



Tipton County, Indiana

Comprehensive Plan

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prepared by:



with assistance from VS Engineering, Inc.

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Introduction

Tipton County, Indiana

Comprehensive Plan

The Tipton County Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) represents the County’s vision for its future. The Plan is the result of a comprehensive process that included data collection, community outreach, stakeholder consultation, and professional analysis. The Plan outlines the existing conditions county-wide, documents the input received from the people who live and work in Tipton County, and defines a vision for future policy direction, development patterns, market conditions and economic development, and the maintenance and preservation of environmental features throughout the County.

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Plan is intended to serve as a foundation for decision-making and a reference for County officials as they consider development proposals, capital improvements, infrastructure investments, roadway improvements, and more. The Plan identifies desired business and industry and the types of development, both in terms of land use and built form, that should take place. Overall, the Plan is to be a roadmap and a vision for future growth, development, and improvement in Tipton County.

The Planning Process

The process to develop the Tipton County Comprehensive Plan began by reaching out to Tipton County residents, businesses and property owners. Their comments and concerns, collected through a series of interviews, workshops, and surveys, set the agenda of issues to be addressed by the Plan. Following initial community outreach activities, in-depth research was conducted to document the current state of the County, including land use, transportation, demographics, the economy, and the environment. This outreach and research was the subject of an extensive Existing Conditions Report which summarized the obstacles and opportunities facing Tipton County and provided the foundation for the Comprehensive Plan.

With a comprehensive understanding of where the County is at the outset of the planning process and where its residents, businesses, and other stakeholders desire to go, the remaining steps of the planning process charted a course on how to get there. The resulting recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan form a holistic guide for County decision makers as they create policies and shape the future of Tipton County.

Planning Jurisdiction

The Tipton County Comprehensive Plan includes recommendations and policies for all areas of the county that are outside of the jurisdiction of local municipalities including Kempton, Sharpsville, Tipton and Windfall. As defined by the Indiana Code (IC 36-7-4-205), municipal planning jurisdiction may extend beyond municipal limits to those unincorporated areas within a 2.0 mile radius of the current corporate boundary. The City of Tipton currently exercises planning and zoning in contiguous unincorporated territory. The Indiana Code (IC 36-1-7) also encourages the negotiation of boundary agreements between communities with overlapping jurisdictions.

Incorporated areas should be encouraged to be engaged in County planning activities and like the City of Tipton, eventually establish their own comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances if that is their desire.

Regional Scope

With the exception of the City of Tipton, municipalities within Tipton County lack comprehensive plans or similar documents needed to guide long term policy. As such, The County’s Comprehensive Plan also provides guidance on regional issues that cross municipal borders such as transportation infrastructure and environmental features. While the County may lack official jurisdiction within municipalities and the surrounding areas, it can play a key role in future development by serving as a partner and resource for local initiatives that reflect County policy and desires.

City of Tipton

The development of the Tipton County Comprehensive Plan followed closely behind the adoption of the City of Tipton’s Comprehensive Plan. While the County’s Comprehensive Plan is designed to complement the City of Tipton’s Comprehensive Plan and the issues addressed therein, the Tipton County Comprehensive Plan approaches these issues from a region-wide perspective. These two plans should be viewed as supplementary to one another.

Plan Organization

The Comprehensive Plan is divided into the following eight sections:

Section 1: Community Profile – The first section of the Plan provides a review of existing land use and zoning and summarizes demographics, identifying trends that will influence future land use and development.

Section 2: Public Input – This section presents a summary of the outreach exercises conducted as part of the planning process, highlighting community issues and opportunities.

Section 3: Vision, Goals & Objectives – This section describes the desired vision for Tipton County, providing a retrospective narrative that summarizes how Tipton County will have changed for the better over the next 15 years. This section also presents goals and objectives that provide specific actions for the County as it strives to achieve the community’s vision.



Section 4: Land Use & Development Plan – The Land Use Plan provides recommendations and policies for all areas within County jurisdiction, including residential areas, commercial areas, industrial land uses, agricultural lands, and more.

Section 5: Transportation & Mobility Plan – The Transportation and Mobility Plan outlines the components of a multi-modal transportation network that accommodates the efficient movement of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians throughout the County.

Section 6: Environmental Features & Open Space Plan – This Plan identifies linkages, open space and parkland, and unique and sensitive natural resources. The Comprehensive Plan underscores the importance of environmental features and areas of open space, and seeks ways to enhance these features as vital county-wide amenities.

Section 7: County Facilities & Infrastructure Plan – The Community Facilities Plan identifies the future need for community facilities and offers long-range recommendations for future facility locations and improvements to ensure that residents and businesses are adequately served by the County and its service providers.

Section 8: Economic Development Strategy – This section explores business attraction and retention strategies as well as potential funding sources that the County should utilize as it endeavors to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.



Section 1

Community Profile

Tipton County, Indiana

Comprehensive Plan

Community Profile

Tipton County, located in central Indiana roughly 30 miles north of Indianapolis, comprises 260 square miles and is home to 15,936 people, according to the 2010 U.S Census. It shares its northern border with Howard County and the City of Kokomo, Indiana’s 12th largest city, and includes four incorporated areas, cities, or towns: Tipton, Windfall, Sharpsville and Kempton.

There are also several unincorporated communities including Goldsmith, Curtisville, Hobbs, Nevada, and New Lancaster. Due to its rich and productive farmland, the County is used primarily for agriculture, both family farms and industrial production. This agrarian character, unbreakably connected to the saga of the American railroad, is deeply rooted in the County’s history.

History

In 1844, the Indiana State Legislature created the last county in Indiana, formed from parts of Hamilton County and the Miami Indian Reserve. It was named Tipton County after General John Tipton. Farming and saw and grist mills were quickly established as the industries driving the County’s economy. The first railroad, completed in the 1850’s, sparked a wave of development, including the founding of several new towns. Railroads would continue to have a significant influence over development patterns in the County for the next century. Over the course of its history, Tipton County has been home to as many as four railroad lines.

Another major burst of growth occurred following the American Civil War as towns with railroad access became supply centers and cultural hubs for other rural communities. Manufacturing also established a stronger foothold in the County’s economy during this period. Amidst the founding of schools, churches, and civic organizations, one of the earliest convents of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the United States was established in Tipton County.

Starting in the early twentieth century, an increase in automobile use and the expansion of the local and regional road network, including U.S. Route 31, led to decreased reliance on railroads for passenger and freight transportation. At the same time, the nature of agriculture changed, with small family farms being replaced with larger operations. These trends combined to result in Tipton County becoming even more strongly agricultural, the industrial and shipping sectors being eclipsed by the productivity of the County’s rich soil, and the shrinking railroad communities developing their now valued rural character.

Tipton

The City of Canton was platted in 1844 as the location of the county seat, but in 1848 the name was changed to Tipton. Tipton is the only county in Indiana having its county seat with the same name as the county name.

First settled by hunters and trappers from as near-by as southern Indiana and as far away as Germany, Scotland, Sweden, and France, larger waves of subsequent settlers established permanent homes. The arrival of the Peru and Indianapolis Railroad in 1854 and the Lake Erie and Western Railroad in the 1870s entrenched Tipton as an important location within the region and caused the city to grow. Anchored by the County Courthouse, Tipton had a number of booming businesses, including grocers, banks, hotels, taverns, and factories. The city also saw important historical events like the establishment of Underground Railroad stations during the Civil War era and the establishment of the first brick street in the State of Indiana. As of 2010, the City had 5,106 residents in 2,471 households.

Windfall

James B. Fouch founded the Town of Windfall in 1853 in anticipation of the Columbus, Chicago and Indiana Central Railroad. After the railroad was completed and a stop established, Windfall became the County’s second largest town. Many businesses, schools, and churches were established, only to have the town devastated by fire in 1883. Windfall recovered from the physical destruction, but has faced more recent economic hardships due to the decline of railroad transportation. As of 2010, the Town had 708 residents in 324 households.

Sharpsville

E. W. Sharp hoped the Town of Sharpsville would become the new county seat when he platted it in 1850. Although the City of Tipton remained the county seat, Sharpsville did become a shipping center due to its access to the Peru and Indianapolis Railroad. The town developed a bustling commercial district, with a saw mill, grain elevator, and canning factory. The railroad was abandoned in the 1970’s and Sharpsville has since emerged as a bedroom community. As of 2010, the Town had 607 residents in 227 households.

Kempton

The founder of Kempton was David Kemp who served eighteen years as a Tipton County Commissioner. In 1875 he platted the town. In that same year the Lake Erie and Western Railroad passed through Kempton’s commercial district. The Lake Erie & Western Railroad passed through Kempton’s commercial district, both founded in the same year, allowing for a number of businesses to flourish in the town. Although the railroad is still in use, several of Kempton’s historic commercial buildings are now vacant. As of 2010, the Town had 335 residents in 129 households.

Regional Setting





Past Plans

There are several past plans and studies that have influenced, and will continue to influence, County policy. Several of the these plans have been reviewed to determine recently adopted policy; identify changes within the County that have taken place since the previous plans were prepared; and assess potential inconsistencies in previous policies.

2003 Comprehensive Plan

The Tipton County Planning Commission undertook a comprehensive planning process for the County in 2003. If there is one unifying message the 2003 Comprehensive Plan articulates, it is that protecting agriculture and agricultural land is the County’s highest priority. It is the first goal of the plan’s first section and is supported by most of the subsequent goals in some way. The plan proposes to achieve this goal by a number of methods including:

- Controlling the location of new development so as not to infringe on prime farmland;
- Guiding the design of new development to be as complimentary to agricultural uses as possible;
- Adjusting the design and maintenance of the County’s transportation infrastructure to better facilitate agriculture; and,
- Supporting policies, such as Indiana’s Right to Farm statutes, that safeguard agriculture.

In addition to the consideration paid to the importance of agriculture in the County, the plan also recognizes the difficulties faced by other commercial sectors. The plan does not advocate commercial growth on the premise that the rural nature of Tipton County’s commercial sector and the lack of population growth do not warrant it. Rather, the 2003 Comprehensive Plan recommends the support of existing commercial development and districts. Similarly, the plan proposes to update the existing industrial zoning regulations for clarity and improved effectiveness. It also acknowledges the importance of U.S. 31 as an economic driver despite the inability of the County to predict exactly what effects changes to U.S. 31 will have.

Despite stability in population and growth in median income between 1970 and 2000, the plan lists decreases in youth and school aged children as a pressing County issue. To address this issue, encouraging educational opportunities and promoting economic development that would attract young families are specifically mentioned as elements of the plan’s Community Vision.

Economic Development Strategy

In 2008, the Tipton County Economic Development Corporation (TCEDC) partnered with Ball State University to develop a vision and strategies to improve its responsiveness to changing economic conditions. The plan, completed in 2009, included mid-term (3-5 year) strategic goals, based on input from economic and demographic research, review of County development plans, interviews with community leaders and general citizens, and facilitated workshops. The goals encouraged action on strengthening agribusiness development, pursuing business expansion, resident attraction and retention, and economic studies of U.S. Route 31 to ensure economic health throughout the County. The goals included a framework of objectives and suggested actions designed to advance and encourage the completion of the County’s economic goals.

Strategy #1: Collaborate on County-wide Agribusiness Development

Tipton County’s past comprehensive plan ensured protection of the County’s agricultural sector from “restrictions that might hinder its ability to thrive.” The policy enabled Tipton County to capitalize on agricultural trends such as growth in worldwide demand for quality and affordable food and the drive for alternative fuels. The agricultural sector in Tipton County is characterized mainly by small entrepreneurial, often family-run businesses that are active in the civic affairs of their community. Opportunities for job creation and economic growth for these locally owned enterprises exist through outside investments and focus on “activities designed to leverage it for new business creation, existing agribusiness expansion, and attraction of new agriculture related businesses.” This strategic goal was designed to build on TCEDC’s knowledge and experience in manufacturing business development.

Strategy #2: Maximize the Long-term Economic Impact of the US 31 Corridor

The past plan identified U.S. Route 31 as an important economic and community development asset in the County. INDOT’s upcoming roadway improvements along the route will permanently affect Tipton County development. TCEDC has the influence to ensure development occurs in the locations that harmonize with existing development and effectively further economic development in the County.

Strategy #3: Aggressively Pursue Business Expansion and Attraction

Tipton County provides many amenities favorable to additional business expansion, including utility infrastructure, access to transportation, developable land, an available workforce, and low business costs. The County primarily focuses on manufacturing, but Tipton County may also be a viable location for logistics/distribution. This past plan identified a number of tasks required to pursue such an industry in the County, such as access to utilities and up-to-date information on labor skills, costs, and availability. The plan should contemplate and support areas that could foster logistics business centers.

Strategy #4: Attract and Retain Families to Live in Tipton Co. Communities

Costs to public services in the County continue to increase although population has remained steady. The past plan noted a desire to attract families who live, work, and shop in the community. A high quality of life and a diverse workforce are two qualities businesses look for when deciding on a location. Objectives to achieve Strategy #4 included assessing the capacity of public facilities to support residential growth and developing a ‘case’ for living in Tipton County, which would include information such as cost of living.

North Central Indiana Regional Plan

The County recently participated in a joint regional planning process with neighboring counties, the State of Indiana’s Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), Purdue University, and Ball State University. The planning process, referred to as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) process, resulted in the creation of the North Central Indiana Regional Plan which outlines economic development goals for Cass, Clinton, Fulton, Howard, Miami, and Tipton Counties.

As summarized in the following table, several priority capital improvement projects were identified for Tipton County. The regional plan was recently completed and presented to the Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) in December 2012.

Project	Community
Water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure	Kempton
Extension of Industrial Drive to CR 350 West	Tipton
Infrastructure extension along Industrial Drive and future extensions of Industrial Drive in Northgate Industrial Park	Tipton
Wastewater plant renovation	Tipton
Upgrade of South Main Street south of Cicero Creek as boulevard gateway to City of Tipton	Tipton
Flood Control Project to eliminate flooding in City of Tipton and improve conditions in areas south	Tipton
Development planning for U.S. 31 Corridor in general and specifically at U.S. 31 and SR 28	Tipton
County jail renovation	Tipton
Downtown revitalization	Tipton
City Hall renovation, redevelopment or new construction	Tipton
New wastewater plant	Sharpsville
County Courthouse restoration	Tipton
Upgrade of CR 525 N from 300 W to 500 W	Sharpsville
Widen College Street and add angle parking from 213 to McClellen and resurface McClellen one block to Railroad Street	Windfall

Demographic Overview

A demographic overview was conducted to establish a firm understanding of Tipton County’s existing demographic and economic profile. The overview includes an analysis of recent trends in population, households, income and age. This overview has been coupled with a detailed review of the County’s 2009 Strategic Economic Development Plan to form an important component in the foundation for land use and development decision making.

An analysis of labor force and employment was also conducted and is included in **Section 8: Economic Development Strategy**.

Current Trends

Future land use and development within Tipton County will be influenced by current trends and anticipated changes in population, households, and demographic composition. Data has been provided for Tipton County regarding current estimates for the year 2011 (the most recent year for which data is available) as well as projections for 2016. Data for this analysis were obtained from *ESRI Business Analyst*, a nationally recognized provider of market and demographic data. Additional market data regarding household income were also obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau’s *American Community Survey*.

Demographic data summarized in this section indicate that the total population of Tipton County has decreased slightly since the 2000 Census. This trend is anticipated to continue through the year 2016. Household income within Tipton County has remained stable over the past decade, while shifts have occurred within the County’s age profile. The proportion of younger and middle-aged households has decreased while the County has witnessed an increase in its older population. Since 2000, the median age within Tipton County has increased while typical household size has remained stable.

Population Change

The following summarizes observed and anticipated changes in population and the number of households in Tipton County. Tipton County has experienced moderate population loss since 2000 and it is anticipated that total household and population numbers will continue to decrease over the near term, though they will remain near 2011 estimates.

- Tipton County experienced a loss of 766 people (-4.6%) between 2000 and 2011 and is projected to lose another 400 individuals (-2.5%) between 2011 and 2016.
- The drop in number of households in Tipton County occurred at a slower pace, decreasing by 144 (-2.2%) between 2000 and 2011. Average household size decreased at a similar rate over the same time period.
- Tipton County witnessed an increase in median age of 4.4 years (11.5%) to 42.8 between 2000 and 2011. This aging trend is projected to continue through 2016 when median age is anticipated to be 43.9.

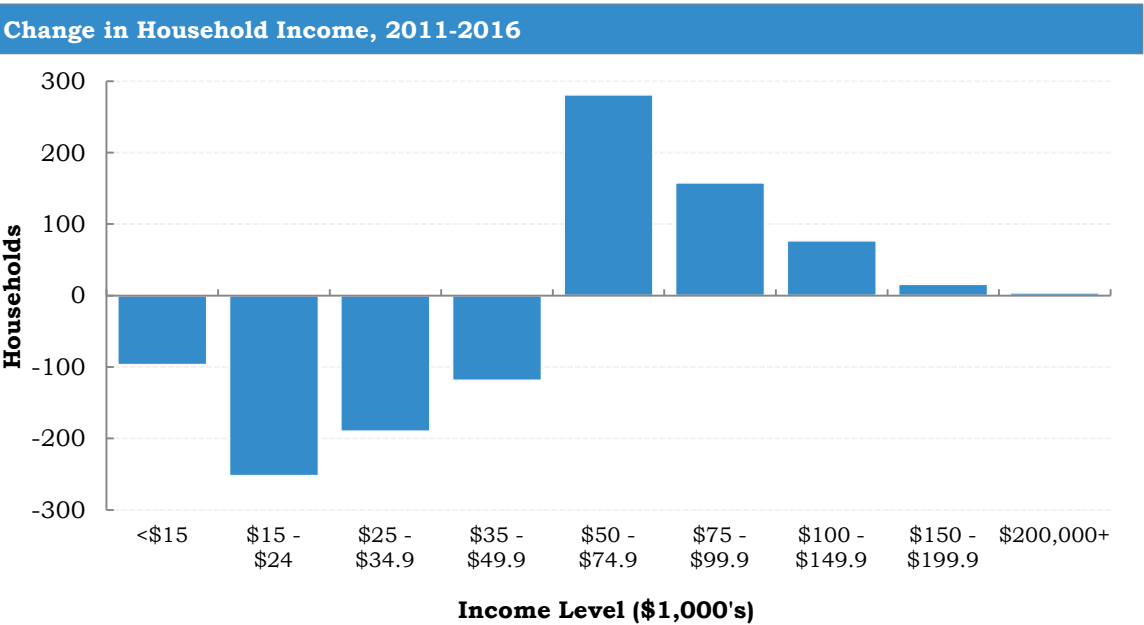
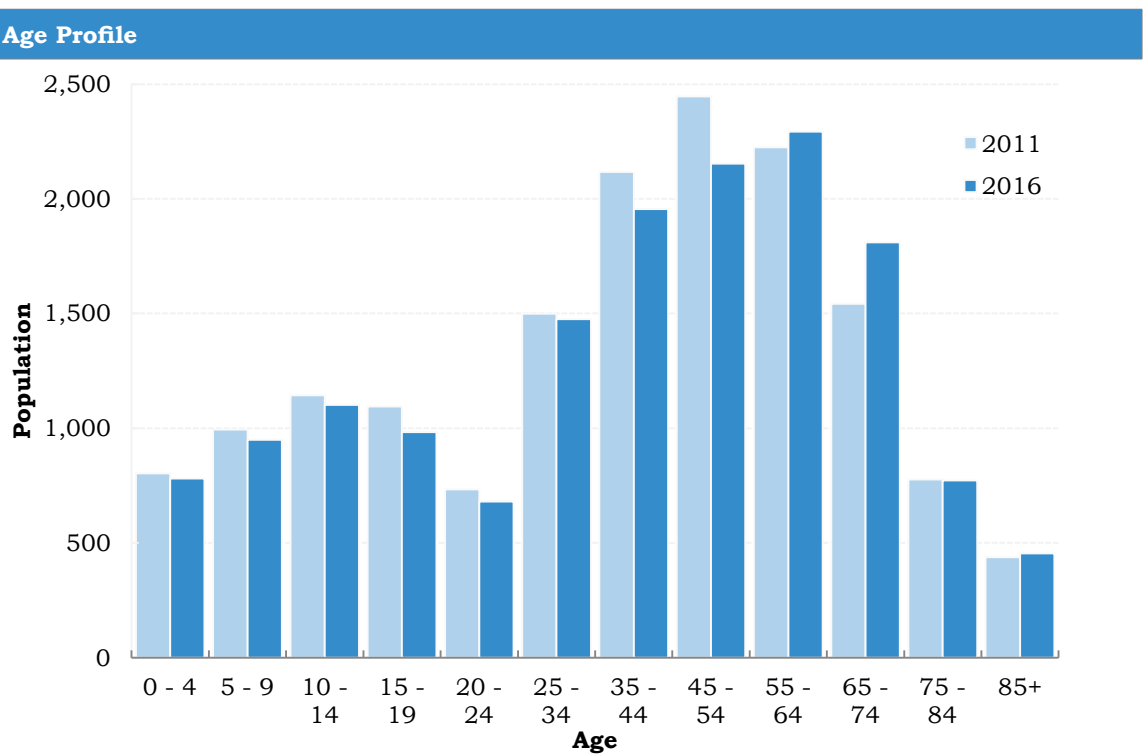
Population Projections

Projections for Tipton County, provided by the State of Indiana, indicate that the County will continue to experience moderate population decline over the next 10 to 20 years. It is anticipated that between 2010 and 2020, Tipton County will have lost 545 individuals, representing a 3.4% decrease. By 2030, the projected population is expected to be 1,280 lower than in 2010, for a total decrease of 8.0%.

Age Profile

The charts below illustrate projected population change by age group over the five year period between 2011 and 2016. Both younger and middle aged cohorts are anticipated to continue to experience decline while increases are projected among Tipton County’s older cohorts. Meanwhile, the Tipton’s youth population has remained stable.

- Tipton County’s population under the age of 25 is projected to decrease by 273 individuals (-5.7%) between 2011 and 2016.
- It is anticipated that the Tipton County population aged 25 to 54 will decrease by 478 individuals, representing a decline of 7.9% between 2011 and 2016.
- The population over the age of 55 is projected to increase by 351 individuals (7.0%) between 2000 and 2010.
- The largest anticipated increase in population is among those aged of 65 to 74. This cohort is projected to increase by 268 (17.4%) and come to make up nearly 12% of Tipton County’s total population in 2016.



Demographic Summary Tipton County, 2000 - 2010					
	Total Change				2011 to 2016
	2000	2011	2016	2000 to 2011	
Population	16,577	15,811	15,411	-766 (-4.6%)	-400 (-2.5%)
Households	6,469	6,325	6,203	-144 (-2.2%)	-122 (-1.9%)
Median Age	38.4	42.8	43.9	4.4 (11.5%)	1.1 (2.6%)
Average Household Size	2.53	2.47	2.45	-0.1 (-2.4%)	0.0 (-0.8%)

Source: US Census

Population Projections Tipton County, 2010 - 2025				
	2010	2015	2020	2030
Population	15,936	15,715	15,391	14,656
Change From 2010		-221	-545	-1,280
		-1.4%	-3.4%	-8.0%

Source: STATS Indiana



Household Income

The previous chart presents projected change in household income between 2011 (the most recent year for which estimated household income data are available) and 2016. It is anticipated that median household income will increase between 2011 and 2016 at a rate similar to that of inflation. This shift in median household income is the result of projected decreases among lower income households, increases among middle income households and minimal change among upper income households.

- The number of households earning less than \$50,000 within Tipton County is projected to decrease by nearly 22%, a loss of 658 households between 2011 and 2016.
- The number of households earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000 is anticipated to grow between 2011 and 2016, increasing by 439, or 20%.
- The number of households earning more than \$100,000 is expected to remain stable, growing by 9% within Tipton County, an increase of 97 households.
- The median income among Tipton County households is projected to increase by 13.4% to \$58,392 in 2016. This represents an average annual increase of 2.55%. The average national rate of inflation between 2002 and 2012 was 2.5%.

Age by Income

The following chart illustrates the changes in the number of households according to the age of the head of household and household income. Changes that occurred between 2000 and 2010 (the most recent year for which data regarding household income is available) are shown as they pertain to each respective household age cohort in the County. For example, the dark blue columns indicate change within the Tipton County householder population over the age of 64. A bar for this age group is shown in each income bracket. A dark blue bar located above the zero line of the graph indicates growth, while a dark blue bar below the zero line indicates decline in this particular age cohort.

Overall, Tipton County has experienced a decline among lower and middle income households as well as a middle aged households, while growth has occurred among older and upper income households. The combined result of these demographic shifts is a local population that is becoming older on average with minimal change among household income.

- Households aged 44 or younger experienced minimal change regardless of income, with the exception of households earning less than \$50,000. The two cohorts that make up this age range (i.e. 25 and under; 25-44) combined for a decrease of 25% among households earning less than \$50,000 incomes. By comparison, the

total population of these two cohorts decreased by only 13%.

- Tipton County households aged 45 and older increased in the majority of age cohorts, particularly among lower to middle income households. Households in this age cohort and earning between \$25,000 and \$75,000 experienced a net gain of 367 households, a 20% increase.
- The change in the number of Tipton County households earning more than \$100,000 was minimal, regardless of income group or age cohort. No group experienced a gain or decrease of greater than 43 individuals between 2000 and 2010.

Chrysler Transmission Plant

Although demographic projections indicate the potential for population loss over the next 10 to 20 years, these projections are forecasts based on recent trends and do not represent a foregone conclusion. Chrysler recently announced intentions to invest more than \$160 million to transform the manufacturing plant located at US 31 and SR 28 into a state of the art automotive transmission plant and create 850 new jobs in Tipton County. These jobs have the potential to transform the local economy and create the demand for new housing, commercial development and complementary industrial development.

Prior to Chrysler’s announcement, market data indicated that spending power within Tipton County would decrease by an estimated 8% over the near term. The key to ensuring this projection does not come to fruition will be the ability to get new employees to locate their households within Tipton County, and generate new demand for local goods and services. If the County can continue to successfully encourage local job growth and development, then future population and related spending power is likely to increase.



Existing Zoning & Land Use

A complete inventory of land use is essential in creating a picture of how the County functions on a day-to-day basis. This snapshot of development is complemented by an understanding of the County’s land use regulations and the types and intensity of activities they permit. The following section contains an overview of current zoning and existing land use in Tipton County.

Current Zoning

The existing Tipton County zoning ordinance defines eleven use districts and their primary purposes:

- AG – Agricultural; to recognize agriculture as the predominant use of land in the County and to ensure the continued viability of this resource
- AB – Agribusiness; to encourage expansion of business and manufacturing support uses for the local agricultural community
- RR – Rural Residential; to provide for low density residential areas
- B-1 & B-4 – Convenience and General Business; to provide convenience business and service uses in neighborhood areas and to provide areas for general business uses to meet the needs of a regional market and the traveling public
- I-1 & I-2 – Light and General Industrial; to encourage the development and expansion of manufacturing and wholesale businesses and to encourage the development and expansion of major industrial operations establishments
- FW & FF – Floodway and Floodway Fringe; to restrict development within the floodplain and to place additional restrictions upon uses within the floodway fringe
- PUD – Planned Unit Development; to allow land use requirements and regulations to be replaced by a Planned Unit Development District Ordinance which specifies the land use requirements, design plan, and performance criteria for the district
- U.S. 31 Corridor Overlay – to guide the growth and development of those areas adjacent and adjoining to the U.S. 31 Corridor

City of Tipton

Some areas in the zoning district map on the following page are labeled as Suburban Residential (SR) because they fall under the City of Tipton’s jurisdiction. The County ordinance does not include an SR district.

Zoning & Development Patterns

This list of districts indicates how land use and development within the County has been shaped. The prevalence of agriculture-related activities, the rural character of the housing stock, flooding as a particularly troublesome environmental concern, and the special importance of development along U.S. 31 are all reflected in the choice of zoning districts.

The development patterns observed, along with input received from the Tipton County community, played a key role in guiding future land use recommendations.

Zoning Assessment

Zoning plays a key role in the implementation of local and regional policies, establishing the types of uses allowed and prescribing the overall character and intensity of permitted development.

Following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, it will likely be necessary to review the County’s zoning ordinance and related ordinances, such as the subdivision control ordinance, to ensure that regulations reflect current County policy and the desires of the Tipton County community.

Based on input from the community outreach process as well as County officials and staff, several zoning-related issues have been identified in the Comprehensive Plan that should be addressed as plan implementation moves forward.

- Three areas that should be given primary consideration include refinements to the County’s:
- **US 31 Overlay District** regulations, particularly regarding the development of the SR 28 area;
 - **Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS)** regulations, particularly regarding the desired location of wind farms and the approval process; and,
 - Review and approval process, including its **Sub-division Control Ordinance**, to seek additional input from local communities and assist in coordinating land use and development policies.

Existing Land Use

All parcels within Tipton County have been assigned to one of seven (7) land use designations. The distribution of land within the County is highlighted in the following chart. The majority of properties in the unincorporated areas of the County are agriculture-related while Tipton County’s various municipalities consist primarily of single family residential uses.

Agriculture/Agribusiness

Over 80 percent of the land within County limits is used for agriculture. This category primarily covers fields and farm accessory uses such as barns, silos, and heavy equipment storage. In special circumstances, large developments related to agriculture, but not tied directly to any specific fields are labeled as agribusiness. This use includes the Cargill, Monsanto, Pioneer, and Beck’s complexes among others.

Residential

The Towns of Windfall, Sharpsville, and Kempton primarily contain detached single family homes. The City of Tipton has some limited multi-family housing, but is mostly single family as well. Outside of incorporated towns, the residential uses in the County most often take the form of isolated, single family, farmstead-style estates and scattered single family homes. In addition, there are small unincorporated subdivisions that are made entirely of residential uses similar to those in the municipalities. Prefabricated homes are common in some areas of the County, but are rarely segregated into communities separate from other types of residential buildings.

Commercial

The City of Tipton has an established downtown that is the commercial center of the County. The other downtown areas, most notably downtown Windfall, also have businesses serving local residents. U.S. 31, connecting to Kokomo and areas north to Indianapolis, hosts commercial uses that are more dependent on vehicle access.

Industrial

At stages in its history, Tipton County has had a number of industrial complexes, including grain elevators, saw mills, grist mills, canning factories, and other manufacturers. While many of these are no longer in use, the buildings that remain are unique and have been categorized as industrial uses.

Natural/Parks & Open Space

Natural areas in Tipton County are defined as undeveloped areas not used for agriculture or intentionally designed as a park or open space. Preserved treestands scattered amongst farmland and buffer zones along creeks are the two most common instances of natural areas. Within local communities, parks, plazas, sports fields, and similar uses are categorized as parks and open space. In some cases, vacant residential land serves as *de facto open space*.

Public/Semi-public

Churches, schools, cemeteries, utilities infrastructure, and parceled road rights-of-way all fall into the public/semi-public category. In general, this land use is rare throughout the County, although churches and other places of worship with large, stable congregations do exist. The Tri-Central High School Complex and the former St. Joseph Center are notable examples of this category.

Vacant

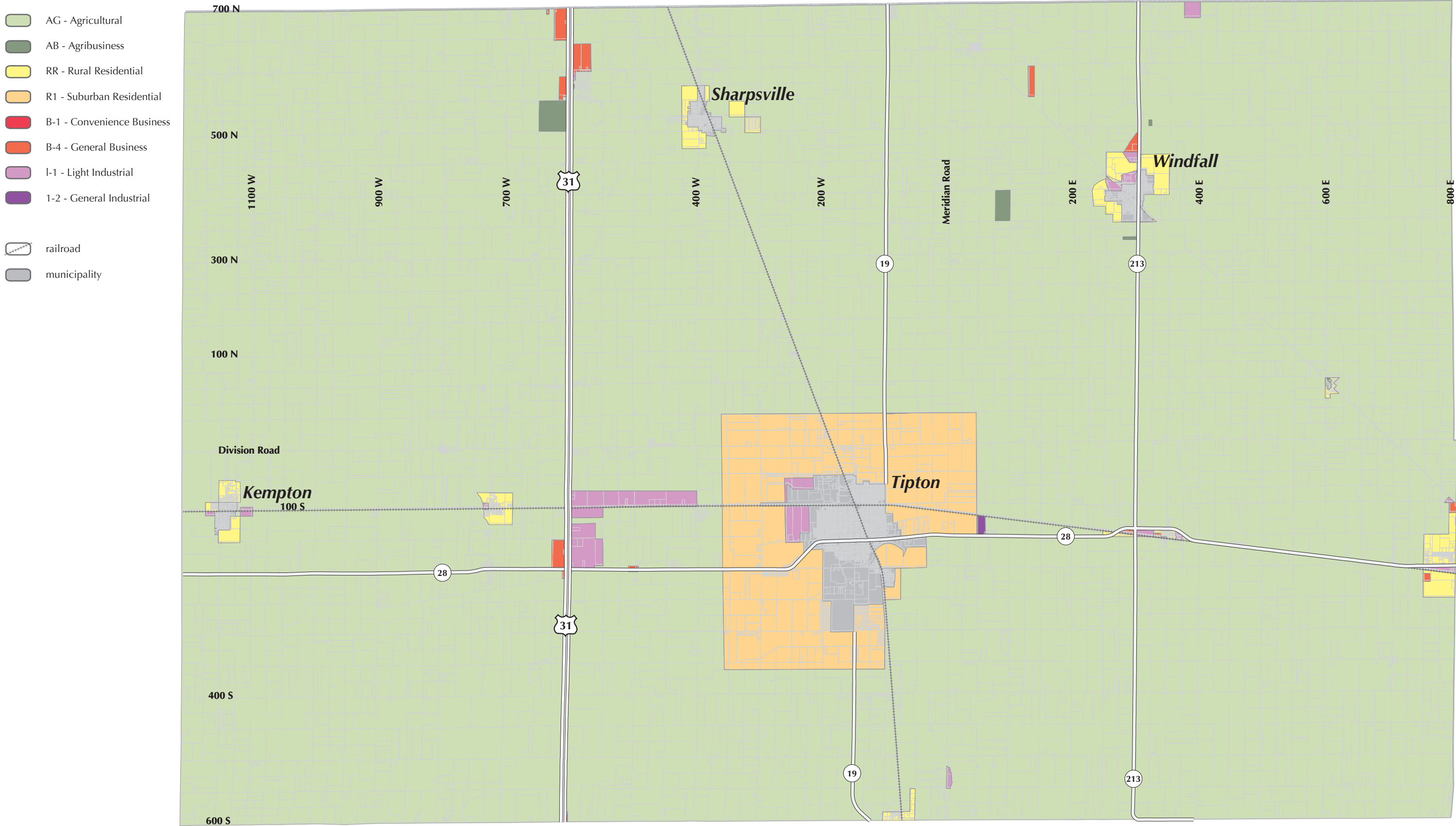
Parcels are labeled as vacant when they are not being utilized for a clearly intended purpose. For instance, a parcel of typical residential dimensions in a residential neighborhood, but with no house or other building is marked as vacant. There are few vacant properties in the County, and those that do exist don’t typically cause significant harmful effects. Vacant residential property is often unnoticeable at ground level.

Existing Municipal Land Use

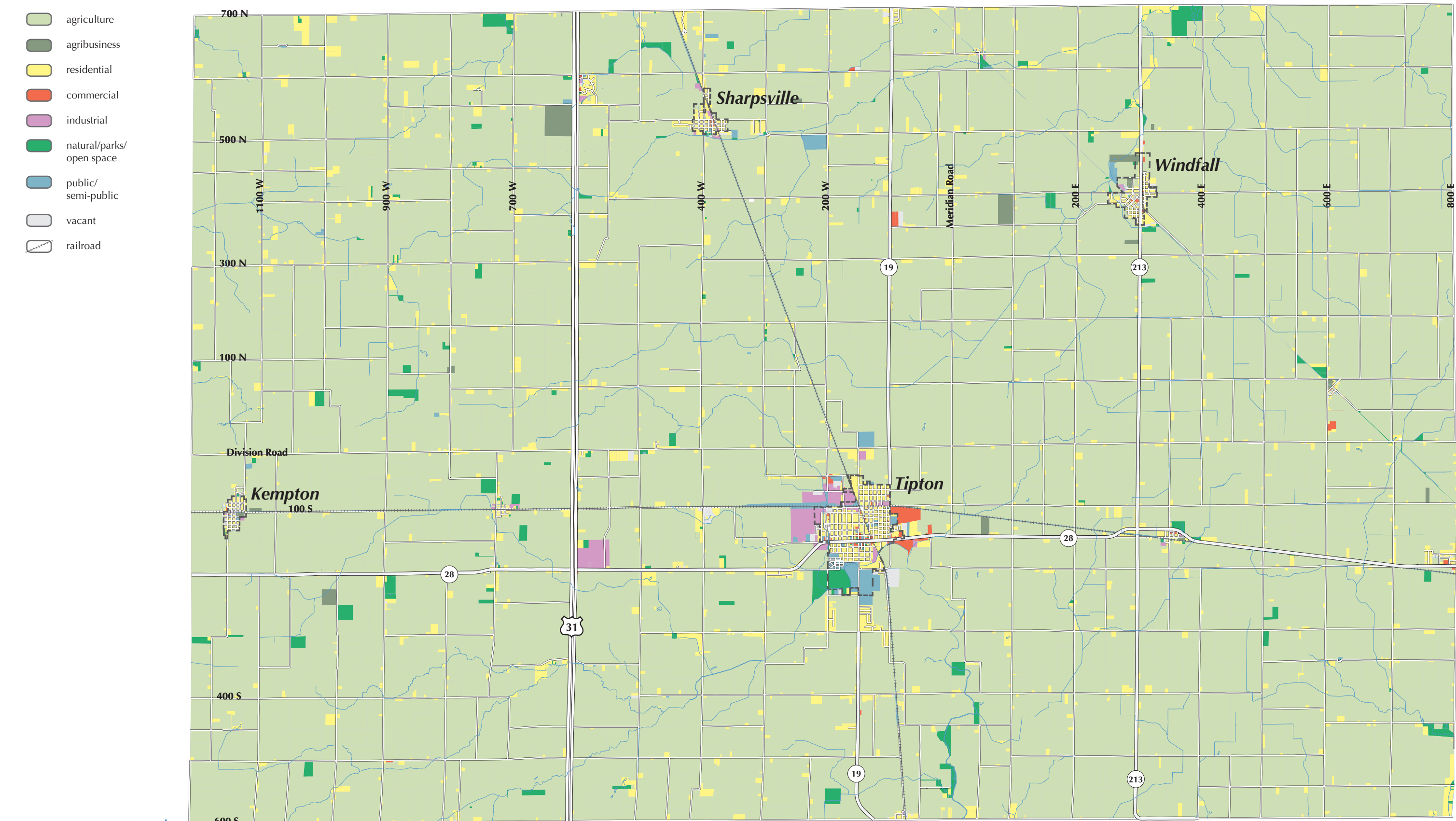
Detailed existing land use figures have been provided for the communities of Windfall, Sharpsville, and Kempton. A detailed existing land use map for the City of Tipton can be found in its recently adopted Comprehensive Plan.

The incorporated municipalities have the same categories of land use as the rest of the County, although not in the same ratios. Windfall, Sharpsville, and Kempton are all mostly residential with a small amount of public buildings such as schools, churches, and civic uses. Industrial land is clustered around the railroads, and each town has a primary commercial district. Agricultural land exists at the town fringes.

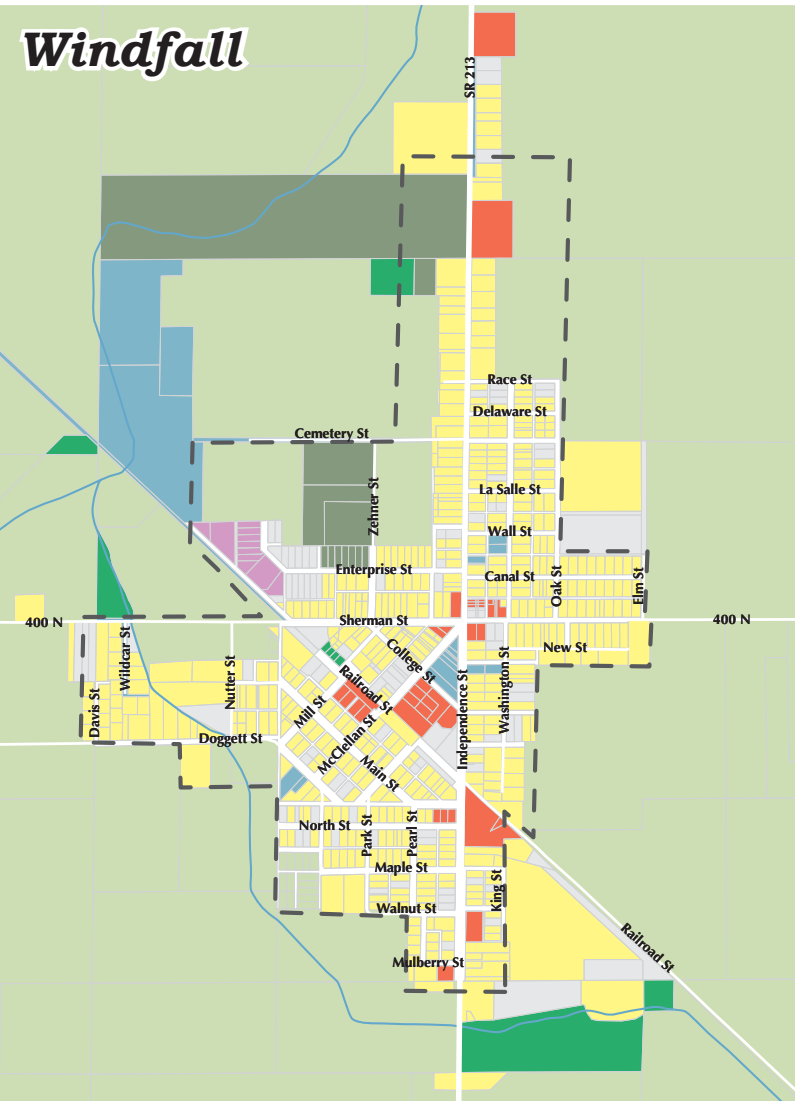
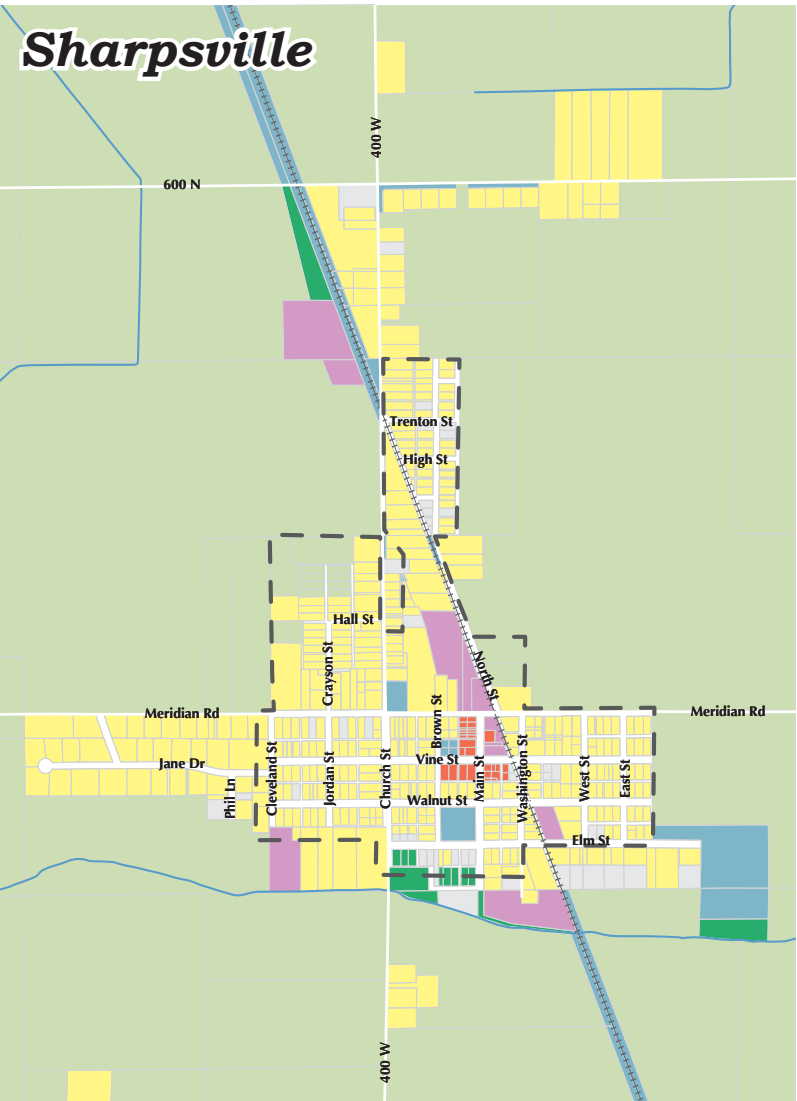
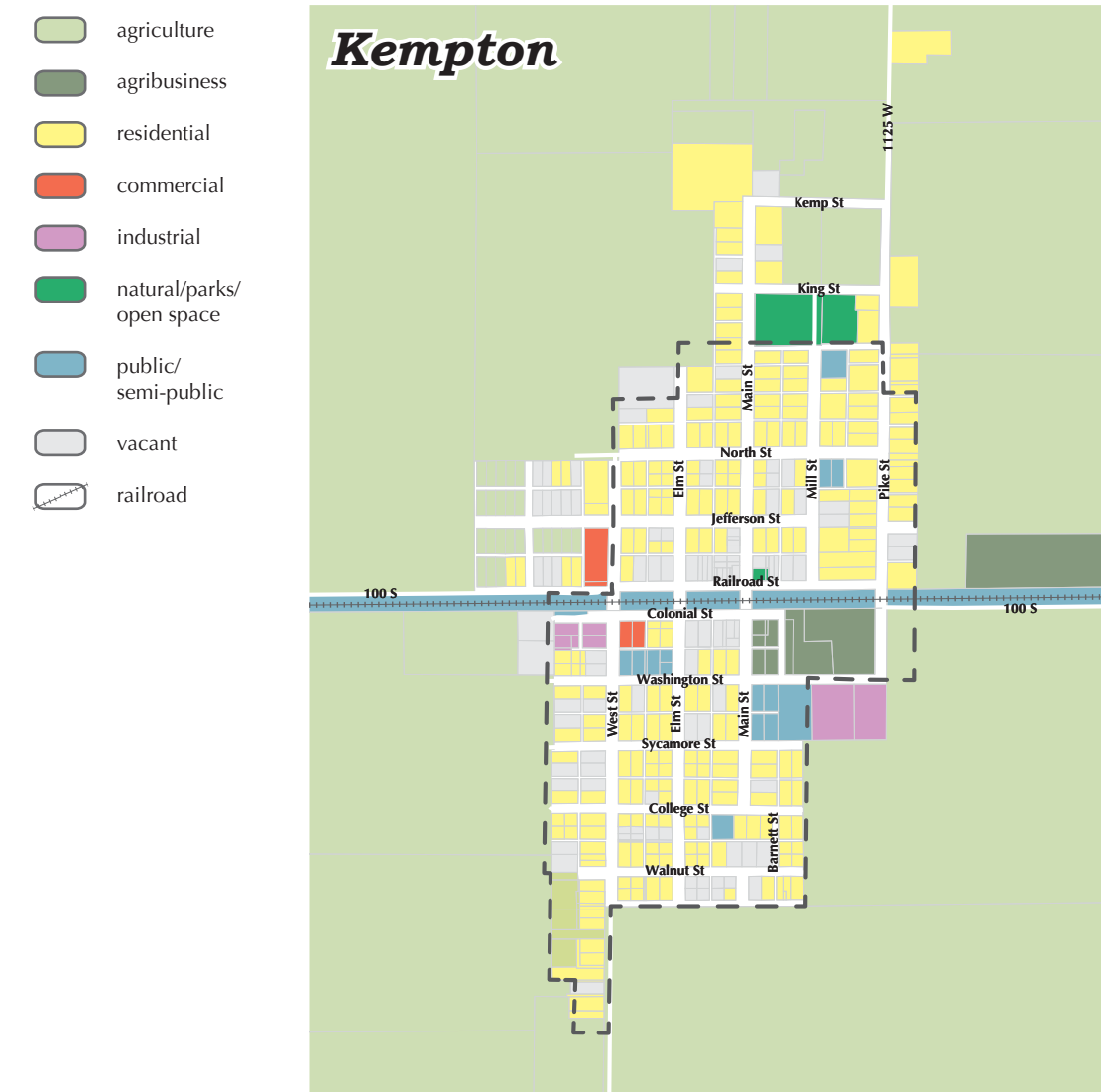
Current Zoning



Existing Land Use



Existing Land Use



Section 2

Public Input

Tipton County, Indiana

Comprehensive Plan

Listening to the voices of engaged, knowledgeable residents and business owners is an important part of any planning process. In preparing the Tipton County Comprehensive Plan, public input initiatives were established early to insure that the issues addressed by the Plan would be influenced by the people who live and work in the County as much as possible. While public participation is ongoing, a preliminary round of outreach activities was conducted to establish an understanding of how residents think and feel about the County today.

This section includes summaries of outreach efforts conducted as part of the planning process. This section is intended as a review of feedback solicited from Tipton County residents and businesses and comments reported here do not reflect any official input from County officials and are not indicative of County policies

Project Initiation Workshop

On Tuesday, April 3, 2012, the first Community Workshop for the Tipton County Comprehensive Plan process was held and attended by approximately 45 people. During this meeting, residents were given an opportunity to voice their concerns, the things they like about the County, and to hear the ideas of their friends and neighbors. Additionally, this event provided a chance for community members to learn about the purpose of a comprehensive plan and the process to be undertaken. This meeting immediately followed the project initiation meeting of the County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

It is important to note that items identified in this section are not recommendations or observations of the Consultant, but rather feedback and comments received by residents who participated in the workshop.

Workshop Questionnaire

The workshop included a questionnaire that solicited participants’ input regarding issues and concerns in the County. The following is a summary of the thoughts, comments, and opinions obtained during the workshop.

1. Identify five issues or concerns confronting Tipton County.

Responses in this category varied quite a bit, but some common themes or areas of concern did emerge. Highlighted below are the categories that were commonly cited by residents. Because so many issues are interrelated, we have grouped several into categories to better communicate the discussion and input from the workshop.

Flooding

Residents expressed a great deal of concern regarding flooding and drainage. Much of the discussion was focused on the problem of flooding of agricultural lands and the flooding problems associated with Big Cicero Creek and the surrounding areas. Another concern was an effort by FEMA to introduce new Flood Insurance Rate Maps that would significantly increase the amount of land area within the floodplain.

U.S. 31 and Related Issues

Proposed improvements to U.S. 31, including its widening and restricted access, were noted as concerns for two primary reasons. The first concern related to being able to cross U.S. 31 from the east and west. The second concern was making sure that U.S. 31 accommodated truck traffic access at points other than just SR 28. Other comments concerning U.S. 31 related to development along the corridor, particularly at the intersection of U.S. 31 and SR 28.

Declining Population

Simply stated, residents are concerned about the declining population and stated the need to attract new families and young people back to the area. It seemed to be understood by attendees that new business and employment opportunities was a key to stopping and reversing the trend of a declining population.

Economic Development and Jobs

The lack of jobs, retail, and industry in the area and the need for economic development were items that received a lot of attention during the workshop. Residents noted a need to attract industry to the county to provide jobs and revenue. Although agribusiness related industries were specifically mentioned, so too were other industrial uses. Several comments related to the manufacturing facility located at U.S. 31 and SR 28, and the need to get that facility occupied and running. Development of the area around the intersection of U.S. 31 and SR 28 was cited by many as a priority. Overall, residents recognize the need for additional jobs, new industry and business, and a greater economic development for the County. It was also noted that the perception of lack of economic development in the County is hurting the County’s efforts. Overall, there is a sense that some areas should be targeted for new development but other areas should be protected for agricultural purposes. Also noted was the need to improve the economic development for smaller communities throughout the county.

County Budgeting, Financing and Taxes

Residents expressed some concern for the financial state of the County, noting the need for balanced budgeting, efficient expenditure of funds, funding for law enforcement, and the need to strengthen the tax base for the County. It was also noted that there is a need to lower the tax burden on business within the County. There was also concern regarding the declining property values in the County.

County Government

There were a number of issues raised with the current government including a lack of vision, communication, leadership, and inter-governmental cooperation—especially between the County and the City of Tipton. Residents would like to see a county government that is more cooperative and transparent and one that cooperates more with other agencies and jurisdictions to provide better and more efficient delivery of services. Another cited concern was regarding the County over regulating and making things more difficult.

Prioritizing Agriculture

Several residents noted the need to maintain the Country as a farming community and prioritize agricultural land and activity. Several individuals noted that targetting new industrial and business development may be appropriate at key locations, but general encroachment of development (primarily residential) into agricultural areas throughout the County was not desirable.

Infrastructure, Facilities and Appearance

A few comments relating to infrastructure and appearance were noted and addressed the poor condition of many of the roads in the County, need to repair/replace the jail, repair the courthouse, and clean up and improve the appearance of the County to make it more attractive. Also noted was the concern for the cost associated with infrastructure repair and maintenance.

Education

Several residents noted the need to maintain and improve upon the quality of schools in the County. Some residents noted a desire for post high school educational opportunities within the County and others mentioned the desire to consolidate the existing two school systems into one. There were some comments regarding the quality of secondary education. However, overall, the quality of education in the County was highly regarded and the desire is to maintain and improve upon the education system. Also noted was the low educational attainment of the County’s population in general.

Parks/Activities

Several residents noted a desire for a regional sports complex to serve both the local population, but more importantly, to serve as a regional draw for visitors into the area. The need for additional sports and leisure recreation facilities was also mentioned. Some residents noted a general lack of parks and recreation in the County.

Resident Participation and Communication

Some residents noted that there is a lack of awareness, volunteerism, and participation among county residents in important matters. Others noted that the county needs to do a better job communicating with residents about what is going on in the County.

2. List, in order of importance, the three most important issues described thus far.

The following issues were identified as being the “most important” to county residents. The items listed below are in order of importance based on the number of people who ranked them as a priority.

- Flooding and Drainage Problems
- U.S. 31/SR 28 Development
- Economic Development – Need to attract new businesses
- Budgeting, Finance, Tax Issues
- Declining/Aging Population
- U.S. 31 access
- Need for Better County/City coordination and integration
- Lack of Jobs
- Need to attract families/new residents
- County Government/Leadership

While there were a few other isolated issues identified, almost all of the comments fell into the categories identified above. Other priorities cited include: overall quality of life, shopping/retail, recreation, two school districts, condition of roads, agriculture v. development mentality, lack of planning for 31/28 intersection, livability, eliminating negativity, education, the manufacturing facility at U.S. 31 and SR 28, communication with residents, infighting among county leaders, utility usage at U.S. 31 and SR 28.

3. Identify three specific projects or actions that you would like to see undertaken in Tipton

While a range of projects were identified, some of the more frequently cited actions concerned: a development plan for U.S. 31; Combining City and County services; addressing the flooding and drainage problems; and providing access to and over an improved US 31. The range of projects and actions are identified below:

- Overflow channel for Cicero creek
- New sports complex
- Tenant for manufacturing facility at U.S. 31 and SR 28
- Repair roads
- Plan and zoning for U.S. 31
- Ivy Tech for Tipton
- Combine City and County law enforcement
- Upgrade/repair existing facilities

- Create incentives to attract businesses
- Rebuild 550N from 31 to 213
- Complete 560W by-pass
- Build overpasses along 31
- Integrate City/County services
- Place cameras in Tipton Park
- Expand backlogged court system
- Develop the fairgrounds
- Revitalize agricultural business park
- Get ownership of west utility plants
- Courthouse renovation and repair
- Downtown Tipton beautification
- Economic development
- Fix jail
- County-wide high speed internet
- Establish Tipton revolving loan fund
- Downtown Business Incentives

- Demolish Carter’s Mall
- Consolidate Tipton and Tri-Central Schools
- Create Value for Volunteers
- Business Incentives
- Widen ROW for county roads & intersections
- Improve access to industrial areas
- Provide technical training for development
- Develop vision for 31/28 area
- Permanent secondary education facility
- Cooperative city/county economic development
- Combine school districts
- Completion of western connector
- Upgrade tile system to prevent flooding
- Fund drainage improvement efforts
- Address sewer and water capacity issues
- Development marketing campaign for County
- Coordinate recreation facilities

4. What are the primary strengths and assets of Tipton County?

While much of the workshop focused on opportunities for improvement within the community, the workshop ended on a high note, with residents expressing those things that they like about Tipton County. From the people to the farmland, from regional location to the hospital, residents identified several things they like about Tipton County. Below is a complete list of the responses.

- The people
- The good agricultural land
- Small town atmosphere
- Good schools
- Proximity to Indianapolis
- Regional location and access
- Rail access
- World class agriculture companies
- Hospital
- Library
- Courthouse
- Minimal urban sprawl
- Theater
- Less violence/crime
- Close proximity to regional roads
- Tipton County Seat
- Fairgrounds/4H
- Low taxes
- Good local work force
- Rural heritage
- Community pride
- Overall quality of life
- Strong values
- Tipton County Foundation
- Good Downtown in Tipton
- Local extension programs
- Strong business community
- Good small manufacturing base

Key Person Interviews

Also on April 3, interviews were conducted with various key residents and community leaders in the County. Flooding and drainage problems were mentioned by multiple people in response to many of the questions. Economic development and transportation issues were also frequently discussed. The following is a brief summary of the themes and responses to the interview questions that commonly arose during the conversations.

1. How would you define/describe the character of Tipton County?

People generally felt that the rural, small town nature of the County is its strongest identity. This includes both the widespread presence of agriculture industries and the character of its residents. Responses included:

- Small town
- Good people
- Best farmland in the world
- Relatively financially sound
- Not “upside down”

2. What do you believe are the primary assets and advantages of the County?

The quality of farmland, in general and for the businesses it supports, was the most cited as the County’s strongest asset by a large margin. Responses included:

- Great agricultural land
- Seed companies
- Access points on Route 31
- Potentially merging school districts and emergency services with Kokomo



3. What do you believe are the primary weaknesses and disadvantages of the County?

Drainage and flooding problems, negative transportation effects, and poor building maintenance were seen as physical weaknesses. An ineffective political culture, lack of business diversity, and inadequate funding are organizational weaknesses. Responses included:

- Drainage and flooding problems
- Negative effects from Route 31 changes
- Lack of new and small businesses to balance the agriculture
- Damaging local politics and political infighting
- Need to update the jail
- Inadequate finances
- Wanting growth but not wanting to pay for it
- Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) attitudes
- Need more direction about industrial and residential development
- Need to buffer and define land uses
- Perception of high amount of vacant homes and transient residents
- Petroleum purchases

4. What do you consider to be the most important issues confronting the County today?

The most common important issue involved policy in some way, either creating better regulations or improving enforcement and execution. Drainage and flooding was a notable exception to this trend. Responses included:

- Improving zoning practices
- Financial policy
- Drainage and flooding
- Code enforcement
- Transportation, including creating a Prairie Creek-Cicero Creek bypass and reactivating the north-south railroad connection to Kokomo
- Windfarm infrastructure requirements
- Eliminating service duplication
- Focusing on existing infrastructure
- Prioritizing agriculture over new development
- Library improvements
- Junk cars and other unsightly uses

5. If you had the power to undertake one project or improvement within the county, what would it be?

Public safety, both specific projects and in general, was high on this priority list. Drainage and flooding, unsurprisingly, was also a part of more than one respondent’s answer. Responses included:

- Flooding and drainage improvements
- Public safety and emergency services
- Snow removal
- Pave gravel roads
- Reduce freight train traffic
- Zoning and enforcement

6. What are your primary concerns regarding future development of the area?

Economic development, attracting businesses, and in turn bringing families back to the County were the most pressing concerns about the future. Broad concerns about the nature of new development, including the master planning process, were also mentioned. Responses included:

- Economic development
- Flooding and drainage
- Attracting large businesses other than Abound Solar
- Attracting industries to bring back kids
- Focusing on infill development
- Tipton County road conditions
- Improving the way we communicate county-wide
- Wind energy
- Staying as agricultural as possible
- Improving the jail
- The state of the fairgrounds
- The master plan

7. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding our work on the County Comprehensive Plan?

Respondents took this opportunity to reinforce topics they had already discussed, but also to introduce new issues. Education, technology, and regional relationships were some of the remarks from this second category. Responses included:

- Address drainage and flooding
- Work together with other counties
- Merge the two school districts
- Secure more state aid for each student
- Improve cell phone coverage
- Install high speed internet
- Downtown needs grocery stores, clothing stores, shoe stores, and big box stores, but fewer banks and credit unions
- Identify and locate new industrial development in key locations
- Address land use
- County Sheriff department should grow
- Improve county road intersection geometry to accomodate farm equipment
- Update southern county line between IN Route 19 and U.S. Route 31
- Expand natural gas lines





Online Questionnaires

Throughout the planning process, County residents and business owners were asked to voice their points of view about the past and future of Tipton County via an online questionnaire. At the completion of the existing conditions assessment and drafting of the Vision Statement presented in the next section, a total of 40 residents and 11 businesses chose to complete the questionnaires. The following is a brief summary that highlights the trends and popular responses to each questionnaire.

Resident Questionnaire

The majority of respondents, almost 85 percent, have lived in the County for more than 15 years. When asked what they liked most about the County, “friendly neighbors” was the most common answer, followed by safety and security; housing affordability; schools; and heritage, history, and local culture. Job opportunities, entertainment, and shopping choices were the most cited disadvantages to living in the County.

The bulk of the public services and facilities listed in the questionnaire were rated more or less evenly between “good” and “fair.” The highest ranked services were the library, electric service, and community meeting space. The lowest ranked were the trail network, recreational and cultural facilities, sidewalks, and stormwater drainage. The characterization of housing stock quality was also split between good and fair, leaning toward good, and was generally thought to be staying the same or getting worse, leaning toward staying the same.

Quality of life in the County today was generally thought to be worse than it was ten years ago, with about 50 percent of respondents expecting the County to remain the same in five years and 40 percent expecting it to improve. Restaurants, retail stores, and industrial/manufacturing uses were desired in the County by a large margin. Similarly, rental housing, combined with condominiums and townhomes, were the most desired uses.

Finally, the availability of jobs was the most important issue to questionnaire respondents. Improving communication between the government and residents was second place, followed by diversifying the tax base and investment in technology tied for third.

Business Questionnaire

Business questionnaire respondents identified the economic characteristics of county residents, the County’s regional location, and having their business close to home as the most beneficial qualities of Tipton County. The local business climate was most cited as the least advantageous quality. Water quality was the highest rated public service among respondents, while the County’s stormwater drainage and trail network were the lowest.

Questionnaire respondent’s concerns about the County’s development process included:

- Lack of community support
- Poor communication
- Too much conservatism
- A powerful, vocal minority of naysayers
- Concern regarding the ability of industry to continue development and diversification of the local resources
- Slowness to complete planning for U.S. 31 corridor and the SR 28 and U.S. 31 intersection
- Need for a full time Economic Development Professional
- Inadequate standards and inspections in regards to site development, drainage, and green space
- Not strict enough adherence to zoning regulations

Respondents would most like to see more industrial/manufacturing in the County, as well as business parks, recreational trails, and restaurants. They also listed the business climate, availability of jobs, and diversification of the tax base as the most important issues facing the county. Organizational support and public relations were identified as strategies to best improve the business environment.

Despite 44 percent of respondents thinking the quality of life in Tipton County has decline in the past ten years, none would relocate out of the County if given the chance.

Section 3

Vision, Goals & Objectives

The Vision is a statement made 15 years after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, describing the improvements and changes that have taken place in Tipton County since the plan’s adoption in 2013. The Vision has been created based upon feedback received through community workshops, key person interviews, on-line questionnaires, several steering committee meetings, and a visioning workshop. The Vision, combined with the goals and objectives established in the Comprehensive Plan, will be used to guide Tipton County over the next 10 to 15 years to serve as a foundation for all future decisions, actions, and policies.

A vision of Tipton County 15 years after adoption of plan...

Land Use

Tipton County and its communities have become home to a growing number of families, employers, and retailers. Reinvestment and redevelopment has been concentrated in areas where infrastructure is available and services can be efficiently extended. In addition to shoring up and expanding commercial and residential areas within the County’s towns and unincorporated communities, key intersections along the US 31 corridor have emerged as commercial and employment nodes within the County. Conservation-oriented policies have limited the expansion of development into areas outside of existing communities and wise land use decisions have helped preserve agricultural areas and environmentally sensitive features. Tipton County has also strengthened its partnerships with municipal and township governments to achieve this common vision.



Rural Character & Residential Development

Tipton County continues to be known for its unique rural character and family friendly neighborhoods and unincorporated communities. The County has partnered with local communities to promote a range of housing options, serving to attract a new generation of first-time home buyers while enabling Tipton County’s older residents to continue to live in the communities they have called home for years. Much of the new housing development within the County has taken place on formerly vacant or underutilized lots, strengthening existing communities, filling in previously incomplete subdivisions, and making efficient use of existing infrastructure. Residential development that has occurred outside of Tipton County’s municipalities in recent years has been sensitive to the rural character of the County as well the natural environment.

Agricultural Resources

Agriculture plays a significant role in Tipton County’s economy and culture, and continues to be of primary concern when making land use and development decisions. In addition to encouraging reinvestment in and around Tipton County’s established communities, large scale development has been discouraged within the County’s rural areas, preventing the premature conversion of agricultural land. An increasing number of Tipton County farmers are also taking advantage of State and Federal programs that encourage the use of Best Management Practices and water and soil conservation. In addition to traditional farming enterprises, Tipton County has become well-known for its agri-business sector and is now home to several grain seed producers and agricultural research facilities.



Transportation

Tipton County can be easily navigated by its residents and visitors, and improvements to roadways such as US 31, SR 28 and SR 213 have improved connections to the greater North Central Indiana region. Routes leading to the County’s various communities have been realigned, making it easier for residents and visitors alike to travel through the County. Truck routes have also been altered to pass around local communities, limiting negative impacts of Tipton County’s growing industrial areas on residential neighborhoods and commercial districts. Rail activity along the County’s north-south and east-west routes has increased, providing an additional asset to the County’s industrial and agribusiness users. US 31 continues to be an important corridor within the larger region and new retailers, restaurants and employers have all benefited from increasing traffic and infrastructure improvements along the roadway.

Bike route and trails have also become an increasingly important component of the County’s transportation network. Utilizing various greenways, creek corridors, major roads and rail corridors, the County has partnered with local communities, land owners and service organizations to establish and maintain a regional trail network.



Open Space & Environmental Features

Tipton County residents have improved access to natural features and areas of open space for passive and active recreation. Regional parks have been established in key areas of the County including the Big Cicero Creek corridor, the former Sisters of St. Joseph Convent, and areas surrounding the Kelley Agricultural Historical Museum. Since establishing the County Park Board, the County has become a partner in improving parks and recreation programming in local communities as well as unincorporated areas. The Tipton County 4-H Fairgrounds continue to be utilized to host a wide variety of events and represents a regional asset in parks, recreation and environmental education.

The County’s creek corridors and wetlands have been integrated into a network of greenways and trails that connect Tipton County residents to parks, historic sites, other communities and the regional trail network. Participation in resource management programs has increased among Tipton County farmers in recent years, improving local water quality and assisting in greenway initiatives. Development within flood hazard zones has also been limited, minimizing flood damages and helping concentrate development in existing communities.



Economic Development

Tipton County’s economy continues to evolve and diversify, helping to attract new workers and their families to the region. The industrial building located at US 31 and SR 28 has emerged as a key economic development engine for Tipton County, providing hundreds of manufacturing and research jobs and attracting additional investment to the area. Higher education offerings have expanded in Tipton County with Ivy Tech and Purdue University Extension now offering a wide range of adult education and associates degrees. A growing number of Tipton County employers are also turning to these facilities for continued skills training for their workforce. In addition to a well-educated workforce, the County business climate continues to improve with a recently renovated conference and event center at the former Sisters of St. Joseph Convent, improved roadways and broadband communication infrastructure. Wind energy development has provided benefits to local land owners while protecting agricultural areas from encroachment.

Goals & Objectives

Tipton County’s Comprehensive Plan looks forward over the next 10-15 years and expresses what the County desires to become in the future. This section presents the Plan’s goals and objectives which outline how the County can achieve that desired future. The goals and objectives form the framework for planning recommendations, policies, future projects, and actions:

- **Goals** describe desired end situations toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range. They represent an end to be sought, although they may never actually be fully attained.
- **Objectives** describe more specific actions that should be undertaken by the County to advance toward the overall goals. They provide more precise and measurable guidelines for planning action.

Together, the goals and objectives provide specific direction and serve as a guide for the evaluation of development proposals and land use alternatives. They are primarily based on input from focus groups in the early stages of the comprehensive planning process and provide a reliable policy guide for decision-making in the County. In addition to the input received from public participation, these goals and objectives are based on input from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Goals and Objectives have been established for:

- Residential Areas;
- Commercial & Industrial Areas;
- Agricultural Resources;
- Environmental Features;
- Community Facilities;
- Transportation and Circulation;
- Economic Development; and
- Infrastructure and Development.

Agricultural Resources

Goal

Preserve productive farmland as a source for viable agricultural activities that will enhance the County’s economy and contribute to its rural character.

Objectives

1. Recognize the cultural, social, economic, and aesthetic benefits provided by agricultural land use.
2. Maintain and protect productive agricultural lands, where appropriate, by discouraging non-agricultural growth in these areas.
3. Support planning initiatives that favor contiguous, clustered development in order to minimize development of prime agricultural areas.
4. Support enactment of state and County programs that provide incentives and support land owners who choose farming as a way of life, such as the purchase and transfer of development rights.
5. Encourage right-to-farm legislation, support incentives to retain farmland, and further limit the circumstances under which farming operations may be deemed a nuisance.
6. Encourage best management practices to reduce potential negative impacts of agricultural activities to natural resources.
7. Recognize and encourage the practice of alternative agriculture such as the production of specialty crops to diversify the agricultural sector of the economy.

Residential Areas

Goal

Maintain the County’s desirability as a great place to live by preserving and enhancing the quality, character, safety, affordability, and appeal of residential areas.

Objectives

1. Promote a mix of housing types and values to meet the needs of all segments of the population.
2. Attract new employers and expand existing businesses to draw new families to the County and increase demand for local housing.
3. Support the provision of a variety of housing types (such as single-family and multi-family) and economic choices (owner-occupied and rental) within the County that meet the specific needs of young families.
4. Support the provision of a variety of housing types (such as single-family, multi-family, and assisted living) and economic choices (owner-occupied and rental) within the County that meet the specific needs of elderly residents, including accessibility, multi-sensory technologies, etc., and help sustain a high quality of independent living, with municipal services.
5. Preserve sound existing housing through regular, active code enforcement, and preventative maintenance programs.
6. Accommodate residential renovation and redevelopment through an expedient, yet thorough permitting process.
7. Encourage future residential development in the County to concentrate near existing infrastructure and maximize the use and efficiency of existing facilities.
8. Explore the creation of a vacant building registration and inspection program to prevent vacant properties from having a detrimental impact on surrounding properties.
9. Review and revise the County zoning, subdivision, and other residential development related ordinances to be consistent with the visions, goals, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Commercial & Industrial Areas

Goal

Develop commercial and industrial areas that encourage job creation, are market responsive, create a diverse tax base, and serve the needs of the County’s residents and, in some areas, a larger regional market.

Objectives

1. Attract businesses to utilize existing, unoccupied commercial and industrial buildings.
2. Identify areas for office/research/industrial areas and business parks with access to regional transportation infrastructure.
3. Work with municipalities, townships, and quasi-governmental entities to help retain existing businesses and industries and attract new industries.
4. Establish programs targeted at community downtowns to revitalize struggling business districts.
5. Mitigate the potential for conflicts between industrial and non-industrial land uses through transitional land use designations and zoning regulations.
6. Accommodate commercial renovation and redevelopment through an expedient, yet thorough permitting process.
7. Encourage future commercial development in the County to concentrate near existing infrastructure and maximize the use and efficiency of existing facilities.
8. Reevaluate the desired land use and development patterns surrounding the U.S. Route 31 corridor in light of on-going improvements the bypass.
9. Review and revise the County zoning, subdivision, and other commercial development related ordinances to be consistent with the visions, goals, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Transportation & Circulation

Goal

Promote increased connectivity within and between existing communities and improve the safety, function, and efficiency of vehicular movement within the County.

Objectives

1. Ensure adequate resources are made available for the maintenance of County roads and public rights-of-way.
2. Protect and improve the function of the street network through controlled access, land-use decisions, and street/intersection design improvements.
3. Promote the expansion of roadways that service office/research/industrial land uses, and support construction of new arterial roads to service development areas that currently lack major roads.
4. Support the movement of goods and passengers by rail.
5. Identify potential opportunity and problem areas in the transportation network that may result from changes to U.S. 31.

Environmental Features

Goal

Make wise land use decisions that recognize the qualities of natural resources and the environment, that protect environmentally sensitive areas, and that provide aesthetically pleasing places.

- 1. Promote land uses that:
 - Maintain the integrity of regional natural systems;
 - Preserve natural features;
 - Minimize the impact on land, water, energy, and other natural resources; and
 - Promote soil development and minimize air pollution.
- 2. Promote the designation and management of greenways to:
 - Link open space areas within the County;
 - Preserve environmentally sensitive corridors;
 - Connect existing trails and public open space; and
 - Enhance recreational opportunities for hiking, biking, and other trail uses.
- 3. Protect environmentally sensitive areas from negative impacts of adjacent land uses.

- 4. Promote the preservation of native trees and vegetation and promote native tree planting and the use of native planting materials in landscaping.
- 5. Ensure an adequate supply of local community park space servicing municipalities and inhabited areas.
- 6. Ensure a robust network of local and regional recreational trails and paths.
- 7. Adopt land use, zoning, and development priorities that are based on natural resource constraints and opportunities, particularly streams, wetlands, and their respective watersheds and recharge areas.
- 8. Protect streams and wetlands through permanent protection methods such as conservation easements, nature preserve dedication, and/or public acquisition.
- 9. Preserve and enhance flood hazard areas, wetlands, and drainageways and their natural functions, including stormwater storage and flood control.
- 10. Update regulatory floodplain maps based on conservative assumptions of existing and future land use.
- 11. Require effective stormwater detention and runoff-reducing best management practices for redevelopment, in addition to new development.

Community Facilities

Goal

Ensure the provision of high-quality public facilities, including special and educational facilities, for all residents of the Tipton County.

Objectives

- 1. Continue to support the Tipton Community School Corporation and Tri-Central Community Schools, striving to constantly improve the quality of education available in the County.
- 2. Examine education requirements of targeted industries and work with existing employers, educational institutions, and not-for-profit organizations to create appropriate workforce training programs.
- 3. Work with municipalities to promote historic preservation and adaptive reuse of significant structures throughout the County.
- 4. Promote and provide for adequate, affordable access to current technological and communications services for all County residents.
- 5. Preserve, develop, and promote multi-faceted cultural tourism resources, such as historical resources, agritourism, and local and regional attractions or points-of-interest.

Infrastructure and Development

Goal

Maintain high-quality, environmentally friendly, and efficient infrastructure systems and networks through regular investment and maintenance to meet the changing needs of the County today and in the future.

Objectives

- 1. Continue to pursue special projects, such as the Big Cicero Creek overflow channel, to alleviate particularly flood-prone areas.
- 2. Continue to support and pursue alternative energy projects.
- 3. Periodically reevaluate the zoning regulations regarding wind farms to ensure they comply with the most up to date practices and technology.
- 4. Identify strategies for providing basic services including water and sewer to developed areas throughout Tipton County, including cooperation and coordination with local municipalities and service providers.
- 5. Monitor the condition of key County facilities, such as the jail and courthouse, and establish a timeframe for all expected future renovation or replacement projects.
- 6. Encourage all future development in the County to concentrate near existing infrastructure and maximize the use and efficiency of existing facilities.
- 7. Support the capital improvement projects identified by the North Central Indiana Regional Plan as outlined on page 8 of **Section 1: Community Profile**.

Economic Development

Goal

Develop and undertake new programs directed at substantially increasing the number and type of primary sector jobs within in the County.

Objectives

- 1. Reduce the proportion of Tipton County residents travelling outside the County for employment.
- 2. Identify potential economic development opportunities surrounding the U.S. Route 31 corridor in light of on-going improvements.
- 3. Build on and continue to implement the 2008 Economic Development Strategy as a basis for strengthening retail, service, office, and industrial uses throughout the County.
- 4. Support the economic development recommendations presented in the North Central Indiana Regional Plan.
- 5. Identify small business assistance programs to stabilize and improve conditions for existing businesses.
- 6. Enhance the appearance of commercial districts to attract businesses and customers, particularly major corridors and local downtowns.
- 7. Seek opportunities for new employment growth through the retention and expansion of existing employers.
- 8. Develop and implement a strategic marketing and recruitment plan for targeted businesses types.
- 9. Promote the County’s commercial corridors and downtowns through joint marketing efforts, community events, and district identification signage.
- 10. Coordinate planning and economic development activities in a manner which provides regular opportunities for contact between business and development interests within the County.

Section 4

Land Use & Development Plan

Tipton County, Indiana

Comprehensive Plan

The Land Use and Development Plan presents appropriate land uses for the future development of Tipton County. The Land Use and Development Plan is the result of community input, sound planning principles, and is influenced by local geography and existing land use. Tipton County’s agricultural heritage and historic land use patterns have had a significant impact on the County’s recent development and continue to influence land use decisions today.

The following section identifies desired land uses for the unincorporated areas of the County, including areas within the planning jurisdiction of incorporated municipalities. A brief discussion of these land uses is accompanied by key guiding principles intended to direct and influence the character of development. The Land Use and Development Plan also includes a Growth and Development Framework that provides policies related to when and how development should occur, as well as a detailed discussion of the important US 31/SR 28 area.

Coordination

While local communities have the option of exercising planning jurisdiction over unincorporated areas within two miles of their borders, the Comprehensive plan identifies desired land uses for these areas to facilitate coordination between Tipton County and local municipalities. This coordination is of particular importance with regard to the provision of municipal services and infrastructure. Currently only the City of Tipton exercises extra-jurisdictional control.

Seeking Local Input

Concentrating development in areas near or adjacent to existing communities is a key strategy to promoting agricultural preservation and encouraging the efficient use existing infrastructure. The County should evaluate various avenues for seeking input from local communities. In particular, the Tipton County Plan Commission should consider augmenting its procedures to allow for review/comment by local municipalities on proposed development. When considering a proposed development plan approval, subdivision approval or rezoning within one mile of an incorporated town, the Plan Commission could require the applicant to send formal notice to local Town Council and request a formal review and report on the proposed project from local officials.

Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan includes six land use designations. As defined here, each land use designation consists of a primary land use to be supported by other uses of complementary scale and purpose. The Tipton County Comprehensive Plan land uses are defined as follows:

Agricultural

Areas where agriculture is to remain the predominant land use. Residential development consists of single family homes. The Agricultural land use designation also includes research and development uses related to agriculture, referred to as agribusiness.

Town Residential

Residential uses located within and in areas surrounding Tipton County’s incorporated towns and unincorporated communities. This use consists primarily of single family homes, along with some single-family attached and multi-family structures. Town residential uses may include complementary small scale, neighborhood commercial uses and institutional uses such as a town hall or fire department.

Commercial

Commercial uses located along the US 31 and SR 28 corridors serve a combination of passing motorists and local residents. Commercial uses are designed to reflect the rural character of their surroundings while minimizing impacts on adjacent agricultural and residential areas.

Commercial and industrial development along the US 31 corridor needs to be developed according to the US 31 Overlay District regulations in the zoning Ordinance.

Industrial

Industrial areas located along the US 31 corridor and on the outskirts of incorporated towns and unincorporated communities, providing local employment options. Businesses could include a variety of uses such as agribusiness, commercial service and contracting services, light assembly, or storage and distribution. Although not ideally located adjacent to residential development, these uses can be somewhat compatible as long as sufficient, setbacks, screening, and landscaping is provided and local transportation mitigates the potential for commercial truck traffic in residential areas.

Natural Areas

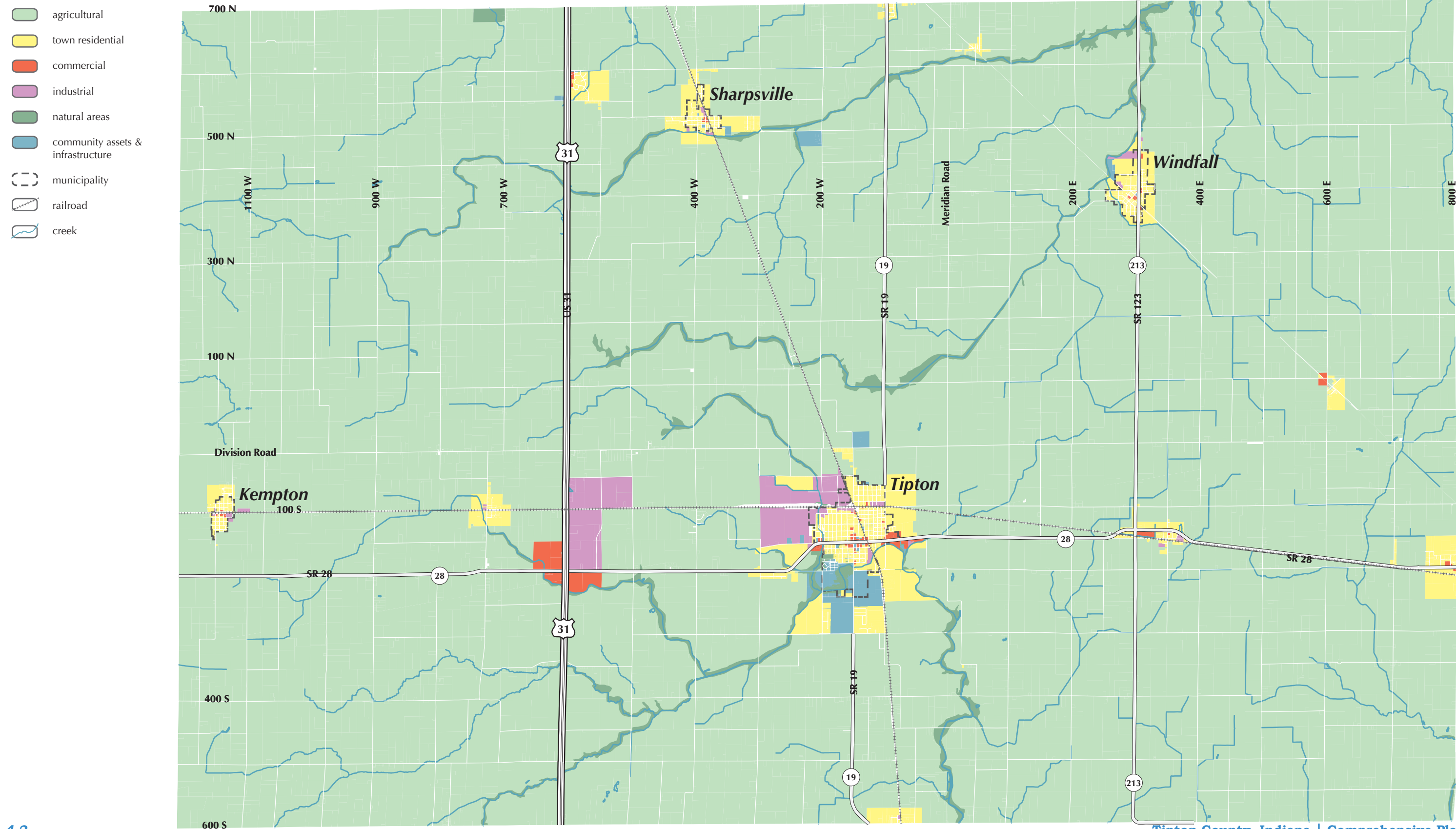
A County-wide network of greenways made up of interconnected creek corridors, wooded areas, and wetlands. Natural areas represent opportunities for conservation and recreation, including the establishment of regional parks.

Community Assets & Infrastructure

This land use includes a range of key community assets such as school facilities, water and sewer treatment facilities, Tipton Hospital, museums, and public safety facilities.



Land Use Plan



Guiding Principles

The Comprehensive Plan Guiding Principles will assist officials and staff in future decision making regarding land use and development, including the prioritization of public improvements. They are intended to guide investment and development throughout the County and are to be applied wherever feasible and appropriate.

Agricultural

The following guiding principles deal with the most significant issues facing agriculture and its associated uses.

Agricultural Preservation

Nearly the entire land area of the County is made up of prime farmland and agriculture has formed the base of the Tipton economy and culture since the County’s formation in 1844. Agricultural preservation should continue to be a priority in the County’s Agricultural areas and prime farmland should be protected to the greatest extent possible without negatively impacting the development opportunities for the Tipton County community. The County should strive to prevent the premature conversion of agricultural land and open space, and promote its continued agricultural use until farming is no longer feasible or desirable by the landowners.

Efficient Growth

Although the County’s agricultural areas are spotted with some residential properties and isolated developments, any new, large-scale development in remote Agricultural areas should be discouraged. New development should maximize the use of existing infrastructure by concentrating in areas currently served by municipal services or areas where such services can be readily extended in an efficient manner. Furthermore, the character and scale of development should respect the character of surrounding areas.

Confined Feeding Operations

Confined feeding operations should continue to be viewed as an asset to the Tipton County economy. In an effort to limit the potential for future land use conflicts and provide room for expansion of confined feeding operations, the County invested considerable resources in creating design standards for confined feeding operations including the establishment of a reciprocal setback of 1,320 feet between confined feeding operations and non-agricultural uses. Although a larger setback of 2,500 feet was initially considered, the zoning ordinance process determined that a smaller setback was most beneficial. Current regulations appear to be working well, allowing confined feeding operations a reasonable opportunity to grow while minimizing impacts on surrounding uses. The County should remain vigilant on this important matter to ensure that future development conflicts do not arise.

Agribusiness

In addition to several family owned agribusiness operations Tipton County is home to several regional, national and international agribusiness companies. The location characteristics of existing agribusiness uses vary widely, with some located in remote Agricultural areas and other located immediately adjacent existing communities and neighborhoods. Though they have an agriculture-related focus, agribusiness uses can function similar to commercial or industrial uses, and should be appropriately buffered from adjacent residential areas.

Furthermore, while smaller users may be able to function independent of municipal water and sewer, larger agribusiness users should be located in areas that can be efficiently served by local municipalities. Given the land intensive nature of agribusiness users, their location should be encouraged in areas on the outskirts of existing communities, allowing room for expansion of the business and community with minimal conflict.

Rural Residential

Family-owned and operated farms are the primary land use in Tipton County and small farmsteads and rural residential development is a necessary complement to these agricultural uses. Residential development within the County’s Agricultural areas should continue to be limited to single family homes associated with agricultural uses. Multi-lot subdivisions should be discouraged within Agricultural areas in favor of locations within or adjacent to the County’s established towns and unincorporated communities.

Wind Energy

With minimal population growth anticipated in the near to mid-future, wind energy represents one of the most significant factors currently having an impact on the Tipton County landscape. As of the writing of this plan a 100 megawatt wind farm has been recently completed in the northeast part of the County and a second project has been proposed for the northwest portion of the County. Given Tipton County’s favorable wind speeds in rural areas capable of accommodating commercial wind turbines, additional wind energy projects may be proposed in the future.

While the County has regulations in place to guide wind farm development as a conditional use within select zoning districts, these regulations do not go far enough in regulating wind farm development in relation to other land uses and the County’s residential areas and commercial corridors. The County should evaluate the use of an overlay district to identify the areas where wind farms are desired, regardless of underlying zoning district. Additional discussion regarding wind farm regulations is located in **Section 7: County Facilities and Infrastructure**.



Town Residential

Town Residential land use should be concentrated within areas immediately surrounding existing communities and within or adjacent to the service area of existing water and sewer infrastructure. These areas should also be integrated into the existing local roadway network.

Single Family Character

Town residential uses are intended to accommodate the growth of the County’s existing towns and unincorporated communities. The character of new development should be reflective of the existing residential neighborhoods in nearby community. Town residential areas should consist of predominantly single family development with single family attached or multi-family uses adjacent to areas of more intense development.

Local Goods and Services

Ancillary uses including commercial development and civic uses should also located in Town Residential areas to provide goods and services to the local population. Such development should be small in scale and designed to complement nearby residential uses.

Commercial

Future commercial development should be limited to the US 31 and SR 28 corridors and areas in and around existing communities.

Existing Commercial Districts

Reinvestment and the redevelopment and expansion of commercial properties should be encouraged within Tipton County’s towns and unincorporated communities. The City of Tipton has an established downtown that is the commercial center of the County. The other downtown areas, most notably downtown Windfall, also have businesses serving local residents. If residential development expands in the areas surrounding existing communities, commercial development and reinvestment should also be encouraged to better serve the local need for goods and services.

Downtown Revitalization

Though all were once at the heart of thriving railroad communities, Tipton County’s downtown areas have suffered in recent years. Vacancies and poor maintenance are issues in these areas, negatively affecting the values and aesthetics of their surroundings. While County-wide policy may not directly impact these incorporated commercial areas, the County could support programs intended to benefit local small business and startups that typically occupy downtown storefronts.

US 31/SR 28

As the location of a large manufacturing plant as well as a potential future interchange, the crossroads of the US 31 and SR 28 presents a significant opportunity for commercial development. Commercial uses, including retailers, restaurants and office uses, should be encouraged to locate on the northwest, southwest and southeast corners of the US 31/SR 28 intersection. The County’s long term vision for the areas surrounding this intersection is detailed in the US 31/SR 28 section at the end of this chapter.

Industrial

Future industrial development should be limited to the US 31 corridor and areas surrounding existing communities.

US 31/SR 28

The existing manufacturing facility located at the intersection of US 31 and SR 28 is the location of a proposed transmission plant for Chrysler. The plant, which is to undergo \$163 million in investment, will eventually employ an estimated 850 jobs. The County should encourage additional industrial development in the areas surrounding this major employer. Additional industrial development should be considered for areas to the north and northeast where infrastructure and services can be provided by the City of Tipton.

Attractive, Coordinated Development

The County should consider the adoption of industrial design guidelines. As with commercial development along the US 31 corridor, industrial development should be visually appealing, utilize screening and buffering to limit the visibility from neighboring agricultural and residential areas. The manufacturing facility located at US 31 and SR 28 is a positive example of attractive industrial development. Where possible, industrial development featuring multiple users should be planned in a comprehensive manner resulting in a campus-like setting with a unified aesthetic and coordinated transportation access and circulation.

Transportation Focus

In addition to local infrastructure, access to major roadways and rail facilities is a key operational factor for industrial users. The County should pursue improvements to US 31, SR 28, and Division Road to enhance truck transportation routes, including the realignment and extension of CR 560 W to a widened CR 550 W. The presence of a siding along the Norfolk Southern railroad also creates the potential to establish rail freight access for future industrials uses located along the CR 100 S corridor.

Natural Areas

The Natural Areas designation highlights an integrated network of creek corridors, wetlands and wooded areas, trails and regional parks.

Greenways

Greenways consisting of natural and artificial natural areas should be established along Tipton County’s numerous creeks and surrounding valuable environmental features. Greenways serve to protect environmental features and provide recreation opportunities. Conservation strategies, such as vegetated buffers, wetland restoration, and naturalized swales, should be established surrounding creek corridors.

Regional Parks

The greenways network, along with key community assets, will serve as an anchor for potential locations for regional parks and trail corridors. These parks will provide a combination of passive and active recreation amenities needed in areas where Tipton County residents are underserved by parks and recreation.

Community Assets & Infrastructure

Community assets and infrastructure uses represent facilities and institutions that should to be enhanced and expanded to continue to support the high quality of life enjoyed by Tipton County residents. Detailed recommendations regarding Tipton County’s community assets and infrastructure are located in Section 7: County Facilities and Infrastructure Plan.

Growth & Development Framework

The following growth and development framework is intended to complement the future land use discussion provided in the previous section. While the land use plan indicates the desired character of future development, the Growth and Development Framework provides guidance as to when and how development should occur. Five different growth area types have been identified, each carrying with it a unique set of considerations for when different land use and development patterns should be encouraged.

Town Planning Jurisdiction

As indicated previously, Indiana municipalities have the option of exercising planning jurisdiction over areas within a two-mile radius of their corporate limits. Counties in Indiana have planning jurisdiction over all other areas. Until an area is incorporated, the County has authority over a range of items, perhaps the most significant being zoning. As such, the planning areas surrounding the Towns of Kempton, Sharpsville, Tipton and Windfall represent areas where coordination and cooperation is critical.

Land use within Town Jurisdictions should generally adhere to the Agricultural land use designation unless a proposed development, such as a large employer or institution, will have a significant and measurable positive impact on the local community. Non-Agricultural land use should be strongly encouraged to locate adjacent to or within existing municipalities and make efficient use of established infrastructure.

Town Growth Area

Given decades of stable or declining population, it is unlikely that local municipalities will grow and expand to include the areas within the Town Jurisdiction growth areas. The Town Growth Area designation represents the areas in which future development should be concentrated to make the most efficient use of existing infrastructure and enhance the vitality of existing neighborhoods and commercial districts.

US 31 Development Corridor

Improvements are currently underway to make the U.S. Route 31 corridor in Hamilton County function as a limited access highway and provide a bypass of Kokomo just to the north of Tipton. These improvements will enhance north-south mobility through the region.

Though a new interchange may be established in the future, the SR 28 intersection will represent the last area of commercial activity outside of Kokomo approaching from the south. The completion of the U.S. Route 31 Kokomo Bypass will impact the potential for commercial and industrial development throughout central Tipton County.

Development should be encouraged where commercial and light industrial uses are already taking hold and infrastructure is already provided or can be readily extended. These target areas include portions of the U.S. Route 31 corridor surrounding the SR 28 intersection as well as the northern portion of the corridor to the west of Sharpsville near CR 550 N. Additional discussion of the County’s vision for this area is located in the US 31/SR28 section at the end of this chapter.

SR 28 & CR 550/600 N

The County should support a nodal approach to development surrounding the intersections of SR 28 and CR 550/600 N with US 31. Development should be concentrated in areas immediately surrounding these intersections and then expand outward as needed. It should be noted that a conservation easement established at a local farm, creates an eastern boundary to development to the north of SR 28 at US 31.

Use of Municipal Services

New development should be concentrated in areas with access to municipal services and infrastructure. Areas surrounding the US 31 and SR 28 intersection should be connected to the water and sewer facilities provided through the Tipton Municipal Utilities that are located along CR 560 W. These facilities currently have excess capacity and are designed to easily accommodate expansion if future demand warrants it. Commercial development elsewhere in Tipton County should be located near or adjacent to existing municipalities capable of providing services.

Other Corridor Areas

Corridor-related development should be encouraged elsewhere in the corridor. The remote-nature of these areas in relation to Tipton County’s existing communities and related lack of infrastructure may limit the potential for large scale development. The potentially costly extension of utilities and other municipal infrastructure to these more remote areas should be limited.

Unincorporated Growth Area

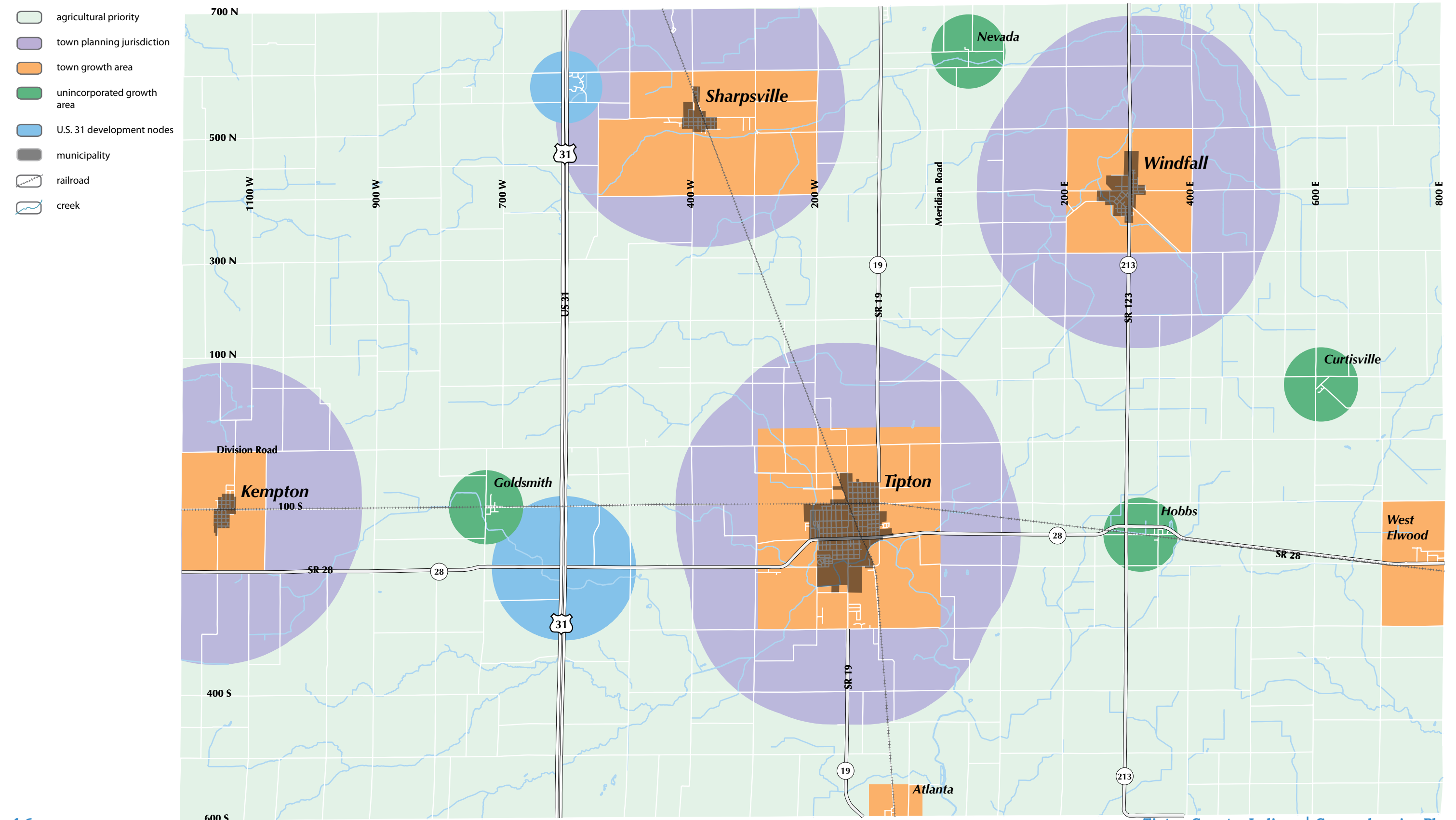
In addition to County’s four incorporated towns, the County is also the location of several small unincorporated communities comprising small clusters of homes and small scale commercial and industrial uses. Similar to the Town Growth Area designation, development within the Unincorporated Growth Area should be promoted in areas immediately surrounding Tipton County’s unincorporated communities. Residential uses and complementary commercial development should be concentrated in nodes within a half-mile of existing homes.

Agricultural Priority

Areas outside of the other growth area designations should generally adhere to the Agricultural land use designation. Aside from rural land uses, only large scale developments of County-wide or regional significance with significant tangible benefits, should be considered in these areas. In considering development, agricultural preservation should take priority and site planning strategies such as buffering should be utilized to minimize the impacts of non-agricultural uses when such uses are deemed appropriate.



Growth & Development Framework



US 31/SR 28 Area

The intersection of US 31 and SR 28 has emerged as the most significant opportunity for growth and development within Tipton County. In addition to being at the crossroads of a two major routes of increasing regional importance, the intersection is home to a manufacturing facility that will soon employ an estimated 850 people in the heart of Tipton County. This portion of the Land Use and Development Plan describes the County’s long term vision for the areas surrounding the US 31 and SR 28 intersection and identifies key factors and strategies to be considered as development occurs.

County-wide Significance

Chrysler recently announced it would invest \$162 million to bring the former Getrag Transmission Plant on-line, creating 850 new jobs in Tipton County. The plant could open as early as the end of 2014 and will represent the most significant project in Tipton County over the last several decades. The importance of this project goes beyond the number of jobs created. The multiplier effect associated with manufacturing creates the potential for additional development in other sectors of the Tipton County economy. These jobs will create a larger ripple effect including opportunities for complementary industrial development, increased demand for commercial goods and services, and a need for new housing.

Long Term Vision

The area surrounding the intersection of US 31 and SR 28 should be developed as a new commercial and industrial hub, strengthening Tipton County’s position within the region and serving to attract new families and additional investment. Development in the US 31/SR 28 area should aspire to a higher standard than elsewhere in the County. When taken as a whole, all new and existing development in the US 31/SR 28 area should portray a positive image of the Tipton County community as a desirable place in which to work, shop, dine and raise a family.

Commercial Development

850 employees may soon be visiting the US 31/SR 28 area on a daily basis. When combined with a key location along a corridor of regional importance, the area is poised for commercial development. Commercial uses should be encouraged in the northwest, southwest and southeast quadrants of this area to capitalize on increasing traffic along US 31 and complement industrial and employment-related uses locating near the intersection.

Industrial Development

In addition to jobs within the manufacturing facility itself, the new plant will create additional demand from suppliers such as machine shops and chemical suppliers. While many of the plant’s inputs will come from outside the region, there is the potential to capture some of that demand within Tipton County through the establishment of complementary industrial uses. Expansion of industrial uses should be encouraged in areas to the north of the manufacturing facility as well as areas to the northeast along the Norfolk Southern railroad corridor.

Housing

While new employers locating in the US 31/SR 28 area will create demand for housing in Tipton County, residential development should not occur in this area. New housing development should be encouraged within existing communities and in surrounding areas where services can be readily provided. In addition to larger scale projects, the development of vacant lots and replacement of aging housing should be encouraged. This is intended to strengthen existing communities and increase demand for local commercial uses.

Infrastructure

If municipal water service is looped between the City of Tipton and the water plant at US 31/SR 28, it will create the potential for increased development in the area between Tipton and US 31. Should development occur within this predominantly agricultural area, future development should consist of commercial development along the SR 28 corridor, with residential development in surrounding areas.

Development Regulations

The County established the U.S. 31 Corridor Overlay District within the Zoning Ordinance to provide higher design standards for the areas within 1,000 feet of the U.S. Route 31 right-of-way as well areas within 1,000 feet of SR 28, one-mile east or west of U.S. Route 31. Given the area’s importance to the broader Tipton County community and the need to create quality development that reflects the County’s desire for signature development, regulations guiding development surrounding in the US 31/SR 28 area should be further bolstered. The following discussion includes a review of existing regulations and areas that should be further addressed.

Current Policies

The US 31 Corridor Overlay District deals with a range of issues and includes requirements for:

- Building orientation toward U.S. Route 31;
- Burying utility lines as development occurs;
- Prohibiting the use of metal walls in building facades and encouraging masonry and glass wall construction;
- Screening mechanical equipment from public rights-of-way and residential properties;
- Prohibiting pole signs and limiting sign placement and size; and,
- Providing access roads as the primary means of entry to properties fronting U.S. Route 31.

Access Management

The County’s existing US 31 Corridor Overlay District regulations go a long way to regulating access management, but should be periodically reviewed and updated as needed. Where possible, direct access to US 31 and nearby portions of SR 28 should be limited. Access to commercial development in these areas should be provided by access drives connected to intersecting roadways. Cross easement access should also be encouraged to consolidate access drives of adjoining commercial developments and minimize curb cuts along US 31 and other major roads.



Signage Restrictions

Overlay district regulations prohibit the use of freestanding signs along U.S. Route 31. While eliminating pole signs will have a positive aesthetic impact on the corridor, this restriction combined with a 7 foot maximum on permitted monument signs may limit the ability of commercial uses along the corridor to capture traffic from the adjacent highway. The U.S. Route 31 corridor is anticipated to play a key role in economic development within Tipton County and it is important that corridor overlay regulations do not adversely impact future commercial and industrial development. The County should evaluate sign height and sign area requirements to ensure that they are appropriate for the setback distances and speed of traffic along the corridor.

Design Standards

Many of the regulations detailed in the US 31 Corridor Overlay District deal with setback and access requirements. However, site development standards within the overlay district regarding other items, such as parking and landscaping, refer back to County-wide standards. These County-wide regulations do not adequately guide the form and function of commercial development within the US 31/SR 28 area and the County should consider adopting additional design standards to be applied within this area. New standards should ensure that new commercial development is beneficial to private investors while improving the image and identity of Tipton County.

- The following general guidelines provide a starting point for future standards:
- In addition to requiring high quality materials, **architectural detail should also be encouraged on all four sides** of commercial and industrial structures.
 - While all buildings should employ “360 degree architecture,” **primary frontages should be oriented toward US 31 and SR 28.**
 - Service or loading areas, as well as mechanical equipment, should be **screened from the view of public rights-of-way** using a combination of berms, landscaping and hardscape materials.
 - **Parking lots should be separated from roadways and enhanced** with perimeter landscaping, landscaped islands, pedestrian scale lighting, and protected walkways.
 - Sites should have adequate access, but **excessive curb cuts and driveways should be avoided.**
 - On-site detention and retention areas as well as existing **creeks should be naturalized and integrated within development** to serve as site amenities.
 - **Clustered commercial development** featuring shared parking facilities should be encouraged.
 - **Unified gateway and wayfinding signage** should be encouraged at major intersections.
 - The use of covenants should be encouraged to **establish consistent style and character of design** within individual commercial complexes and industrial parks.
 - **Increase the setback for access roads** from the highway at SR 28 and Division Road to accommodate interchange right-of-way.

Detailed Study

Given its increasing importance to County-wide economic development, the intersection of US 31 and SR 28 and surrounding areas should be the subject of further planning and study. The County should seek out grants or initiatives, such as the Urban Land Institute’s Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program, to create a detailed plan for this area including the identification of strategies to better leverage the area’s excellent transportation access and employment assets.

In pursuing additional study of this important area, the following factors should be taken into consideration.

Development Assets

Various infrastructure improvements have either been made or are underway to facilitate further investment and development in the SR 28 area.

Excess/Expandable Utility Capacity

Modular sewer treatment and water plants located in the areas to the north and east of the manufacturing facility create the potential to expand utility capacity as development occurs.

Access Road Development

Significant progress has been made with regard to engineering and funding for improvements to CR 550 W and CR 560 W. These two roadways will be aligned with one another and an improved railroad crossing will be established, forming a continuance local roadway link between SR 28 and Division Road. This roadway could function as an access road for future commercial or industrial development in this area.

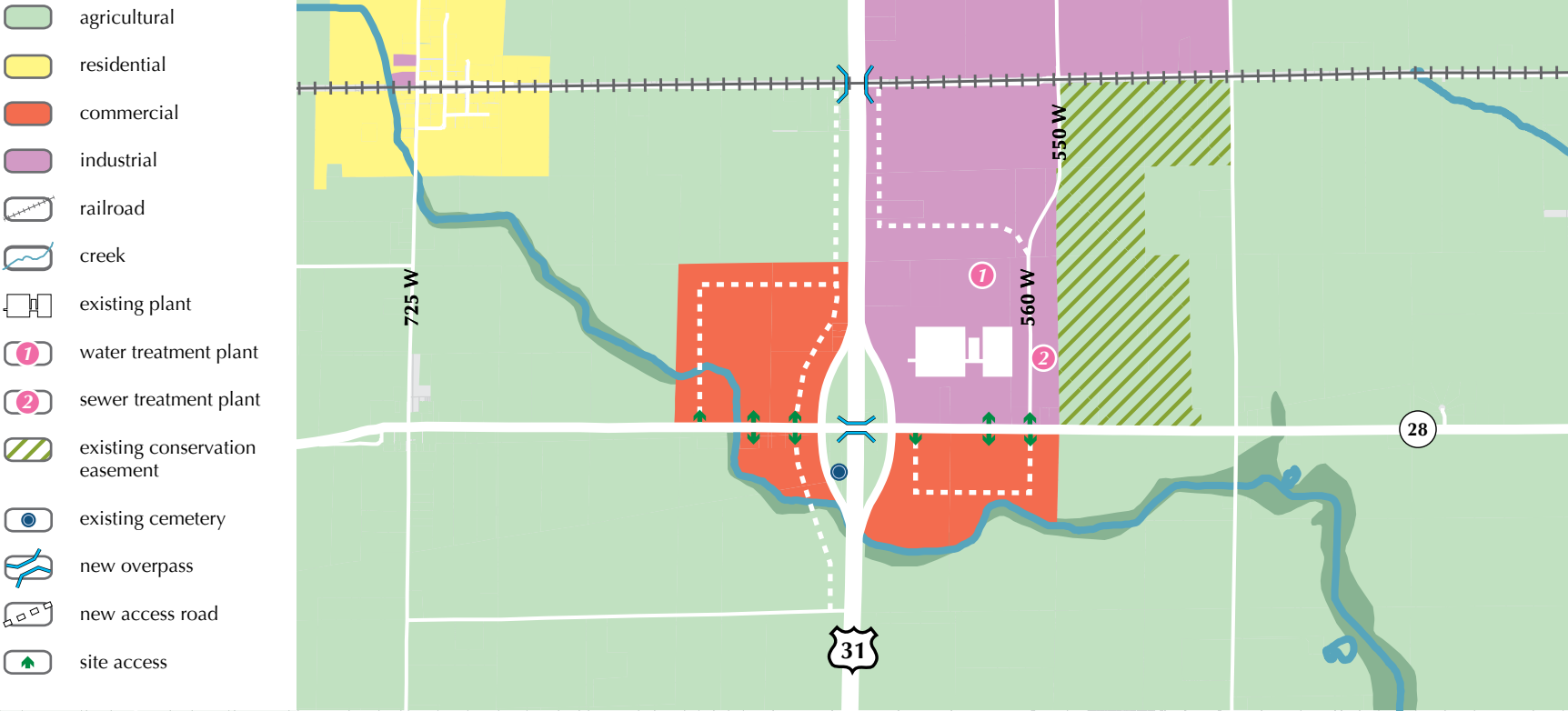
Lack of Development

Aside from the manufacturing facility and several small commercial properties, the area surrounding the intersection of US 31 and SR 28 is largely undeveloped. The northwest, southwest and southeast corners of the intersection are predominantly agriculture.

Norfolk Southern Railroad

The Norfolk Southern Railroad operates a line that parallels CR 100 S to the north of the US 31/SR 28 area. The Norfolk Southern currently provides freight service to several nearby industrial users and could be an asset to future industrial development in the US 31/SR 28 area.

Potential Development Framework



US 31 Improvements

INDOT is in the process of improving US 31 as a limited access highway in both Howard County to the north and Hamilton County to the south. In planning for the eventual extension of similar improvements though Tipton County, the SR 28 intersection is the likely location of a future interchange. US 31 is becoming increasingly important to the region and represents a significant source of potential consumer traffic for businesses to be located near the intersection.

Development Constraints

Several land use features will constrain where and how development occurs within the US 31/SR 28 area.

Cemetery

A small cemetery is located approximately 800 feet south of SR 28 along the west side of US 31. In addition to preserving the cemetery itself, access to the cemetery will also need to be secured if US 31 is improved as a divided highway or development occurs in the southwest corner of the US 31/SR 28 area. As shown in the graphic, the alignment of the southbound US 31 on-ramp may need to be altered from a more typical alignment to avoid the cemetery.

Conservation Easement

A conservation easement has been established on a local farm located immediately east of CR 560 W at SR 28. This easement will prevent the development of the property and forms a firm eastern boundary to commercial or industrial development in the area. Any development to be located north of SR 28 will have to utilize Division Road and CR 550/560 W for access.

Dixon Creek

Dixon Creek parallels SR 28 near US 31 before turning to the northwest approximately one-quarter mile west of US 31. The creek does not represent a constraint to the extent of where development can occur, but rather a factor that should be accommodated within future development. While the creek is currently channelized, new development in the US 31/SR 28 area should seek to incorporate the creek as a natural amenity and asset to the project.

Lack of Service

Water and sewer have not been extended to areas west of US 31 right-of-way. Given the lack of existing development and extent of uninterrupted frontage along both US 31 and SR 28, the property located on the northwest corner of the intersection may be the most attractive to near term commercial development provided municipal services are extended west.

In light of plans by INDOT to build an interchange at US 31 and SR 28, it is of vital importance to extend service to the west side of US 31, serving both sides of SR 28. If service is not extended in coordination with development of the interchange, at a minimum, conduit should be installed to facilitate the extension of services in the future.

Market Study

A market study is needed to determine the potential demand for goods and services. The study should estimate potential local demand from Tipton and immediate areas, as well as broader opportunities resulting from new limited access highways in Hamilton and Howard Counties. The potential increased demand by the traveling public as a result of bypassing substantial existing commercial outlets in Kokomo needs to be quantified as well as opportunities resulting from the Chrysler development.



Section 5

Transportation & Mobility Plan

Tipton County, Indiana

Comprehensive Plan

Tipton County’s Transportation and Mobility Plan is intended as a guide to assist the County in developing and maintaining a comprehensive transportation system that enhances mobility, connectivity, and safety for the efficient movement of people and goods. The recommendations in this Plan support the County’s initiative to create a safe and continuous County-wide road network which can accommodate multi-modal travel.

Functional Classification

Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes based on the service of traffic that they are intended to provide. INDOT’s Functional Class map designates roadways as interstates, other freeways or expressways, principal and minor arterials, and major and minor collectors. The remaining roadways, which are not shown on the map are considered local roads. The County’s 2008 Thoroughfare Plan further simplifies the functional classification groups into INDOT roadways, arterials, collectors, or local streets. Roads within the County are grouped into these categories based on the character of traffic and the degree of land access that is provided, as indicated by the graphic on the right. The following is a detailed description of the four primary functional classifications within Tipton County:



INDOT Arterials

This classification includes the roadways within Tipton County that are under the jurisdiction of INDOT. This includes US 31, SR 28, SR 19, and SR 213. These roadways are typically designed with a high level of mobility and therefore carry a larger volume of vehicles per day, including an increased number of trucks. Any improvements made to INDOT arterials along with additional access points must be reviewed and approved by the state.

Arterials

Arterials provide the highest level of service at the greatest speed, while maintaining some degree of access control. Arterials serve as a supplement to interstates and regional highways. Posted speed limits will vary based on the adjacent land uses and may be as low as 30 mph for central business districts or as high as 55 in areas that are more rural. Division Road is an example of a key east-west arterial through the heart of Tipton County.

Collectors

Collector roads are low to moderate capacity roadways that move traffic from local streets to arterials through shorter connections and at lower speeds, usually between 25 and 35 mph. Collector roads are important as they link residential areas and other major community facilities within the County to the arterial network. There are numerous collector roads throughout Tipton County, including CR 100 East and CR 200 North.

Local Roads

Local roadways are considered all roadways not designated as state routes, arterials, or collectors within Tipton County. They primarily provide a high degree of access to adjacent properties, but a lower level of mobility.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are critical to providing safe and convenient alternative travel for those within Tipton County. A plan to include bicycle and pedestrian facilities on future roadway improvement projects, as well as strategically identifying existing locations that would benefit from the addition of such facilities, should be completed by the County. Improvements to or additions of bicycle and pedestrian facilities will promote a healthier lifestyle of those throughout the County and provide increased connectivity to surrounding areas, such as the City of Kokomo’s existing trail network. Additionally, implementing a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan would be beneficial as opportunities to obtain federal funding for improving pedestrian facilities become available. Communities with existing plans in place and that are actively working toward improving walkability and bikeability are more likely to be awarded such funding. Section 6: Environmental Features and Open Space Plan has more recommendations for bicycle and pedestrian trails.

Complete Streets

Streets designed for only vehicular traffic flow limit transportation option by making walking, biking and utilizing public transportation inconvenient and dangerous. It is critical that the County work toward enhancing the safety, mobility, and accessibility for all modes of transportation through development of a Complete Streets Policy. Implementing Complete Streets will ensure that the County continually strives to plan, design, operate, and maintain a road network that will serve buses, bicycles, and pedestrians, in addition to passenger cars and commercial truck traffic. Complete Streets may include components such as sidewalks, bike lanes, paved shoulders, safe crossing opportunities, median islands, pedestrian signals, etc. Although a complete street in a rural area may look very different than one within an urban area, both accomplish the same goal of allowing for safe, multi-modal travel.

Existing & Future Traffic Volumes

INDOT periodically updates average daily traffic counts on state routes throughout Indiana. The most recent traffic data available for Tipton County is year 2010 traffic volumes, which also include data for commercial vehicle counts. These volumes include various segments of US 31, SR 28, SR 19, and SR 213 within the County. Traffic counts, if needed, for other arterials, collectors and local roadways in Tipton County are obtained on an as-needed basis. As future growth in Tipton County occurs, consideration should be given to developing a traffic count program. A data collection program would enable the County to monitor traffic flow patterns and growth, which would be beneficial in forecasting where future roadway improvements may be necessary.



Accident Data

Crash records are maintained at the Tipton County Sheriff’s office and utilized to determine where safety improvements may be required on the existing road network. A general review of the state’s Automated Reporting Information Exchange System (ARIES) for crash data within Tipton County yielded 205 accidents resulting in 93 injuries (no fatalities) over the last two years. The accidents occurred in various areas throughout the County with no apparent pattern as to the locations and frequencies of the crashes.

Additionally, INDOT completes the Five-Percent Report on an annual basis, which outlines the most dangerous intersections and road segments in the state based on accident data. None of the locations noted in the 2011 report were within Tipton County. The County should continually review accident data to identify locations where safety improvements may be required.



Roadway Condition Assessment

Tipton County does not have a formal Maintenance Improvement Plan (MIP) for identifying, budgeting, and scheduling future roadway improvements. With roadway conditions ever-changing, repair locations are chosen on an annual basis as determined through a field inspection of all roadways within the County.

Many of the roadways throughout the County are chip seal, which is a cost effective alternative for maintaining lower volume roadways. This maintenance method is preferred by the County which, like many other municipalities, is faced with limited yearly budgets for road improvements. The County has been supplementing the road maintenance budget in a manner that may not be sustainable. Developing an MIP should assist in planning efforts for the contingency of reduced funding.

It is recommended that all costs associated with the maintenance of each roadway segment within the County are documented annually. This information can be used to assign representative costs to future roadway maintenance projects, be used to determine if alternate maintenance procedures are applicable and should be considered in the future, and may provide long-term costs savings to the County.

Established Roadway Network

Overall, the County’s road network is well established and provides good connectivity to surrounding areas such as the City Kokomo to the north and Hamilton County to the south. Other than improving a few strategic connections, the County’s primary focus should be on maintaining and enhancing the infrastructure within the existing road network through widening projects, intersection improvements, drainage improvements, resurfacing as needed, and other improvements.

Connectivity

Tipton County understands that improving connectivity is a critical element of continually enhancing the transportation network. A strong connected roadway system, including pedestrian facilities, will balance traffic distribution on the County’s roadways and reduce travel distances and times.

As future opportunities for connectivity and roadway improvements are considered by the County, an engineering assessment should be conducted to determine the optimal alignments, access points and impact the improvements will have on traffic flow prior to beginning design.

Access to US 31 by way of SR 26

To provide better access to US 31 as a result of losing connectivity by way of CR 600 W, the County should make improvements to CR 400 W from Sharpsville to the Howard County line. Howard county has improved their road from SR 26 south to the Tipton County line which connects with CR 400 W.

Upgrades should also be made to CR 600 N from CR 400 W to the new overpass at US 31. This would benefit Sharpsville and north central Tipton County including the built up area around CR 600 N and US 31.

In addition to improving the flow of traffic through the County, improvements to CR 400 W could have a positive economic impact on Sharpsville. Local businesses could benefit from increased traffic volumes, helping to stabilize development in Sharpsville.

CR 550/560 W Improvement

The initiative to extend 560 W north to connect with 550 W, with an improved RR crossing at CR 100 N should continue toward completion as soon as possible.

These improvements will establish a preferred route for trucks travelling between US 31 and industrial areas in the City of Tipton. The CR 550/560 W connection will be of even greater importance if access to US 31 from Division Road were ever restricted in the future, leaving SR 28 as the primary access point for getting trucks on US 31 to and from Tipton without traveling into the City. If an interchange is provided at Division Road the 550/560 W connection will serve as a high capacity frontage road for development between SR 28 and Division Road with outlets at each end connecting to US 31.

Sharpsville Realignments

The existing road network connecting the Town of Sharpsville to both US 31 and SR 19 has a series of right-angle turns or curves that inhibit access and may present safety issues for motorists. ‘

550 N/525 N Realignment

The T-intersection of CR 525 N and CR 550 W was noted as having a number of accidents with injuries over the last two years. Realignment of the connection of both CR 550 N and CR 525 N with CR 550 W through Sharpsville would enhance safety and improve the accessibility to US 31. This route should also be improved from a collector road to an arterial road to better accomodate traf-fic between US 31 and Sharpsville.

Tri-Central Schools

Realigning CR 500 North to the east of Sharpsville will pose some challenges with maintaining safe and efficient access to and from Tri-Central High School. The optimal alignment of CR 500 North and the adjacent local roads will need to be evaluated and finalized during the design phase. Coordination with representatives of the school corporation is recommended to ensure any realignment will sufficiently accommodate traf-fic flow patterns for both passenger vehicles and buses entering and departing the school.

US 31 Corridor Improvements

Improvements are currently underway to make the US 31 corridor in Hamilton County function as a limited access highway and provide a by-pass of Kokomo just to the north of Tipton. The intent of the improvements is to enhance north-south mobility through areas which are more highly congested.

US 31/SR 28 Interchange

While INDOT has not initiated an Environmental Impact Study for the Tipton section of US 31, the efforts of the US 31 Coalition, of which Tipton County is a member, continues to promote the completion of a limited access highway from Indianapolis to South Bend. The Hamilton County segment to the south and Howard County segment to the north are advanced in terms of funding and construction, placing the Tipton County segment in a strong position. INDOT’s plans for an interchange at the intersection of US 31 and SR 28 increases the likelihood that the Tipton County portion of US 31 will be improved as a limited access highway.

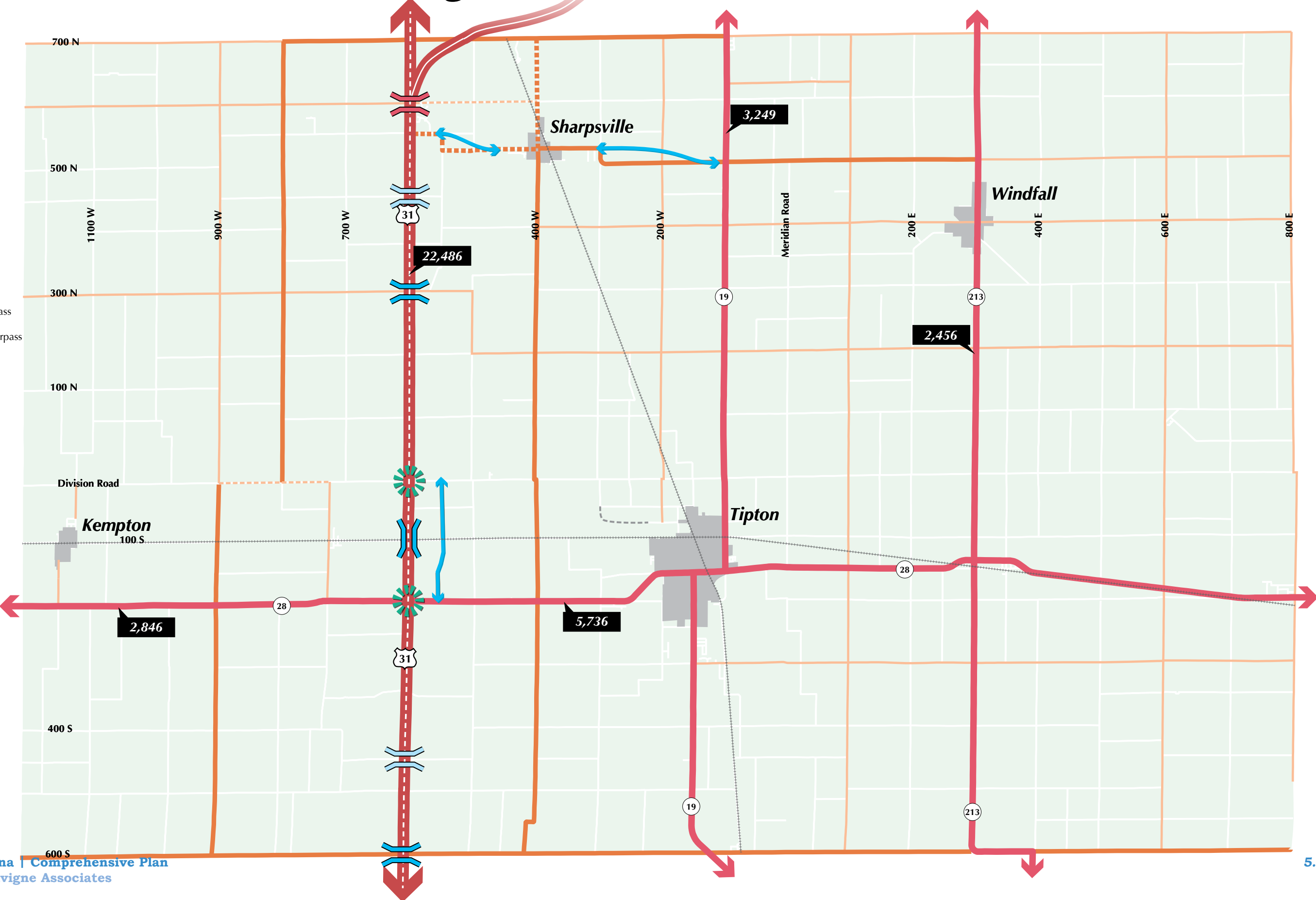
Communicate US 31 Vision

It is incumbent upon all stakeholders in Tipton County to plan for the eventuality of a limited access highway and, as such, utilize planning documents including the Thoroughfare Plan, Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance to communicate a community vision to INDOT and elected officials including legitimate wants and needs relative to transportation planning. Until such time that the Tipton County segment is begun, the importance of the US 31 Corridor to North Central Indiana ensures that the highway will continue to be well maintained and managed by INDOT.

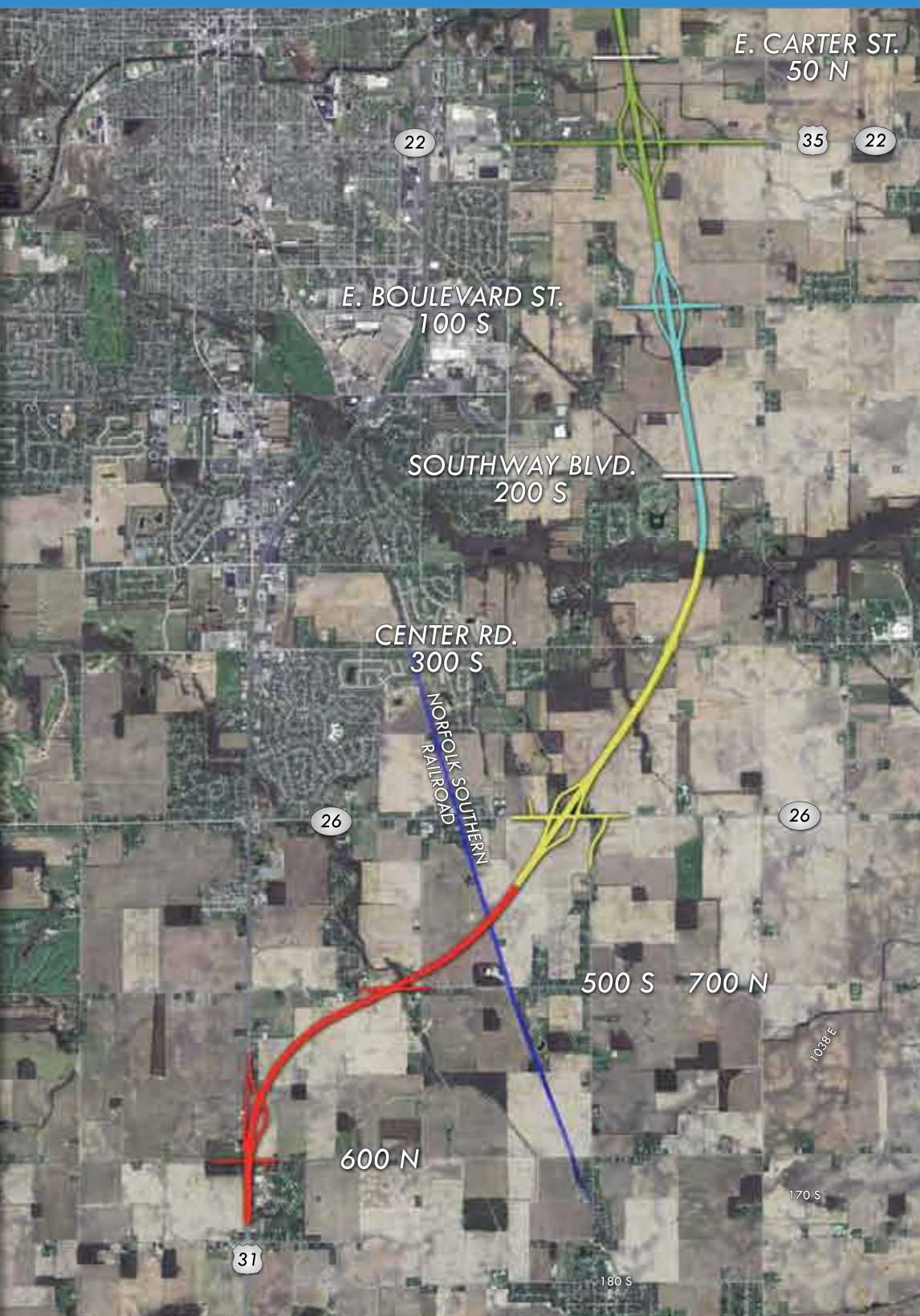
Over the near term, the new Kokomo bypass could have significant impacts on the viability and potential of nearby existing and future commercial land use. A more detailed discussion of the land use around this portion of the U.S. 31 corridor can be found in **Section 4: Land Use and Development Plan**.

Transportation & Mobility Plan

- U.S. Route 31
- Kokomo Bypass
- INDOT arterial
- arterial road
- planned arterial road
- collector road
- planned collector road
- local road
- planned local road
- potential improvement/realignment
- potential primary overpass
- potential secondary overpass
- existing overpass
- potential primary interchange
- railroad
- municipality
- 2011 average annual daily traffic



U.S. Route 31 Bypass



Planning for Future Improvements

Although INDOT has not commenced an Environmental Impact Study for a limited access highway in Tipton County at this time, the County should continue to carefully plan and monitor new developments where future interchanges are desired and/or may be located.

US 31 Interchanges

The Transportation and Mobility Plan indicates two proposed interchanges on US 31 at SR 28 and Division Road.

SR 28 Interchange

The Chrysler plant at US 31 and SR 28 may accelerate the construction of an interchange at that intersection. It is important that the County work with the State and ensure the proper amount of right-of-way is maintained to facilitate construction of interchanges at a later date.

The County currently has an Overlay District set up for the area surrounding US 31 and SR 28 to ensure special attention is given to planning efforts as future growth and development occurs. The Overlay District extends 1000 feet on either side of the US 31 right-of-way the entire length of the County and along SR 28 for one mile and has an access management component that requires frontage roads for new developments.

Division Road Interchange

In addition to the SR 28 interchange planned by INDOT, a second interchange is desired at Division Road. This interchange would facilitate efficient truck access for the Chrysler plant and anticipated future industrial development to the north along CR 550/560 W as well as development along the Norfolk Southern Railroad. The interchange would also enhance access to the existing Northgate Industrial Park in the City of Tipton which would serve to keep truck traffic on Division Road instead of winding through residential neighborhoods to and from SR 28 (Jefferson Street) in the City of Tipton.

Secondary Interchange

If the request for a Division Road interchange is refused by INDOT due to proximity to the planned SR 28 interchange, the County should advocate for a second interchange in the northern section of the County. This interchange would help ensure long term viability of commercial and industrial development within the northern portion of the US 31 corridor.

Right-of-Way Requirements

Prior to design and construction of a new interchange, INDOT typically has an Interchange Justification Study completed. This study evaluates the existing conditions and details the various design alternatives and associated impacts the proposed interchange may have on the area (e.g. costs of construction, amount of right-of-way required, property acquisitions, traffic operations, etc.). The Interchange Justification Study will provide a recommendation on whether a new interchange is a feasible option and identify the preferred interchange type. The type of interchange and actual design characteristics (e.g. use of MSE walls on ramps, survey data, etc.) will impact the amount of right-of-way required to accommodate the footprint of the interchange.

As an example, on a typical diamond interchange, an approximate right-of-way width of 1,200 feet along US 31 (at the widest point to account for the on/off-ramps) would be required to accommodate the interchange; however, the amount of right-of-way needed may vary depending on the type of interchange and actual design (e.g. use of MSE retaining walls on ramps, etc.). Ramps extending from US 31 to SR 28 would travel as estimated 1,600 feet to the north and south of the intersection. Coordination between the County and INDOT will be critical in making the final determination of the area that should be protected from development in consideration of the future interchanges.

The following graphic depicts the general areas in which additional right-of-way may be necessary to accommodate the SR 28 and Division Road interchanges (based on a typical diamond interchange only) and railroad overpass at US 31.

U.S. Route 31 - SR 28 Interchange Right-of-way Requirements



US 31 Overpasses

The Transportation & Mobility Plan identifies primary and secondary overpass locations to facilitate east-west connections across US 31.

Primary Overpasses

Primary overpasses represent connections that are critical to the functioning of the County as a social and economic entity. In addition to the two desired interchanges, at a very minimum, overpass connections are needed at CR 600 N, CR 300 N, and CR600 S.

Secondary Overpasses

Secondary overpasses are viewed as highly important to maintaining good quality of life in areas located west of US 31. If US 31 is improved as a limited access highway, it is crucial that east-west connections over US 31 are established to provide adequate public safety services and school busing to Tipton County residents located to the west of US 31. It is also important that farmers and agribusiness users have efficient access to fields falling on either side of US 31.

Project Funding

Implementing roadway improvements at the County level can be difficult without assistance from outside funding streams. There are a number of state and federal programs intended to assist counties and municipalities with major infrastructure projects. The County should continue to seek federal funds for roadway improvement projects through programs such as those provided through the MAP-21 transportation reauthorization bill. This program is discussed in further detail in **Section 8: Implementation & Economic Development Strategy**.

Railroads

Tipton County is bisected by several railroads which create numerous at-grade crossings within the County.

Norfolk Southern

Tipton County is served by both a north-south and an east-west alignment of the Norfolk Southern Railroad.

North-South Alignment

The Norfolk Southern railroad runs northwest from the City of Tipton, through Sharpsville and on to Kokomo. The 12-mile section from Tipton to Kokomo is currently inactive, although there are currently plans to rehabilitate and reopen the line to freight traffic by year 2014. The plans include replacement of rails, railroadies, and crossings in order to restore the dormant Norfolk Southern line. Additionally, this rail corridor may serve as a future alignment for a trail that would connect Tipton to Kokomo through an extension of the existing Industrial Heritage Trail on the south side of Kokomo.

East-West Alignment

The Norfolk Southern Railroad operates a line that runs east-west across the County and parallels CR 100 South to the west of the City of Tipton and follows SR 28 east of the City. This railroad currently has an at-grade crossing at US 31, among other locations throughout the County, and serves the industrial area on the northwest side of the City of Tipton.

in the future, an overpass would be required at CR 100 S and the existing railroad. This could require as much as 300 to 350 feet of right-of-way width along US 31 at the railroad, depending on the design of the overpass and potential implementation of MSE retaining walls.

Based on current INDOT Design Standards, a 3% maximum grade for the US 31 overpass of the railroad is allowable. Using this percentage, the limits of the overpass would extend approximately 1000’ to the north and south of the railroad. This length would allow the overpass to meet INDOT’s vertical clearance requirement of 23’ on a free-way over a rail line. The limits for right-of-way required for the railroad overpass and the physical footprint of the overpass are only estimates and should be more accurately determined with survey data and a preliminary design.

Indiana Transportation Museum

The Indiana Transportation Museum (ITM) operates a 37 mile rail line that connects SR 28 in the City of Tipton with the Indiana State Fairgrounds in Marion County. The ITM provides the public with experience of railroad travel with stops in the City of Tipton for dinner during seasons of operation. The City of Tipton would like to establish a trail along the portion of the ITM corridor, linking Cicero Creek with residential areas to the north. As discussed in **Section 6: Environmental Features & Open Space Plan**, the ITM rail corridor could also serve as a trail link between the City of Tipton and the Town of Atlanta to the south.



US 31 Railroad Overpass
If US 31 is upgraded to a limited access highway



Section 6

Environmental Features & Open Space Plan

Tipton County, Indiana

Comprehensive Plan

This section of the Comprehensive Plan establishes policies to guide stewardship of the County’s valuable open space assets and natural features. These policies are intended to facilitate wise land use decisions that protect environmentally sensitive areas and provide quality opportunities to experience healthy, vibrant natural settings for generations to come.

The County’s natural areas should be viewed in a holistic manner, as an interconnected network of open space, greenways, and environmental features, also referred as green infrastructure. The concept of green infrastructure incorporates resources and facilities at a range of scales. On the local level, parks and recreation areas provide opportunities for social gathering and serve as a focus for community activities and sporting events. On a regional scale, natural areas and greenways provide opportunities to interact with nature and the wildlife. Green space, regardless of scale, can also serve to protect sensitive natural areas, water resources, and other significant portions of a region’s natural and cultural heritage.

Due to a combination of productive soils and minimal topographical obstacles, most of the arable land within Tipton County was converted to agriculture. The remainder of undeveloped land takes the form of curated parks and recreational areas, streams and creeks, wetlands, and wooded areas. In addition to rich soil and plentiful water, Tipton’s winds are also quickly becoming a highly valued as a natural resource.

Parks & Recreation

Public parks and open space provide places for residents and visitors to relax and enjoy the outdoors and are integral to the health and well being of the Tipton County community. Neighborhood parks provide children with a place to play without being driven and provide the community a nearby, central gathering place for picnics, sports, and other activities.

Tipton City Park is the largest park in the County, with 30 acres of covered pavilions, sports facilities, walking paths, general purpose areas, and more. Sharpsville and Kempton also have small, local parks with playground and sports equipment. The Tipton County Fairgrounds is home to the annual 4-H fair. In addition to the livestock barns and arenas, there are a number of conference rooms, meeting rooms, and kitchen space available for rent. Community members may also request free garden plots on the grounds.

No land under County jurisdiction is officially designated as parkland, but vacant and undeveloped land in residential areas often serves as unstructured open space for recreation.

County-wide Park System

The County should encourage municipalities and communities to expand existing park facilities if they do not adequately meet the needs of residents. Areas serving as parks but not officially designated as such should be considered first for expansion. The County should also study the feasibility of offering communities assistance with park operations and maintenance. A program with unified signage, equipment, and maintenance would create an identifiable, cohesive, and attractive park system.

Regional Parks

The public input indicates that the County needs to invest additional resources in regional open space and trails planning. While local parks and recreation amenities are provided by Tipton County’s various municipalities, residents have identified a need for additional amenities beyond municipal borders. Cicero Creek, Buck Creek, Turkey Creek, Mud Creek and their related tributaries form the foundation of green corridors that crisscross the County. These corridors are the location of extensive wooded areas and pockets of wetlands that represent potential sites for regional parks and trail corridors. The Environmental Features and Open Space Plan identifies several potential locations for regional parks adjacent to natural and/or community assets that could serve to anchor regional park development.

Kelley Agricultural Historical Museum

The agricultural museum is an important asset within Tipton County that celebrates the County’s rural heritage. The museum could be used as an anchor for a unique regional park with a focus on agricultural education and conservation, including demonstration farms and conservation demonstration projects.

Tipton City Park & Golf Course

The 40-acre Tipton City Park and adjacent Tipton Municipal Golf Course represent the County’s largest concentration of park land. While it could be considered a local park within the City of Tipton, given its size and unique set of recreation amenities and community facilities, Tipton City Park functions as a regional park within Tipton County. The County should support the Tipton Park Board’s efforts to improve Tipton City Park. A flood mitigation effort would help alleviate the park and golf course periodic flooding issue.

IDNR Property

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources owns approximately 72 acres at the southwest corner of CR 700 W and CR 700 N, just south of the Howard County line. This area represents another potential opportunity for regional park space in Tipton County. The area is located in a more remote, less populated portion of the County, so its development as parkland may not be as desirable as other identified potential locations.



St. Joseph Center

As part of the re-use of the former St. Joseph Center, regional park amenities could be integrated within or adjacent to the site, forming a multi-use campus. As the permanent location of a higher education institution or a convention center and hotel, park amenities should complement future uses at the St. Joseph Center site.

Greenway Parks

Many of the creeks in the County’s rural areas are channelized and surrounded by farmland within limited natural features. While naturalization of these waterways is a desired long term goal, the need and desire for regional parks is immediate. As such, regional park locations are recommended in areas where creek corridors retain some natural features including large wooded areas. Greenway parks in the suggested locations could be used by the local community with support from the County.

There are several wooded areas running along the Kokomo Creek as it passes along the western edge of Windfall. Contiguous wooded areas also flank both sides of the Cicero Creek near the former Tipton County Landfill at CR 300 S and CR 25 E. A regional park in either of these areas, consisting of wooded areas and adjacent open space, could provide a combination of recreation facilities such as ball fields as well as passive features such trailheads servicing trails travelling along the creek.

Park Board

The County should establish a formal Park Board to pursue parks and recreation initiatives including grant funding opportunities. The City of Tipton currently has a Park Board which has been successful in securing funding for a variety of projects including the development of a trails network within Tipton’s City Park.

Park District

The County should also consider establishing a Tipton County Park District to allow for the creation and administration of regional parks and recreation facilities to serve residents from communities throughout the County. Local communities should also be encouraged to partner with the County in such an endeavor to coordinate improvements within and between incorporated areas of the county.

Trails

Alternative modes of transportation are important for providing recreational opportunities for residents and tourists alike. Walking and bicycling should be encouraged, and the County should be proactive in providing the infrastructure for active transportation which consists of a robust network of trails and off-road shared use paths, as well as on-street bikeways. The County should coordinate with communities to create and implement a county-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to strategically interconnect unincorporated areas of the county and established communities to one another through a county-wide sidewalk and trails network.

When determining appropriate locations for new trails, the following goals should be taken into account:

- Capitalizing on existing greenways and natural features;
- Connecting key community facilities, such as the Tri-Central Schools, the Kelley Agricultural Historical Museum, and the Tipton County 4-H Fairgrounds;
- Connecting prominent commercial areas and places of employment, such as downtowns, the industrial facility at U.S. 31 and SR 28, and the northern U.S. 31 corridor; and
- Connecting established residential areas.
- Connecting to established or planned trails in surrounding counties.

Trail treatments should vary depending on location and desired use. For example, trails located in higher traffic areas such as a local municipality may consist of two travel lanes and a paved surface. Conversely, trails in more remote natural areas may consist of a wide, multi-use trail with a gravel or wood chip surface, or the native ground cover.

A number of potential trails are identified in the Environmental Features and Open Space Plan.

Railroad Corridors

The Norfolk Southern and ITM railroad corridors represent opportunities for trail alignments between Tipton County communities.

Norfolk Southern Trail

The 12-mile stretch of the Norfolk Southern Railroad is being reopened between Tipton and Kokomo. This rail corridor would also serve as a good alignment for a future trail that could tie into Kokomo’s existing Industrial Heritage Trail to the north. A similar trail alignment is also proposed for the east-west route of the Norfolk Southern railroad that passes through Kempton, Tipton, Hobbs and Elwood. The Industrial Heritage Trail in southeastern Kokomo, which consists of a multi-use path along the Norfolk Southern railroad, provides a local example of this type of project.

ITM Trail

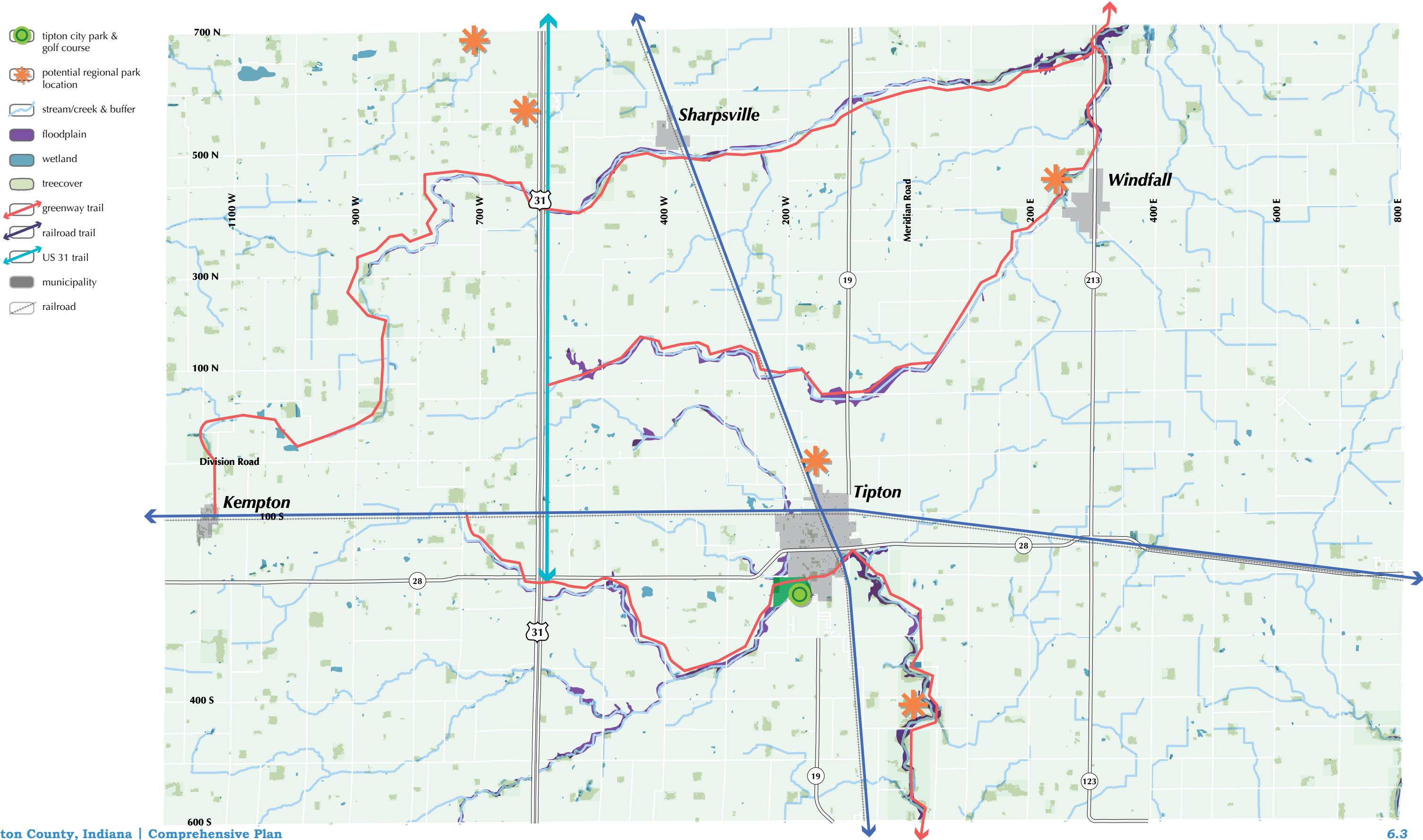
The County should consider locating a trail along the Indiana Transportation Museum (ITM) rail line between the City of Tipton and Atlanta in neighboring Hamilton County. If coordinated with trail improvements planned by the City of Tipton and the recommended Norfolk Southern trail alignment, this would result in a north-south trail connection running the length of Tipton County.

US 31 Corridor Trail

US 31 is a key transportation route for vehicles within the County. If properly buffered from traffic lanes, a multi-use path along US 31 could also allow this roadway to provide key connections between other proposed trail alignments terminating at US 31.



Environmental Features & Open Space Plan





Greenways Network

When open space is concentrated in a linear manner along a natural or artificial corridor it is referred to as a greenway. The Comprehensive Plan establishes an integrated network of greenways throughout the county.

Greenways vary greatly in scale, from narrow ribbons of undeveloped landscape that run through development, to wide corridors that incorporate diverse natural and cultural features. A greenway can incorporate both public and private property, but always provides benefits for the larger community. Some greenways run along creek corridors or wetlands; others follow abandoned rail right-of-way, transportation corridors, or other land-based features. Greenways serve multiple uses within the Comprehensive Plan framework.

Conservation

As tools for conservation, greenways preserve important natural landscapes, provide needed links between fragmented habitats, and protect plant and animal species. They also help protect local water quality by buffering creeks and other water bodies from neighboring development and guarding against soil erosion. Greenways can also serve a recreational purpose, creating a defined but natural setting for trails, parks, and other gathering places. By connecting the county’s natural corridors and environmental features, greenways will create a continuous network of open space that is truly greater than the sum of its parts.

Protecting and enhancing existing natural areas in the County was a prominent sentiment throughout the public outreach process. A broad network of greenways spanning the County would facilitate multiple goals of the Comprehensive Plan, such as preserving sensitive streams and creeks and establishing recreational trails.

The Environmental Features and Open Space Plan identifies several potential locations for formally designated greenways, most of which follow existing creek corridors and rail corridors. The Plan illustrates FEMA designated floodways and areas within the 100-year floodplain that should remain free of development and should be considered for conservation initiatives and the establishment of greenways.

Streams & Creeks

While not home to large bodies of water, Tipton County is crisscrossed by small creeks, streams, and ditches. These waterways are an important part of the County’s ecology. Cicero Creek, Buck Creek, Turkey Creek, and Mud Creek are the primary water bodies in the County. These waterways and their floodplains will form the core of Tipton County’s greenways network.

Improving Water Quality

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) includes several local waterways within its 303(d) Impaired Streams list including portions of Buck Creek, Cox Ditch, Tobin Ditch and Big Cicero Creek. High levels of E. Coli, often associated with run-off containing agricultural pollutants, are a primary factor in this designation. In Tipton County creeks that pass through farmland are often channelized with minimal buffer between the waterway and crop areas.

Non-point source pollutants, such as fertilizers and pesticides, degrade waterways, threaten water quality, and endanger the health of aquatic species. Streams should be buffered from the pollutants often found in surface water run-off. According to the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, a properly installed agricultural buffer, which is a type of informal greenway, can remove up to 50% or more of nutrients and pesticides and up to 75% or more of sediment that would otherwise be washed into waterways.

In addition to protecting local creeks from unmitigated run-off and associated erosion, these buffers can accommodate trails and serve as amenities to local residents while protecting local waterways.

Private Ownership, Public Benefit

Where possible, the County should seek to protect streams and creeks through permanent methods such as conservation easements, nature preserve dedication, and/or public acquisition. The County should also consider the use of tax abatements, special variances, or other incentives to encourage private property owners to implement creek preservation efforts. Participation by local farmers in conservation programs, such as those provided by the NRCS, should also be encouraged. Waterway protection is an important tool in agricultural areas like Tipton County, especially when used as part of a comprehensive set of environmentally-friendly agriculture practices.

Wetlands & Wooded Areas

Wetlands are areas saturated with water, either seasonally or year-round. Wooded areas are lands with permanent copses of trees and other uncultivated shrubs and vegetation. Many of Tipton County’s wetland areas have been drained and brought into agricultural production. Wetlands and wooded areas generally overlap, comprising pockets of unfarmed land throughout the County that represent only a small portion of the County’s total land. Residential parcels are also frequently be wooded, but are not considered as natural areas.

Wetland Preservation

In addition to enhancing the aesthetic appeal and recreational opportunities of an area, if properly preserved and restored, wetlands and wooded areas can provide natural flood control measures that limit property damage and prevent the water logging of crops. The federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which has a local office in Tipton, is responsible for wetlands and erosion control protection. The NRCS has a wide range of programs and funding opportunities that could assist in protecting and maintaining existing wetland and woodland ecosystems.

The County should work with the NRCS and private property owners to identify and apply for federal funds in various conservation and preservation programs. The County should also promote the preservation of native trees and vegetation on private property. This could be done though the offering of tax abatements, special variances, or other incentives for planting native trees and using native planting materials in landscaping.

Soils

Tipton County is made up of seven different soil types as defined by the NRCS. Almost all of the County, a tiny portion of the northwest corner excluded, is a mixture of 80 percent or more prime farmland. Cataloging the various types and locations of soils throughout the County has the multiple benefits of 1) minimizing the footprint of new development by identifying locations where it is desirable and where it should be prohibited, and 2) protecting the County’s valuable agricultural assets and potential. In general, future residential and commercial development should strive first to occur near existing occupied areas or along designated corridors and second to avoid prime farmland whenever possible. Following the recommendations described in the **Section 4: Land Use and Development Plan** will minimize the harmful impacts of development that might degrade or endanger Tipton’s farmland.

Aquifers

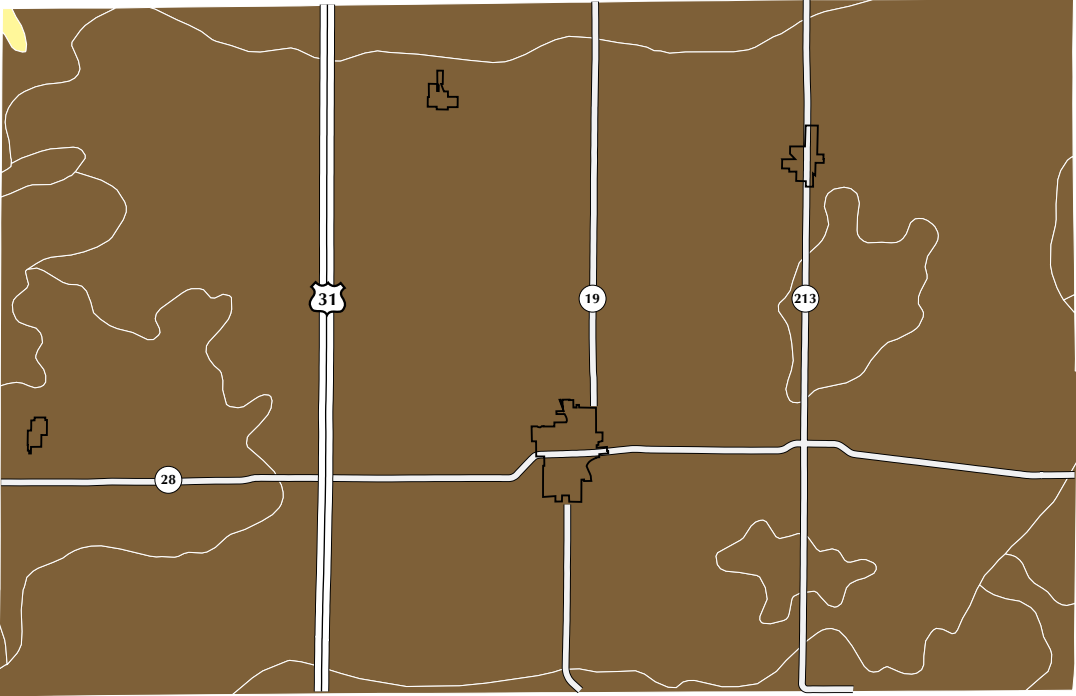
Tipton County residents obtain their drinking water from distinct aquifers in the County. Most development in unincorporated Tipton County utilizes on-site wells for potable water and septic systems for sewage. The soils in Tipton County are such that there is minimal use of irrigation for crop production at this time. Although there are currently no problems with the quality or availability of water in the County, measures to prevent shortage or degradation should not be ignored. The County should work with municipalities to better evaluate and implement local water conservation programs and should pursue creation of a County-wide wellhead protection plan with coordination and cooperation with local municipalities.

Wind

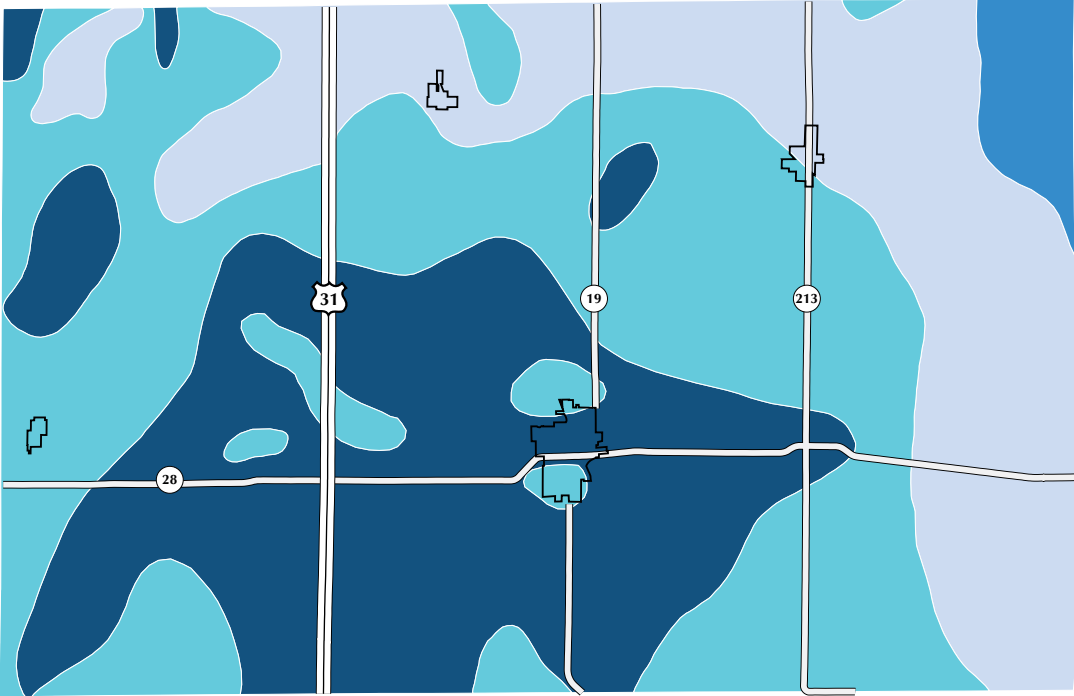
Often overlooked as a natural resource, Tipton County has regular wind patterns that, when combined with the agricultural nature of the County, make it attractive for wind farm development. Average wind speed is relatively uniform across the County, varying by only one meter per second when measured at a 50 meter altitude. The speed and predictability of winds have spurred several wind farms to consider locating in Tipton County. A more discussion about wind energy can be found in **Section 7: County Facilities and Infrastructure Plan**.

Natural Resources

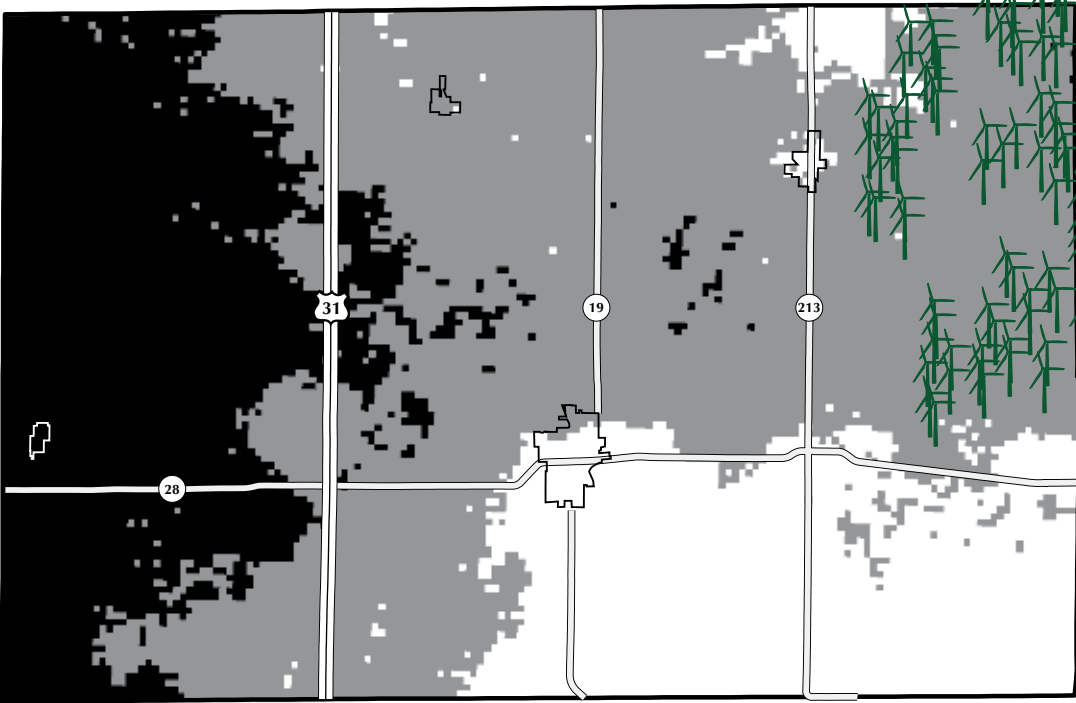
Prime Farmland



Aquifers



Wind at 50 Meters



Natural Resources Legend

- Prime Farmland**

 - 81-100% prime
 - <81% prime
- Wind at 50 Meters**

 - 7 meters/second
 - 6 meters/second
 - existing turbine
- Aquifers**

 - Tipton Complex Aquifer System
 - Tipton Till Aquifer System
 - Tipton Till Aquifer Subsystem
 - Till Veneer Aquifer System

Section 7

County Facilities & Infrastructure Plan

Tipton County, Indiana

Comprehensive Plan

Tipton County includes several agencies and organizations that provide community services and facilities for residents and businesses. These include services and infrastructure provided by the County as well as other partner agencies. Collectively, community facilities help define the local quality of life and make Tipton County a desirable place in which to live and work.

Community facilities include public and quasi-public uses provided by the County, cities and towns, and other governmental districts and organizations including schools, emergency responders, and utilities. The County Facilities and Infrastructure Plan presents recommendations to help ensure high-quality facilities and services are available and desirable throughout the County, today and in the future. These recommendations support existing community facilities and services while encouraging new desirable facilities to locate in the County, and provide strategies and recommendations to ensure the County continues to be well served.

The County Facilities and Infrastructure Plan presents general policies and guidelines; however, it is not intended to supersede goals and policies of other agencies, or substitute for the more detailed planning which should be undertaken by the County and other service agencies and organizations such as the municipalities and school districts. Since many of the community facilities are not under the control or direction of Tipton County, it is important that the County maintain active communication and coordinate planning efforts with other agencies. The following recommendations underscore the need for the County to work with other service providers to accommodate the appropriate expansion of community facilities within the County.

Water & Sewer

Tipton County

The Tipton Municipal Utilities has water and wastewater treatment facilities on the northeast corner of the U.S. 31 and SR 28 intersection. The water system includes three groundwater wells, a treatment facility, and a 500,000 gallon ground storage tank. The wastewater facility was developed in a modular fashion to allow capacity to be increased as demand grows. Chrysler has purchased the facility for which the water and sewer plants were built. Preliminary discussions indicate that their production process will not require intense water usage. Once Chrysler’s needs are quantified actual planning can commence as to where best strategically deploy the excess capacity and to discuss plant expansion if needed.

Water Supply

In addition, there are no reported water supply limiting factors or availability restrictions known within the County. Even so, the County should continue to coordinate with local municipalities to ensure adequate water and sewer capacity. This could include helping to identify locations and funding sources for new facilities or expansions, brokering agreements between different agencies, providing service directly, or other actions.

Ground Water Quality

At present, there are no known water quality issues affecting local supplies. Tipton County has a well-head protection plan in place which identifies the 1-, 5-, and 10-year travel time radii around each of the City’s water supply wells. This well-head protection plan should continue to be enforced as development or redevelopment occurs. To ensure ground water quality remains high, the County should also consider establishing a County-wide well-head protection plan with the support of other service providers and municipal entities.

Other Communities

The Town of Atlanta serves approximately 12 homes in Tipton County with water and four with sewer services. The City of Elwood has annexed approximately seven homes in the County which receive municipal services. There is a private sewer system that serves approximately 55 customers in the Prairie Acres Subdivision near U.S. 31 and CR 600 N. All other development within Tipton County receives water through private on-site wells.

City of Tipton

The Tipton Municipal Utilities provides both potable water and wastewater systems to the City of Tipton.

Excess Water Capacity

The potable water facilities treat groundwater from seven wells and distribute nearly 900,000 gallons per day during peak summer months for drinking water and fire protection to the community. Improvements to the water treatment plant have recently been made, including a clear well, filters, and aeration, increasing the storage capacity to 1.24 million gallons. The available water supply and storage currently within the system has adequate capacity to allow growth and development to occur within the city.

Excess Sewer Capacity

The sewer system is a combined system that conveys wastewater and storm water to the water pollution control facility (WPCF) on the east side of the city. The WPCF has a rated capacity of 4.2 million gallons per day. In addition, upgrades to the WPCF are planned between 2012 and 2020 to provide additional wet-weather capacity as well as treatment improvements. As development and redevelopment occur, separate sanitary sewers for wastewater and storm sewers for drainage should be included within those portions of the city where separate systems are available.

Both the potable water system and the wastewater system have available capacity to serve growth in and around the City of Tipton.



Sharpsville

The Town of Sharpsville recently updated municipal water service which draws from two ground-water wells before being treated and distributed to approximately 300 customers. A 150,000 gallon elevated storage tank provides reserve capacity and fire protection. The water system has potential to accommodate additional customers if development occurs in proximity to the town.

Sharpsville also has a sanitary sewer collection system which converges at the town’s lift station. Flows are then pumped to the City of Tipton for treatment by Tipton Municipal Utilities (TMU). The town’s lift station is approximately 20 years old and includes a force main nearly seven miles long. The extreme length of the force main and age of the pipe are contributing factors to storm-water reduced capacity from the original design. In addition, due to the long length of the force main, the wastewater being discharged to TMU has increased hydrogen sulfide and ammonia levels.

Wastewater Treatment Needs

The Town of Sharpsville is currently exploring alternatives to improve its ability to provide wastewater treatment to its customers. The two primary alternatives are 1) to build a new wastewater treatment plant for the town, or 2) upgrade the town lift station and force main. Although improvements to the treatment capabilities are anticipated within the next few years, there is capacity available within the collection system which could support additional development.

Windfall

The Town of Windfall provides municipal water and sewer services within town limits.

Excess Water Capacity

The water utility is ‘brand new’ in that the elevated storage tank, filtration plant, and distribution system have all been upgraded within the past five years. The utility draws from two groundwater wells and has a capacity of 480,000 gallons per day (gpd), but current average daily flow is approximately 70,000 gpd, providing excess capacity that is available to support growth.

Excess Sewer Capacity

The town’s sewer system was built in 1978, but improvements to the primary lift station and at the treatment plant were completed within the past few years in response to an Agreed Order with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. In addition, rehabilitation of sewers within the collection system to reduce infiltration has been completed and there is an on-going effort to improve the system capacity, especially during wet weather. These improvements to the sewer system result in a design capacity of 130,000 gpd and a peak capacity of 660,000 gpd.

Both the municipal water system and the wastewater system have available capacity to serve growth in and around the Town of Windfall.

Kempton

The Town of Kempton currently does not have either water or wastewater municipal services; individual groundwater wells and septic systems serve each property.

Wastewater Treatment Needs

The Town of Kempton is under an Agreed Order from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) to install a sewer system since most of the septic systems discharge into a storm drain network that eventually pollutes Mott Ditch. Currently, the town is working with IDEM to identify options and parameters to locate a new wastewater treatment plant to serve the community. Preliminary engineering reports are being submitted to Rural Development and the Indiana Finance Authority for possible funding assistance from the USDA or the State Revolving Loan Fund for a gravity sewer collection system and small wastewater treatment plant to serve Kempton. The exact location of the proposed plant is still unknown, pending the coordination with IDEM.

Currently, the town’s priority is to develop sewers and wastewater treatment. If the town feels it can afford to do so, it may pursue development of a municipal drinking water system.

Flooding Control

Flooding

Tipton County regularly experiences flooding in low lying areas resulting in crop loss and roadway flooding, limiting mobility throughout the County. In 2011, preliminary updated Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) were issued by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These maps in part are based upon modeling completed for the 2006 Big Cicero Creek Flood Control Study and show a significant increase in the number and area of properties within Tipton County affected by the 100-year flood elevations. Areas impacted and potentially classified within the Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) Subject to Inundation by the 1% Annual Chance Flood (i.e. 100-year flood event) include many parts of the City of Tipton.

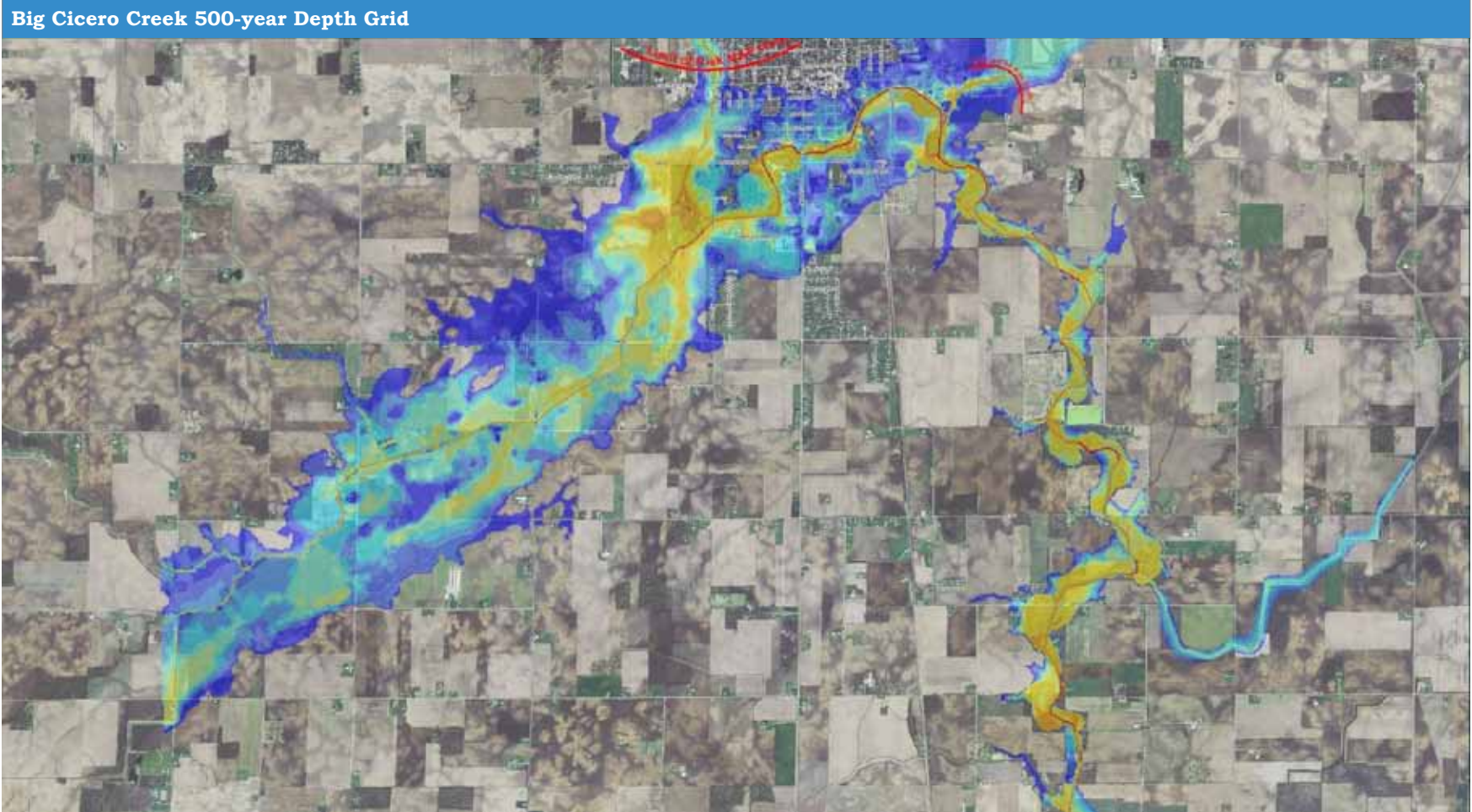
Drainage Solutions

By far, the biggest drainage concern in the County is the Big Cicero Creek, which loops across the southern portion of the County, discharging into Morse Reservoir in Hamilton County. The creek is under the jurisdiction of a Joint Drainage Board from four different counties: Tipton, Clinton, Boone, and Hamilton. A Big Cicero Creek Flood Control Study was prepared for board in 2006 which evaluated several alternatives to the flooding in the creek area and to the southwest of Tipton.

Big Cicero Creek Flood Control Study

The recommended plan components included extending the hydraulic modeling to evaluate the downstream impacts of constructing a channel improvement from about 2,800 feet downstream of Tobin Ditch to County Road 400 South. The \$17.4 million cost of the project was to be funded through regulated drainage assessments on the properties within the watershed. The Joint Drainage Board pursued the recommended channel improvement through preliminary evaluations and held a public hearing. The project was rejected after the hearing due to lack of local support.

Drainage within the rest of Tipton County falls under the jurisdiction of several agencies. The Tipton County Surveyor oversees all regulated drains within the County except the Big Cicero Creek. The remaining, non-regulated drainage ways (roadside drains, bridges, and culverts) fall under the jurisdiction of the Tipton County Highway Department.



Evaluating Flooding Issues

As of the writing of this plan, several issues related to flooding are in need of further study and consideration by Tipton County, the City of Tipton, and the Joint Drainage Board. Current questions relate to determining the true extent and economic impacts of flooding issues and understanding the viability of potential solutions.

Flood Mitigation

The Tipton community is considering its options to mitigate flood risk in the areas surrounding Big Cicero Creek. A mitigation project would have several implications for properties both within the City of Tipton and nearby unincorporated areas. It is anticipated that the cost of improvements would be funded, at least in part, by property owners within the Cicero Creek watershed. The project would reduce flooding in areas near the southern portion of the City of Tipton, while pushing additional flooding downstream.

The agricultural community may be more motivated to financially participate in a solution due to higher potential losses resulting from higher commodity prices. Opportunities for grants should be explored as part of the process.

The City of Tipton’s additional engineering studies are complete and the related appeals of the 2011 Preliminary FIRM maps were filed in a timely manner. The additional study should help clarify the issue and although the resolution of the Preliminary FIRM map appeals are not known at this time, the community should continue to pursue plans to mitigate flooding of the Big Cicero Creek. Part of this process will entail a study of downstream effects of whatever mitigation option is chosen.

In addition to the appeal of the Preliminary FIRM map for Big Cicero Creek the County Surveyor worked with an Engineering firm to appeal the Buck Creek Preliminary FIRM map, principally in the area of Northgate Industrial Park which supports a reduction in the flood hazard area.

Economic Impacts

Calculating the economic impacts of flooding differs between rural and urbanized areas. From an agricultural vantage point, rising yields of modern-day farming practices combined with rising grain prices results in high costs of lost production of flooded acreage. Within the urbanized areas, implications depend upon whether property has already been developed. Mapped flooding areas on developed property will require that those properties buy flood insurance, which is often quite costly. Further, when flooding does occur, rehabilitation and reconstruction costs can be very disruptive to normal operations and excessively expensive.

For properties that are undeveloped and fall within a Special Flood Hazard Area, development is usually discouraged or disallowed through local zoning and land use ordinances, and additional planning, engineering, and construction costs can be required to develop the property in a manner that doesn’t require flood insurance. Since the areas where the current school, hospital, and industrial park are all potentially affected by the updated FIRMs, the economic impact has the potential to be extremely high to both the City of Tipton and Tipton County.

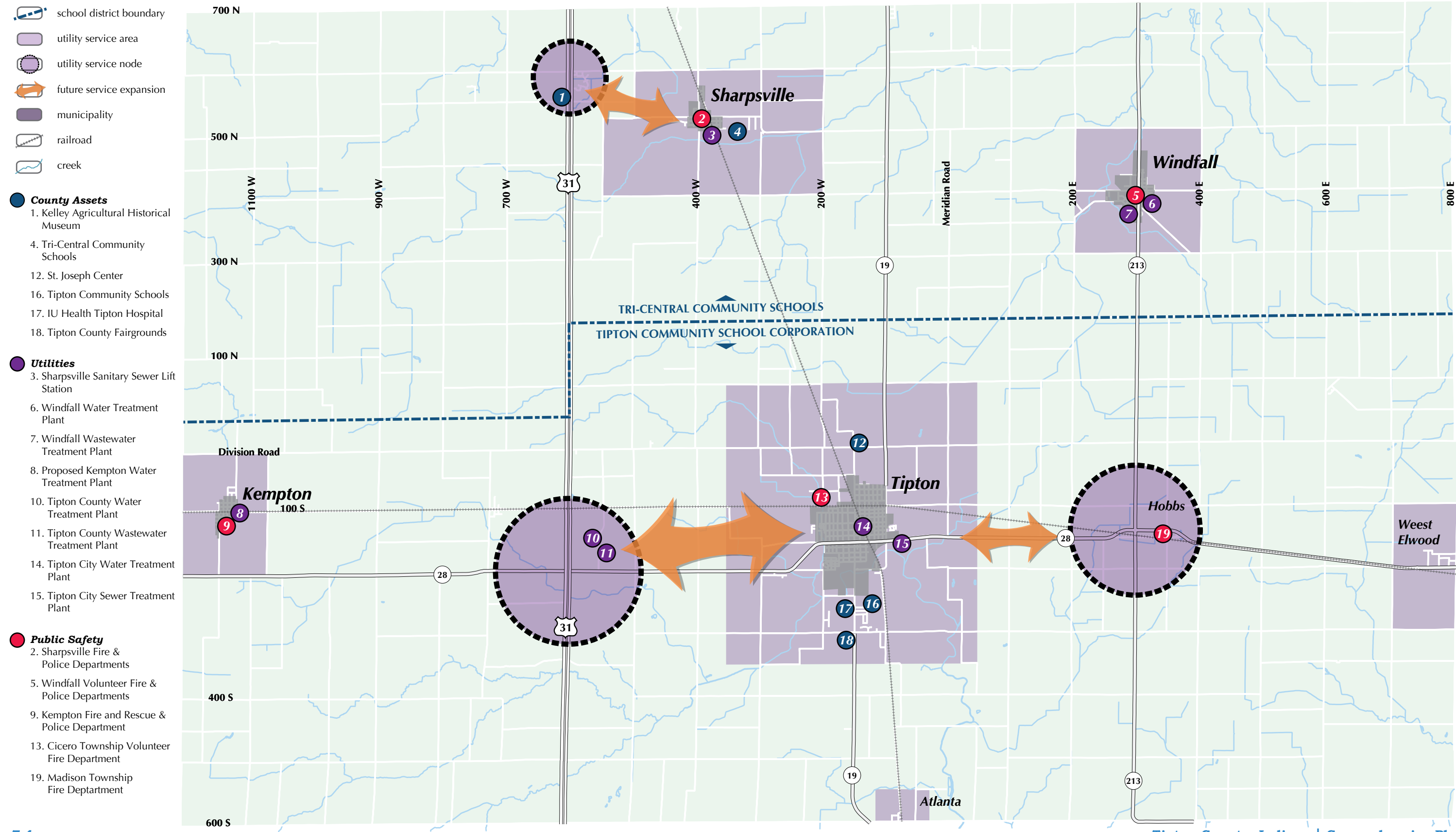
Potential Solutions

Potential solutions identified to date generally range in cost from \$2 million to over \$60 million for options including decreased frequency of flooding and lowering of water surface elevations to maintain drainage within accepted floodways. Although the flooding and drainage problems identified result from the Big Cicero Creek watershed, a case could be made that the drainage improvements would provide County-wide benefit in the name of economic development opportunities and quality of life factors such as impacts to health care and education. Impacted areas include numerous community assets within the City of Tipton such as the industrial area on the northwest, commercial areas on the northeast, the hospital and school complexes and 4-H area on the southwest, and residential properties on the south side.

This wide-spread problem may best be approached through a collaborative effort between the Joint Drainage Board and Tipton County and City of Tipton leaders along with financial and legal advisors to develop an economically viable solution with appropriate level of benefit to best serve the community.



County Facilities & Infrastructure Plan



Schools

The Tipton Community School Corporation administers elementary, middle, and high schools serving the City of Tipton and the southern half of the County. Tri-Central Community Schools owns a complex east of Sharpsville, also for K-12 students. Both schools maintain their own athletic facilities and teams. St. John the Baptist School is a private Catholic K-5 school also located in the City of Tipton.

Secondary Education

The Tri-Central Schools complex is the only public school in the County’s jurisdiction. It consists of two main buildings and is conveniently located to serve students in the northern part of the County. Both schools are located adjacent to agricultural fields which could potentially accommodate future expansion of facilities if warranted by increases in enrollment. The County should partner with the school district to plan for and provide adequate accessibility and connectivity, room for expansion, student safety, etc. for students currently enrolled and for any anticipated growth should enrollment trends reverse..

Educational Attainment

It is estimated that as of 2010, nearly 88% of all Tipton County residents aged 25 or older had received at least their High School diploma or equivalency. This is similar to the education attainment of the State of Indiana and slightly higher than that of the nation. A similar proportion of Tipton County residents have either received some college education or an associate’s degree when compared to the state and nation. Despite higher levels of educational attainment at the secondary level, a smaller proportion of Tipton County residents received a bachelor’s degree (8.5%) or graduate or professional degree (5.0%). State attainment levels for these degree types were 14.8% and 8.2% respectively. Enhancing higher education and workforce training offerings should be a priority within Tipton County.

Educational Attainment, Population 25+
Tipton County, 2010

	Tipton County	State of Indiana
Less than 9th grade	4.7%	4.2%
9th to 12th grade	7.8%	8.6%
High school graduate	44.9%	35.5%
Some college, no degree	21.3%	20.9%
Associate’s degree	7.8%	7.9%
Bachelor’s degree	8.5%	14.8%
Graduate / Professional degree	5.0%	8.2%

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey
5-Year Estimates

Higher Education

There is an essential link between higher education, household income and economic development. In 2010, Tipton County residents obtained an associate’s or higher degree at a rate of 21.3%. This is significantly lower than the 30.9% obtained by all residents in the State of Indiana, which ranks only 40th in the nation in degree attainment. Household income within Tipton County has not increased over the past decade and it is anticipated that median household income between 2011 and 2016 will only increase at a rate similar to that of inflation.

For income levels to increase Tipton must improve the education levels of their citizens and match that education to the needs of employers. It is essential that the US31/SR28 business investments be tied with the availability of a Tipton County post secondary education and training facility to support Chrysler and other Tipton County business including agribusiness and independent farming operations requiring employees with essential technology and knowledge requirements.

A community college such as Ivy Tech provides numerous benefits for the County’s youth and older workforce alike, such as university preparedness, associates degrees, certifications, and skills training. These programs help both young people pursue 2 and 4 year education degrees and established workers learn new skills to stay competitive.

The County should work with Ivy Tech and other community colleges to establish a permanent presence and coordinate educational programs with the County’s economic development efforts.

An independent community college facility in Tipton County such as Ivy Tech will attract students from Tipton County and neighboring communities and could create a cornerstone project to generate future growth. Tipton County must give top priority to a permanent post secondary education and training facility to improve the way citizens are prepared for the 21st century workforce, resulting in increased quality of life and ensuring the future of Tipton County.

Special Facilities

There are a number of facilities unique to Tipton County that add to the County’s individuality and can serve as assets to build upon in the future.

Sisters of St. Joseph

The Sisters of St. Joseph were established in Tipton County in 1888. The 20-acre campus includes private rooms with baths for more than 60 guests, five meeting rooms, a cafeteria, commercial laundry, large kitchen, dining rooms, chapel, guest house and a formal garden. Until recently, the Congregation of St. Joseph operated the site as the St. Joseph Center consisting of a retirement home, retreat, and conference center. The sisters, involved in a number of charitable efforts, vacated the facility in December 2012.

With its range of facilities and amenities, the former St. Joseph Center complex represents a unique opportunity within Tipton County. The County should actively search for new uses or occupants of the complex. In addition to continuing to serve as a hotel and convention center, the complex could also be used to house a higher education institution, such as the Ivy Tech. A portion of the grounds could also serve as the location of regional park amenities.

Tipton County 4-H Fairgrounds

Located at the southwest corner of Fairgrounds Road and Main Street in the southern portion of the City of Tipton, the Tipton County 4-H fairgrounds are the home of the annual County Fair as well as numerous public events and trade shows. The fairgrounds are also the location of Purdue University’s Extension Education Center.



Kelley Agricultural Historical Museum

An endowment left by the Kelley family funded the restoration of an early twentieth century farmstead. The Kelley Agricultural Historical Museum land now holds the old farmhouse, a schoolhouse, a round red barn, and antique farm equipment. This site could be integrated into a County-wide park and trail network as a key historic destination. **Section 6: Environmental Features and Open Space Plan** contains additional discussion of county-wide parks and recreation.

Wind Farms

As the nation strives toward energy independence, the use of alternative energy sources such as solar, bio-fuels and wind energy has become increasingly attractive with respect to both economic and environmental sustainability. In addition, thanks to an abundance of natural gas reserves it is now possible to build and economically power peaking plants that can be brought online quickly to provide supplemental power for renewable installations like wind and solar. Wind Energy Conversion System (WECS) projects can bring significant economic benefit to communities in terms of lease payments to land owners, increased assessed valuation, improved roads and economic agreements with wind energy companies. The economics of WECS projects require a reliable wind resource and proximity to transmission lines. It is this need for geographic proximity to transmission lines and the markets for energy that creates potential conflicts with existing land use and requires additional consideration on behalf of the County.

Completed Project

As of the writing of this plan, a 200-megawatt (MW) wind farm, known as the Wildcat I, has been recently completed. Of the total project, 69 turbines capable of delivering 110 MW capacity are located in the northeast portion of Tipton County.

Land Use Considerations

There are several factors that could be taken into consideration when evaluating the locations of wind farms.

Agricultural Preservation

Reciprocal setback requirements established in the County’s zoning ordinance will limit residential development in areas surrounding wind farms. While these restrictions minimize potential conflicts between the wind turbines and residential uses, they also provide the added benefit of agricultural preservation in areas where commercial or industrial development is minimal.

Compatibility & Aesthetic

There are concerns among the Tipton County community regarding the aesthetic impact of wind turbines on an area. To better balance these concerns with the potential economic benefits and agriculture preservation benefits of wind farms, a greater connection is needed between the County’s wind farm regulations and compatibility with land use. In addition to setback requirements, there are certain areas of Tipton County, especially within proximity of the County’s established communities and municipalities that should be better protected from wind farm development.

Relating Wind Farm Placement to Land Use

It is important to have a community-wide land use discussion with the objective of determining the optimal process for considering applications for WECS projects that provide for a fair and transparent process within a sound regulatory framework.

Approval Process Alternatives

The Indiana Statute anticipates three alternatives for communities that exercise planning and zoning to consider developments of this type.

- WECS projects could be permitted outright in a district or districts. The development standards and districts in which they are permitted could be revisited.
- The Board of Zoning appeals could continue to act as the approval authority to consider applications for conditional use.
- An overlay district could be created that establishes where WECS projects are appropriate and where they are not. Establishment of an overlay district would then require the Plan Commission, not the BZA, to act as the approval authority to review development plans.

Conditional Use

The County currently allows Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS) as a conditional use within the AG, I1 and I2 districts. The Board of Zoning Appeals hears applications for conditional use at public hearing. The development standards and districts in which they are permitted could be revisited by the plan commission.

WECS Overlay District

The extent of the overlay district could be determined using a combination of factors including wind speed and the desired buffer from existing residences, community boundaries, airport protection zones, certain natural features and select highway corridors.

Wind farms should be strictly prohibited from developing in the growth areas surrounding the County’s towns and unincorporated communities, along major roadway corridors and the US 31 and SR 28 intersection.

Comprehensive Plan Amendment

In evaluating the potential use of an overlay district, the County should provide an opportunity for input from the community to discuss what it envisions as appropriate areas for wind farm projects, separate from any application for a specific project.

If it is decided that a WECS Overlay District should be established and one cannot be determined at this time, the Plan should be amended following such an action.



Section 8

Implementation & Economic Development Strategy

A major goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to foster business growth and investment and increase the number and types of jobs within the County. To this end, the Implementation and Economic Development Strategy outlines a number of techniques and approaches that support the goal of economic development as well as the implementation of all of the Plan’s primary goals and objectives.

This chapter represents a collection of strategies and recommendations for economic development from a number of sources – elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan, other plans and documents such as the Tipton County Economic Development Vision & Strategic Goals, and general best practices – into one unified strategy for Tipton County. It is organized into four subjects that reflect the challenges influencing everyday life in the County:

- Plan Administration and Implementation,
 - Business Development and Expansion,
 - Quality of Life, and
 - Infrastructure
- The funding sources identified in this chapter are subject to change and do not represent a complete list of all possible grants, incentives, and other programs available. The County should continue to seek ways to fund the recommendations presented in the Plan; research and monitor grants, funding agencies, and programs to identify new opportunities as they become available; and review and update the strategies presented.

Plan Administration & Implementation

Use the Plan on a Day-to-Day Basis
The Comprehensive Plan should become the County’s official policy guide for land use, development, and community improvement. It is essential that the Plan be adopted and then used on a regular basis by County staff, boards, and commissions to review and evaluate all proposals for improvement and development in the years ahead.

Planning Commission staff should meet with Department heads to explain the purpose and benefits of the Comprehensive Plan. To further educate the community about the Plan, the County should:

- Make copies of the Plan available online for free, provide hard copies at the County Office for purchase, and have a copy on file at the public library for reference;
- Provide assistance to the public in explaining the Plan and its relationship to private and public development projects and other proposals, as appropriate;
- Assist the County Commissioners and Council in the day-to-day administration, interpretation, and application of the Plan;
- Maintain a list of current possible amendments, issues, or needs which may be a subject of change, addition, or deletion from the Comprehensive Plan.

Update the Plan on a Regular Basis

It is important to emphasize that the Comprehensive Plan is not a static document. If community attitudes change or new issues arise which are beyond the scope of the current Plan, the Plan should be revised and updated accordingly.

Although a proposal to amend the Plan can be brought forth at any time, the County should regularly undertake a systematic review of the Plan. The County should initiate review of the Plan at least every three to five years. Ideally, this review should coincide with the preparation of the County’s budget and Capital Improvement Plan and the preparation of an annual action agenda.

In this manner, recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the commitments for the upcoming fiscal year. Routine examination of the Plan will help ensure that the planning program remains relevant to community needs and aspirations.

Partner Organizations

Independent organizations designed to help local businesses already operate within Tipton County. Rather than duplicating efforts, the County should continue to partner with and support these organizations to achieve the shared goals of business expansion and development. When seeking to implement the recommendations contained in this section, or anywhere in the Comprehensive Plan, the County should seek to utilize the resources provided by these partner organizations.

Tipton County Economic Development Organization

Many communities have a Community Development Corporation (CDC) that oversees a range of redevelopment activities for a specific geographic area, particularly commercial areas and central business districts. CDCs are often funded through public-private partnerships with financial commitments from local financial institutions or businesses and a public funding source such as TIF to provide for both operating expenses and programs.

The Tipton County Economic Development Organization (EDO) is a CDC organized to promote economic growth through a public-private partnership model. The EDO promotes the economic development of the County, including the communities of Tipton, Kempton, Sharpsville, and Windfall, by increasing the number of employment opportunities and ensures the economic stability and strength of Tipton County’s business sector. Its office maintains a database of available buildings and sites in the Tipton County area. Additionally, its office maintains demographic information on population, employment and other information necessary to assist in expansion or relocation decisions.

Tipton County Chamber of Commerce

The Tipton County Chamber of Commerce is the promotion partner and marketing representative for businesses and organizations in Tipton County and surrounding communities. It partners with businesses to bring attention to products and services and offer opportunities for promotion, increased brand recognition, and interaction with the business community and local consumers. The Chamber acts as a liaison for local businesses and consumers, providing information and encouraging the advancement of the community’s civic, commercial, industrial, and agricultural interests. Other services include business leads and referrals, networking opportunities, promotions, training seminars, and consulting through the North Central Small Business Development Center.

Tipton County Foundation

The Tipton County Foundation is a non-profit, public charity that funds a variety of grant and scholarship programs throughout Tipton County. Some of its more well known programs include the annual Ducky Day event in Tipton Park and the United Community Fund, which is a special fund that supports an array of social service agency programs in Tipton County such as the Red Cross disaster assistance programs, the ENCORE food pantry, and Mustard Seed programs for families in need.



Coordinate with Municipalities

Planning areas surrounding the Towns of Kempton, Sharpsville, Tipton and Windfall represent areas where coordination and cooperation is critical regarding future development and the provision of municipal services and infrastructure.

The Comprehensive plan identifies desired land uses for these areas to facilitate coordination between Tipton County and local municipalities. County staff should regularly meet with representatives of the municipalities and unincorporated communities to ensure the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan are being implemented and remain mutually beneficial.

Review of Zoning and Development Controls

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan should be followed by a review and update of the County’s various development controls including the zoning ordinance, the subdivision ordinance, and other related codes and ordinances. It is essential that all development controls be consistent with and complement the Comprehensive Plan’s vision, goals, and objectives. Particular attention should be paid to periodically updating regulations regarding issues that are more directly related to economic development, such as wind energy, activities within the agriculture, commercial and industrial districts throughout the County, and the management of flood prone areas.

Three areas that should be given primary consideration include refinements to the County’s zoning code:

- US 31 Overlay District regulations, particularly regarding the development of the SR 28 area;
- Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS) regulations, particularly regarding the desired location of wind farms and the approval process; and,
- Review and approval process, including its Subdivision Control Ordinance, to seek additional input from local communities and assist in coordinating land use and development policies.

Explore Funding Sources & Implementation Techniques

Many of the projects and improvements called for in the Comprehensive Plan can be implemented through administrative and policy decisions or traditionally funded programs. However, other projects may require special technical and/or financial assistance.

The County should continue to explore and consider the wide range of local, state, and federal resources and programs that may be available to assist in the implementation of planning recommendations. For example, initiatives related to economic development, neighborhood stabilization and housing, or sustainability and environment can receive assistance from grant programs established for specific categories of actions or projects.

Funding sources are identified throughout this section as they apply to the implementation of various Comprehensive Plan recommendations.

USDA Rural Development Program

One example of a flexible funding source that may be applicable for multiple types of activities is USDA Rural Development (RD). USDA RD offers a variety of financial programs that help support rural areas through the provision of essential public facilities and services such as water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities, and electric and telephone service. RD promotes economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks, credit unions, and community-managed lending pools. It offers technical assistance and information to help agricultural producers and cooperatives get started and improve the effectiveness of their operations. It provides technical assistance to help communities undertake community empowerment programs. In 2011, the USDA Rural Development program invested nearly \$1.28 billion in the State of Indiana through various business, community/utility, and housing programs. Tipton County is served by the Muncie Area (Area 4) Rural Development office.

Business Expansion & Development

Labor & Employment Overview

The following data provides a snapshot of the Tipton County economy in the Fall of 2012. This labor force and employment overview should be used to help inform business expansion and development decisions.

Total Employment

Historic employment estimates for 2002 through 2011 indicate that the number of jobs offered by Tipton County employers have steadily declined over the last decade. Tipton County witnessed several successive years of decreasing employment, with the exception of 2011, losing a total of 1,812 jobs (-12%) over nine years. In 2010 and 2011, the combined number of jobs in Tipton County increased by 299, up 4.7% from 2009.

Total Employment Tipton County, 2002 - 2011			
	Employment	Change	
		Number	Percent
2002	8,109	-	-
2003	7,819	(290)	(3.6%)
2004	7,724	(95)	(1.2%)
2005	7,610	(114)	(1.5%)
2006	7,594	(16)	(0.2%)
2007	7,399	(195)	(2.6%)
2008	7,085	(314)	(4.2%)
2009	6,297	(788)	(11.1%)
2010	6,417	120	1.9%
2011	6,596	179	2.8%
Total Change (2002 - 2011)		-1,513	(18.7%)

Source: STATS Indiana Labor Force Time Series (NSA); Houseal Lavigne Associates

Employment by Industry

Employment estimates for 2011 show that Tipton County’s economy is concentrated in one of a handful of industries, each employing at least 12% of the workforce. In 2011, it is estimated that the public- and private sector businesses in Tipton County employed 4,302. The majority of the County’s jobs are also located in the City of Tipton.

As shown in the following table, in 2011 the manufacturing sector provided 751 jobs, representing 23.7% of all private-sector employment in the County. The Health Care & Social Assistance sector provided the second largest number of jobs within Tipton County, employing 599 individuals. The Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting sector and Retail Trade sector provided 423 and 390 jobs respectively within Tipton County in 2011.

Employment by Industry Tipton County, 2007 - 2011						
	2007		2011		Change 2007 - 2011	
Total (Private & Government)	4,302	100.0%	3,920	100.0%	-382	-8.9%
Private	3,135	72.9%	3,168	80.8%	33	1.1%
Government	1,167	27.1%	752	19.2%	-415	-35.6%
Total, All Industries	3,135	100.0%	3,168	100.0%	33	1.1%
Manufacturing	904	28.8%	751	23.7%	-153	-16.9%
Accommodation and Food Service	254	8.1%	176	5.6%	-78	-30.7%
Construction	291	9.3%	225	7.1%	-66	-22.7%
Retail Trade	419	13.4%	390	12.3%	-29	-6.9%
Other Services	105	3.3%	78	2.5%	-27	-25.7%
Transport. and Warehousing	43	1.4%	22	0.7%	-21	-48.8%
Wholesale Trade	171	5.5%	151	4.8%	-20	-11.7%
Finance and Insurance	108	3.4%	96	3.0%	-12	-11.1%
Information	31	1.0%	25	0.8%	-6	-19.4%
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	15	0.5%	11	0.3%	-4	-26.7%
Arts, Entertain., and Recreation	4	0.1%	3	0.1%	-1	-25.0%
Mining	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Utilities	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Admin. and Waste Services	40	1.3%	41	1.3%	1	2.5%
Professional and Tech. Servs.	109	3.5%	136	4.3%	27	24.8%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	380	12.1%	423	13.4%	43	11.3%
Health Care and Social Assistance	226	7.2%	599	18.9%	373	165.0%
Mgmt. of Companies	-	-	-	-	-	-
Educational Services	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Indiana Department of Workforce Development

No other industries within Tipton County provided for more than 7.1% of total employment in 2011. Government entities, namely Tipton County and the City of Tipton, are also significant employers. Government accounted for one-fifth of all jobs in Tipton County in 2010.

A comparison of data from 2007 and 2011 (the latest years for which detailed employment data are available) shows that the majority of recent employment loss within Tipton County has been concentrated in the Government; Manufacturing; Accommodation and Food Services; and Construction sectors. The number of local jobs in these four industries decreased by 36%, 17%, 31% and 23% respectively, combining for a loss of approximately 712 jobs over a four year period. These losses were partially offset by growth among the Health Care and Social Assistance sector which grew by 165%, adding 373 jobs in Tipton County.

Employment Projections

A comparison of county employment to the larger region further highlights the importance of a diverse job base to the County’s well-being. The following table contains employment estimates between 2008 and 2018 (the most recent period for which projections are available) for Tipton County and the Economic Growth Region #4 (which comprises Benton, Carroll, Cass, Clinton, Fountain, Howard, Miami, Montgomery, Tippecanoe, Tipton, Warren and White Counties). In addition to reported employment estimates, the table also calculates the county’s local share compared to that of the larger region and uses that share alongside employment projections for the region to determine anticipated job growth within Tipton County.

Tipton County accounted for approximately 2.1% of jobs within the region in 2008. When Tipton County’s local share is applied to the region’s projected employment growth of 11,278 jobs, it is indicated that Tipton County could stand to gain an additional 242 jobs between 2008 and 2018.

Industries that are projected to be the largest contributors to job growth in Tipton County between 2008 and 2018 include:

- Government (81 new jobs)
- Health Care and Social Assistance (48 new jobs)
- Information (48 jobs)
- Construction (46 jobs)

Manufacturing

A report entitled Economic Development Vision & Strategic Goals was prepared for the Tipton County Economic Development Corporation by Ball State University in 2009. Data contained in this report indicate that although manufacturing is projected to decline within the region, the specialized nature of manufacturing in Tipton County may limit the impacts of job loss felt locally. The Machinery manufacturing and Food, beverage, and tobacco manufacturing sub-sectors were identified as established and growing industries with a significant presence within Tipton County.

Labor Inflow/Outflow Analysis

The figure below illustrates the volume of labor inflow and outflow for Tipton County.

- Dark Green – Workers employed in Tipton County, but living outside the county
- Medium Green – Workers that live and work in the Tipton County
- Light Green – Workers employed outside of Tipton County, but living in the county

The labor flow data discussed here is from 2010, the most recent year for which data is available. In 2010, approximately 53.2% of the community’s estimated 2,008 primary jobs were performed by workers who live outside of Tipton County. Approximately 1,767 individuals both live and work within Tipton County.

Commute Shed

The Commute Shed graphic highlights areas where Tipton County workers live. Areas shown in blue represent concentrations of households where people who work in Tipton County reside. The county’s commute shed is dispersed throughout the northern Indianapolis Metro area and nearby portions of Howard County and Madison County.

As shown in the following figure, 20% of Tipton County residents work in the City of Tipton with another 16% and 10% travelling to jobs in Kokomo and Indianapolis respectively. No one other community employs more than 3.4% of the local workforce. Approximately 39% of people living in Tipton County are travelling less than 10 miles to their places of work and another 25% are commuting between 10 and 24 miles.

Market Implications

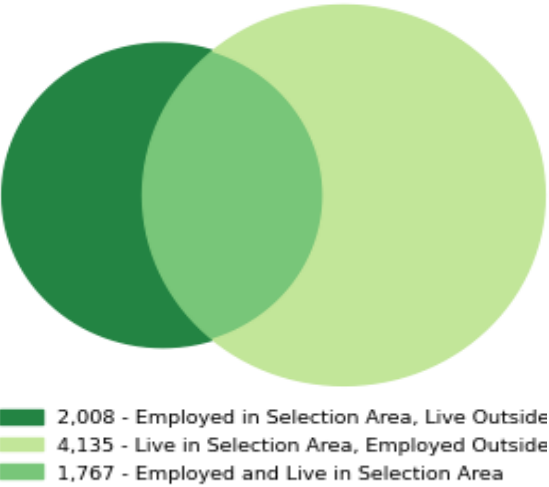
Although local employment has decreased in recent years, projections for Tipton County and the surrounding region indicate there is potential for the local economy to regain lost jobs in the coming years. Moving forward, Tipton County should continue to focus on balanced economic growth and work to attract and retain employers across a range of industries. With a steady employment base that is slightly larger than the local labor force, Tipton has a strong local economy that should stabilize over the long term. The expansion of agribusiness business development and manufacturing firms, including machinery and food-products related businesses, should also be pursued. The County should continue to support existing commercial area while promoting development that accommodates additional non-retail employment.

Employment Projections by Industry Tipton County & EGR #4 ¹ , 2008 - 2018					
Industry (NAICS Code)	Employment by Industry (2008)		County Share	Projected Growth (2008 - 2018)	
	EGR #4 ¹	Tipton County		EGR #4 ¹	Tipton County
194,783	4,182	2.1%	11,278	242	
Government, Total	12,301	1,191	9.7%	838	81
Health Care & Social Assistance	22,843	249	1.1%	4,409	48
Information	1,895	28	1.5%	3,249	48
Construction	7,211	261	3.6%	1,282	46
Accommodation and Food Services	16,676	240	1.4%	1,149	17
Retail Trade	22,839	404	1.8%	924	16
Other Services	4,994	113	2.3%	353	8
Administrative & Waste Mngmnt. Service	5,913	42	0.7%	943	7
Wholesale Trade	5,278	160	3.0%	90	3
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	1,480	6	0.4%	219	1
Finance and Insurance	4,968	102	2.1%	0	0
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,984	18	0.9%	-75	-1
Natural Resources and Mining	2,100	388	18.5%	-22	-4
Transportation & Warehousing & Utilitie	4,596	36	0.8%	-4,172	-33
Professional, Scientific & Tech. Services	4,113	100	2.4%	-1,931	-47
Manufacturing	50,364	844	1.7%	-4,041	-68
Management of Companies and Enterpris	457	-	-	5,047	-
Educational Services, Private & Public	24,771	-	-	3,016	-

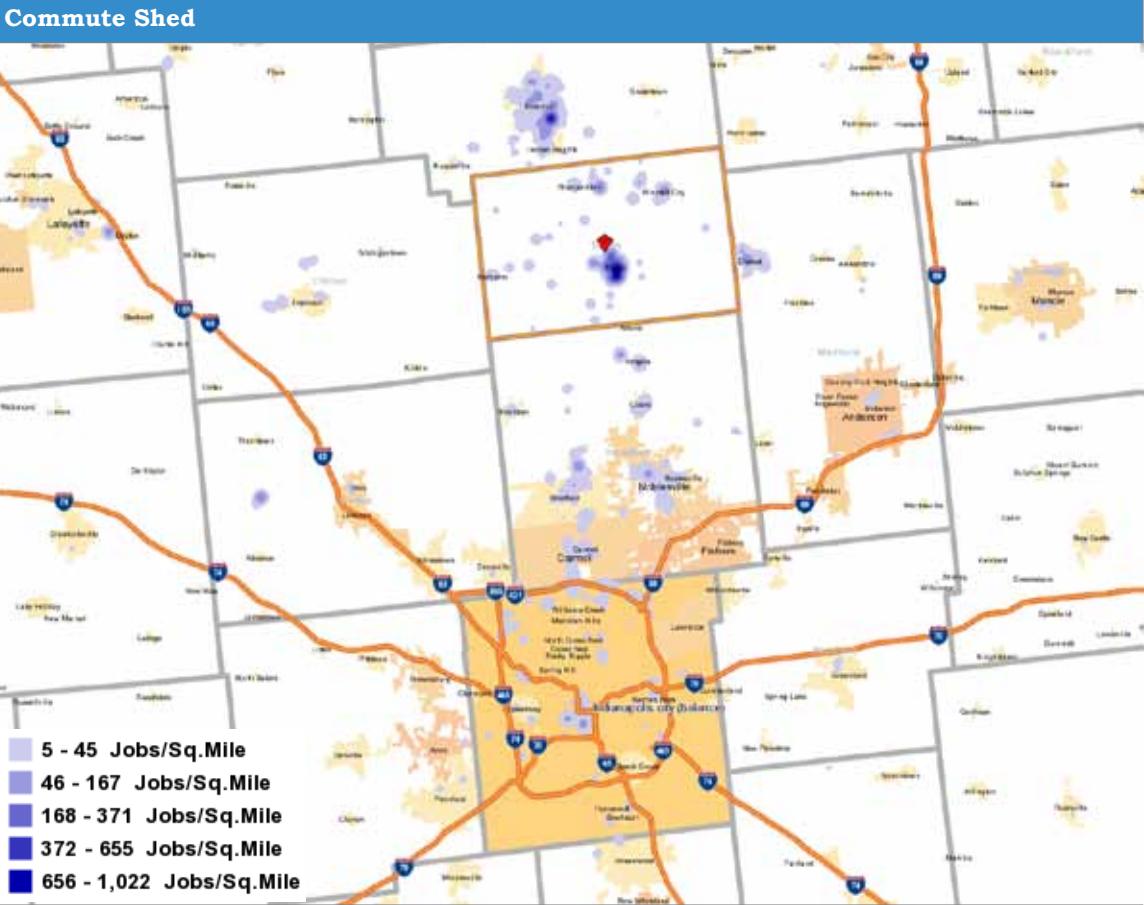
¹ Economic Growth Region #4 comprises Benton, Carroll, Cass, Clinton, Fountain, Howard, Miami, Montgomery, Tippecanoe, Tipton, Warren and White Counties.

Source: Indiana Department of Workforce Development; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Labor Flow



Source: U.S.Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies



Source: U.S.Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies

Educate the Workforce

Tipton County residents lag behind the state with regard to higher education attainment. The expansion of higher education offerings with Tipton County is a key strategy in encouraging local youth to learn and earn within the County and establishing a local workforce that meets the needs of employers.

While Ivy Tech currently operates programs out of the 4H Fairgrounds facility, the County should promote the development of an independent post secondary education and training facility. The County should work with Ivy Tech and other higher education institutions to establish a permanent presence and coordinate educational programs with the County’s economic development efforts. The County can also play a role in reaching out to local employers and soliciting input to identify workforce training needs.

Indiana Community Improvement/Development

Indiana Community Improvement/Development Grants can be used for capital projects such as investments in facilities, equipment, or real estate (non operation funding). Projects focusing on education are eligible for the grant program which has an award ceiling of \$10,000. Lower grant ceilings may limit the ability for the County to seek out a single source to accomplish the task of establishing a permanent higher education facility in Tipton County. However, there are numerous grants available to assist with education and workforce development that could be combined toward this effort.

Develop US 31 Corridor as a Unique District

The Chrysler Plant at US 31 and SR 28 represents the most significant investment in Tipton County in decades and establishes that area as significant employment hub in the region. The County should seek to further leverage this asset by encouraging additional commercial and employment-related development in the surrounding area.

INDOT recently announced the committment of approximately \$17 million in improvements to the intersection of US 31/SR 28. This significant investment reinforces the emergence of this area as a unique and important place within Tipton County.

The US 31 Corridor Overlay district already in place provides higher design standards for development along the US 31 corridor. In addition to these guidelines, the County should also consider the adoption of design guidelines that promote coordinated, attractive industrial development in a campus-like setting. Utilizing a resource like the Tipton County EDC website and property inventory, the County may also play a role in facilitating the assembly and marketing of multiple properties for unified development.

Support and Preserve Agribusiness

The agricultural sector is characterized mostly by locally-owned, often family-run small entrepreneurial businesses, and a strong presence of established regional, national and international corporate agribusiness operations. Meaningful opportunities exist for job creation and economic growth through maintenance of this sector’s competitive advantages. Focus should be placed on activities designed to leverage the sector for new business creation, existing agribusiness expansion, and attraction of new agriculture-related businesses. By collaborating with entities such as the Agriculture Roundtable, Purdue Extension, Future Farmers of America, etc., agribusiness development in Tipton County will gain additional support via better educated and more engaged citizens.

Agricultural preservation should continue to be a priority in the county’s rural areas and prime farmland should be protected to the greatest extent possible without negatively impacting the development opportunities for the Tipton County community. The County should advance the development and application of planning and zoning ordinances that facilitate the development of modern agriculture operations and investment in agribusiness enterprises.

Focus on Existing Commercial Districts

Reinvestment and the redevelopment and expansion of commercial properties should be encouraged within Tipton County’s towns and unincorporated communities. If residential development expands in the areas surrounding existing communities, commercial development and reinvestment should also be encouraged to better serve the local need for goods and services. The County should support programs intended to benefit local small business and startups that typically occupy downtown storefronts such as small business loans, façade improvement programs, and others. The County could also play a coordinating role between the various municipalities wishing to combine resources into programs with larger impacts.

Targeted Improvements

There are several tools that can be used to assist the County, and its municipal partners, in targeting select commercial areas for reinvestment.

Business Improvement District

A local government may designate, after public hearings, an area of the municipality as a Business Improvement District (BID). While business district designation does not provide a funding source, it empowers a municipality to carry out a business district development or redevelopment plan through the following actions:

- Approve all development and redevelopment proposals;
- Acquire, manage, convey or otherwise dispose of real and personal property acquired pursuant to the provisions of a development or redevelopment plan;

- Apply for and accept capital grants and loans for business district development and redevelopment;
- Borrow funds as it may be deemed necessary for the purpose of business district development and redevelopment;
- Sell, lease, trade or improve property that may be acquired in connection with business district development and redevelopment plans;
- Expend public funds as may be necessary for the planning, execution and implementation of the business district plans;
- Establish by ordinance or resolution procedures for the planning, execution and implementation of business district plans;
- Create a Business District Development and Redevelopment Commission to act as an agent for the municipality for the purposes of business district development and redevelopment.

Economic Improvement District

An Economic Improvement District (EID) is designed to allow property owners in a given area to collect a fee, pool that money, and then use it to fund programs that might otherwise not happen through local government action. Because the fees in an EID are assessed equally and in a formal process, the possibility that some businesses will carry more financial burden for improvements than others is eliminated. The County should promote the establishment of EIDs within local municipalities to facilitate various improvements district such as:

- Capital improvements for streetscaping and other physical improvements like lighting, street furniture, and landscape installation and maintenance.
- A marketing and branding campaign.
- Joint maintenance services such as street and sidewalk maintenance, snow removal, trash collection, and other services.
- Parking management and wayfinding programs.
- On-site security where necessary.





Business Infrastructure Improvements

Grant opportunities are available for infrastructure improvements that entice companies to expand or relocate in Indiana, and should be sought for this type of activity within Tipton County.

Industrial Development Grant Fund

The Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) provides financial support for infrastructure improvements for projects creating jobs and generating capital investment in Indiana. This Industrial Development Grant Fund (IDGF) provides money to local governments for infrastructure projects associated with an expansion of an existing Indiana company or the location of a new facility in Indiana. State funding through the IDGF program must be matched by a combination of local government and company financial support. Approval is based on the number and quality of jobs being created, the community’s economic need, a local match of funding, and capital investment being made by the company.

Typically this grant does not exceed 50 percent of project costs. This may include: construction, extension and completion of sanitary sewer lines, storm sewers, and other related drainage facilities; waterlines; roads and streets; sidewalks; rail spurs and sidings; information and high technology infrastructure; and preparation of surveys, plans, and specifications for the construction of publicly owned and operated facilities, utilities, and services.

Tax Abatement

Tax abatement is a tool used by municipalities to attract private investment and job creation by exempting taxes on all or a portion of the increased assessed value resulting from new investment. Tax abatement can be granted on either real or personal property for a period of 1 to 10 years. Unlike TIF, tax abatement is granted on a sliding scale so at least some level of new assessed value is added to the tax role as soon as the second year of the abatement period. Tax abatement is based on an applicant’s ability to achieve development goals such as jobs and new investment.

Tax abatement is one of the most commonly used local financial incentives in Indiana. Tipton County recently approved a 10-year property tax abatement to DuPont Pioneer, which announced plans to expand its operations in the City of Tipton, adding up to 20 new jobs.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) is a similar tool to tax abatement. The County can use PILOTs to reduce the property tax burden of a desired business for a predetermined period. In this instance, a local taxing body and a property owner will agree to the annual payment of a set fee in place of the property taxes. Payments are typically made in the form of a fixed sum, but they may also be paid as a percentage of the income generated by a property. In addition, PILOT can also be a means of reducing the fiscal impact on the County, of a nonprofit, institutional use or other non taxpaying entity locating to a key site. While such uses can be desirable as activity generators, they can also negatively impact municipal services. Provisions can be made to offset that negative impact by allowing the County to be compensated for at least a portion of the revenue that would otherwise be collected in the form of property tax.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Finance (TIF) utilizes future property tax revenues generated within a designated area or district to pay for improvements and incentivize further reinvestment. As the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of properties within a TIF District increases, the incremental growth in property tax over the base year that the TIF was established is invested in the area. Local officials may then issue bonds or undertake other financial obligations based on the growth in new tax revenue within the district. The maximum life of a TIF district in the State of Indiana is 30 years. Over the life of a TIF district, the taxing bodies present within the district receive the same amount of tax revenue that was generated in the base year in which the TIF was established. There are provisions that allow for schools to receive additional revenue. In Indiana TIF Districts can be designated as either redevelopment areas or economic development areas, depending on factors related to alleviating blight or creating jobs and new investment.

Chrysler Manufacturing Plant

In partnership with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, Tipton County has leveraged TIF funds, as well as tax abatement incentives, to facilitate infrastructure improvements related to the 800,000-square-foot Chrysler facility located on the northeast corner of US 31 and SR 28. Chrysler will invest more than \$162 million into manufacturing operations at the site. It is estimated that, when operational, the plant will provide for up to 850 new jobs. The County approved two bonds in excess of \$4 million in total, supported by the TIF district, to fund infrastructure improvements. While the Chrysler Plant incentive is an extreme example, the project demonstrates the potential TIF holds for attracting new employers to the County.

Quality of Life

Services in Unincorporated Areas

The delivery of sufficient community services, such as water and wastewater, is key in providing for the health and welfare of Tipton County residents. While many areas of Tipton County are rural in character with limited development, there are several built up areas where residential neighborhoods lack municipal services. The County should place a priority on the extension of services into underserved areas including Curtisville, East Elwood, Goldsmith, and Hobbes and areas north of Atlanta. In addition to improving quality of life for current residents, an extensive and reliable network of municipal infrastructure will also facilitate expansion of the County’s housing stock to accommodate local workforce.

Improve the Available Housing Stock

Tipton County is known and valued for its unique rural character and family friendly neighborhoods and unincorporated communities. Although the predominantly single family makeup of the housing stock complements Tipton County’s desired identity, maintenance of homes is an issue in some areas. New housing development should be encouraged within existing communities and in surrounding areas where services can be readily provided. The development of vacant lots and replacement of aging housing should be encouraged to strengthen existing communities and increase demand for local commercial uses.

Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority

The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCD) creates housing opportunity, generates and preserves assets, and revitalizes neighborhoods by investing financial and technical resources in the development efforts of qualified developers, lenders, investors, and nonprofit partners throughout Indiana.

The IHCD offers a variety of programs intended to help address housing needs in Indiana communities. Program guidelines and selection criteria by which IHCD allocates housing funds can be found in its Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP).

Housing Programs

Significant state and federal programs include:

Rental Housing Tax Credit (RHTC)

The Rental Housing Tax Credit (RHTC) is a tax incentive program established under Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code to give an incentive to developers to provide affordable rental housing. These federal income tax credits offset the building acquisition, new construction, and substantial rehabilitation costs for rental housing developments. By reducing a developer’s federal tax liability, or selling of tax credits to investors, tax credits can contribute significantly to the financial viability of developing affordable rental units. Each state has a limit on the amount of tax credits that it can allocate. In 2013, IHCD allocated \$14.3 million through RHTC, funding nearly 800 housing units and leverage a potential \$130 million in private capital.

Multifamily Bonds

Tax-exempt bond financing provides long term financing for the acquisition, construction, or substantial rehabilitation of affordable rental housing. These bonds are attractive to developers as the interest paid to investors is exempt from federal income taxes, which gives the developer a lower interest rate than conventional debt, reducing the developments debt service cost. Bond financed properties are eligible for a 4% federal tax credit.

HOME Program

The Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) is a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) based grant program that helps fund both non-profits and local governments with a number of housing programs. The HOME grants are extremely diverse and the monies can go to support assistance with down payments, owner-occupied rehabilitation and even rental properties for both transitional and permanent housing. The HOME program can also be used as a source of financing in conjunction with tax credits.

Affordable Housing and Community Development Fund

The Affordable Housing and Community Development Fund provides a resource for not-for-profit organizations seeking financing for housing, as well as a range of community and economic development activities. The charge of IHCD and the Development Fund is to help local communities build upon their unique assets — to create places that are ripe with opportunity, that have ready access to goods and services, and that celebrate a vibrant culture.

From its establishment in 1989 through October 2008, the Development Fund committed approximately \$32 million to finance and develop a broad range of housing solutions including: 250 units of emergency and transitional housing, 1,200 units of rental housing, and 450 units of homebuyer housing.

Community Development Block Grant Program

The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) program provides funding to support the development of the rehabilitation of rental housing and owner-occupied residential units. Although originating federally with HUD, CDBG funds are administered through local housing authorities like the IHCD.

A CDBG grantee must develop and follow a detailed plan that provides for and encourages citizen participation. This integral process emphasizes participation by persons of low or moderate income, particularly residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, blighted areas, and areas in which the grantee proposes to use CDBG funds. Over a one-, two- or three-year period, as selected by the grantee, not less than 70 % of the funds must be used for activities that benefit low-and moderate-income persons.

Other Programs

IHCD administers a number of other grants and assistance programs related to providing quality housing for Indiana residents. Resources available to Tipton County residents and organizations include:

- CHDO Works
- Emergency Shelter Grant
- First HOME/First HOME Plus/First HOME Community
- Housing Opportunities for People with HIV/AIDS
- Indiana Energy Assistance Program
- Indiana Weatherization Assistance Program
- Individual Development Accounts (IDA)
- Mortgage Credit Certificates
- Private Activity Multi-Family Housing Bonds
- Shelter Plus Care

Other Agencies

Governmental agencies other than HUD and IHCD also offer funding programs to help families find affordable, high quality housing. The U.S. Department of Agriculture in particular has a number of funding sources available for rural families.

USDA

- 502 Direct Single Family Housing Loan Program
- 504 Single Family Housing Repair Loan and Grant Program
- 515 Multi-Family Housing Preservation & Revitalization Restructuring Demonstration Program
- 515 Rural Rental Housing Program
- Farm Labor Housing Loan and Grant Program
- Guaranteed Rural Housing Loan Program
- Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program (GRRHP)
- Housing Preservation Grant Program

Federal Home Loan Bank

- Affordable Housing Program
- Homeownership Initiatives (HOP and NIP)



Establish a Regional Park System

The County should encourage municipalities to expand existing local park facilities if they do not adequately meet the needs of residents. The County should also study the feasibility of offering communities assistance with park operations and maintenance. Regional parks should also be established to needed amenities in areas where Tipton County residents are underserved by parks and recreation.

County Park Board

The County should establish a formal Park Board to pursue parks and recreation initiatives including grant funding opportunities. The County should also consider establishing a Tipton County Park District to allow for the creation and administration of regional parks and recreation facilities to serve residents from communities throughout the county.

Local Participation

Local communities should also be encouraged to partner with the County to coordinate improvements within and between incorporated areas of the county. For example, a program with unified signage, equipment, and maintenance would create an identifiable, cohesive, and attractive park system.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was passed by Congress in 1965 to assist eligible governmental units in the provision of new park areas. The LWCF is a matching assistance program that provides grants for 50% of the cost for the acquisition and/or development of outdoor recreation sites and facilities. Since the program began, Indiana has received approximately \$75 million in federal funds, over \$36 million of which has been provided to local agencies. More than 30,000 acres of land have been acquired in Indiana with LWCF assistance for public outdoor recreation use and conservation.

The sponsor must have the local matching 50% of the project cost available prior to the application. The Land and Water Conservation Fund applicants may request amounts ranging from a minimum of \$10,000 up to a maximum of \$200,000.

Examples of types of projects include:

- acquiring park or natural area;
- picnic areas;
- sports and playfields, such as playgrounds, ballfields, court facilities and golf courses;
- water oriented facilities for boating, swimming, and access to lakes, rivers, and streams;
- natural areas and interpretive facilities;
- campgrounds;
- fishing and hunting areas;
- winter sports facilities;
- amphitheaters and bandstands;
- parks adjacent to schools for mutual use;
- outdoor natural habitat zoo facilities;
- roads, restrooms, utilities, park maintenance buildings; and nature centers.

Establish Regional Trails

The County should work with local municipalities, property owners, and other partners to begin development of a regional trails network. The extensive network identified in Section 6: Environmental Features and Open Space represents a long term goal to which the County should aspire, but should be evaluated on a regular basis. The proposed trail network would utilize a combination of railroad and roadway rights-of-way as well as greenways along various streams and creeks.

Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a matching assistance program that provides funding for the acquisition and/or development of multi-use recreational trail projects. Both motorized and non-motorized projects may qualify for assistance. The Indiana RTP will provide 80% matching reimbursement assistance for eligible projects. Applicants may request grant amounts ranging from a minimum of \$10,000 up to a maximum of \$150,000. Projects will be eligible if they provide public access to trails. Funds from RTP can be used for development and rehabilitation of trailside, trailhead facilities, and trail linkages; construction of multi-use trails; acquisition of easement or property for trails; operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to trails; providing stream and river access sites; construction of bridges, boardwalks and crossings; signage; and building of sanitary facilities and other support facilities.

Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Stewardship Program

The County should seek to protect streams and creeks through permanent methods such as conservation easements, nature preserve dedication, and/or public acquisition. While incentives such as tax abatements can be utilized, the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can be an effective tool in promoting conservation and securing greenways for preservation.

The CSP is a voluntary program that encourages agricultural property owners to undertake conservation activities and expand or improve upon resource management. CSP participants are reimbursed through annual or supplemental payments for a wide range of enhancements. Some of the more typical enhancements used to establish greenways include:

- Riparian buffers;
- Filter strips;
- Prairie restoration; and,
- Forest buffers.



Infrastructure

Follow the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) addresses the procurement, construction, and maintenance of capital assets, including buildings, infrastructure, technology, and major equipment. The CIP is critical to water, sewer, transportation, and other essential public services. The CIP establishes schedules, priorities, cost projections and funding options for public improvement projects within a three-year period.

A CIP typically schedules the implementation of a range of specific projects related to the Comprehensive Plan, particularly the restoration and upgrading of existing utilities and infrastructure facilities, expansion of infrastructure into developing areas, construction and development of new facilities (i.e. fire stations, public works facilities, etc.), and can include such items as the water system, sanitary sewers, stormwater facilities, the road network, and streetscape enhancements.

The CIP aims to reflect and help implement the County Commissioners’ goals, of which the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan should be a part. As financial resources in Tipton County will always be limited and public dollars must be spent wisely, the County should continue to use the CIP to provide the most desirable public improvements and stay within budget constraints.

Municipal Services

Areas surrounding the US 31 and SR 28 intersection should be connected to the water and sewer facilities provided through the Tipton Municipal Utilities that are located along CR 560 W. These facilities currently have excess capacity and are designed to easily accommodate expansion if future demand warrants it. Development elsewhere in Tipton County should be located near or adjacent to existing municipalities capable of providing services, maximizing the use of existing infrastructure.

Should INDOT implement a limited access treatment along US 31 in Tipton County, the County should also work with INDOT to identify areas where conduit should be installed to facilitate the extension of services in the future.

State Revolving Fund Loan

The State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan Programs provide low-interest loans to Indiana communities for projects that improve wastewater and drinking water infrastructure. The program’s mission is to provide eligible entities with the lowest interest rates possible on the financing of such projects while protecting public health and the environment. SRF also funds non-point source projects that are tied to a wastewater loan.

Invest in Transportation

In addition to local infrastructure, access to major roadways and rail facilities is a key operational factor for industrial users. The County should pursue improvements to US 31, SR 28, and Division Road to enhance truck transportation routes. The presence of a siding along the Norfolk Southern railroad also creates the potential to establish rail freight access for future industrial uses located along the CR 100 S corridor.

Other specific roadway improvements include:

- Extension of CR 560 W north to connect with CR 550 W, with an improved railroad crossing at CR 100 N
- Realignment of CR 500 N to the east of Sharpsville to enhance safety and improve the accessibility of US 31 and SR 19
- Construction of primary and secondary overpasses over US 31 and the existing railroad if US 31 is upgraded to a limited access highway in the future.
- Complete Streets related improvements such as on-street and shoulder bike path treatments, and intersection and bridge enhancements.

MAP-21

On July 6, 2012, President Obama signed into law Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), a two-year transportation reauthorization bill. MAP-21 replaces the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which expired in September 2009 and was extended nine times. The goal of MAP-21 is to modernize and reform the current transportation system to help create jobs, accelerate economic recovery, and build the foundation for long-term prosperity. MAP-21 continues funding for numerous programs previously funded through SAFETEA-LU.

Given the recent passage of MAP-21, it is still uncertain how changes in Federal policy will ultimately impact existing funding programs. The County should continue to keep informed as to the status of these programs and any new funding sources that may be introduced in the near future as a result of MAP-21.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program provides funds to states for transportation projects designed to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality.

MAP-21 improves the existing CMAQ program by including particulate matter as one of the pollutants addressed, and by requiring a performance plan in large metropolitan areas to ensure that CMAQ funds are being used to improve air quality and congestion in those regions.

As a rural county with a population between 5,000 and 50,000 (known as a Group III entity), Tipton County must request CMAQ funds directly from INDOT. INDOT has supported a wide range of projects through the CMAQ program including improvements to bicycle facilities, commuter parking, transit facilities, intersections, sidewalk improvements, and signal timing. Funds have also been used to make transportation improvements to eliminate bottlenecks and limit diesel emissions, and to create promotional campaigns to enhance use of transit and bicycles.

Highway Safety Improvement Program

The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), which is administered through the Indiana Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), funds projects designed to improve traffic safety. Projects such as recommended roadway realignments near Tipton and Sharpsville would likely be eligible to receive HSIP funds.

Eligible improvements include:

- Intersection or road segment safety improvements
- Pavement and shoulder widening
- Rumble strip installation
- Skid-resistant surface installation
- Safety improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, and/or disabled persons
- Railway-highway crossing improvements
- Railway-highway crossing traffic enforcement monitoring
- Traffic calming features
- Elimination of roadside obstacles
- Improvements to highway signage
- Emergency vehicle signal priority
- Reflective pavement markings
- High crash potential warning signs
- Crash data collection
- Safety-conscious planning
- Improvement in the collection and analysis of crash data
- Workzone safety improvements
- Installation of new guardrails, barriers and crash attenuators where none existed before.
- Construction, installation and maintenance of signs at pedestrian-bicycle crossings and in school zones
- Improvements on high-risk rural roads
- Other projects to promote the awareness and education of the public concerning highway safety matters and/or enforce highway safety laws