4** Require greater buffering requirements when high traffic commercial areas or high volume roadways abut residential areas.

**IM 2.5** Expand the trails and sidewalk networks in residential, commercial and industrial areas to allow safe walking and cycling.

**IM 2.6** Support the use of alternative fuel sources.

**IM 2.7** Encourage planting of native shade trees and evergreen trees to soften the impacts of noise.

**Objective 3: Minimize conflicts between growth and the environment.**

**IM 3.1** Establish zoning and subdivision control ordinance language that requires new development to be sensitive to environmental features through the use of buffering, landscaping, filtration strips, tree preservation and clustering.

**IM 3.2** Encourage new development to limit impervious surfaces.

**IM 3.3** Minimize the use of septic systems.

**IM 3.4** Enforce the County's regulations for erosion control during the construction process and join the MS4 Region in Angola.

**IM 3.5** Develop regulations for the development of steeply sloping sites to prevent the destruction of natural vegetation, to prevent soil erosion and to prevent the disruption of the natural waterflow on the site.

**IM 3.6** Reduce light pollution.

**Objective 4: Conserve existing natural areas including woodlots, wildlife habitats, riparian corridors, littoral corridors, open spaces, wetlands and floodplains.**

**IM 4.1** Restrict development in areas with notable environmental features.

**IM 4.2** Participate in State and federal programs to conserve, sustain and restore natural features and areas.

**IM 4.3** Promoting the purchase of land with unique or important environmental features for conservation, use as park land, environmental education or eco-tourism.

**IM 4.4** Educate the public about the benefits of preserving and protecting existing natural areas from development.

# Nurture Environmental Quality

---

The following sections provide the background and essential information relating to best management practices necessary to nurture environmental quality. The information in these sections also denotes actions, processes and potential strategies that will contribute to environmental enhancement.

## **Floodplain Management**

Flooding causes more damage to communities across the country than all other types of natural disasters combined. Flooding is costly, not only in terms of the value of the property lost, but also lives lost.

Floodplains act as sponges, soaking in rain, filtering pollutants and slowing the overland flow of water. This contrasts with impervious surfaces, such as parking lots, rooftops and roadways, which accelerate stormwater flow. Watersheds that have significantly more pervious floodplains lessen the severity of flooding in downstream areas.

To minimize economic losses attributed to flooding, Steuben County will encourage the maintenance of natural areas within floodplains. Although most of Steuben County is not significantly susceptible to flooding, being a participant in floodplain management is socially responsible.

Steuben County will strongly discourage development in the floodplain. In instances when development must occur, the impact of development must be offset by mitigation measures to ensure “no net loss” of floodplain storage capacity.

## **Riparian and Littoral Corridor Management**

Riparian corridors are linear forests and vegetation located along creeks and ditches. Littoral corridors are forests and vegetation located adjacent to lakes and ponds. These corridors have significant ecological and aesthetic values, in part because they contain a rich array of plants and animals.

Healthy riparian and littoral corridors are typically composed of large trees, woody understory trees, shrubs, flowers, grasses and ground covers. This vegetation stabilizes the banks of the waterways, reduces the amount of sediments and pollutants entering waterways, and lessens flooding and impacts.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the ideal riparian and littoral corridor includes three specific zones for management in which development should be restricted. These zones, listed in sequence from the stream, are as follows.

- **Undisturbed Forest** - this zone is adjacent to the stream and is minimally 15’ in width. Removal of vegetation should not be permitted.
- **Managed Forest** - this zone is ideally 60’ in width and harvesting of mature trees and older vegetation is encouraged to support better filtering and removal of nutrients through younger, faster growing vegetation.
- **Runoff Control** - this zone is ideally 20’ and may be pastured or mowed for recreational purposes. Structures should not be permitted.

Waterways are often vulnerable to developmental pressures. Steuben County will revise its ordinances and policies, as needed, to minimize the effect of development on riparian and littoral corridors.

## **Soil Quality and Management**

Soils limit the type of development, the ability of installing septic systems and the types of uses on a site. Development on inappropriate soils can result in problems such as foundation damage, water and wind erosion, flooding, and insufficient drainage. These problems can financially burden property owners and often impact the County.

When evaluating sites for public buildings, Steuben County will test soils to make certain the land use is suitable for a particular location.

Steuben County will encourage all new public and private developments to connect to a public wastewater system.

## **Water Quality**

Steuben County is sensitive to land uses and practices that could contaminate water resources. Any development that poses a risk to ground or surface water will be prohibited unless proven measures are used to protect water quality.

# Nurture Environmental Quality

---

To protect water quality, the County will require developers to submit development and redevelopment plans that provide for:

- Surface stabilization, including tree and vegetation preservation, retaining walls, and sodding;
- Runoff control, such as swales, small culverts, and vegetative buffers;
- Sediment control, including sediment traps and filter strips;
- Stormwater management, such as retention and detention ponds; and
- Stream protection, including stream bank preservation, buffering and setbacks.

## **Wetland Conservation**

Steuben County has areas that are or could be considered wetlands, low flow streams/ditches, and wet soils.

The County will strive to ensure State and federal laws for wetland mitigation are met. The County will also consider ways to limit development in these areas, to the extent possible. Some possible alternatives include purchasing property, encouraging the use of conservation easements, or promoting planned developments that are designed to preserve open space.

## **Woodlot and Forest Management**

Steuben County has a many small and medium sized woodlots and some forests.

Woodlots and forests should be well managed and protected because of the many benefits they provide.

For instance, a woodlot can:

- Reduce air temperatures in the summer by about 10 degrees Fahrenheit;
- Reduce wind velocities by 20 to 60 percent;
- Provide vital wildlife habitat;
- Clean pollutants from the air, absorbing an estimated ten tons of carbon dioxide per year per acre of woodlot; and
- Reduce the erosion of soil on construction sites.

For the property owner, saving a few trees on site reduces energy bills, improves quality-of-life and increases the value of the property.

The County will require new developments be designed to minimize the impact to existing woodlots and forests.

# Nurture Environmental Quality

---

Chapter

6

Foster Convenient Circulation



# Foster Convenient Circulation

---

## Introduction

Steuben County is bisected by Interstate 69, Toll Road 80/90, U.S. 20 and several state roads. The County road system is generally established on the one-mile grid system.

The Transportation Plan addresses circulation, safety, efficiency, maintenance, relationship to future land uses and cost effective implementation. Engineering and other transportation studies will be needed to further evaluate and determine the exact (site specific) solutions for the transportation recommendations in this chapter.

The following components are necessary to foster convenient circulation.

- Vehicular network
- Limiting access from arterial streets
- Establishing and maintaining connectivity
- Maintaining a road hierarchy
- Establishing aesthetic corridors
- Pedestrian network

The remainder of this chapter contains the goal, objectives, implementation measures (IM), and elaboration on specific steps related to fostering convenient circulation.

## Foster Convenient Circulation Goal

Provide a safe, efficient, and convenient circulation system accommodating vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

### Objective 1: Develop, enhance and maintain an efficient roadway system.

- IM 1.1** Ensure that adequate right-of-way is preserved for future road extensions, widening and drainage.
- IM 1.2** Establish 1/2-mile grid system in urbanizing areas to add connectivity and opportunity.
- IM 1.3** Ensure accessibility and efficiency for emergency services.
- IM 1.4** Require road networks within new subdivisions to link to the networks in neighboring subdivisions.
- IM 1.5** Utilize and adhere to the Transportation Plan during development approval.
- IM 1.6** Periodically review the Transportation Plan and then adjust for previously unknown circumstances, update roadway classifications and capture newly discovered opportunities.
- IM 1.7** Expand the scope of the Transportation Plan to include the planning of sidewalks, pedestrian trails and bike paths.
- IM 1.8** Develop pedestrian and vehicular circulation routes that work together to form an overall transportation network that accommodates the range from high speed/high volume traffic to intimate walkways and small courtyards.
- IM 1.9** Prepare a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan that identifies realistic construction and maintenance projects prioritized by importance and availability of funding. Avoid hodgepodge upgrades to roads.

# Foster Convenient Circulation

---

## **Objective 2: Improve transportation safety.**

- IM 2.1** Significantly restrict all access onto major arterials, restrict access onto minor arterials, and limit nonessential access onto major collectors.
- IM 2.2** Install traffic signals at major intersections.
- IM 2.3** Disallow entrances and driveways when proposed too close to intersections or along a street with a blind approach.
- IM 2.4** Encourage joint driveways, shared parking areas and off-road connections between businesses to help limit the traffic in and out of a site.

## **Objective 3: Strive to improve air quality.**

- IM 3.1** Be at the forefront of alternative fuels use in the region (such as hydrogen).

## **Objective 4: Maintain and improve the condition of existing roadways.**

- IM 4.1** Minimize dangerous roadways, intersections, pedestrian crosswalks, trail crossings and rail crossings.
- IM 4.2** Establish a ranking system for roadway improvement projects that reflect the priorities of the County and can serve as a tool for capital improvement planning.

# Foster Convenient Circulation

---

The following sections provide the background and essential information relating to best management practices necessary to foster convenient circulation. The information in these sections also denotes actions in process and potential strategies to help the overall circulation within the County.

## **Interstate 69**

Interstate 69 (I-69) includes 157 miles of roadway in Indiana and 203 miles of roadway in Michigan. Interstate 69 cuts through the middle of Steuben County just to the east of Lake George on the northern border of the County and continuing south around Angola to the east side of the Town of Ashley.

Interstate 69 was originally planned to run from the east side of Indianapolis to the Indiana Toll Road located near the Indiana-Ohio Border in Steuben County. Indiana and Michigan agreed to a shifting of the northernmost portion of I-69 to its present position and it continues to the Blue Water Bridge at the Canadian international border in Port Huron, Michigan.

Currently I-69 is planned for an extension from Indianapolis to the southwest eventually stretching to the United States/Mexico border. The County supports this extension and shall plan for increased traffic on I-69.

## **The Indiana Toll Road 80/90**

The Indiana Toll Road is a vital transportation link in the network of super highways that run from Boston and New York to Chicago, Milwaukee and points to the west and provides quick and easy access to a variety of markets. Over 43 million passenger and 9 million commercial vehicles traveled the Indiana Toll Road in 2001.

In 1951, the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation creating the Indiana Toll Road Commission. The Commission issued bonds for the construction of the Indiana Toll Road which opened to traffic in late 1956. Since 1985, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) has been charged with operating the toll road for the Indiana Finance Authority (IFA).

The 157-mile section of roadway within Indiana's borders spans from Ohio to the Illinois state line – near Chicago. The Indiana Toll Road relies on tolls for bond payments, highway maintenance and construction, salaries and offices for Indiana State Police officers and operating expenses. No gas tax money or other State revenue is used for the road. In 2004, the Indiana Toll Road showed 66% of the revenue is derived from out-of-state vehicles, 18% from in-state cars and 16% from in-state trucks. Governor Daniels has proposed an increase in tolls starting in 2006 with \$7.8 million to go towards road improvements at Interstate 69 and U.S. 20 near Angola.

## **Half-mile Grid**

Many of the existing County roads are based on a one-mile grid. As development occurs, new streets need to be established to create a half-mile grid system, especially in areas with moderate to very high intensities.

Relying solely on the existing County road system will result in a transportation system of arterials and local streets; without essential collectors.

Steuben County wishes to avoid long-term problems associated with not establishing a full and appropriate mix of road classifications. Installing collector and minor arterials such that large blocks of land are divided into areas one-quarter square mile in area will greatly relieve the concern.

## **Street Hierarchy**

The Transportation Plan is established through study of each road's existing right-of-way, condition, existing classification, travel demand, access points, speed, and purpose. It strives to overcome dangerous intersections, missing links, absence of hierarchy, and lack of trans-community routes. The Transportation Plan should result in a system that provides safe and efficient circulation of vehicles and pedestrians and takes into consideration the strengths and limitation of the existing transportation system.

# Foster Convenient Circulation

---

The primary means for establishing the Transportation Plan is by illustrating proposed streets and future street classifications on a map. The Transportation Plan shall be used to set-aside land necessary to establish new roads and to determine future rights-of-way necessary for the construction of new and existing streets. All development proposals shall be required to establish the future rights-of-way, streets, intersections and other components of the transportation system.

## **Roadway Improvements**

The following roadways and intersections have been identified as needing improvements:

- U.S. 20 East and 100 East
- Bay View Road and 225 West
- U.S. 20 West and new Golden Lake Road
- U.S. 20 West and 900 West including U.S. 20 West and State Road 327
- State Road 120 and 700 North
- State Road 120 and 300 West
- U.S. 20 South and 500 South
- U.S. 20 South and 800 South

# Foster Convenient Circulation

---

## Classification System

Steuben County's classification system recognizes six types of roads. They are:

- **Interstate/Toll Road** - a road designed to rapidly convey vehicular traffic from city to city or state to state. These roads have strictly controlled access utilizing interchanges. The right-of-way for an Interstate is to be determined by the Indiana Department of Transportation.
- **Major Arterial** - a road that restricts access, disallows on-street parking, and conveys significant vehicular traffic from one side of the County to the other. These roads primarily connect with interstate and major and minor arterials. The minimum right-of-way for major arterials shall be 110 feet in all circumstances.
- **Minor Arterial** - a road that limits access, significantly limits on-street parking, and conveys significant vehicular traffic from one district within a community to other. These roads primarily connect with major and minor arterials and major collectors. The minimum right-of-way for minor arterial shall be 95 feet.
- **Major Collector** - a road that reduces access, allows minimal direct driveway access, and allows on-street parking when deemed safe and necessary. These roads primarily connect with minor arterials and major and minor collectors. The minimum right-of-way for major collector shall be 80 feet.
- **Minor Collector** - a road that allows direct driveway access and allows on-street parking when deemed safe. These roads primarily connect with major and minor collectors and local streets. The minimum right-of-way for minor collector shall be 70 feet.
- **Local** - a roads designed primarily to provide access to platted residential lots and remote properties. These roads primarily connect with minor collectors and local roads. Local roads may include non-through roads. The minimum right-of-way for local roads shall be 50 feet.

The Steuben County Transportation Plan (on page 37) has been designed to foster convenient vehicular circulation throughout the County.

Often times roads will be classified higher than their existing use because the community expects traffic volumes to increase or for that segment of road to become more essential. Because existing roads may not match the proposed classification, Steuben County will encourage future development to occur along streets that have adequate capacity. If the developer insists on developing areas without adequate capacity, they will be expected to establish adequate public facilities for their development.

Steuben County also uses road hierarchy to protect neighborhoods and provide safe environments. Developers should primarily utilize narrow local roads to ensure quieter, safer, and more enjoyable neighborhoods. These neighborhood roads reduce the potential for accidents and increase pedestrian safety because they are designed to keep faster, heavier traffic out of these sensitive areas.

The following map illustrates the desired hierarchy of the existing and proposed roads within Steuben County.

**TRANSPORTATION PLAN  
MAP PLACEHOLDER**



Chapter

7

Serve Community Needs



# Serve Community Needs

---

## Introduction

The County government's elected leaders and appointed officials strive to anticipate and meet the needs of the public at large by maintaining public lands and facilities and by providing services to the community. Through this comprehensive planning process the County has identified more clearly the public's needs for services. For purpose of organization, five types of community services and facilities have been identified. They are:

- Public services and their locations
- Parks and recreation facilities
- Transportation systems
- Leveraging public capital
- Advancing communication and coordination

Public services include police, fire, rescue, administrative offices, highway department, and the like. The second category includes passive and active parks, conservation areas, pavilions, and community recreation centers. Transportation systems include the network of roads, railroads, sidewalks and paths throughout the County. Leveraging public capital includes pursuing grants and private investment to help fund the activities of the County. Advancing communication and coordination includes activities like disseminating information about the community to the public and working with special interest groups to allow their concerns to be heard.

The community services and facilities of transportation systems is covered in Chapter 6; Foster Convenient Circulation. The services and facilities for advancing coordination with residents and other governmental bodies will be covered in Chapter 9; Reinforcing Relationships.

The remainder of this chapter contains the goal, objectives, implementation measures (IM), and elaboration on specific steps related to serving the community's needs.

## Serve Community Needs Goal

Provide high quality, effective and efficient community services and facilities to the residents of Steuben County.

### Objective 1: Develop and maintain a plan for all community services and facilities.

- IM 1.1** Encourage new development and growth where existing services and facilities are in place and have the necessary capacity.
- IM 1.2** Work with the local school system to help them further enhance education.
- IM 1.3** Work with the library system to help them further enhance services and broaden service areas.
- IM 1.4** Maintain a capital improvements plan to fund and plan infrastructure improvements.
- IM 1.5** Evaluate the best use of all public buildings.
- IM 1.6** Partner with Tri-State University on the use of their facilities to hold large government meetings or community events.
- IM 1.7** Continually update and improve the County's Emergency Management Plan (EMP).
- IM 1.8** Work to combine services and facilities with other communities in Steuben County to provide more efficient and economical ways to provide these services.

### Objective 2: Enhance the non-traditional educational opportunities for residents of all ages.

- IM 2.1** Encourage Tri-State University and Ivy Technical Institute to offer adult continuing education classes.
- IM 2.2** Create more opportunities for seniors in the community to learn and socialize.
- IM 2.3** Establish vocational programs in Steuben County for local high school students.

# Serve Community Needs

---

## **Objective 3: Institute and maintain a competitive niche for recreation in the County.**

- IM 3.1** Create a County Parks Master Plan and update it every 5 years. Include an inventory of amenities and usage rates.
- IM 3.2** Develop recreational programs for all age groups.
- IM 3.3** Involve local volunteers in maintaining the park land and facilitating recreational programs.
- IM 3.4** Expand parks and activities to not only attract local residents but to promote tourism.
- IM 3.5** Create both passive parks in the form of fishing areas and picnic areas and active parks in the form of hiking and biking trails, playgrounds and sports fields.
- IM 3.6** Promote year-round utilization and activities on the 4-H fairgrounds property.
- IM 3.7** Link existing and new parks, Pokagon State Park and other natural areas with biking trails.
- IM 3.8** Improve public access to the lakes and awareness of these opportunities.
- IM 3.9** Seek funding sources to help offset the cost of park improvements.
- IM 3.10** Develop a year-round nature center for residents and tourists.

## **Objective 4: To effectively disseminate information to the public about the County's activities.**

- IM 4.1** Expand and continually update the County's website with new information and community links. Secure a webmaster to manage this communication tool.
- IM 4.2** Include summaries of all public meetings on the County's website.
- IM 4.3** Publish a list and answers to the most frequently asked questions by residents.

- IM 4.4** Create and publish a quarterly or semiannual newsletter to showcase the accomplishments of the County and preview upcoming events. This can be a newspaper insert or stand-alone publication.
- IM 4.5** Create a countywide directory of departments in print and on the website defining what services each department provides, their phone number, hours of operation and a web address.
- IM 4.6** Continue to use the local newspapers, radio programs, and public websites to educate and update the public about community activities.

# Serve Community Needs

---

Chapter

8

Improve Image and Identity



# Improve Image and Identity

---

## Introduction

Steuben County's image and identity are born from its environmental features, history, cultural diversity, amenities, economy, location, and physical development. The County's image and identity is also derived from its vitality, appearance, cleanliness, land use patterns, mix of land uses and reputation. The County can set itself apart as a distinctive place to live, vacation and work by enhancing its image and identity

Steuben County wants a self-sufficient community that is inclusive of commercial, office, industry, housing, recreation, entertainment, and shopping. More specifically, the County wants a vibrant community while still preserving the environmental features that attracted many people to the County in the first place.

Steuben County has an appealing terrain with many environmental features and several recreational amenities. While many of the lake cottages are now occupied year-round by their residents, some are only occupied during the warmer months by their owners.

For the people who live in Steuben County in the summer, the draw is most often the lakes, natural features, recreational opportunities and the overall quality-of-life. These same factors are likely what will attract more year-round residents. Further enhancement of the County's image and identity will likely increase year-round residency.

Steuben County needs to promote its natural features, recreational opportunities and the overall quality-of-life it offers its residents and tourists. Steuben County is known as the Land of 101 Lakes (or more). To add to that, it needs to be known as the County with great parks, biking trails, boating, fishing, camping, cross country skiing and much more.

Community image and identity are what a person sees when they are driving down a road or experience while interacting in the community. It is what a person remembers about the community after they have returned home. Building on the already positive image

of Steuben County, the following strategies are recommended and discussed in detail:

- Defining and beautifying gateways and corridors;
- Promoting environmental amenities; and
- Promoting year-round tourism.

The remainder of this chapter contains the goal, objectives, implementation measures (IM), and elaboration on specific steps related to improving image and identity.

## Improve Image and Identity Goal

Strengthen Steuben County's image and identity to showcase the County as a unique, active place to live and work.

### Objective 1: Preserve and promote the environmental features of the community.

- IM 1.1** Provide clean and inviting public access to the lakes.
- IM 1.2** Create bike trails with appropriate signs and area maps showing important destinations.
- IM 1.3** Showcase environmental features with educational signs.
- IM 1.4** Celebrate natural lands by creating a public inventory of them and their available amenities.

### Objective 2: Beautify the gateways and primary corridors within the County.

- IM 2.1** Develop a gateway theme and install design standards to regulate development in these areas.
- IM 2.2** Develop corridor themes and install design standards to regulate development in these areas.
- IM 2.3** Establish an "Adopt-a-Gateway" program to allow local volunteers and businesses to help maintain the appearance of gateways and corridors.
- IM 2.4** Modify the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Control Ordinance to require higher quality development in essential areas in the County.

# Improve Image and Identity

---

**IM 2.5** Require sidewalks, roadway planting, buffering and screening in all new developments that are not completely rural.

**IM 2.6** Require a minimum amount of landscaping in all new developments.

**IM 2.7** Encourage landscape vistas and features on sites to improve the aesthetic impact from public roadways.

## **Objective 3: Promote the image of Steuben County as a year-round tourist destination**

**IM 3.1** Work with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to enhance the identity of Pokagon State Park and Steuben County.

**IM 3.2** Expand the County website to promote year-round tourism opportunities.

**IM 3.3** Design easily accessible information centers throughout the County to distribute advertisements for tourist attractions.

**IM 3.4** Encourage or facilitate regional amenities and attractions to Steuben County.

**IM 3.5** Create unified branding of the County.

**IM 3.6** Build an observation tower on Hoosier Hill with notable architectural character.

## **Objective 4: Encourage the use of high quality material, building practices and ongoing maintenance within the County.**

**IM 4.1** Develop ordinance language that requires quality building and landscaping material applicable to all developments.

**IM 4.2** Utilize high quality material and appealing designs on all County projects, including buildings, gateway focal points, bridges and park lands.

**IM 4.3** Strengthen and enforce ordinance language on property maintenance to clean up nuisance properties.

## **Objective 5: Improve the community image with the use of design guidelines and design standards.**

**IM 5.1** Require the screening of parking lots, loading docks, service areas, garbage dumpsters and other unattractive features with attractive buffering materials.

**IM 5.2** Develop regulations that allow for creative ways to provide parking on a site, such as the placement of parking lots at the rear of the property, shared parking arrangements between adjacent properties and the land banking of overflow parking.

**IM 5.3** Create sign regulations that limit the sizes of signs, require signs to be a uniform scale to the buildings and adjacent roadways, be integrated into the landscape and consistent with the architectural style and materials used on the building.

**IM 5.4** Encourage building facade designs to reflect historical precedents, neighborhood character and contextual relationships.

# Improve Community Image and Identity

---

The following sections provide the background and essential information relating to physical enhancements such to improve community character.

## **Gateway Profile**

Gateways can be essential statements of a community's vitality, values, amenities, and quality-of-life. Gateways can be evaluated and critiqued in many ways. They can be a single element at the corporate limit (e.g. a "welcome to" sign) or an entire stretch of corridor leading into the community.

Strong gateway statements can improve a community's identity, economy, and image. They can identify a community's boundaries and can invoke pride in be part of the community. For these reasons and others, gateway protection and improvement shall be an ongoing objective of Steuben County.

The most important gateways in Steuben County are:

- Interstate 69
- 200 West
- US 20
- Interstate 80/90
- State Road 120

The strategy also includes improving the character of buildings visible from the interstate. This can be done by requiring facades facing the interstate to be aesthetically appealing and for utilities, loading docks, outdoor storage, and mechanical systems to not be visible from the interstate.

Chapter

9

Reinforce Relationships



# Reinforce Relationships

---

## Introduction

A key role the County can play in advancing quality-of-life is to improve communication and coordination with residents and neighboring communities. The County should disseminate information to the public and other governmental agencies in the area allowing those individuals and groups to take an active role in the future of the community.

This chapter looks at ways to effectively communicate with and relate to the residents of the County, the residents of cities and towns within the County, governmental bodies and quasi-governmental bodies.

The remainder of this chapter contains the goal, objectives, implementation measures (IM), and elaboration on specific steps related to reinforcing relationships.

## Reinforce Relationships Goal

Reinforce relationships with other governmental bodies, local associations and local residents to improve awareness of events, opportunities, successes, challenges and information.

### Objective 1: Enhance County and local government cooperation.

- IM 1.1** Hold periodic meetings with municipalities to discuss topics of interest.
- IM 1.2** Establishing an inter-local planning committee composed of officials and planning staff from the County and municipalities to share information and address issues.
- IM 1.3** Meet with municipal leaders before a Plan Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals or County Commissioners meeting to understand the municipality's point of view when a matter may effect said community.
- IM 1.4** Work toward complementary zoning and subdivision control regulations applicable to city, town and county jurisdictions.

### Objective 2: Expand County and local associations' relationships.

- IM 2.1** Provide periodic meetings for discussions on topics of interest to both the County and local associations.
- IM 2.2** Disseminate information to the local associations about upcoming petitions in front of the Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals.
- IM 2.3** Work with the real estate industry to educate developers, land owners and home buyers on the long-term advantages of purchasing a home on land protected by some form of a conservation district or easement.

# Reinforce Relationships

---

## **Objective 3: Reach out to local residents.**

**IM 3.1** Create and distribute an executive summary of the Steuben County Comprehensive Plan

**IM 3.2** Utilize Channel 20 to inform the community.

## **Objective 4: Maintain relationships with regional, state and federal resources.**

**IM 4.1** Maintain relationships and utilize the resources of Region 3A, Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC), Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Small Business Administration (SBA), Senior Core of Retired Executives (SCORE), Department of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Management, Department of Transportation, Department of Commerce and other regional, state and federal agencies.

# Reinforce Relationships

---

The following sections provide the background and essential information relating to reinforcing relationships within the County.

## **Active Citizens**

Steuben County has an active and interested group of residents. Some of these residents are active due to their association with an interest group, while others simply have personal interest. Each of these residents has concerns on how actions taken by both the government and other property owners will affect their quality-of-life.

This concern and interest by the residents should be encouraged in a positive way. Residents should be given all of the available information. Along with the information, it should be explained to residents why certain systems are in place and what benefit they are to the overall community. Residents should be given the opportunity to share their thoughts on the information after having had time to review it.

Chapter

10

Direction



# Direction

---

## Implementation Strategy

An important part of a successful Comprehensive Plan is a Plan for its implementation. While it is an enormous accomplishment for Steuben County to prepare the Steuben County Comprehensive Plan, the real work is still to come.

The intent of a Comprehensive Plan is to provide a framework for implementation, but not the exact courses of action. To determine the exact courses, the County leadership should prepare an implementation strategy to complement the Steuben County Comprehensive Plan. The implementation strategy should focus on achieving a realistic number of implementation measures listed throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

More specifically, the implementation strategy should outline the most important implementation measures that need to be completed; and then devise the means to accomplish them. The strategy should address the priorities for the next two years and then be reviewed and updated every year. The implementation strategy will likely only need to be three to eight pages in length to explain:

- The priority implementation measures to be accomplished in the next two years,
- A timeframe for each project's estimated start and completion date,
- Who or what group will be responsible for the implementation, and
- What financial or staff resources will be necessary to complete each project.

## Comprehensive Plan Maintenance

The Comprehensive Plan cannot be viewed as a static "set in stone," series of unalterable ideas and projects. To be effective, it must be reviewed, evaluated, and when necessary, updated to reflect changing trends, outlooks, and big picture thinking in the community. In doing so, the community can collectively plan for the future in a proactive manner, thus capturing opportunities and avoiding potential pitfalls.

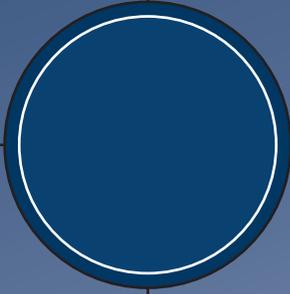
To achieve this result, Steuben County will strive to:

- **Annually review the Steuben County Comprehensive Plan.**

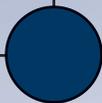
This review should denote what has been accomplished and identify necessary minor amendments. Through this process the Plan Commission should become more familiar with the plan and its content; and

- **Comprehensively review the Steuben County Comprehensive Plan every five years.**

This review should include public workshops, interest group interviews, and full scrutiny of the content and maps. A five-year revision schedule is the most cost effective means to maintain a Comprehensive Plan and will result in greater appreciation for community planning. It will also result in a well-planned community.



**Part 3**  
Appendix





Appendix

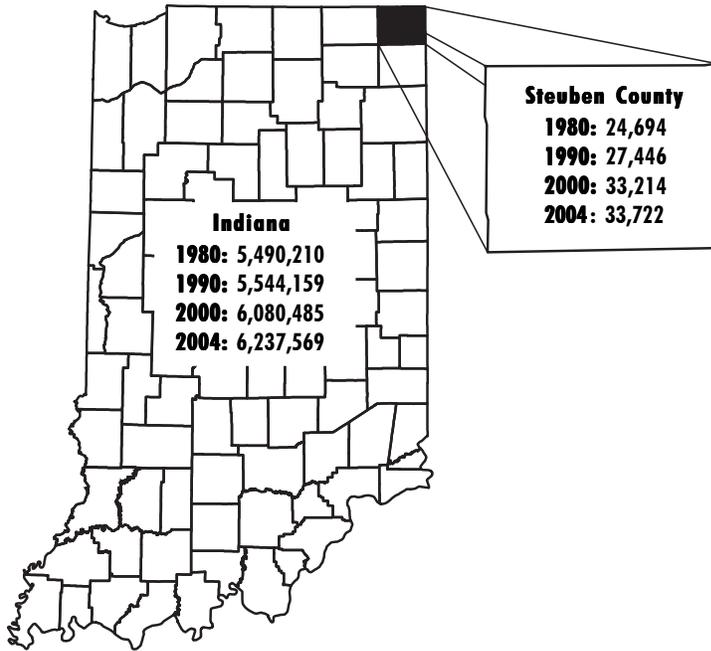
A

Demographics



# Appendix A - Demographics

## POPULATION

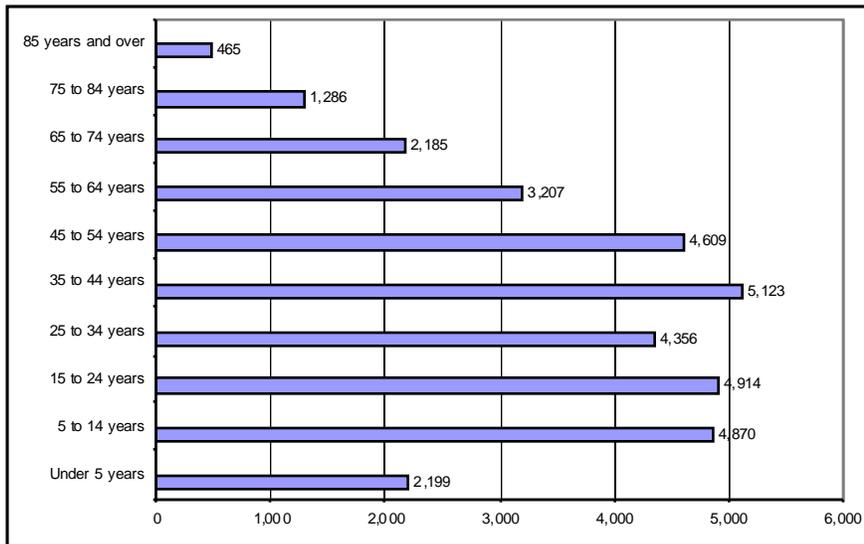


In 2000, Steuben County had a population of 33,214. It has the smallest population when compared to surrounding counties. Lagrange County, Indiana, has the next smallest population with 34,909 residents in 2000.

Steuben County's population has increased over the past 30 years. From 1990 to 2000, the population increased by 5,768 residents which is a 21% increase. Steuben County had the second greatest population growth during that 10-year period of all of the surrounding counties, behind Noble County, Indiana. The State's growth for that same period was under 10%.

A population estimate for Steuben County for 2010 is 34,112 residents, which is only a 2.7% increase from the actual population recorded in 2000.

## POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

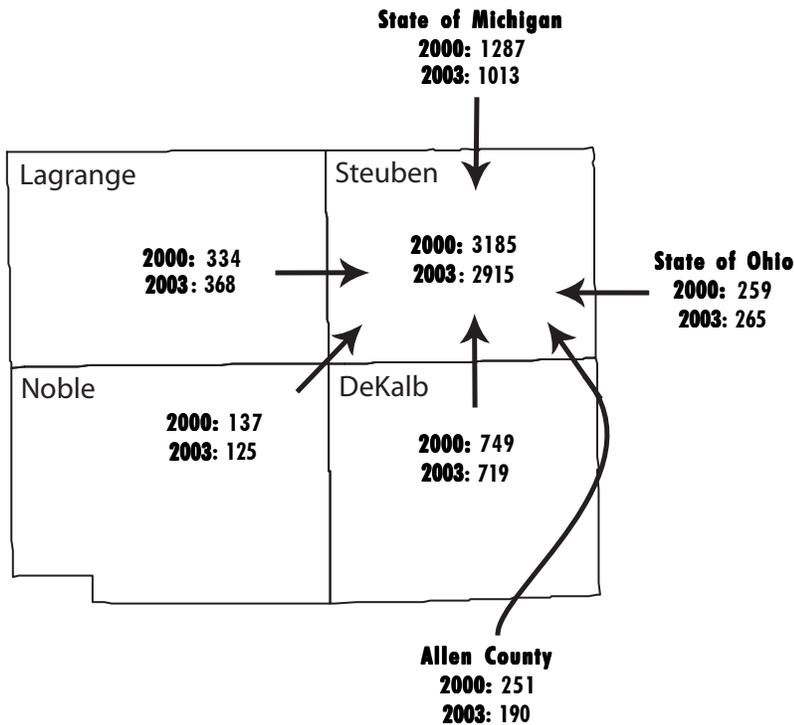


The population distribution for Steuben County for the year 2000 is shown on the bottom table. The largest segment of the County's population is the 35 to 44 year old range. The 15 to 24 year old range ranks second. That number can be divided into 15 to 19 year olds with a population of 2,598 and 20 to 24 year olds with a population of 2,316.

*Source: 1980- 2000 U.S. Census and July 2004 Census estimates (www.census.gov) and Indiana Business Research Center, I.U. Kelley School of Business dated September 22, 2005 (www.stats.indiana.edu).*

# Appendix A - Demographics

## COMMUTING PATTERNS

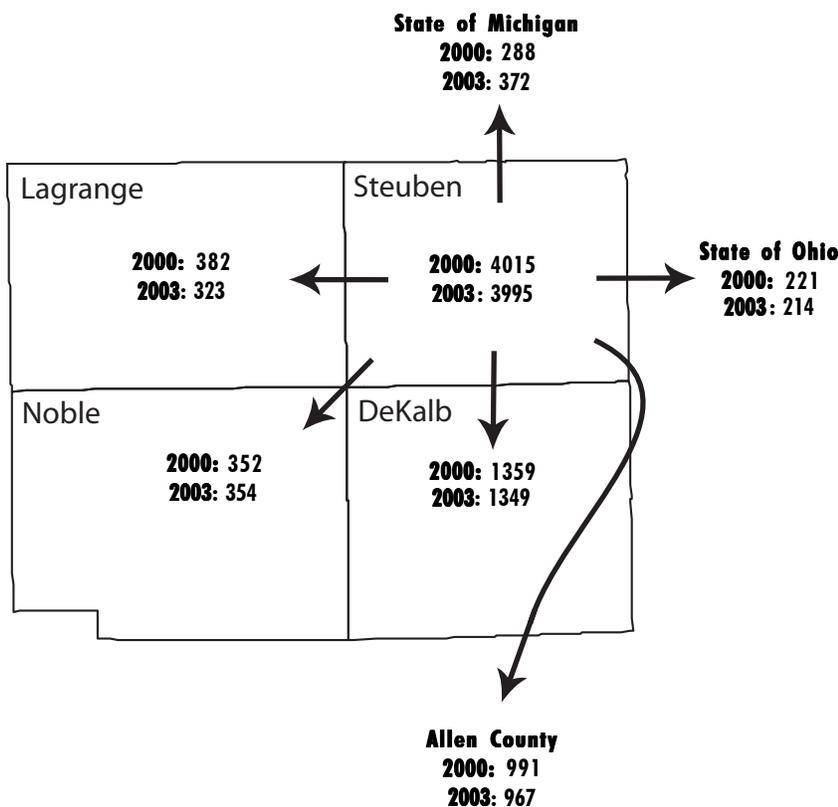


The top illustration shows the commuting patterns of the surrounding communities coming into Steuben County for employment. In 2000, 3,185 residents commuted to Steuben County. By 2003, the number had decreased to 2,915 residents.

The second illustration shows the commuting patterns of Steuben County residents traveling to the surrounding counties and states for employment. In 2000, 4,015 residents commuted into one of the surrounding counties. By 2003, the number had decreased to 3,995 residents.

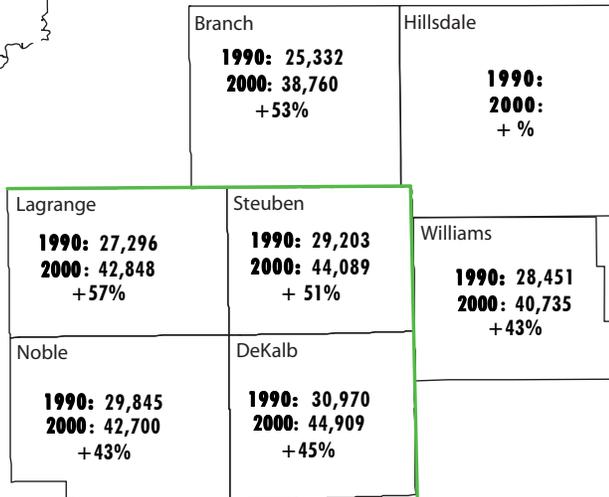
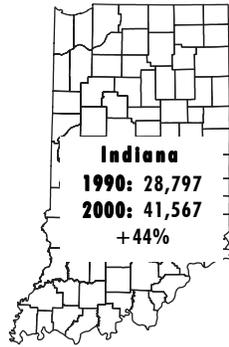
The surrounding areas that attract the most number of Steuben County residents for employment are DeKalb County and Allen County.

*Source: Data was compiled from the Indiana Business Research Center, I.U. Kelley School of Business website ([www.stats.indiana.edu](http://www.stats.indiana.edu)) dated September 8, 2005.*



# Appendix A - Demographics

## MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



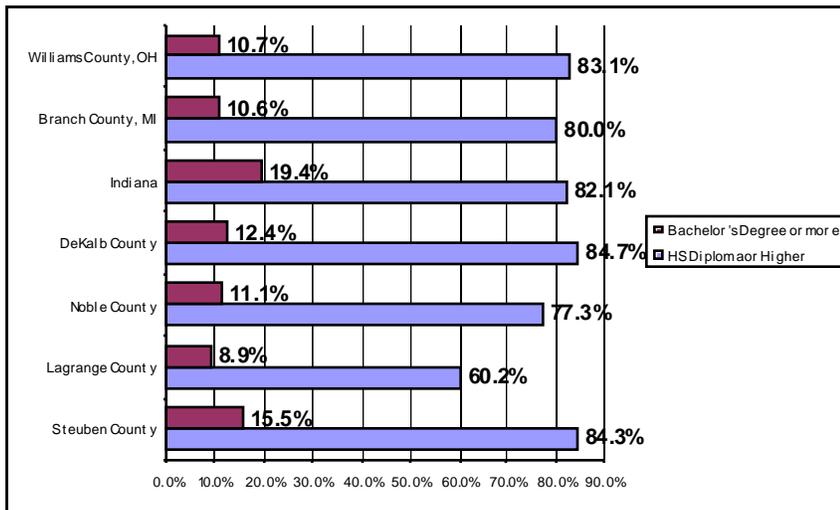
The median income divides the income distribution into two equal groups, one having incomes above the median, and other having incomes below the median.

Steuben County's median household income has increased by 51% from 1990 to 2000, an increase of \$14,886. The state's median household income increased by 44% during the same period.

Two of the six surrounding counties had medium household income increases greater than Steuben County's medium household income growth between 1990 and 2000, Lagrange County, Indiana, at 57% and Branch County, Michigan, at 53%.

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)).

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

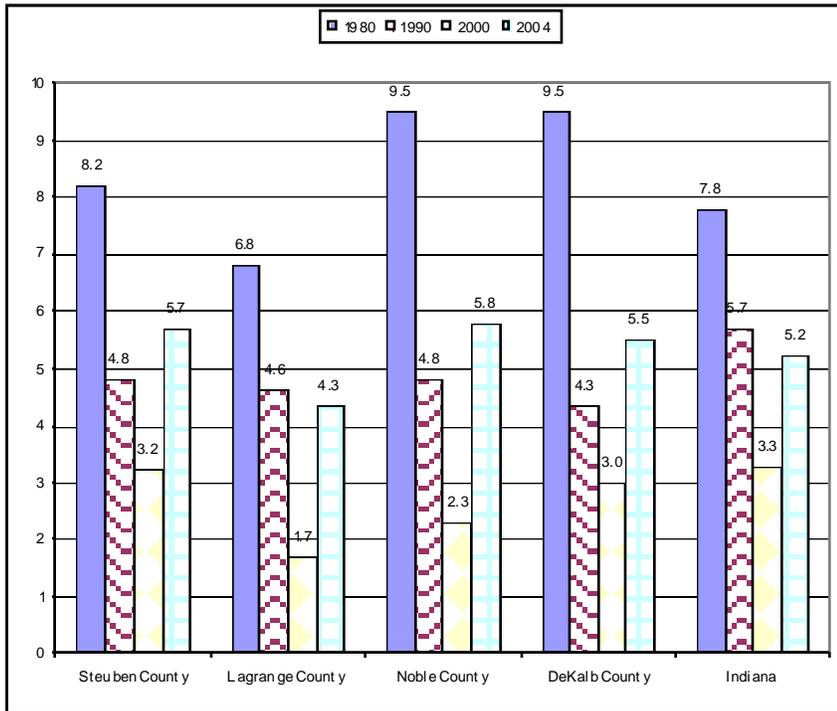


Steuben County has a higher high school graduation rate than the State of Indiana (84.3% compared to 82.1%) but a lower rate for adults with Bachelor's degrees or greater (15.5% compared to 19.4%). The rate for both categories exceeds the rates for all of the surrounding counties.

Source: 2000 U.S. Census ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)) and Indiana Department of Education.

# Appendix A - Demographics

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

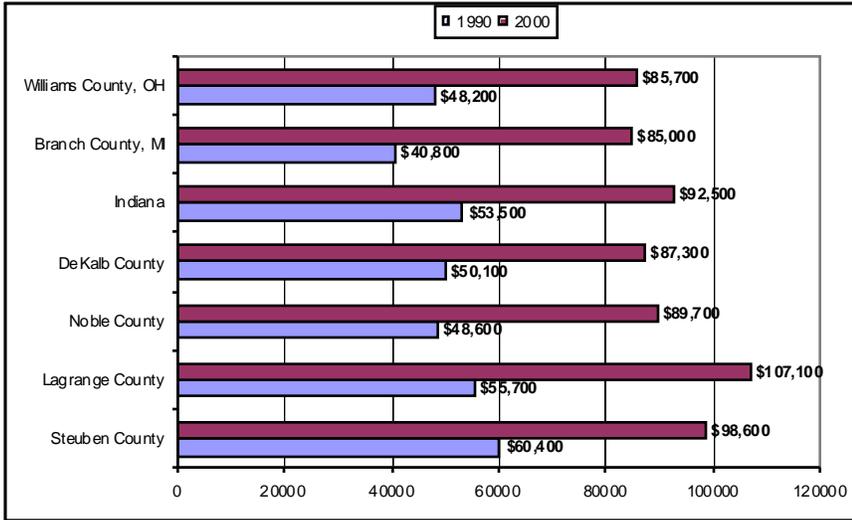


Steuben County has 2004 unemployment rate of 5.7%. The State of Indiana's rate was 5.2% for 2004. Lagrange and DeKalb counties in Indiana have slightly lower unemployment rates.

Source: *Indiana Business Research Center, I.U. Kelley School of Business website (www.stats.indiana.edu) dated September 8, 2005.*

# Appendix A - Demographics

## MEDIAN HOME VALUE



The median home value divides the total data into two equal parts: one-half of the home values fall below the median and one-half of the values exceed the median.

Steuben County's median home value was \$98,600 for 2000. Lagrange, Indiana was the only surrounding county with a higher value in 2000. Steuben County's median home value exceeded the state's median value by \$6,100.

When comparing the percent increase in median home values, Steuben County falls behind all of the surrounding areas. Steuben County's median home value increase from 1990 to 2000 was 63.2%. DeKalb, Indiana, and Williams, Ohio, values were increased 74.3% and 77.8% respectively. Noble and Lagrange, both in Indiana, had median home value increases of 84.6% and 92.3% during that same period. Branch County, Michigan increased 108.3%.

Source: 1990, 2000 U.S. Census

Appendix

**B**

Public Workshop



# Appendix B - Public Workshop

---

## LIABILITIES

The following liabilities were recorded by the facilitators at the small table discussion groups:

### Infrastructure/Utilities

- Lack of infrastructure
- Lack of cell phone coverage
- Emergency systems alerts
- Drainage
- Utility rates are high
- County communications system
- Poor roads and infrastructure

### Transportation

- Too many gravel roads
- Pot holes off Exit 157
- I-69/ Toll Road 80/90
- Impression of I-69 and US 20
- Private roads residents must maintain
- Traffic congestion on N. Wayne
- Speed limits too slow
- Weight limits are not being enforced
- Speed limit signs needed on curves
- Too many semi's on US 20
- Too many semi's through Angola
- Truck brakes
- Condition of roads
- Airport facility
- Confusing street names and numbers
- Land of 101 truck stops
- Traffic problems on US 20
- Heavy truck traffic on exit 157
- Roads
- Truck traffic in downtown Angola
- Public transportation
- Driveway curb cuts on County roads

### Business/Industry

- Too many fast food restaurants
- Too many truck oriented businesses near Lake George
- No medical care for cardiac patients
- Employment getting worse
- American Freightways/Fed Ex
- Truck stops
- Low wage employers/jobs
- Empty buildings
- Illegal junkyards
- Lack of technology
- Fireworks sales
- Lack of industrial base
- Lack of employment opportunities
- Cigarette shops
- Lack of small businesses
- Abandoned industrial sites
- Health care needs
- Co-ops closing
- Old theatre
- Different restaurants

# Appendix B - Public Workshop

---

## LIABILITIES CONTINUED

### Government/Services

- Cost of construction is going up
- Too many variances and special exceptions
- Lack of overall coordinated fire protection
- Perception County doesn't work to protect lakes
- Cost of services isn't understood by public
- Reactive County officials
- Slow timeline for meetings
- Not computerized at local government level
- Government can't identify all problems
- Tax burden on lake properties
- Lake property owners unrepresented but still paying taxes
- Property tax structure
- Cost of schools
- Cost of government
- Library should be free
- Library doesn't cover all townships
- No police protection on the lakes
- Petitioners not contacting adjacent property owners
- Perception decisions are made before the meeting
- Lack of planning/zoning education of local officials
- Property tax assessment increases
- Plan Commission doesn't look at sites
- Impression Plan Commission doesn't care about lakes
- Taxation without representation
- Tax base

### Environment/Recreation

- Poor water and air quality due to trucks
- Pollution from open air burning
- Industrial runoff from pipes
- Environmental protection of the lakes
- Insufficient public access to lakes (e.g. piers for fishing)
- Stress on natural resources
- No path, boardwalk or riverwalk near lakes
- Lack recreational spaces and green spaces
- Need more fish
- Trucks on I-69 and toll road destroying natural resources

### Growth/Development

- All business is going north
- Minimum 500 acres for a landfill
- Too many PUD's
- Unplanned growth
- Spot zoning/fragmenting
- County lacks direction
- Not defining land use areas better
- Lack of master planning
- Industrially zoned land missing in County
- Weak zoning structure
- Current Master Plan is not valued or followed
- No protection of existing residential properties
- Excessive number of used homes on the market

### Culture/Tourism

- No community concert/theatre
- Lack of cultural activities
- Need community wide festival
- Lack of tourism – few facilities
- Lack of arts and culture
- Lack of atmosphere for culture

### General

- Not a lot keeping young people
- Brain drain
- Division between lakes/towns/rural
- Lack of affordable housing
- Price of lake properties
- County's needs vs. residential (lake's) needs
- "Laker" term
- Loss of visual unique identity
- Lakers not interested in County
- Lake properties driving out middle class
- Low income vs. high income residents
- Aging population

# Appendix B - Public Workshop

---

## ASSETS

The following assets were recorded by the facilitators at the small table discussion groups:

### Infrastructure/ Utilities

- Communications
- Central sewer

### Transportation

- Cross roads of I-69 and Toll Road
- Airport
- Location of County
- Access to Midwest
- Lower priced gas
- Drive to Fort Wayne
- Revitalized train from Hamilton to Angola

### Business/Industry

- Restaurants
- Winery
- Downtown theatres
- Small town businesses still thriving
- Agriculture
- Adequate retail
- Cameron Woods Assisted Living

### Government/Services

- Tax base
- Hospital
- Public schools
- Radio station/newspaper
- Good quality public employees
- Open Planning Director
- Fire/Sheriff departments active in community
- Tri-State
- Middle college program
- Local healthcare
- YMCA
- Libraries
- Homeless shelter
- Low crime rate
- Community center/old high school
- Fire department
- Snow removal

### Environment/Recreation

- Lakes
- Natural resources
- Fishing
- Golf courses
- Bike trail
- Affordable entertainment
- Four seasons
- Open space
- Hills
- Farmland
- Unique landscape
- Rural vs. urban diversity
- Hunting
- Skiing
- Snowmobiling
- Fish Creek trail in Hamilton
- Parks
- Camp grounds

### Culture/Tourism

- Pokagon State Park
- Yogi Bear
- Outlet malls
- Motels
- Fun Spot
- Buffalo Ranch
- Festivals in different communities

### General

- People/concerned citizens
- Community and fellowship
- Churches
- Safety
- Variety/diversity
- Amish population
- Tourist with money
- Highly valued properties
- People's ability to adjust to change
- Population gets along
- Friendly attitude of people
- Volunteers
- Activities for youth
- People willing to pay for a higher quality-of-life
- People who want to stay here
- Steuben County Lakes Council
- Community foundations

# Appendix B - Public Workshop

---

## NEEDS

The following needs were recorded by the facilitators at the small table discussion groups. Participants were given four “votes” to place on the need or needs they felt were the most critical to the County. The numbers in parenthesis represent the number of times the need was voted for if it was voted for more than once.

### Infrastructure/Utilities

- Infrastructure (6)
- Improve drainage (4)
- Control waste going into lakes (3)
- Underground utilities (2)
- Pave dirt roads (2)
- County-wide sewer system (1)

### Transportation

- US 20 Bypass to minimize truck traffic (18)
- Affordable public transportation (4)
- Revamp exits where trucks enter/exit (3)
- County traffic plan (3)
- Reroute US 20 (2)
- Enforced truck routes
- More paved roads
- County Road 4 from I-69 to Hamilton

### Business/Industry

- More industry/commerce (21)
- Higher paying jobs (15)
- More local health care (7)
- Technology jobs (5)
- Force utilization of existing industrial parks (3)
- Locally owned businesses (2)
- Clean up junkyards (2)
- Utilize Tri State for job training (1)
- Diverse restaurants
- New industrial park

### Government/Services

- Strong Plan Commission (13)
- More restrictions on variances/special exceptions (7)
- Communication between County and State (5)
- Better response from public officials (5)
- School structure concept (5)
- Maintain a strong educational system (4)
- Clearinghouse for information (3)
- Clear vision by officials (3)
- Coordinate and distribute comprehensive plan (3)
- Uniform planning/zoning ordinances in county (1)
- Educate the public on the costs of services (1)
- Combine city and County services (1)
- Accountability in how taxes are spent

### Environment/Recreation

- Protect environmental areas (10)
- More public access to recreational activities (9)
- Protect watersheds of lakes (8)
- Protecting the environment from trucks (7)
- Protect wetlands (4)
- Eliminate/control funneling (4)
- County-wide bike paths (3)
- Control storm water runoff
- Environmental aspects in business
- Parks

### Culture/Tourism

- More tourism, destination facilities (9)
- Indoor attractions (3)
- More restaurants and motels (2)
- County festivals
- Develop more cultural events

### Growth/Development

- Include and enforce lake issues in Master Plan (10)
- Create and use Master Plan and map (8)
- Tax abatement for redevelopment (8)
- Add more restrictions on landfills (3)
- Protect prime farmland (3)
- Coordinated plan for N. Wayne (3)
- Wiser use of land and development (2)
- Infill vacant building (1)
- Structured growth without spot zoning (1)
- Minimize lot size

### General

- Learn from other communities (3)
- Get people more involved (2)
- Keep our children in County (1)
- Develop quality, stricter rules
- Clean up intersections

# Appendix B - Public Workshop

---

## DREAMS

The following dreams were recorded by the facilitators at the small table discussion groups:

- Elevate US 20
- Asphalt all roads
- Tear down empty structures
- Community theatre and concerts
- Full service hospital
- Public access to all lakes
- More fishing/fish variety
- Eliminate new truck stops and reduce current ones
- Reduce goose population
- Don't destroy what we already have
- Clean all County drains and maintain them
- Free library services to everyone
- Limit growth
- Control growth
- More technical positions
- Jobs for everyone
- Extensive trail system
- No truck stops
- Create more parks
- Permeable concrete for roads
- Community center
- GIS viewable on internet
- Improved water quality
- Work on Master Plan
- Quarterly review of Master Plan
- Educating public
- Require use of alternative energy
- Affordable housing
- Give more to charity
- Pay farmers to protect against development
- County-wide sewer plan
- Lower property taxes
- Corporation-community partnership
- Major home office located here
- Public transportation
- Scheduled air service
- Revitalize outlet malls
- Visitors center on I-69
- Stop light at 200N/200W
- Revitalize Bledsols'
- Ski hill
- All utilities buried
- Connect greenspaces
- No billboards
- County-wide bike trails
- Winter carnival
- Year-round tourism
- Organize farmers market
- City swimming pool
- Botanical gardens
- More hotels
- Walkways covered around Angola
- Sports center
- Redevelop downtown Angola
- Truck By-pass
- Improve railroads
- Year-round lakes
- Make I-69 and US 20 a showplace
- Small version of a research "park"
- Face lift of N. Wayne
- Theatre
- Outdoor theatre
- Redevelop Angola's industrial area
- Create downtown theme
- Limit boating to improve fishing
- Improve roads and infrastructure
- More land owned by conservancies
- Expand State Park
- Provide good paying jobs
- Recreational based community
- Create Steuben County as retirement community
- No trucks

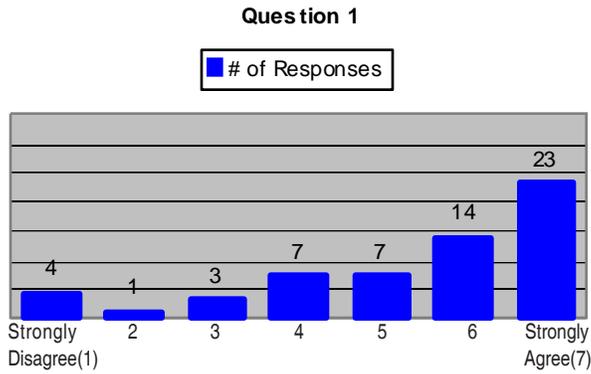
# Appendix B - Community Values Exercise

The following pages show the results from the Steuben County Community Values Exercise distributed at the public workshops

## 1. Prime farmland should be protected from development.

### Additional Comments:

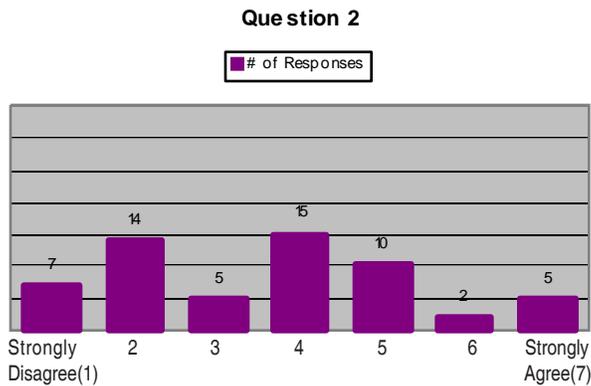
- But it depends.
- Right to farm.
- Some development projects warrant the destruction of farmland but most don't. Unfortunately, the owner has a monetary stake he controls.



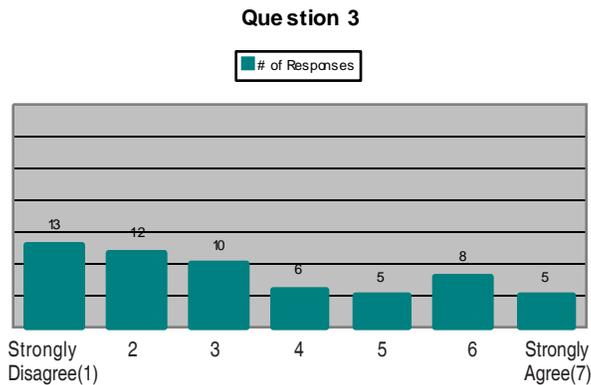
## 2. Steuben County should strive to be a bedroom community.

### Additional Comments:

- Around the lakes.
- More inexpensive housing (not lake front) would help.



## 3. Improving the overall quality-of-life in the County is more important than protecting an individual's property rights.

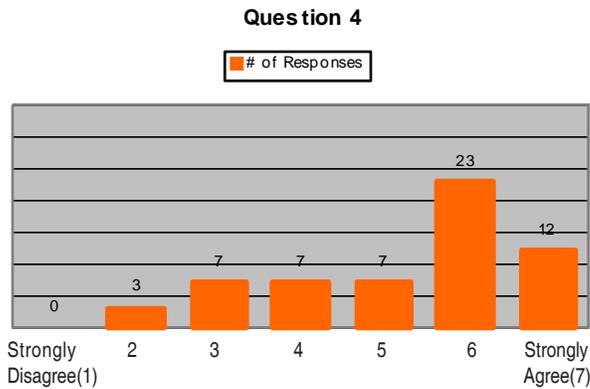


# Appendix B - Community Values Exercise

4. New growth and development should primarily be focused near communities with infrastructure and services.

**Additional Comments:**

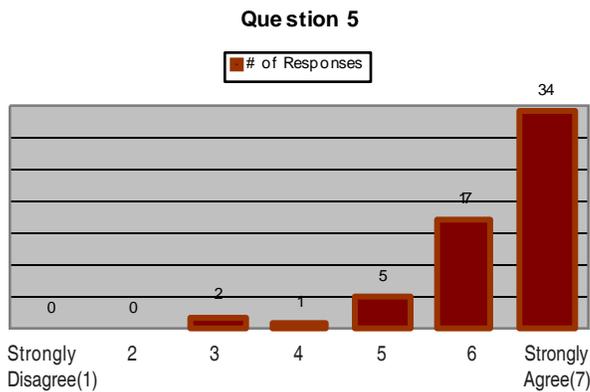
- Loaded question, can't answer without more information.
- I think we can do both. Good quality-of-life will ensure property values.



5. The community's natural resources and environmental features should be protected from the impacts of development.

**Additional Comments:**

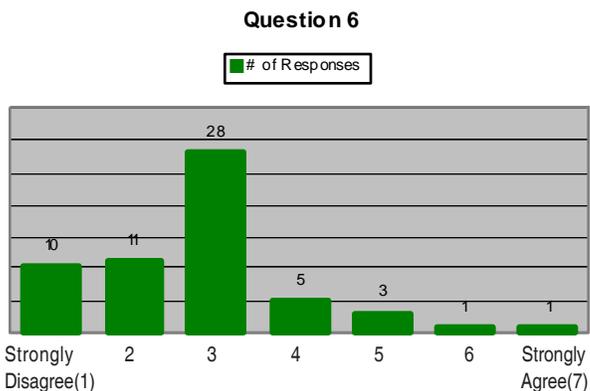
- Or on County sewer system.
- High property taxes, infrastructure, development are all serious issues.
- I would support this statement if the community wasn't land locked by structural features both natural and man-made.



6. Good employment opportunities is the main reason people live in Steuben County.

**Additional Comments:**

- I plan to retire to this area.
- Bring in Internet Catalog businesses instead of fighting China and Mexico for industrial work.
- Many people who work in Steuben County drive in from Ohio and Michigan. We should woo some of these employees to be residents.

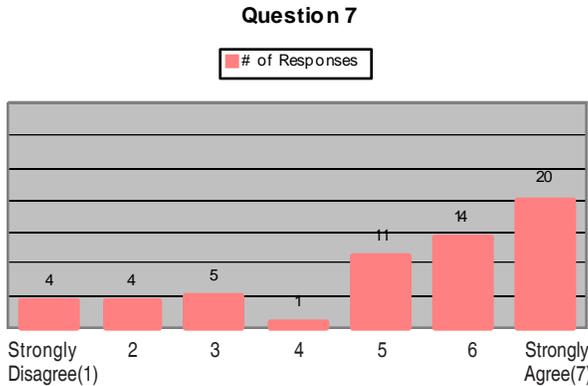


# Appendix B - Community Values Exercise

7. I purchase at least 90% of all the goods and services I need over the course of a year from businesses in Steuben Co.

**Additional Comments:**

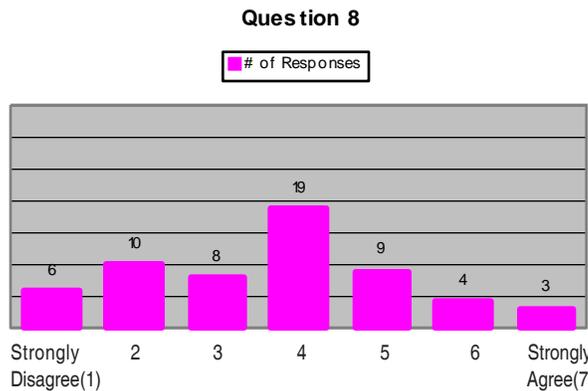
- I come to the lake for weekends and bring in most of my needs.



8. There is a good balance between residential, industrial, commercial, institutional, agricultural and recreational land uses in the County.

**Additional Comments:**

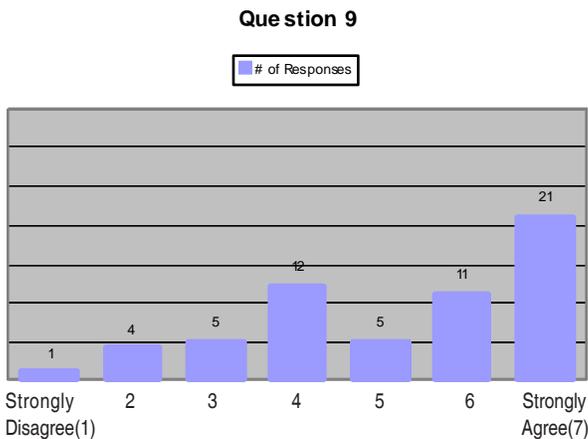
- The lake pays most of all taxes in this community.
- No more industrial parks, use the ones we have.
- Need more information.



9. Steuben County should strive to establish a tourism economy year-round.

**Additional Comments:**

- No more Menards or Super Wal-Marts.
- N. Wayne St. and downtown Angola are awful, nothing to bring tourists in. Everyone goes to Shipshewana. Why would they want to shop here?
- Our lakes are our greatest asset. Zone more land for public use and prevent overdevelopment. Land trusts could be encouraged to protect over development and allow certain public usage.



## **Appendix B - Community Values Exercise**