

# FOUNTAIN COUNTY

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### FOR

## PLANNING AND ZONING

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This Comprehensive Plan update is prepared for an in cooperation with the following elected and appointed officials of Fountain County.

## **EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

### **Fountain County Commissioners**

Brenda Hardy, District 2, President

Andrew Hall, District 1, Vice President

Tim Shumaker, District 3, Member

## **LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

### **Fountain County Council**

Dudley Cruea, President, Member at Large

Kelly Carlson, Vice President, Member at Large

Dale White, District 2, Member

Jeff Fishero, District 1, Member

Jim McKee, District 4, Member

Tom Booe, Member at Large

Denise Crowder, District 3, Member

### **County Attorney**

J Kent Minnette

## **FOUNTAIN COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING**

### **Planning Commission**

#### **Voting Members**

- Kyle Crowder - Citizen
- Jake McGraw - Citizen
- Laura Bush - Citizen
- Glen Walter - Citizen
- Sue Ann Anderson- Citizen
- Nancy Tuggle - Designee Appointed by Surveyor Designee as voting member
- Jamie Shonkwiler- Purdue Extension Agent
- Tim Shumaker - County Commissioner
- Jim McKee - County Council

#### **Non-Voting Members**

- Roger Azar - Zoning Administrator
- Jenny Eads - Health Department Environmentalist
- Erich Haley - Health Department Environmentalist
- Tina Holmes - Floodplain Administrator
- J. Kent Minnette - County Attorney
- Amber Roarks - Admin of Records

#### **Board of Zoning Appeals**

- Kyle Crowder
- Nancy Tuggle
- John Allen
- Rodney Norman

## **Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Members**

Thank to the following steering committee members for your time and contributions to this Plan:

Rod Bannon

Jeff Fishero

Dale White

Tim Shumaker

Sue Anderson

Tina Holmes

Lori Jordan

DRAFT

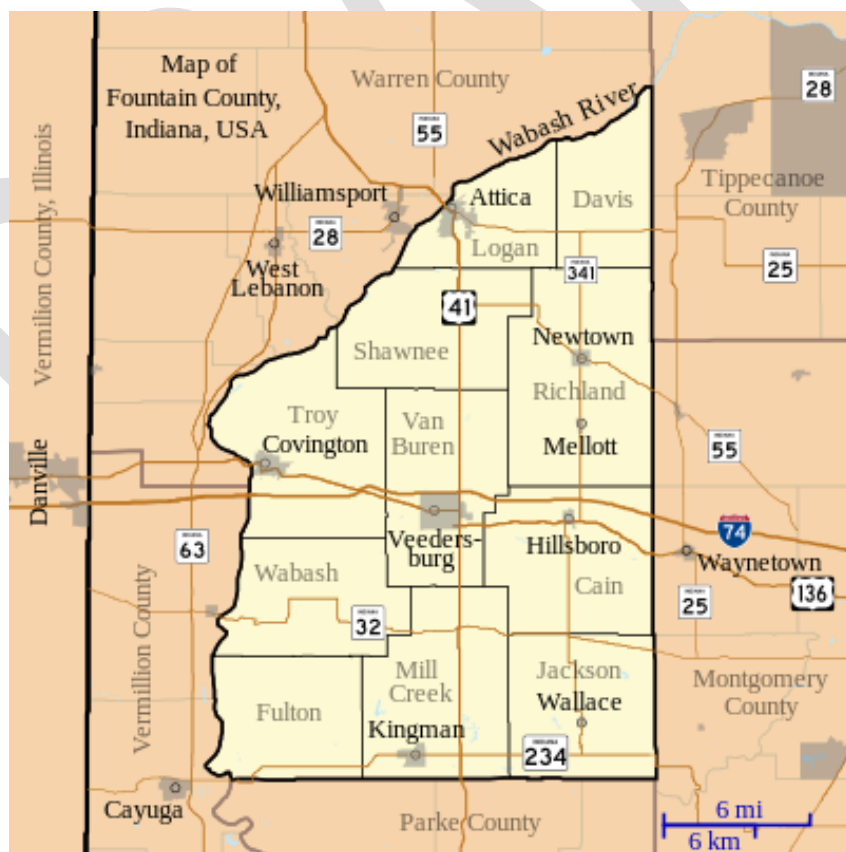
## Article I

### Executive Summary

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan update provides analysis of key existing demographic and physical data and a direction toward desired planned growth and livability for Fountain County, Indiana. While the scale of desired growth varies among cities and counties in Indiana, Fountain County seeks to preserve its present way of life, preserve property values, and expand potential services and amenities for its citizens. A Comprehensive Plan can also provide guidance for economic development activities and other governmental efforts to improve quality of life in the County.

The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to provide an update to the previous plan completed in 2007. It is necessary to periodically update comprehensive plans due to changes in the environment, population, technology, and other social and economic factors. Since the last comprehensive plan update, there have been a substantial number of changes or shifts in economic, technology, and societal factors which affect the way property is developed. Those changes, in turn, can have significant impacts on the public and neighboring properties.

This Comprehensive Plan is only intended for the unincorporated areas regardless of having existing zoning. The incorporated areas that do not have zoning can adopt this plan in the future and be a participating municipality to the Fountain County Plan Commission. This document does not apply to incorporated areas of the County which have planning and zoning jurisdictions and have exercised extra-jurisdictional authority outside their planning boundaries according to State Statute. The map below shows the Township structure and incorporated and unincorporated areas of Fountain County.



Planning and zoning is important to all land use sectors. To assure the best possible planning and zoning, education of the local decision-makers and citizens is vital. Fountain County possesses a friendly, rural atmosphere that residents want to protect for the enjoyment of future generations and agricultural productivity. Planning and zoning can assist in reducing land use conflicts by assigning zoning to districts and permitted uses to create compatibility and transitions with adjacent lands. As growth occurs, planning encourages development in areas where municipal services may be located, thus providing adequate planning, and making more efficient use of infrastructure, such as water, sewer, drainage, and roadway networks.

The comprehensive plan is designed to establish the official policy of the County with respect to its physical, economic, and social development for a period extending from ten to twenty years forward. Zoning is the established "legal" use of the land within the County jurisdiction. Obviously, comprehensive plans and zoning are in a constant state of change and will be updated and recodified from time to time. However, this overall review and reestablishment and development of new policies for the County is essential to ensure that the County will grow and progress in a proper and orderly manner.

In order to establish land use ordinances involving the regulation of land use, the County must comply with the elements of Title 36-7-4 of Indiana Code. Section 502 of that Title defines specific items that land use regulations must address.

A comprehensive plan is simply an agency's policy with respect to development. Once a plan has been adopted, planning and zoning ordinances can be drafted or revised accordingly. A zoning ordinance regulates the various districts created by referring to the comprehensive plan. The subdivision control ordinance handles the way in which land shall be divided to create higher densities or more parcels for development.

A comprehensive plan should look at the inventory and capacity of existing infrastructure, the current rate of growth, the types of growth occurring, the fact that social factors that can affect growth, and the future trends of the land uses to make predictions out 10-20 years. The comprehensive plan makes these predictions from socio-economic trends in the county as it relates to land use and infrastructure. This plan is a guide to the Advisory Plan Commission as they review zoning map amendments, subdivision development requirements, and County development standards in the future.

The purpose of planning and zoning in Fountain County is to improve the health, safety, convenience, and welfare of the citizens and to plan for future development; to the ensure:

1. That roadway systems be carefully planned.
2. That Fountain County grows only with adequate public way, utility, health, educational, and recreational facilities.
3. That the needs of industry and business be recognized in future growth and balanced with the needs of the County.
4. That residential areas provide healthful surroundings for family life; and
5. That the growth of Fountain County is commensurate with and promotive of the efficient and economical use of public funds.

## **Article II County Background**

Fountain County was the 53<sup>rd</sup> county established in Indiana on December 30, 1825. The first settlers arrived in area during the Spring of 1823. The County is named for Major James Fontaine who was killed at Harmar's Defeat in the Battle of Maumee near Ft. Wayne, Indiana in 1790 during the Northwest Indian War. The county seat is Covington, which has its own planning and zoning. The county government is a constitutional body granted powers by the Constitution of the State of Indiana and Indiana Code. The Board of Commissioners for Fountain County comprises the executive body of the County, while the legislative branch for the County is the Fountain County Council.

The County is bounded by the Wabash River and Warren County to the north; Tippecanoe County and Montgomery County to the east; Parke County to the south; and Vermillion County to the west. According to STATSINDIANA, Fountain County has an area of 395.7 square miles with a population density of 41.89 people per square mile. There are eleven townships, three school districts, railroad systems, no public airports, approximately 17 miles of I-74 frontage with 2 exits, and approximately 41 miles of riverbank along the Wabash River.

### **Government Services**

Fountain County has the following offices and services operated by elected officials:

Fountain County Commissioners (Executive Branch of Government)

Fountain County Council (Legislative Branch of Government)

Assessor

Auditor

Clerk

Coroner's Office

Prosecutor

Recorder

Treasurer

### **Public Safety**

Sheriff's Office

Emergency Management

County Jail

911 Communications (Shared with Warren County)

### **Public Service Departments**

Ambulance

Community Corrections

Veteran's Affairs

Department of Health

Planning and Zoning

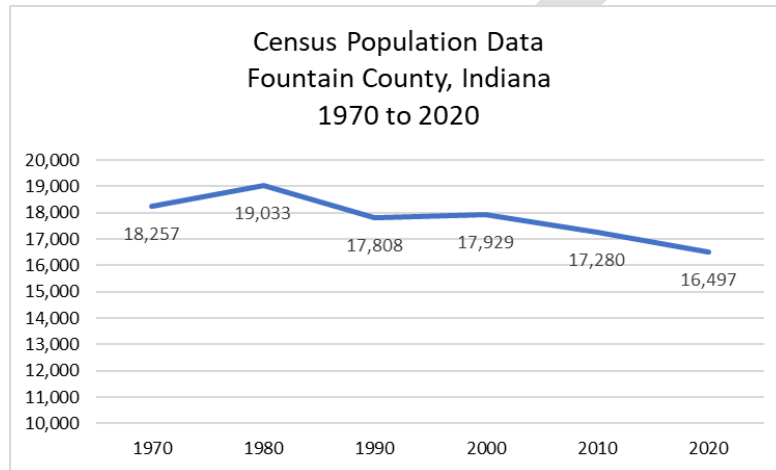
County Highway

Probation

County Extension

## Population Data

The population of Fountain County is 16,574 according to present estimates. (Population estimates for the County vary slightly by source.) The three largest municipalities, which already have planning and zoning in place, are Attica, Covington, and Veedersburg, which make up 47.6% of the total county population. In total towns comprise 57.2% of populous in the County. The smaller areas including Kingman, Hillsboro, Mellott, Newtown, and Wallace, make up 1,530 people. A total of 42.8% of the population of the county are distributed in the unincorporated areas of the 11 Townships. Population data from the US Census for Fountain County for 1970 to 2020 is provided in the chart below. Fountain County has experienced an overall 10% population decline since 1980, with a 0.07% increase occurring from 1990 to 2000.



Data from the 2020 Census and subsequent for Fountain County is as follows:

Population over Time	Number	Rank in State	Percent of State	Indiana
Yesterday (2020)	16,479	77	0.30%	6,484,050
Today (2022)	16,574	77	0.20%	6,833,037
Tomorrow (2030 projection) *	15,259	78	0.20%	7,014,880
Percent Change 2020 to Today	0.60%	73		0.70%

From: [https://www.stats.indiana.edu/profiles/profiles.asp?scope\\_choice=a&county\\_changer=18045](https://www.stats.indiana.edu/profiles/profiles.asp?scope_choice=a&county_changer=18045), as of August 1, 2023.\*Projection based on 2015 Census population estimates.

Sources: [U.S. Census Bureau](#); [Indiana Business Research Center](#)

Population change from 2021-2022 is summarized in the following table.

(Source: [U.S. Census Bureau](#))

Components of Population Change, 2021-2022	Number	Rank in State	Percent of State	Indiana
Net Domestic Migration	181	28		5,230
Net International Migration	6	68		15,490
Natural Increase (births minus deaths)	-76	53	-7.40%	1,024

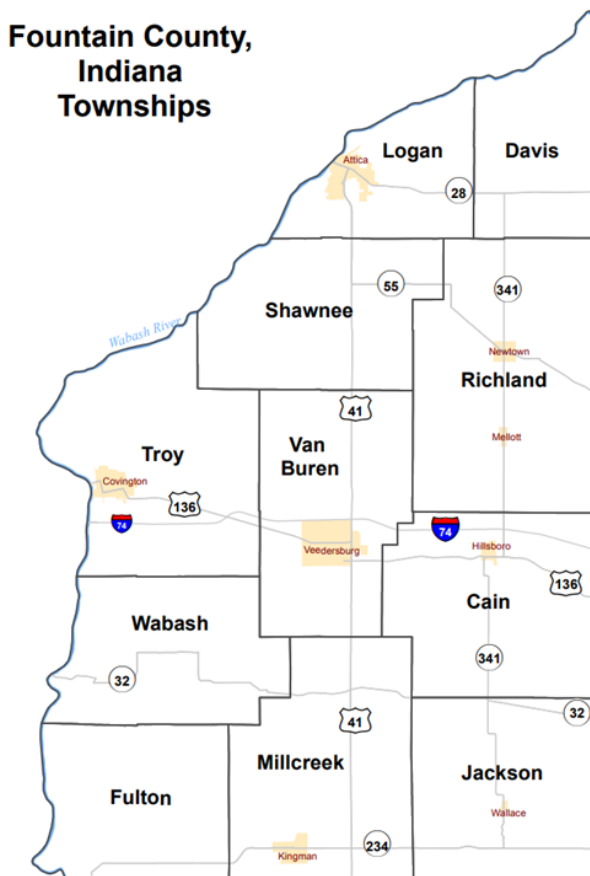
A breakdown and summary of the population of Fountain County is provided in the following table.

Population Est. by Age, 2021	Number	Rank in State	Pct. Dist. In County	Pct. Dist. In State
Preschool (0 to 4)	934	77	5.7%	6.0%
School Age (5 to 17)	2,634	78	16.0 %	17.3%
College Age (18 to 24)	1,256	77	7.6%	9.7%
Young Adult (25 to 44)	3,746	78	22.8%	25.7%
Older Adult (45 to 64)	4,519	78	27.5%	24.9%
Seniors (65 and older)	3,338	78	20.3%	16.4%
Median Ages	43.0			Median Age = 38.1

The median age in Fountain County is 43.0 years old. The median age in the State of Indiana is 38.1 years old.

### Summary of Townships

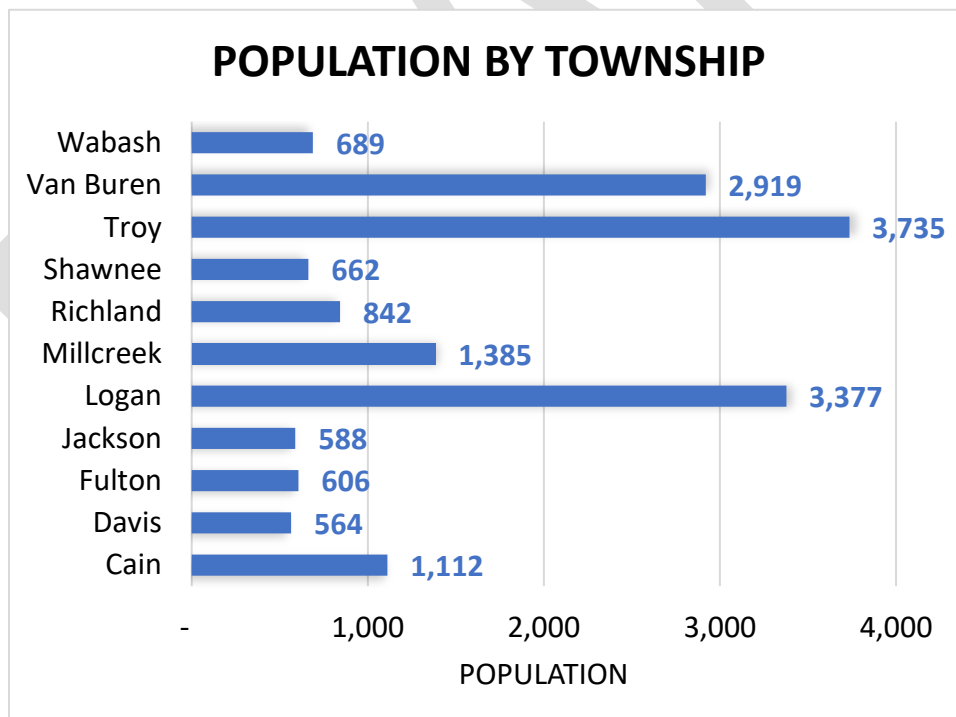
Fountain County is divided in eleven different Townships ranging in land area, population, and development density. Below is an illustrative map of townships in Fountain County.



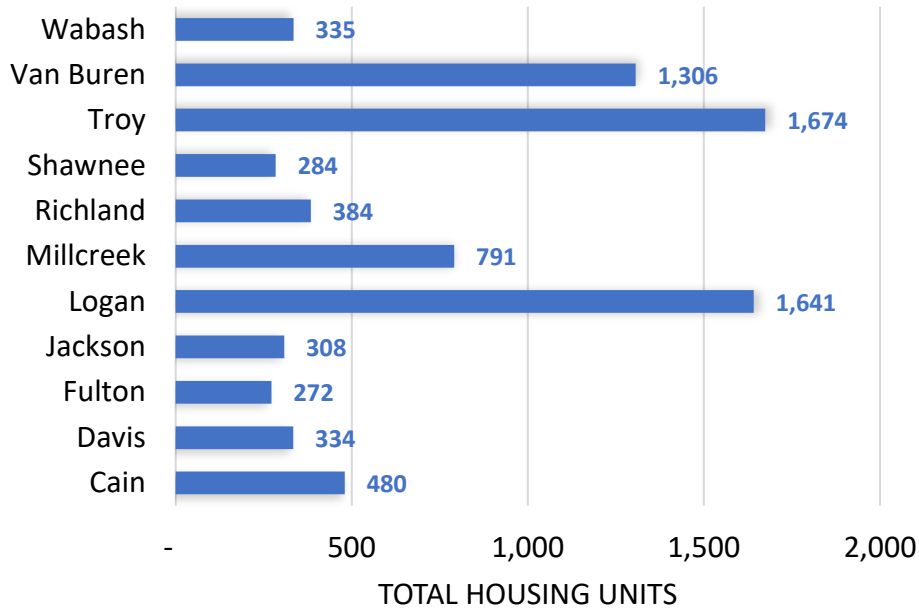
The following table presents a breakdown and summary of population by township in Fountain County.

Township	Housing Units 2020	Housing Units 2010	% Change	Population 2020 Census	Population 2010 Census	% Change	Square Miles	Housing Density Per Square Mile
Cain	480	483	-0.6%	1,112	1,140	-2.5%	39.9	12
Davis	334	286	17%	564	684	-17.5%	23.5	14
Fulton	272	285	-5%	606	623	-2.7%	30.4	9
Jackson	308	373	-17%	588	623	-5.6%	36.0	9
Logan	1,641	1,685	-3%	3,377	3,675	-8.1%	22.2	74
Millcreek	791	728	9%	1,385	1,412	-1.9%	42.7	32
Richland	384	373	3%	842	960	-12.3%	51.9	7
Shawnee	284	264	8%	662	669	-1.0%	34.7	8
Troy	1,674	1,657	1%	3,735	3,718	0.5%	43.9	38
Van Buren	1,306	1,308	0%	2,919	2,986	-2.2%	37.5	35
Wabash	335	336	0%	689	785	-12.2%	33	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,809</b>	<b>7,778</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>16,479</b>	<b>17,275</b>	<b>-4.6%</b>	<b>395.7</b>	

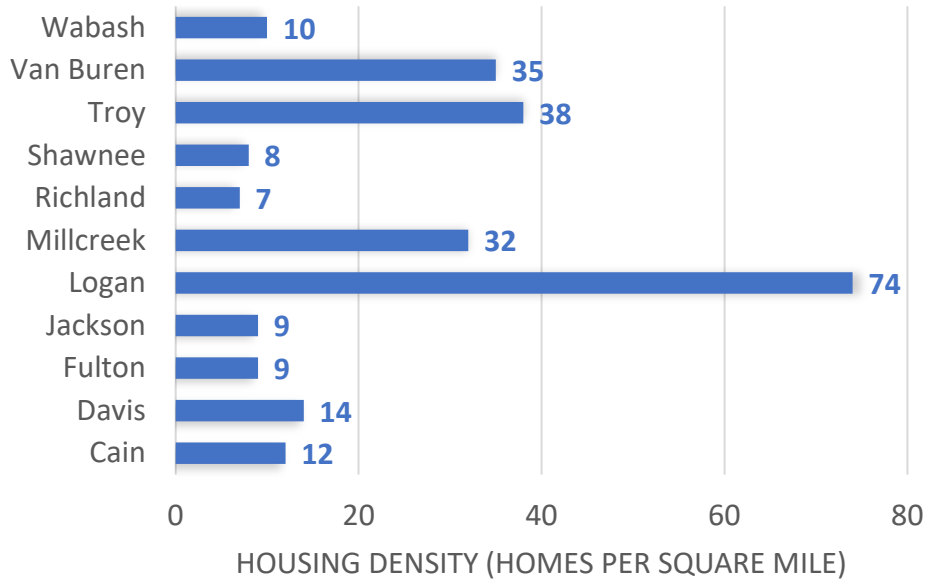
The following graphs summarize population, housing units, and housing density by township.



## HOUSING UNITS BY TOWNSHIP



## HOUSING DENSITY BY TOWNSHIP



## Cities and Towns

Cities and Towns in Fountain County are summarized on the following page. 57.2% of the population of the county lives in an incorporated city or town, while 42.8% of the population live in rural areas. The trend of people within the county moving to incorporated areas is one that was identified in 2008 and has continued into 2022.

While most of the population lives in a city or town, Fountain County is classified as a “rural” county this is due to large percentage of land that remains agricultural. A vast majority of the land area in the county is of a rural nature.

A summary of population data for cities and towns in Fountain County is provided in the table below.

**Population Summary for Cities and Towns in Fountain County**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Population in 2022</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Percent of County</b>	<b>Land Area (sq mi)</b>	<b>Population Density (people/mi<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Median Age</b>
Attica	3,205	City	19.3%	1.80	1,614	37.6
Covington	2,686	City	16.2%	1.40	1,937	45.2
Hillsboro	507	Town	3.0%	0.31	1,619	32.5
Kingman	559	Town	3.4%	0.66	925	43
Mellott	170	Town	1.0%	0.34	371	42.9
Newtown	214	Town	1.3%	0.50	585	39.5
Veedersburg	2,070	Town	12.5%	3.0	686	47.0
Wallace	80	Town	0.5%	0.10	1,075	24.0
Total	9,491		57.2%			

## Schools

Fountain County is home to three public school districts: Attica Consolidated Schools, Covington Community School Corporation, and Southeast Fountain School Corporation.

- Attica Consolidated Schools serves as the public school system for those who live in the City of Attica and Shawnee, Logan, and Davis Townships in Fountain County.
- Covington Community School Corporation serves as the public school system for the City of Covington; Troy, Wabash, and Fulton Townships in Fountain County; as well as Mound Township in Warren County. It is the only school district in Fountain County which serves an area located outside the County.
- Southeast Fountain School Corporation serves as the public school district for Veedersburg, Newtown, Mellott, Hillsboro, Kingman, and Wallace as well as Richland, Van Buren, Mill Creek, Hillsboro, and Jackson Townships. Southeast Fountain is the only school district located in an unincorporated area.
- There is a small number of private schools located in the County, including Covington Christian School for which little enrollment or other public data is available. While no research was completed on these schools, their presence is recognized within the County, and they are included in the discussion for the scope of this document.

The table below represents the most recent data for public schools in Fountain County from the Indiana Department of Education.

**Fountain County Public School Information**  
(From the Indiana Department of Education Website)

<b>Category</b>	<b>Attica Consolidated</b>	<b>Covington Community</b>	<b>Southeast Fountain</b>
Enrollment, K-12	613	827	1,024
Economically Disadvantaged	53.7%	33.7%	48.5%
English Learners	2.1%	0.8%	2.7%
Foster	1.1%	0.5%	1.0%
High Ability	11.3%	19.2%	8.9%
Homeless	0.2%	0.5%	0.9%
Military Connected	2.9%	0.4%	3.4%
Students with Disabilities	24.6%	16.4%	14.7%

Public school enrollment data is the most current available online from:

Attica Consolidated School Corporation: <https://inview.doe.in.gov/corporations/102435000>

Southeast Fountain School Corporation: <https://inview.doe.in.gov/corporations/1024550000>

Covington Community: <https://inview.doe.in.gov/corporations/1024400000>  
Summary of School Data from US Census Bureau

Education	Number	Rank in State	Percent of State	Indiana
School Enrollment (2022/2023 Total Reported)	2,488	73	0.2%	1,124,094
Public	2,419	73	0.2%	1,035,718
Adults (25+ in 2022 ACS)	11,606	78	0.3%	4,532,091
with High School diploma or higher	88.9%	59		90%
with B.A. or higher degree	13.5%	85		28.2%

Sources: Indiana Department of Education; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

The following information is enrollment trend data for 2006-2022 from Indiana University's Center for Evaluation and Education Policy.

Attica Consolidated School Corporation: -42.89%  
Southeast Fountain School Corporation: -25.53%  
Covington Community School Corporation: -10.39%

<https://ceep.indiana.edu/education-policy/policy-reports/2023/enrollment-changes-indiana-2006-2022-f.pdf>

## **ARTICLE III**

### **Introduction**

Fountain County has seen several changes since the last comprehensive plan update and will continue to experience changes in population, socio-economic circumstances, as well as other demographic data. Additionally, the development of technology and health and age factors can cause changes in the way people live, work, enjoy recreational activities, and conduct business. For example, the development of new technology and greater access to the internet has created new business opportunities and has resulted in many people working from home or remotely since the last Comprehensive Plan update.

Planning allows for more transparency and opportunity for public input and involvement over the future and gives the ability to provide a high quality of life for the residents of the County. By giving attention to land uses and public investments, public services can be provided more efficiently, and resources can be used as tools to solve issues and problems as they arise. The focus and foundation of this plan is how managed growth can be implemented through incentives rather than regulations.

It is important to understand that this Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory document or zoning. It is a policy tool to set the direction for future development within the County. Zoning is the regulatory tool for the orderly and consistent use of property. This is just one of many tools available to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

Parts of this Comprehensive Plan provide an analysis of the factors most likely to affect growth and development in Fountain County over the next 20 years. These factors usually include land use, educational opportunity, economic development, utility systems, community facilities, transportation facilities, demographics, recreational facilities, and housing. The information is compiled to show the current condition of the County and to illustrate the opportunities and limitations within the county. This will lead to possible resolutions to issues the County may face in the future. For example, when the last comprehensive plan update was completed, solar and wind farms and rural internet services were not technologically significant at the time and were much less prevalent than today. The availability of those services has changed the economy, education, and business. While these matters are small examples of changes in development practices over time, they provide relevant and good examples of how socio-economic factors impact growth, the public, and property. Also, planning and zoning also provides an opportunity to avoid loss of life or property by protecting the public from overloading infrastructure or from development in the floodplain and floodway of rivers, streams, waterways, and wetlands.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **Goals and Objectives**

Fountain County has identified several new goals and objectives as well as the continuation of goals and objectives from the previous Comprehensive Plan, to focus on during the upcoming years. While some goals are broad and long term in nature, there are several which are attainable in a shorter time frame. Goals identified as desired and pursuable are listed below followed by specific objectives to work on each goal:

1. Maintain and enhance the rural and small-town character of Fountain County.
  - The County will evaluate and implement economic development and land use policies which enhance Fountain County's rural history and character as appropriate.
2. Evaluate and implement policies regarding affordable housing
  - As the cost of housing has increased disproportionately to average income, the County officials will consider implementing a formal review of its economic development plan to analyze and address affordable housing.
  - Continue to participate in the implementation and further development of the READI Region Housing Study.
  - Work within the framework of the READI Region Housing Study to develop an approach to this issue.
3. Evaluate and consider existing childcare needs for county citizens.
  - Consider options for evaluating the impacts and costs of childcare on the cost of living and affordability of the community.
  - Work within the framework of the READI Region Housing Study to develop an approach to this issue.
4. Develop and implement programs for the creation of small business and small business retention.
5. Encourage agricultural, recreation, tourism, homestead, business and commerce development to increase tax base.
  - Evaluate alternatives and options to increase outdoor recreation activities to improve economic development potential and quality of life issues.
6. Protect natural resources in the County.
  - Evaluate and promote policies which preserve and protect drinking water resources and the water quality in aquifers for both the health and well-being of citizens and the environment.
7. Invest in improving or replacing aging County infrastructure such as Courthouse renovations and the County Highway Garage.

8. Investigate and create opportunities for the expansion of trails, trail connections, bicycle routes and greenways throughout the County.
9. Focus on energy development and consider policies promoting sustainable energy use and consumption.
10. Promote the expansion of broadband and internet services.
11. Communicate and coordinate with adjoining jurisdictions to promote mutual objectives.
12. Investigate and identify needs for standard right-of-way widths for the improvement of the County's transportation network.
13. Consider the development of a master plan for infrastructure improvements for the use of funds received from development fees and revenue.
14. Consider updated and improved means and methods for the preservation of farmland and other county natural resources such as the Wabash River and aquifers used for potable water.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Land Use Proposals**

The agricultural use sector is the largest user of land in the county. There are 497 farms in Fountain County with an average size of 427 acres. There are 212,012 acres in farms in Fountain County, according to the 2017-2020 Indiana Agricultural Statistics from the USDA. Another 5,027 acres were in pastureland and finally, another 15,827 acres in woodlands. All *total* agricultural lands, 232,866 acres or over 91.7% of the entire county, is associated with some type of agricultural commodity or activity. These number represent an overall increase in farmed acreage and wooded acreage in the County from 2008 and a decrease in the overall land used for pasture. The increase of some farmed acreage can be attributed to development or pasture converted to crop production occurring in the county. Most of the development in the county is from 2016 to 2021.

Commercial growth for the most part occurs within the incorporated areas that have planning, zoning, and water and sewer utilities such as Covington, Attica, and Veedersburg. The other few areas are along major corridors within the unincorporated areas.

A particularly important consideration in Fountain County is that agriculture is a land use and not vacant ground waiting to be developed. It is at its highest and best use. There are various forms of agriculture such as grain and livestock, but there is also bio-energy production, farm implement repair, trucking, grain elevators and many other agri-related businesses that need to be considered when implementing zoning. Corn and soybean production represent a large majority of crop production.

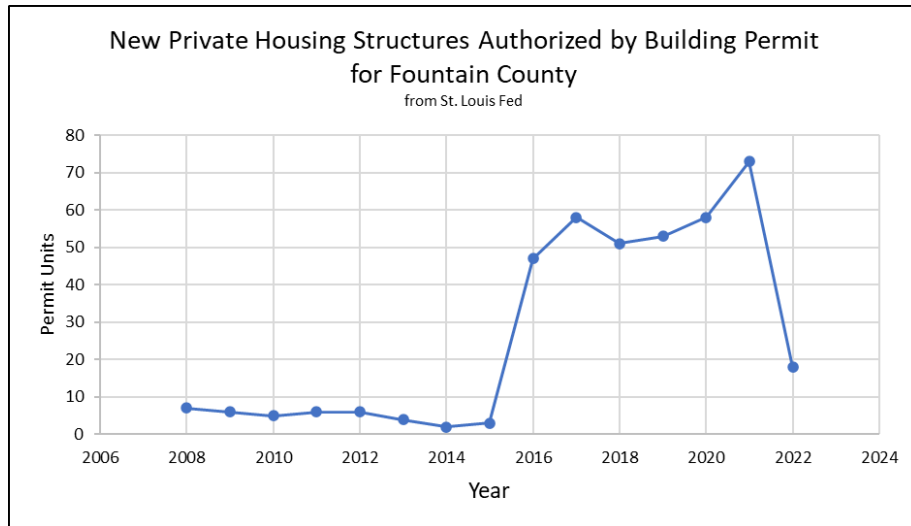
Industrial growth and its associated land use needs to be near municipal services and infrastructure such as railroad and major road systems. Articles VI, VII, and IX will talk more about the road systems, infrastructure and economic development that will affect this land use sector.

Residential growth comes in various types, sizes, and plans. Residential development can consist of single-family, duplexes, multi-family, condominiums, apartments, and assisted living facilities. As indicated in the summary of Township population and housing data in the table on Page 8, single family development in the County is the least dense and the most common in the county. As density and residential development increases, the need for water demand and sewer infrastructure increases.

According to “FRED Economic Data” compiled by the St. Louis FED, Fountain County experienced a considerable number of permits for new housing structures from 2016 through 2021. Building permit data is provided in the figure and the tables on the following page. Periods of recessions occurred in 2008 and during the pandemic of 2020.

Fountain County has an important and reliable GIS resource for available for land use and mapping on its website. The GIS database has information on land use, waterways, floodplain, right-of-way, and other land use and property information. There are also other valuable resources available online for agricultural and soil information available from the County and US Department of Agriculture.

## Building permit data for Fountain County from 2008 to 2022 from the St. Louis Fed



A summary of residential building permits in 2022 is shown below.

Residential Building Permits, 2022	Units	Pct Dist. In County	Pct Dist. In State	Cost (\$000)	State Cost (\$000)
Total Permits Filed	18	100.0%	100.0%	\$5,225	\$6,635,992
Single-Family	18	100.0%	65.0%	\$5,225	\$5,513,030
2-Family	0	0.0%	1.9%	0	\$76,873
3- and 4-Family	0	0.0%	0.5%	\$0	\$14,702
5+ Family	0	0.0%	32.6%	\$0	\$1,031,387

Total housing units and housing data for Fountain County are presented in the table below.

Housing	Number	Rank in State	Pct Dist. In County	Pct Dist. In State
Total Housing Units in 2022 (estimate)	7,896	77	100.0%	100.0%
Total Housing Units in 2022 (includes vacant units)	7,795	77	100.0%	100.0%
Owner Occupied	5,062	77	64.9%	63.5%
Median Value (2022)	\$123,400	76		
Renter Occupied (2022)	1,758	71	22.6	27.1
Median Rent (2022)	\$554	72		

Data obtained from:

[https://www.stats.indiana.edu/profiles/profiles.asp?scope\\_choice=a&county\\_changer=18045](https://www.stats.indiana.edu/profiles/profiles.asp?scope_choice=a&county_changer=18045)

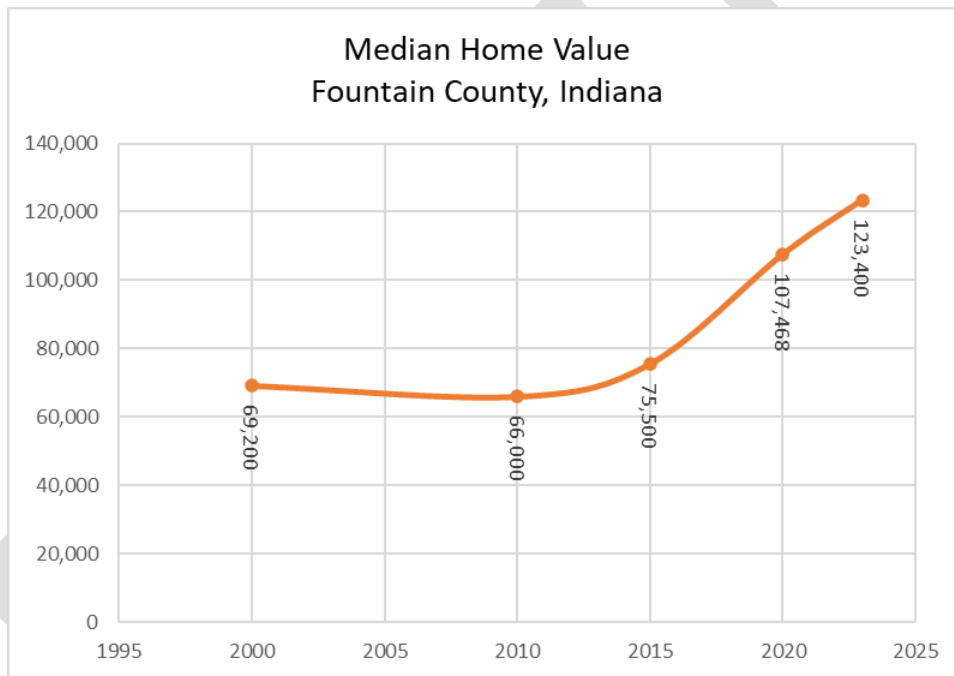
According to data obtained from the US Census Bureau for 2022, the homeownership rate for Fountain County is approximately 74%, while the statewide average rate for Indiana is approximately 71%. Additional housing data from the US Census Bureau is available at:

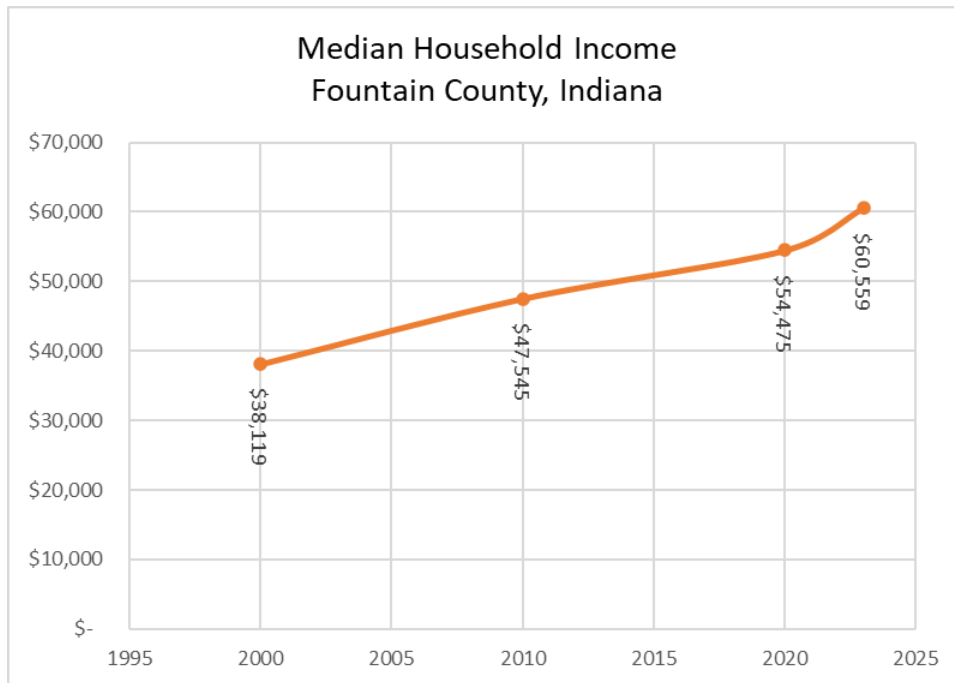
[Fountain County, Indiana - Census Bureau Profile](https://data.census.gov/profile/Fountain_County,_Indiana?g=050XX00US18045#housing)

([https://data.census.gov/profile/Fountain\\_County,\\_Indiana?g=050XX00US18045#housing](https://data.census.gov/profile/Fountain_County,_Indiana?g=050XX00US18045#housing))

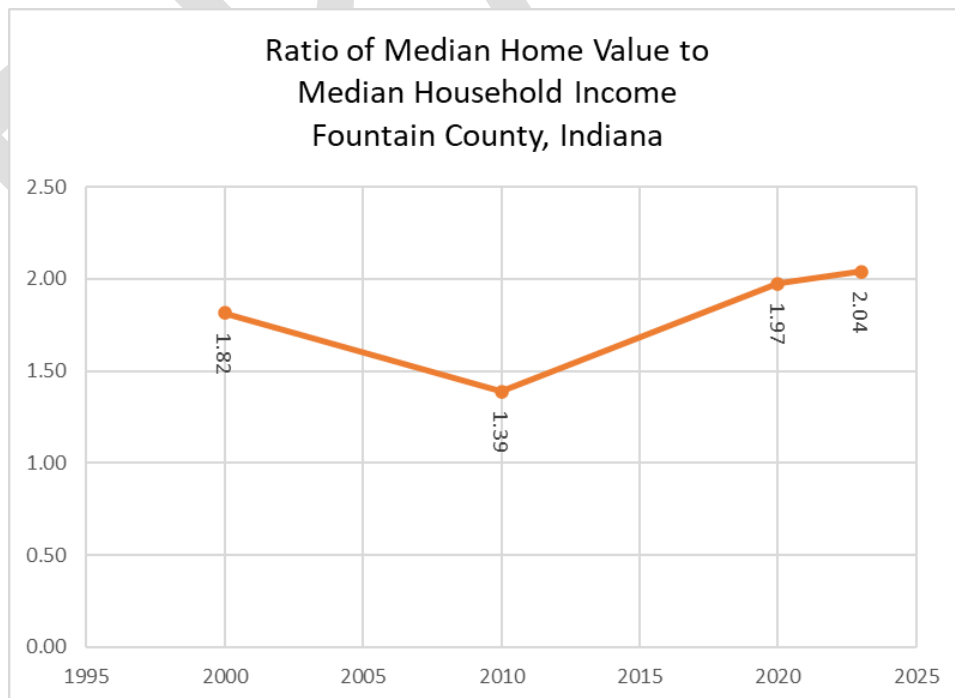
Median home value and household income data from 2000 to 2023 for Fountain County is provided in the following figures. Information used was compiled from the following sources:

- US Census Data
- “A Look at the Indiana Housing Market, 2010” by IU’s Kelley School of Business
- “Indiana’s Housing Market in 2015” by IU’s Kelley School of Business





From 2010 to 2023, the median household income increased by 27%, while the median home value increased by 87%. Participants from the steering committee noted that the average housing stock in the county is aging significantly.



Anomalies in the graphs represent the crash in the housing bubble and stock market in 2008. The decline in economic conditions led to a decrease in home values.

The price and quality of housing is a key factor in both the standard of living, the appeal, and attractiveness of any community. Various economic factors such as interest rates and increases in the consumer price index, cost of materials, and the employment situation can affect the purchasing power of and affordability of homes.

Representatives from Fountain County participated in a the “Greater Lafayette READI Region Housing Study” which was completed in July of 2023. The document was prepared to address housing needs and demands in the six-county regional housing marking around Lafayette and Tippecanoe County. That document is incorporated into this Plan by reference.

The READI Housing Study focused on goals to:

1. Innovate in the way lot development is financed.
2. Add housing variety across all locations.
3. Preserve existing naturally occurring affordable housing.
4. Foster housing innovation to lower costs.

Affordable housing is important to the viability and attractiveness of a community for a variety of reasons. Economic development efforts rely on robust population base and affordable housing to attract and retain jobs and workers. The cost of housing also affects other standards of living as well and can have an economic effect on residents. Rising home or rent costs can impact how families manage important budget matters, such as childcare. The READI housing study states:

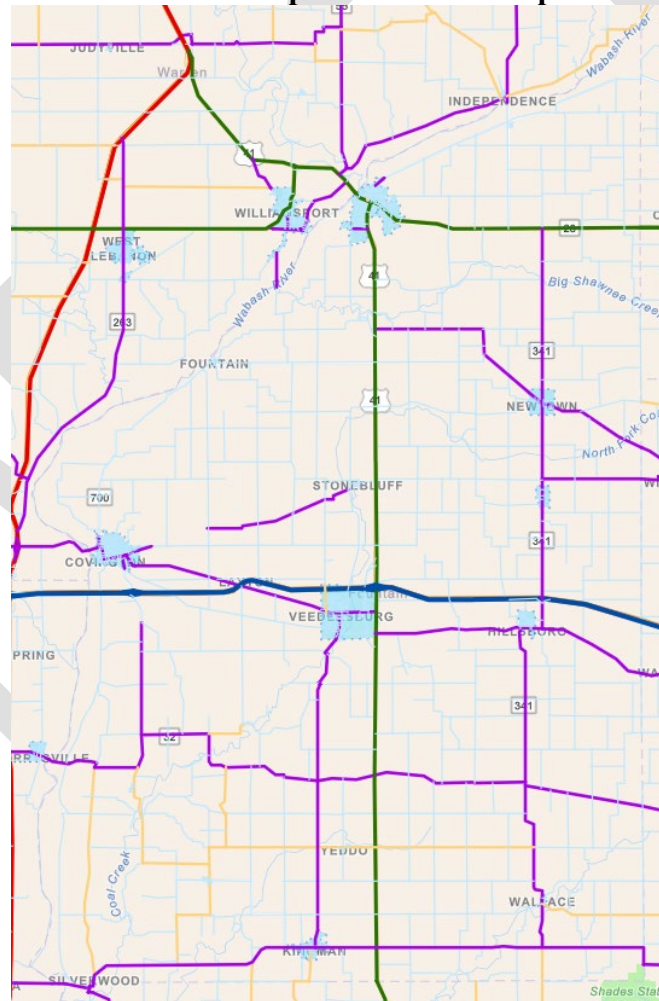
“Attainable Housing. Any housing that is not financially burdensome to a household in a specific income range. Financially burdensome could be housing expenses that exceed 30% of household income. However, it could also include situations where a household has high daycare costs, student debt, or other costs that limit income to spend on housing. Housing in terms of housing subsidized by Federal programs can be included in this definition.”

Changes in the cost of housing or the cost of living can also affect economic development efforts.

## ARTICLE VI Transportation Plan

There is not presently an official system of classification for roadways owned and operated solely by Fountain County. The County presently relies on the Functional Classification System and Map maintained by the Indiana Department of Transportation, which is shown below. Roads highlighted in red, magenta, or green have designations within the Functional Classification System. The Functional Classification system establishes a hierarchy for roadways in each state and typically qualifies them for potential eligibility for State and Federal Funding. While most roadways on the Functional Classification Map are part of INDOT's inventory, there are few roadways owned and maintained by Fountain County on the Functional Classification Map, such as Stone Bluff Road and South Springtown Road.

**Functional Classification Map  
For Fountain County  
From The Indiana Department of Transportation**



Source: <https://indot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=df731decaa704512923b7732ed3ddad2>

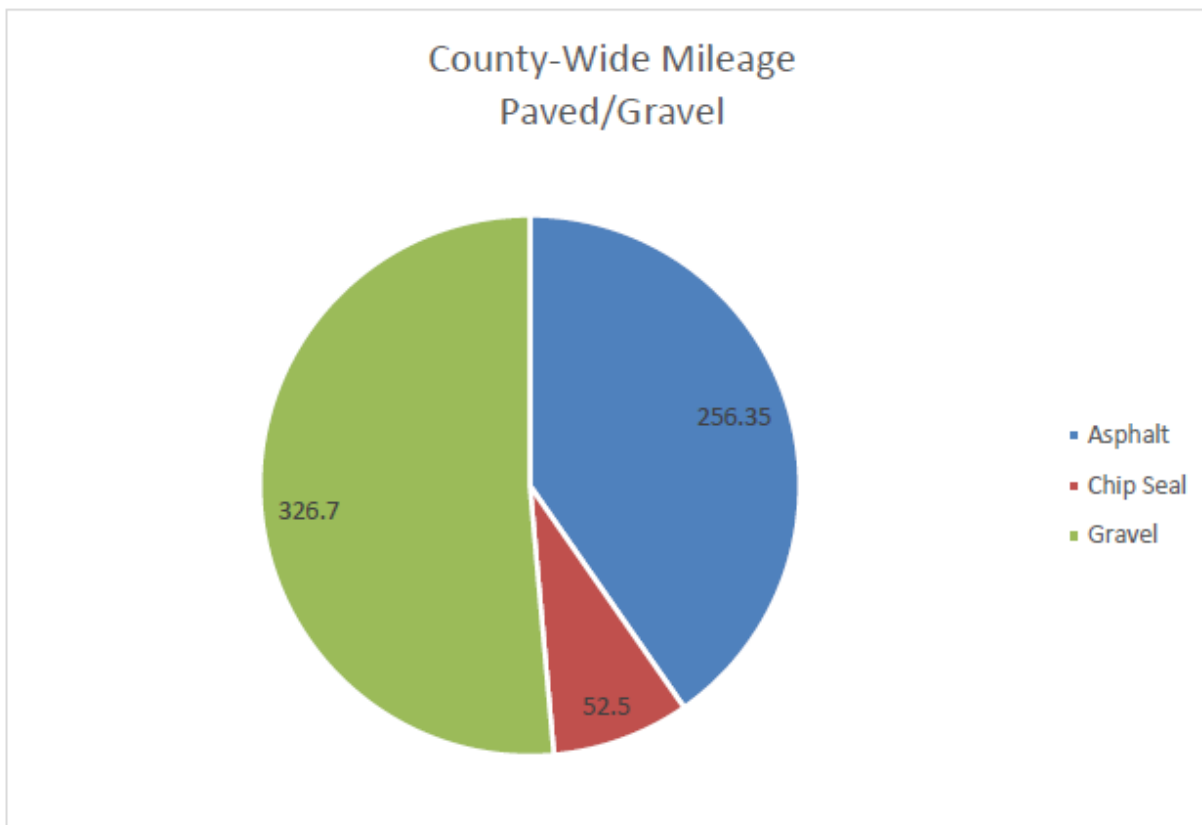
### Map of Roadways in Fountain County



Roadway classification is a valuable tool which can be used to assist in developing the requirements for the Subdivision Control Ordinance and establishing minimum pavement types, widths, and right-of-way widths. Roadways are typically classified in a hierarchy based on traffic volumes, pavement type, and capacity. Each classification has different speed limits, right-of-way widths, pavement depth, and other physical requirements.

Fountain County owns and maintains a total of 635.8 miles of roadway in its 8 Districts. In that inventory, 40.3 % of roadway miles are asphalt, 8.3% are chip and seal, and 51.5 % are gravel. A total of 48.6% of roadways are hard surface. A breakdown of roadways by surface is provided in the chart below.

**Summary of Paved and Gravel Roads in Fountain County Inventory**



Fountain County has approximately 141 total miles of Interstate, Highways, and State Routes maintained by INDOT. Interstate 74 runs from Indianapolis to Champaign, Illinois for 17 miles through Fountain County. There are 2 exists on I-74 within the County. The chart and map on the following page illustrate the routes maintained by INDOT in Fountain County and mark their locations. US 41 is a major north-south route in western Indiana that connects Chicago and Evansville.

This is a detailed road map of Warren, Fountain, and Vermillion counties, Missouri. The map shows major highways like US-41, US-136, and MO-55, along with local roads and distances between towns. Key locations include Warrensburg, Fountain, and Vermillion. The map also shows the Wabash River and the Vermillion River.

Route	Approximate Length (Miles)
I-74	17
US 41	24
SR 55	14
SR 28	9
SR 341	22
US 136	18
SR 32	20
SR 234	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>

### **Airports**

Fountain County does not have a municipal airport of its own, but the Indianapolis airport is just over an hour away. It could be advantageous to form a search committee to locate an area for a local airport for business attraction. There is an old airport in the Attica area. This may be the place to begin the study to see if it is large enough to retrofit to a modern airport. If there are enough land options in the area surrounding the old facility, it may be most beneficial to begin grant searching through the FAA to reconstruct an airport on existing land.

### **Railroads**

There is a northern stretch of the Norfolk Southern line that enters Attica and runs just over nine miles parallel with the northern county line along the Wabash River. There was a stretch of railroad approximately twenty-five miles long that went through the heart of the county, but due to economics and trends, the track and service have been discontinued. The status of the old railroad right-of-way is currently unknown.

## **ARTICLE VII Infrastructure Plan**

Infrastructure data is vital as the zoning districts are formulated and considered by the County. Denser zoning typically needs to take place where infrastructure is present because of the demands placed on the environment by development. Environmental factors which require attention and planning prior to development include topography, soil type and condition, existing land uses, road systems, flood plain, and drainage.

### **Water and Sewer**

Covington, Attica, Veedersburg, Hillsboro, and Kingman have water treatment plants and distribution facilities for potable water and collection systems and treatment plants for wastewater service. Development in the County is expected and planned to occur near municipalities in the County with water and sewer service due to the demands and intensity of manufacturing and other large-scale production operations.

The rural areas of Fountain County rely on individual wells for drinking water and septic systems for the treatment and disposal of wastewater and sewage. There are no central sewer systems for wastewater for unincorporated areas of the county. According to the Fountain County Health Department, there are 3,000 to 4,000 septic systems in the county. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources online well records database has 2,410 records for existing wells in Fountain County.

### **Electric**

Electrical power is provided by various agencies throughout the entire county. Extra power, such as 3-phase is provided on an as-needed basis. Virtually all of Fountain County, including the incorporated and unincorporated areas, have access to an adequate source of electricity.

### **Gas**

There are pipelines and gas service in the county that service specific areas, primarily the incorporated areas of the county. Gas service is not widespread through all of Fountain County, but it does service a large populous. Unincorporated and areas of low density in the County rely on propane tanks for gas service.

### **Pipelines**

There are several natural gas pipelines throughout the county. They range in diameter from 1 ½ up to 8 inches and travel over forty-six miles within the county boundaries. These pipelines serve Attica, Veedersburg, Covington, Hillsboro, and Kingman and are a vital part of the infrastructure system. They are also a vital part of economic development in the county.

### **Public Safety**

Public services such as Police, Fire, EMS, Hospitals, Post Offices, etc. are found throughout the county. The nearest hospital is in Williamsport. As populations grow and depending on the location, other services may need to be provided.

### **Internet and Broadband**

Presently, internet and broadband services are offered more consistently in the more densely incorporated areas of the County. Internet service and speed is lacking the more rural and unincorporated areas of the County. Cable internet availability is very low in the central and eastern sections of the County. Internet and cable providers vary by territory and location in the County.

### **Courthouse**

The County Courthouse, which is in Covington, hosts most public office holders and services, including the court, Clerk, Auditor, and offices and conference rooms for other elected officials. While the building is an asset and landmark, it is outdated by modern standards for meeting space and technology needs. Updates and renovations for the Courthouse are both needed and desired, but not planned.

### **County Highway Facility**

The County Highway Garage is in Veedersburg. It is outdated and old for its present use and demand. The condition and infrastructure at facility is a significant issue for the County. The need to update or replace the facility is an option to improve conditions and modernize the Highway Department.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Parks and Recreation**

**State Parks**-Although there are no State Parks within Fountain County, Turkey Run and Shades State Parks are just outside of the county to the southeast. This is still within the regional area and can be drawn upon as an asset of the area for tourism and as an amenity for companies and individuals to locate in Fountain County. State Parks also provide an opportunity for Fountain County to attract tourist to visit from nearby parks.

**Local Parks**-Fountain County has established a Park Board that takes care of county recreational areas. There are also recreational areas associated with the schools, churches, and small, denser areas of housing around some of the lakes that are maintained separate from the County Park Board.

With the established Park Board, the County may want to continue to pursue the money from the Wabash River Fund. With this county department, they will be the funding mechanism and it will create an operational force for any buildings, equipment, or lands that they would acquire. The Local Park Board can also function as a mechanism to foster and develop trail connectivity between communities and local amenities, such as the Wabash River.

**Wabash River**-There are approximately forty-one miles of riverbank that create the northwest boundary of Fountain County. There are only nineteen counties in Indiana that have the privilege of being a part of the Wabash. Along with this privilege comes monetary support. There are funds at the state level to help protect the Wabash Corridor and create walking/biking paths and even structures that highlight and promote the Wabash River as a major natural resource.

**Golf Courses**-There are a two golf courses in the County. One each in Attica and Covington. They would appear to be sufficient for the size of the county. Covington also has a disc golf course for outdoor recreation.

#### **Trails**

Covington Circle Trail runs from around Covington from the north side of town toward US 136 on the east side of town and westward on the south side of town toward the Wabash River.

#### **Boat Launches and Public Access**

There is public access site for small watercraft on the Wabash River west of Attica and another site in Covington.

#### **Nature Preserves and Land Trusts**

**Portland Arch Nature Preserve:** The Portland Arch Nature Preserve was dedicated in 1972 and is in Shawnee Township on West Scout Camp Road just south of Fountain. The 435-acre preserve is managed by the Indiana Department of Environmental Resources. The preserve has a trail network and caves for sightseeing and hiking activities.

There are four properties in Fountain County that are held within the Northern Indiana Citizens Helping Ecosystems Survive (NICHES) Land Trust. The properties offer a varying degree of

nature and recreational activities to the public. More information on these properties is available online at: [Fountain County - NICHES Land Trust](#).

### **Ravine Park**

Ravine Park is a ninety-acre park in Attica that offers a variety of outdoor activities. The size of the park represents a significant attraction for visitors to Fountain County.

### **Public Art and Sculpture Walk - Attica**

Since 2020, Attica is home to the culturally significant public art and sculpture exhibits. There are twenty public art and sculpture exhibits located at various locations downtown for touring and public viewing. The fifteen sculptures were sponsored by private donors and provide an outdoor option for visitors to tour town.

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## ARTICLE IX Economic Development

The mission of the Economic Development Commission is threefold and is coordinated with the recommendations of the Plan Commission. The elements of the mission are:

- (1) To focus on the needs of the existing businesses
- (2) To continue assisting local industries and businesses as required for their future development needs, and
- (3) To maintain moderate and selective growth for the community by attracting new businesses and industries and to provide a base for the creation of new small businesses.

There are three goals of the Economic Development Commission:

- (1) Retain the existing industry located in Fountain County
- (2) Assist existing companies with expansion possibilities, and
- (3) Create incentives to attract new employment to Fountain County.

By focusing on these three goals, the tax base for the county will be increased as well as the diversity of jobs expanded. Currently, the job breakdown is summarized in the following tables.:

<b>Workers</b>	
Number of people who live in Fountain County and work (implied resident labor force)	11,376
Number of people who live AND work in Fountain County	8,080
Total number of people who work in Fountain County (implied workforce)	9,505

<b>Income and Poverty</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank in State</b>	<b>Percent of State</b>	<b>Indiana</b>
Per Capita Personal Income (annual) in 2022	\$50,737	55	87.0%	58,323
Median Household Income in 2021	55,195	71	88.0%	\$62,723
Poverty Rate in 2021	10.6%	55	87.6%	12.1%
Poverty Rate among Children under 18	15.3%	49	97.5%	15.7%
Welfare (TANF) Monthly Average Families in 2022	5	88	0.1%	3,933
Food Stamp Recipients in 2022	1,226	79	0.2%	611,203
Free and Reduced Fee Lunch Recipients in 2022/2023	1,179	77	0.2%	511,735

Sources: [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#); [U.S. Census Bureau](#); [Indiana Family Social Services Administration](#); [Indiana Department of Education](#)

### Summary of Labor Force

<b>Labor Force, 2022</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank in State</b>	<b>Percent of State</b>	<b>Indiana</b>
Total Resident Labor Force	8,011	78	0.2%	3,404,443
Employed	7,790	77	0.2%	3,302,632
Unemployed	221	80	0.2%	101,811
Annual Unemployment Rate	2.8	41	93.3%	3.0
August 2023 Unemployment Rate	3.4	44	91.9%	3.7
<b>December 2023 Unemployment Rate</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>2.8</b>

The August 2023 unemployment rate was 3.4% while the State of Indiana was at 3.7%. The unemployment rates in December of 2023 declined to 2.4% for Fountain County and 2.8% for Indiana as a whole.

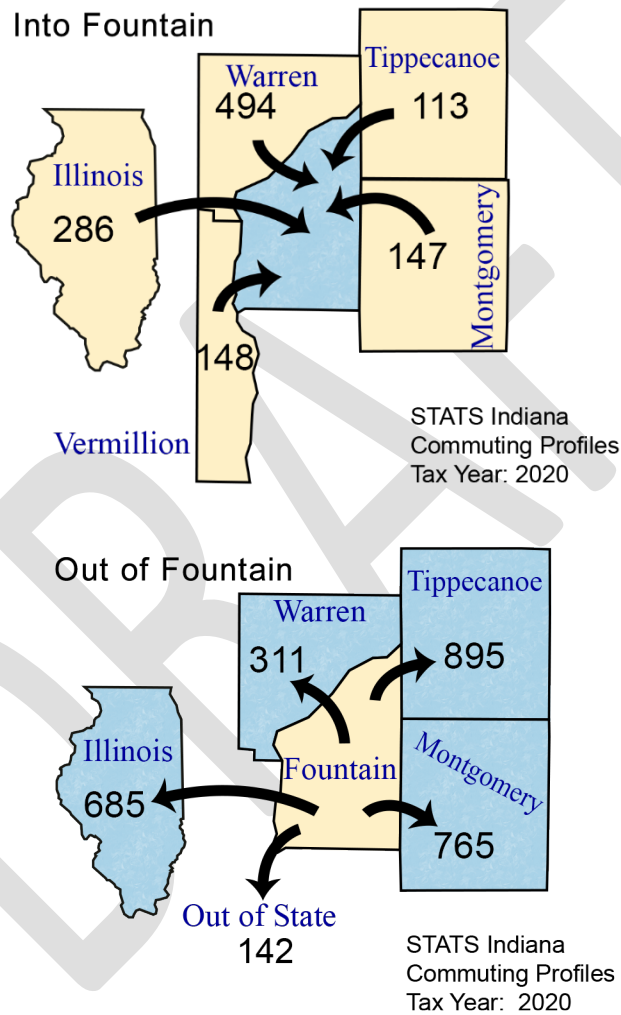
### Summary of Employment Data

<b>Employment and Earnings by Industry, 2022</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Pct Dist. in County</b>	<b>Earnings (\$000)</b>	<b>Pct Dist. In County</b>	<b>Avg. Earnings Per Job</b>
Total by place of work	7,172	100.0%	\$370,789	100.0%	\$51,700
Wage and Salary	5,217	72.7%	\$236,550	63.8%	\$45,342
Farm Proprietors	368	5.1%	\$35,353	9.5%	\$96,068
Nonfarm Proprietors	1,587	22.1%	\$41,263	11.1%	\$26,001
Farm	427	6.0%	\$37,875	10.2%	\$88,700
Nonfarm	6,745	94.0%	\$332,914	89.8%	\$49,357
Private	5,909	82.4%	\$287,591	77.6%	\$48,670
Accommodation, Food Serv.	423	5.9%	\$8,346	2.3%	\$19,730
Arts, Ent., Recreation	94	1.3%	\$1,825	0.5%	\$19,415
Construction	316	4.4%	\$14,272	3.8%	\$45,165
Health Care, Social Serv. Information	Data not available due to BEA non-disclosure requirements.				
	65	0.9%	\$2,544	0.7%	\$39,138
Manufacturing	1,831	25.5%	\$123,587	33.3%	\$67,497
Professional, Tech. Serv.	175	2.4%	\$7,186	1.9%	\$41,063
Retail Trade	729	10.2%	\$24,490	6.6%	\$33,594
Trans., Warehousing	218	3.0%	\$13,118	3.5%	\$60,174
Other Private (not above)	1,184*	16.5%*	\$43,251*	11.7%*	\$36,530*
Government	836	11.7%	\$45,323	12.2%	\$54,214

Source: [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#)

\* These totals do not include county data that are not available due to BEA non-disclosure requirements.

The commuting patterns of the labor force of Fountain County exports more than twice as much as it imports from surrounding counties and the State of Illinois. This represents a slight decrease in exported commuters from the data previously provided in the last Comprehensive Plan. The following maps illustrate the patterns of the import and export of the total labor force.



### Summary of Commuting Patterns

Date	Total Into Fountain County	Total Out of Fountain County
2007 Comprehensive Plan	1,727	3,956
2020	1,188	2,798

The 29.3% decline in total workers commuting out of Fountain County from the previous Comprehensive Plan is significantly larger than the 4.5% decrease in population since 2010, which indicates that less workers are commuting out of the County since the last Comprehensive Plan.

### **Occupations as a Percent of Workforce for Fountain County**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Management Occupations	8.11%
Business & Financial Operations Occupations	3.69%
Computer & Mathematical Occupations	0.98%
Architecture & Engineering Occupations	1.49%
Life, Physical, & Social Science Occupations	0.17%
Community & Social Service Occupations	2.64%
Education Instruction, & Library Occupations	5.87%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media Occupations	0.89%
Health Diagnosing & Treating Practitioners & Other Technical Occupations	3.80%
Health Technologists & Technicians	2.10%
Healthcare Support Occupations	1.71%
Food Preparation & Serving Related Occupations	5.80%
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance Occupations	3.06%
Personal Care & Service Occupations	3.34%
Fire Fighting & Prevention, & Other Protective Service Workers Including Supervisors	0.63%
Law Enforcement Workers Including Supervisors	0.83%
Sales & Related Occupations	7.06%
Office & Administrative Support Occupations	8.24%
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry Occupations	1.06%
Construction & Extraction Occupations	6.33%
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair Occupations	6.82%
Production Occupations	20.23%
Transportation Occupations	5.14%

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Implementation Plan**

With the previous research and compilation of statistics and demographics completed, the next step is to validate this document and record it as a legal reference in Fountain County.

The process for this is outlined in IC 36-7-4-507. The Advisory Plan Commission must:

1. Give notice and hold one (1) or more public hearings on the plan.
2. Publish, in accordance with IC 5-3-1, a schedule stating the times and places of the hearing or hearings. The schedule must state the time and place of each hearing, and state where the entire plan is on file and may be examined in its entirety for at least ten (10) days before the hearing.

According to IC 36-7-4-508, the plan commission may approve the Comprehensive Plan after the public hearing. The plan commission may adopt section by section as it is drafted or the entire document.

Once the plan commission approves the entire plan, it is certified to all participating legislative bodies. In this case, the County Commissioners are the only entity since all other incorporated towns already have adopted. Comprehensive Plans with Planning and Zoning implemented.

After certification of the Comprehensive Plan, the County Commissioners may adopt a resolution approving, rejecting, or amending the plan. Such a resolution requires only a majority vote of the County Commissioners and is not subject to approval or veto by the executive of the adopting unit, and the executive is not required to sign it. [IC 36-7- 4-509]

The Comprehensive Plan is not effective for a jurisdiction until it has been approved by a resolution of the County Commissioners. After approval by resolution of the County Commissioners, it is official. Upon approval of the Comprehensive Plan by the County Commissioners, the Auditor of the County shall place one (1) copy of the Comprehensive Plan on file in the Office of the Fountain County Recorder. [IC 36-7-4- 509]

If, however, the County Commissioners reject or amend the Comprehensive Plan, it shall be sent back to the Advisory Plan Commission with a written statement for rejection or amendment, for reconsideration.

If handed back to the plan commission, the commission shall have sixty (60) days to consider the rejection or amendment. If the Advisory Plan Commission approves the amendment, the Comprehensive Plan stands as amended by the County Commissioners, as of the date of the filing to County Commissioners.

If the plan commission does not file a report with the County Commissioners within the sixty (60) days, the action of the County Commissioners in rejection or amending the Comprehensive Plan becomes final.