



Brown County Comprehensive Plan

2025

Preston Anderson

An aerial photograph of a vast forest with trees in various shades of green, yellow, and orange, indicating autumn. In the distance, a small town with several buildings and a parking lot is visible. The sky is overcast. The year "2025" is written in large, white, outlined numerals across the center of the image. A signature "Preston Anderson" is visible in the bottom right corner.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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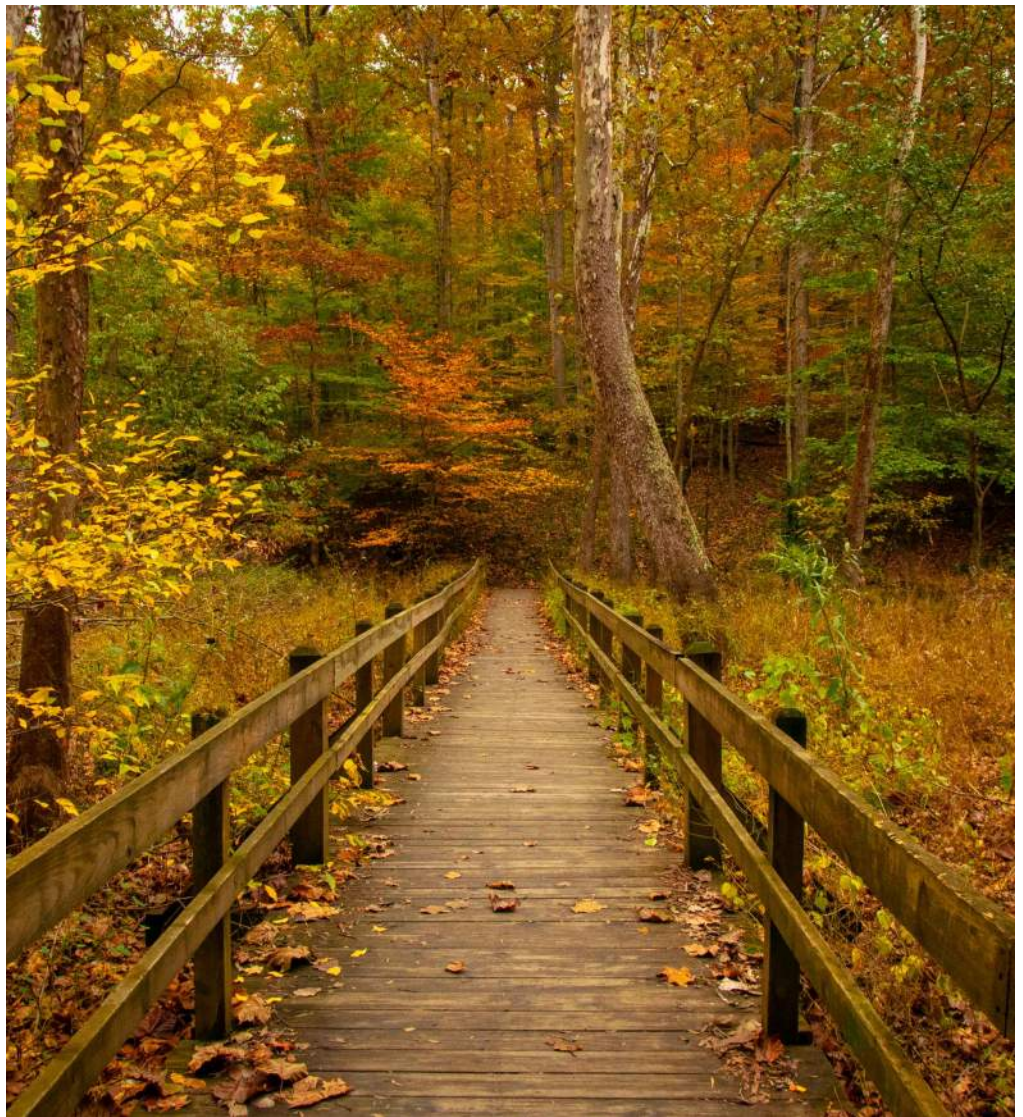
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Brown County Comprehensive Plan serves as a forward-thinking blueprint aimed at guiding the county's sustainable growth, development, and preservation efforts for the foreseeable future. Rooted in a balance between community values, historical preservation, and stakeholder input, this Comprehensive Plan sets forth strategies to maintain Brown County's unique identity while accommodating evolving community needs.



Executive Summary

VISION AND CORE PRINCIPLES



This plan envisions a Brown County where:

- The rural character and natural beauty are preserved through thoughtful planning and conservation efforts.
- Economic growth is diversified, balancing tourism with emerging industries and supporting local businesses.
- Housing options are inclusive, providing for various income levels and demographic groups.
- Infrastructure investments meet the needs of both residents and visitors while enhancing public safety and quality of life.
- Community engagement and transparent decision-making processes shape policy directions.

Executive Summary

KEY FOCUS AREAS

1) Land Use and Zoning Modernization

- Update and modernize zoning ordinances to reflect current and future land use needs.
- Implement clearer standards for short-term rentals and property maintenance to ensure community stability.
- Introduce a Heritage Mixed-Use District encouraging higher-density, community-focused development.

2) Economic Growth and Infrastructure Expansion

- Develop a strategic economic growth plan targeting key areas for development along major transportation corridors.
- Expand utility services, including micro sewer treatment solutions, to support controlled development.
- Secure state funding and identify sites for industrial and commercial growth opportunities.
- Promote sustainable tourism while diversifying economic opportunities through remote work initiatives and light industry.

3) Quality of Place

- Identify and prioritize sites for diverse housing options, including multi-family units and mixed-income developments.
- Promote affordable and accessible housing that meets the needs of all age groups and income levels.
- Align housing initiatives with infrastructure improvements, including broadband and utility expansion.

4) Transportation and Connectivity

- Develop a comprehensive transportation plan addressing road safety, congestion, and multi-modal access.
- Improve road infrastructure, add passing lanes, and expand pedestrian and bicycle trails for greater community connectivity.
- Incorporate advanced wayfinding systems and create walkable connections between residential, commercial, and recreational spaces.

Executive Summary

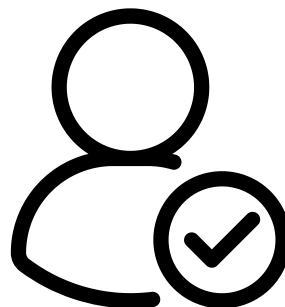
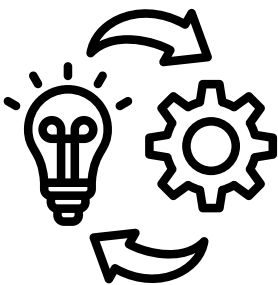


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INPUT

The comprehensive plan was crafted with extensive public participation, including town hall meetings, community workshops, surveys, and input from local organizations. Public feedback emphasized the importance of preserving Brown County's identity while planning for sustainable growth.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The plan includes a detailed implementation matrix outlining specific goals, responsible entities, potential funding sources, and timeframes for completion. Regular progress reviews will ensure accountability and adaptability over time.



Executive Summary

CONCLUSION

Brown County's Comprehensive Plan represents a bold and strategic effort to guide the county's future while respecting its past. This plan integrates a deep understanding of the county's demographics, economy, and natural environment to provide actionable pathways toward sustainable growth. By focusing on inclusive housing, modernized infrastructure, environmental stewardship, and economic resilience, the plan reflects the shared vision of residents, businesses, and stakeholders.

The future of Brown County lies in a balanced approach—leveraging its strengths in tourism and natural beauty while proactively addressing challenges such as housing affordability, infrastructure needs, and workforce development. Through targeted initiatives like the Heritage Mixed-Use District, enhanced transportation networks, and short-term rental regulations, the plan seeks to foster a community where residents can thrive, businesses can grow, and visitors can continue to find inspiration.

As the county implements this comprehensive vision, it will rely on collaboration among local leaders, residents, and regional partners to achieve its ambitious goals. Together, these efforts will ensure that Brown County remains a vibrant, connected, and resilient community, rooted in its values and poised for a prosperous future.



INTRODUCTION

Nestled in the rolling hills of south-central Indiana, Brown County has a rich history shaped by its natural beauty and the independent spirit of its residents. Established in 1836, the county was originally a hub for agriculture, timber, and small-scale industry. However, its rugged terrain and dense forests made large-scale farming challenging, leading many settlers to rely on subsistence farming and craftsmanship.

By the early 20th century, Brown County gained recognition as a haven for artists, drawn to its scenic landscapes and tranquil setting. This artistic legacy remains a cornerstone of the county's identity, evident in its vibrant art galleries, studios, and festivals. Today, Brown County is best known for its thriving tourism industry, with attractions such as Brown County State Park, the largest state park in Indiana, and the charming village of Nashville. These natural and cultural assets have made it a destination for outdoor enthusiasts and visitors seeking a connection to nature and creativity.

This rich blend of history, culture, and natural resources provides a strong foundation for Brown County's comprehensive plan, guiding the community toward a sustainable future while honoring its unique heritage.



Introduction

Brown County has the opportunity to focus on thoughtful growth and development that balances the needs of residents with the demands of its thriving tourism industry. This comprehensive plan will explore a range of strategies, including housing, infrastructure, economic development, and environmental stewardship, to support sustainable progress while preserving the county's unique character. With a high number of properties owned by non-residents and used as short-term rentals, such as Airbnbs and Vrbos, the plan will address challenges related to housing affordability and availability for full-time residents.

Historically, Brown County's development has been characterized by its rural charm and natural beauty, attracting visitors and residents alike. However, the need for varied housing options, improved infrastructure, and economic diversification highlights the importance of strategic planning. This comprehensive plan combines demographic data, economic trends, and community input to guide sustainable growth while preserving Brown County's unique character. It identifies priorities, addresses critical needs, and aligns development with community values to create a roadmap for a thriving future.



Introduction

NATIONAL CONTEXT

National trends must be considered in the context of Brown County's growth and development, as these shifts will influence local dynamics and community needs.

Recognizing national trends is crucial for stakeholders in community planning, economic development, and infrastructure improvements to ensure Brown County can adapt to the evolving needs of its residents and visitors. Key elements to consider within this comprehensive plan include:

- **Aging Population:** The nation's 65-and-older population is projected to reach 95 million by 2060, comprising nearly a quarter of the U.S. population. Brown County's planning must account for this trend by ensuring access to amenities, housing, and services that support older adults while fostering a multigenerational community.
- **Natural Population Decline:** By 2030, declining birth rates are expected to surpass natural population increase as a defining factor in U.S. demographic trends. This shift may influence local and regional growth strategies, presenting challenges for sustaining population levels while emphasizing the importance of attracting new residents and supporting workforce diversity to maintain economic vitality.
- **Changing Households:** Today, only 50 percent of adults are married compared to 70 percent in 1960, with growing rates of cohabitation among unmarried partners. Families are no longer the largest housing segment nationally, highlighting the need for housing that meets various living arrangements.

These national trends underscore the need for Brown County to diversify its planning strategies to address housing, infrastructure, and community needs. While single-family detached homes have traditionally dominated development, shifting demographics and consumer preferences suggest a growing demand for varied housing options and community amenities. Aligning these trends with Brown County's unique character and values will ensure future growth is both open and sustainable.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

As part of the Indiana Uplands region, Brown County collaborates on economic growth, workforce development, and quality of life initiatives across 11 counties. This partnership grants access to resources like READI funding for infrastructure, housing, and community projects. By aligning with regional strategies, Brown County can diversify its economy, enhance tourism, and improve housing while preserving its unique character and supporting the broader regional vision.

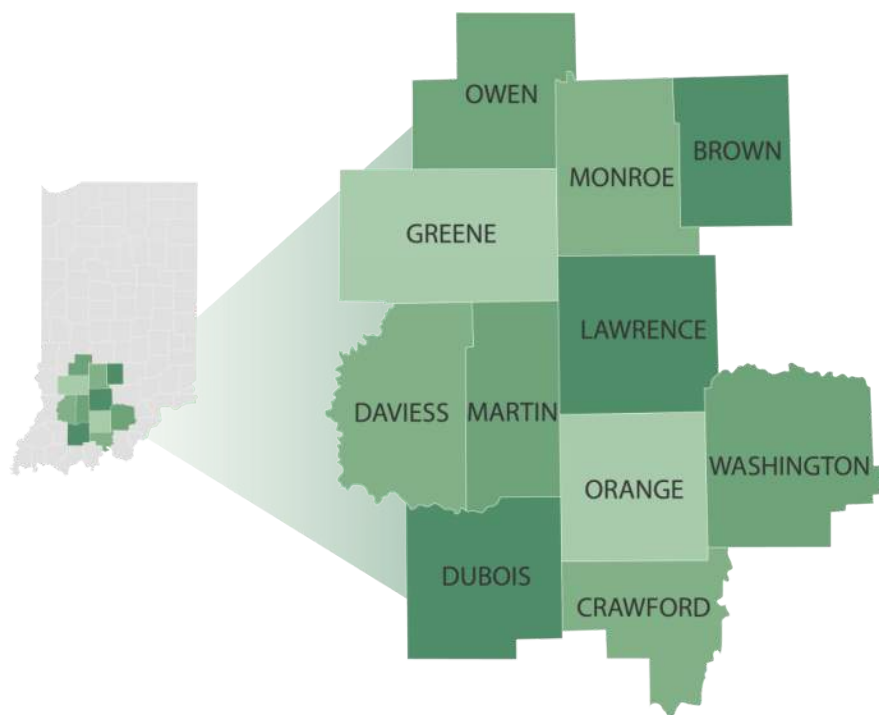


Figure 1: Indiana Uplands Region

While Brown County is part of the Indiana Uplands region, a more localized comparison of population focused on neighboring counties, including some outside the region (Figure 1). These counties exhibit varied population trends, from steady growth to stagnation or decline. Brown County experienced modest population declines in most years since 2013 but began recovering in 2021, growing 3.47% by 2023. Nearby Johnson County saw significant growth, increasing 18.35% since 2013 and outpacing state and national averages, while Lawrence County continued to decline, dropping 2.10% by 2023. These trends highlight the importance of strategic planning to address population shifts. Brown County's recent rebound suggests potential for growth if supported by targeted housing, infrastructure investments, and policies that align with regional opportunities and community needs.

Despite their proximity, Brown and Johnson counties show distinct population trends. Johnson County has grown 18.35% since 2013, driven by its proximity to Indianapolis, strong infrastructure, and suburban-urban appeal. In contrast, Brown County's rural character and tourism-based economy have led to slower growth and periods of decline. While Johnson County thrives as a suburban extension of Indianapolis, Brown County faces the challenge of balancing rural charm with sustainable growth.

However, Brown County's proximity to Monroe and Bartholomew Counties presents significant opportunities. Monroe County, home to Indiana University, boasts a vibrant economy driven by education, research, and a younger, dynamic population. Bartholomew County, anchored by Columbus, is known for its strong manufacturing base, architectural heritage, and robust job market. These neighboring counties create opportunities for Brown County to attract professionals and families seeking a quieter lifestyle while remaining within commuting distance of these economic hubs.

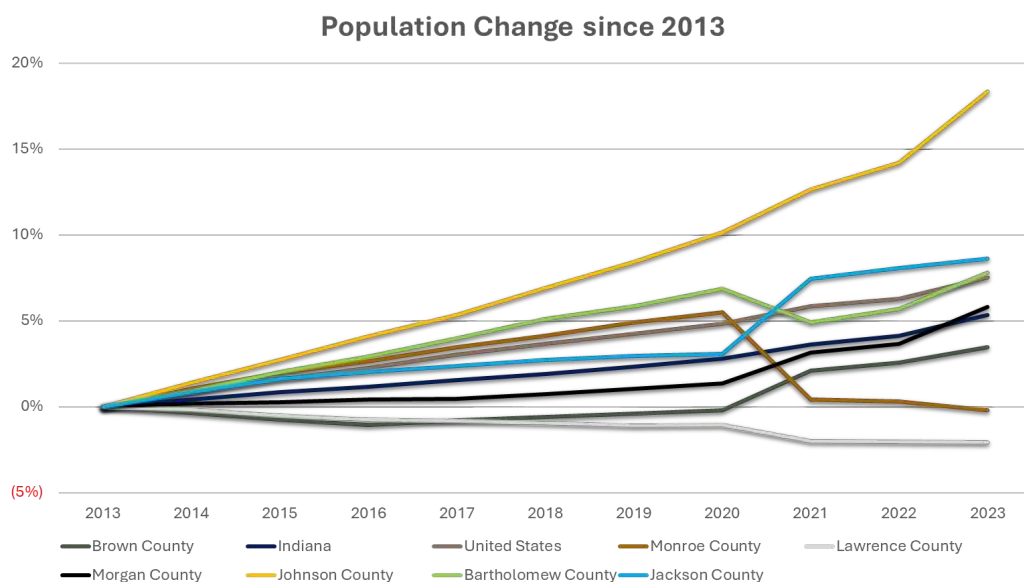


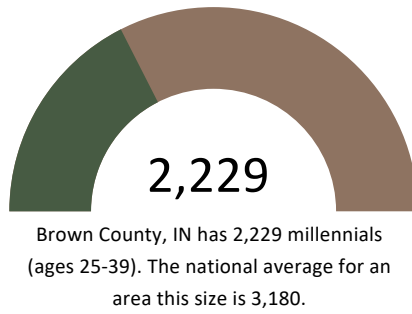
Figure 2:
Regional
Population
Growth Trends

Source:
US Census
Bureau, DP05
& STATSIndiana

By leveraging its natural beauty, small-town charm, and tourism appeal, Brown County can position itself as a desirable residential option for those who work or study in Monroe and Bartholomew Counties. Strategic investments in infrastructure, such as broadband expansion and road improvements, as well as targeted housing solutions like mixed-use developments or affordable housing options, could help Brown County capture a portion of this regional growth. Additionally, fostering partnerships with Monroe and Bartholomew Counties through regional coalitions or economic development initiatives could enable Brown County to align its growth strategies with broader regional trends, ensuring sustainable progress while preserving its unique identity.

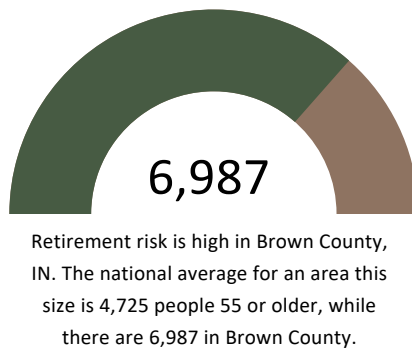
DEMOGRAPHICS

Millennials



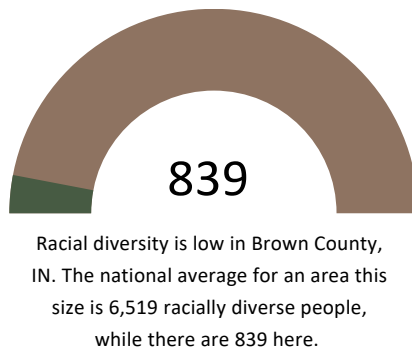
Understanding the socioeconomic landscape is essential for creating a comprehensive plan, as it provides insight into the various factors shaping the dynamics of a community. This section examines key demographic indicators influencing Brown County's development, with a focus on population trends, age distribution, household sizes, and educational attainment. These factors are vital for understanding the community's character, needs, and opportunities, offering a foundation for informed planning decisions and strategies for future growth.

Retiring Soon



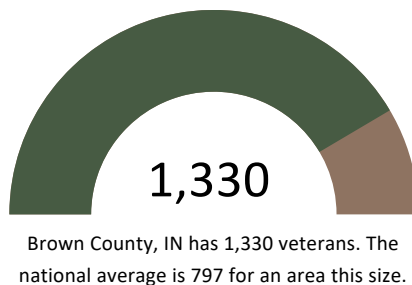
Population trends serve as a cornerstone for understanding community change, shedding light on growth, decline, or shifts in demographics. Analyzing these trends provides critical context for anticipating future needs, including housing demand, infrastructure planning, and resource allocation.

Racial Diversity



Age demographics play a pivotal role in identifying the needs of different generations. Examining the distribution of age groups within Brown County helps align housing, amenities, and services to meet the varying preferences of young families, working adults, and older residents.

Veterans



Household size is another important metric, influencing housing preferences and demand. Understanding variations in household composition helps forecast the need for various housing types, from single-family homes to multi-family units, and the design of spaces that accommodate evolving lifestyles.

By exploring these demographic factors, this section provides a comprehensive view of the community's dynamics, guiding thoughtful planning and development efforts for Brown County's future.

Demographics

POPULATION

Brown County's population was analyzed using recent data to understand historical trends and anticipate future changes, shown in Figure 3. Between 2013 and 2021, the County experienced periods of decline and recovery, with the population decreasing from 15,128 in 2013 to a low of 14,965 in 2016. However, by 2021, the population rebounded to 15,444, showing signs of stabilization and modest growth.

This increase coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, a time when the shift to remote work significantly reshaped lifestyle and housing preferences. With fewer people tied to traditional office locations, many relocated to rural areas offering natural beauty, affordability, and a slower pace of life. Brown County's appeal as a peaceful, scenic community likely contributed to this population growth during the pandemic.

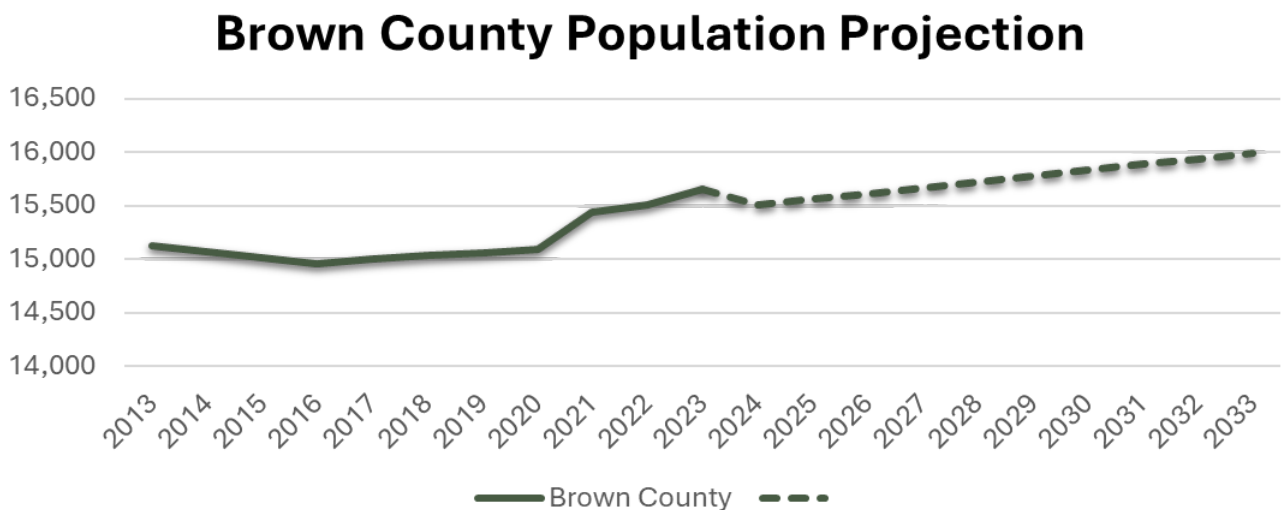


Figure 3: County Population Growth Trends and Projections
Source: US Census Bureau; ACS DP05 & STATS Indiana

Demographics: POPULATION

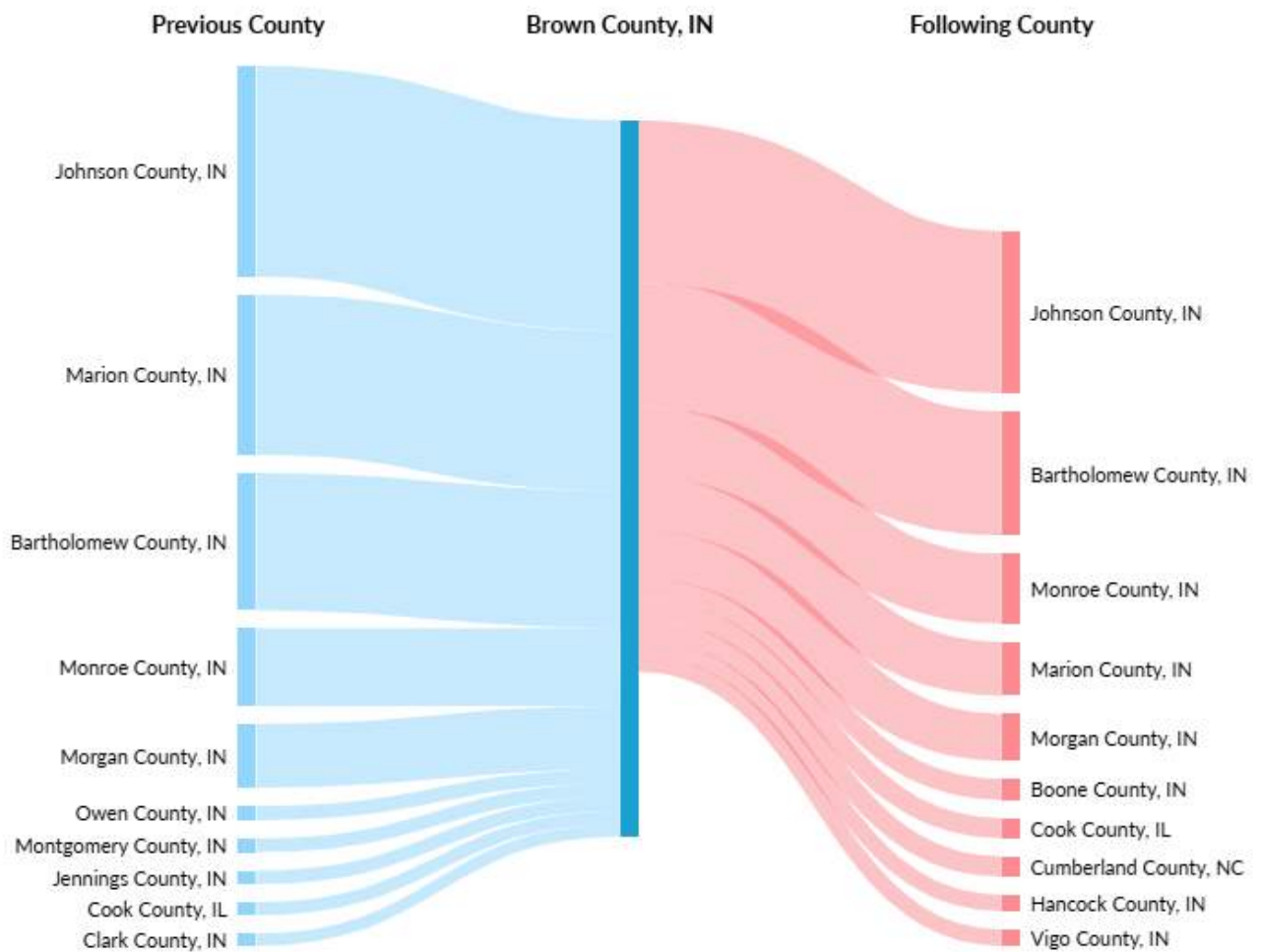


Figure 4: County Migration Trends, Source: Lightcast Economy Overview

Migration data in Figure 4 highlights regional relocation patterns, primarily within Indiana, with Johnson, Marion, and Bartholomew Counties serving as major hubs for both incoming and outgoing migrations.

Johnson County stands out as the top source of new residents and a leading destination, indicating dynamic internal movement and strong interconnections within the region.

Marion County, home to Indianapolis, contributes significantly to new residents, likely due to population shifts, economic factors, or urbanization trends.

Bartholomew County serves as both a key source and destination, likely driven by its economic opportunities, housing options, and proximity to Columbus, Indiana.



The migration data also highlights smaller migration flows to counties like Monroe, Boone, and Hancock, indicating suburban expansion, as well as to more distant locations. These destinations include places like Cook County, Illinois, and Cumberland County, North Carolina, which could be driven by job relocations, family connections, or specific life transitions.

These migration patterns reveal where new residents are coming from and where former residents are relocating, emphasizing strong regional ties and movement primarily between neighboring counties. They also highlight the pull of urban centers like Indianapolis and educational hubs like Bloomington. Analyzing these trends can help shape housing, transportation, and economic development strategies, ensuring infrastructure and services align with shifting population dynamics and future growth.

Demographics: POPULATION

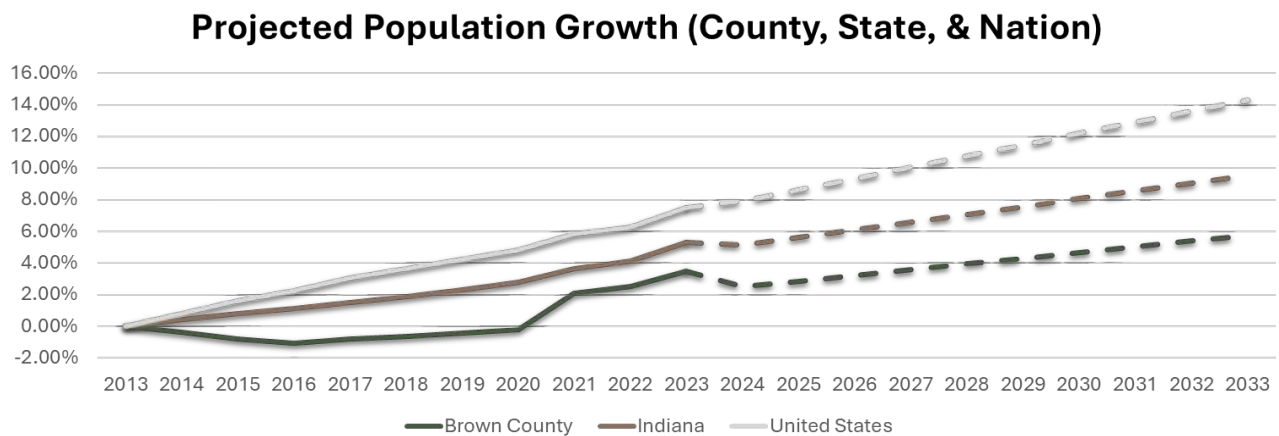


Figure 5: Population Trends Comparison

Source: US Census Bureau; ACS DP05 & STATS Indiana

Figure 5 further examines Brown County's population in comparison to State and National trends. This comparison analyzes both past and future trends for the three regions of comparison. Indiana and the United States have experienced more consistent and substantial population growth compared to Brown County and are projected to continue outpacing the county through 2030.

These trends highlight Brown County's more gradual growth, which reflects both its unique character and potential challenges related to available land for development. While slower growth helps preserve the county's rural charm, it may also impact economic competitiveness, tax base expansion, and community vibrancy. This plan will consider strategies to address these areas.



Figure 6 examines past population age trends in Brown County from 2012 to 2022. Younger cohorts, such as those under 9 years old, experienced a notable decline, dropping from 10.34% of the population in 2012 to 7.77% in 2022. Similarly, the percentage of residents aged 10 to 24 years decreased from 16.51% in 2012 to 15.40% in 2022. Middle-aged groups, such as those aged 45 to 54 years, also saw a decline, falling from 16.42% to 13.63% over the same period.

In contrast, older age groups demonstrated significant growth. The percentage of residents aged 65 to 74 increased from 11.09% in 2012 to 16.34% in 2022, while those aged 75 and older grew from 6.65% to 9.06%. These trends highlight a shifting demographic toward an aging population in Brown County.

Overall, the data reveals a decrease in younger and middle-aged residents alongside an increase in older cohorts. This aging demographic profile could have significant implications for future community planning, including infrastructure, housing, and healthcare needs.

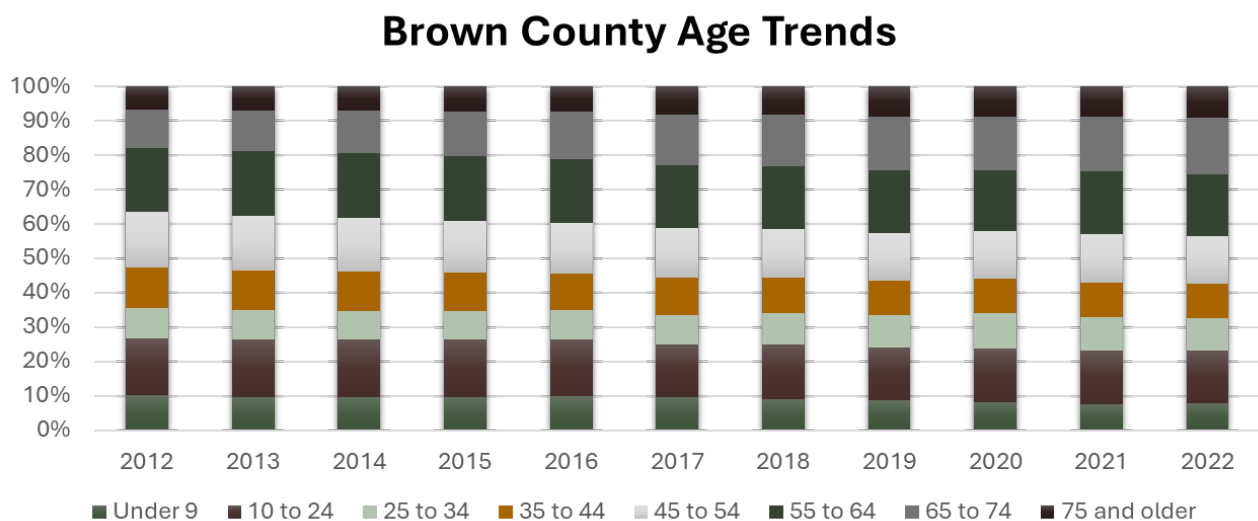


Figure 6: Brown County Aging Trends, Source: US Census Bureau DP05

Demographics: POPULATION

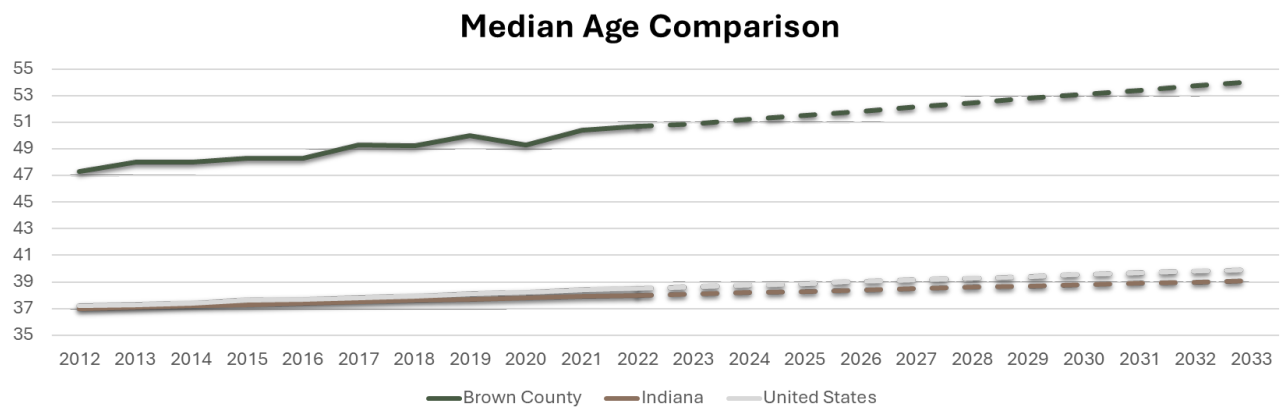


Figure 7: Brown County Median Age Comparison, Source: US Census Bureau DP05

Figure 7 examines the median age in Brown County and compares it to state and national trends. Between 2012 and 2022, Brown County's median age consistently remained higher than both state and national averages. In 2022, the median age in Brown County was approximately 50.7 years, which is significantly older than the state and national medians, reflecting the county's aging population.

While state and national median ages are projected to increase modestly in the coming years, Brown County is anticipated to see a more substantial rise, following broader trends of population aging observed in Figure 6. This trend underscores the county's shifting demographics, with an increasing proportion of residents in older age groups and a declining share of younger and middle-aged cohorts.



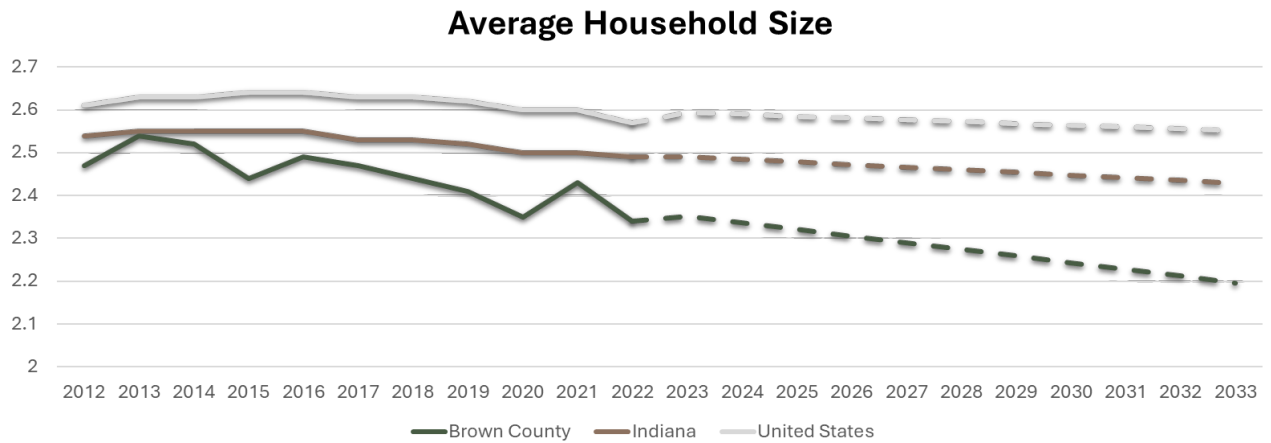


Figure 8: Brown County Average Household Size, Source: US Census Bureau S1101



Figure 8 shows that the average household size in Brown County has experienced a gradual decline over the past decade and is projected to continue decreasing. In 2012, the average household size was 2.47, dropping to 2.35 by 2020. Projections suggest further decreases, with the average household size expected to reach approximately 2.24 by 2030.

This trend reflects shifting demographics in Brown County, aligning with broader patterns of smaller household sizes at the state and national levels. While Brown County's household size has historically been smaller than the state and national averages, the projected decline indicates evolving household dynamics that may influence demand for smaller housing units.

Demographics: POPULATION

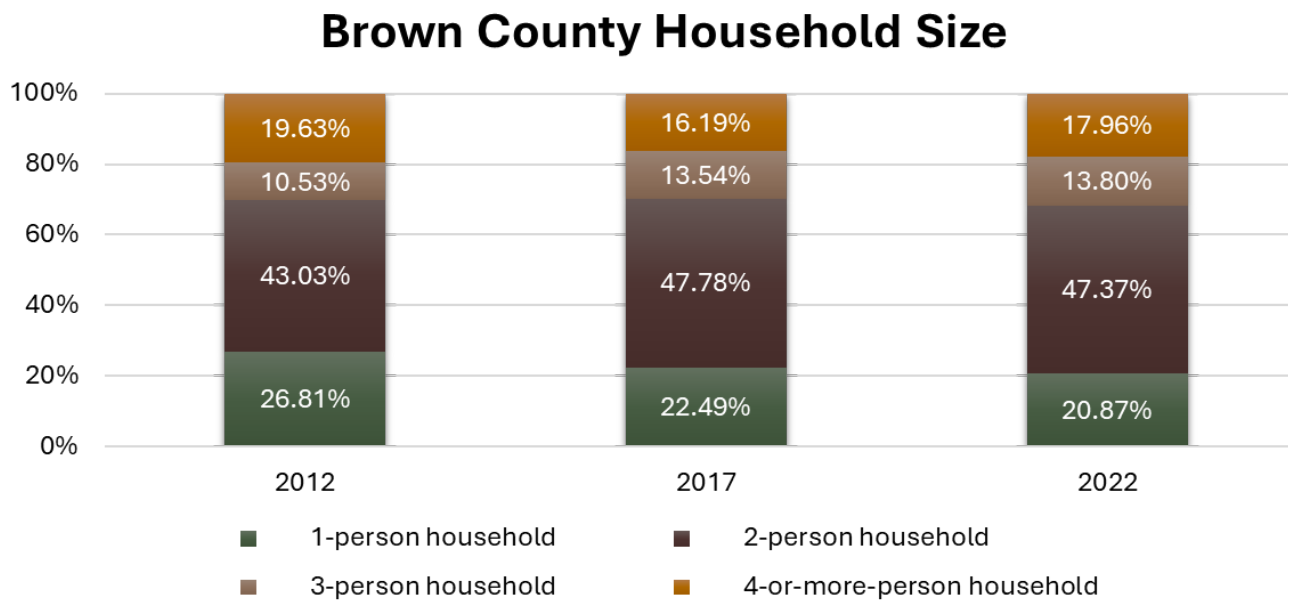


Figure 9: Brown County Household Size , Source: US Census Bureau S1101

From 2012 to 2022, the composition of households in Brown County revealed key trends in household size and structure, shown in Figure 9. The proportion of 2-person households steadily increased, making up approximately 47.4% of all households by 2022. Meanwhile, 3-person households accounted for 13.8%, and households with 4 or more persons represented 20%.

These shifts suggest evolving household dynamics, with smaller households becoming more prevalent. This trend reflects broader demographic changes and provides insights into the social and economic fabric of the county, including potential impacts on community services, infrastructure needs, and local planning priorities.

Over the past decade, Brown County experienced fluctuations in the total number of households, reflecting a modest overall growth trend. Beginning with 6,094 households in 2012, the county saw a dip to 5,889 households in 2013, followed by a gradual recovery, reaching 6,372 households by 2020. Despite some variability, the total number of households has shown resilience, marking an overall upward trajectory during this period.

Projections suggest that household numbers may increase, but at a minimal pace through 2030. This stability, despite a declining average household size, highlights shifting demographic dynamics and offers insights into Brown County's evolving community structure. These trends underscore the importance of understanding and adapting to changes in household composition to address the county's long-term social and economic needs.

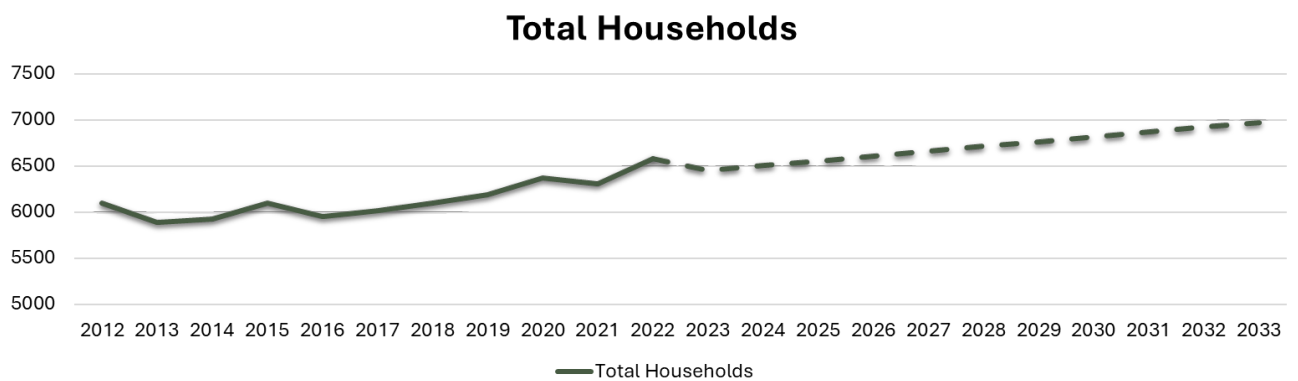


Figure 10: Brown County Total Households, Source: US Census Bureau S1101

Demographics

EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

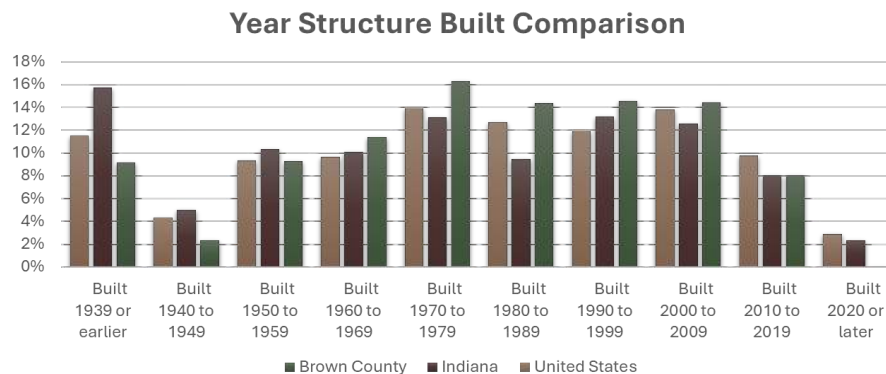


Figure 11:
Year Structure
Built
Comparison

Source: US
Census
Bureau,
B25034

Figure 11 compares the year housing structures were built in Brown County, Indiana, and the United States and illustrates patterns in the construction of buildings across different decades. Notably, Brown County exhibits a substantial proportion of structures built in 1970-1989, indicating a moderately aging housing stock. However, it should be noted that a home's construction year does not necessarily reflect its condition. Furthermore, fewer homes have been built in 2010 or later, which can exacerbate a housing supply issue.

National, state, and regional trends relating to year of construction are similar with far fewer homes being built after 2010, emphasizing the impact of the Great Recession. This reduction in new housing supply has compounded affordability issues, as the limited availability of new homes has driven up prices and reduced options for potential buyers and renters.

Brown County has a greater percentage of low to middle-priced housing options compared to the

United States, but a similar percentage to the State. Approximately 57% of homes within the county are valued between \$100,000 and \$299,999. Conversely, Brown County has a smaller percentage than both the Nation and the State of homes valued below \$100,000. The shortage of homes in that price range and the high cost of constructing new homes may limit the availability of affordable options for prospective buyers. Current homeowners may be less likely to upgrade to higher-priced properties due to affordability constraints and prevailing interest rates.

This situation restricts options for new buyers and complicates the ability of existing homeowners to upgrade to better properties. The lack of diversity in available housing products creates a scenario where the housing market may struggle to support upward mobility for residents. Addressing this imbalance in the housing market could potentially unlock opportunities for both first-time buyers and existing homeowners seeking to transition to newer residences.

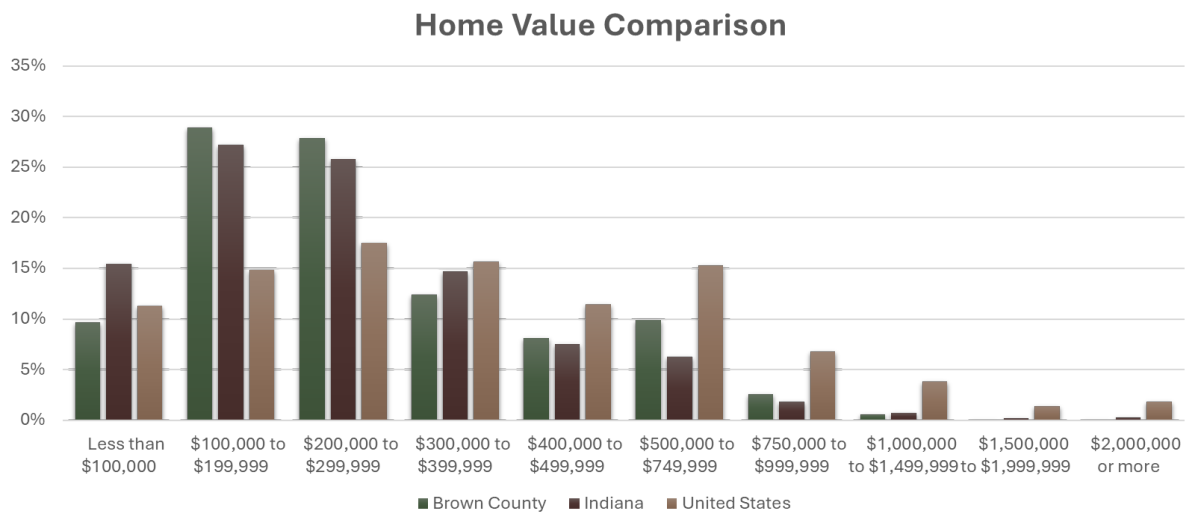


Figure 12: Housing Value Distribution, Source: US Census Bureau, B25075

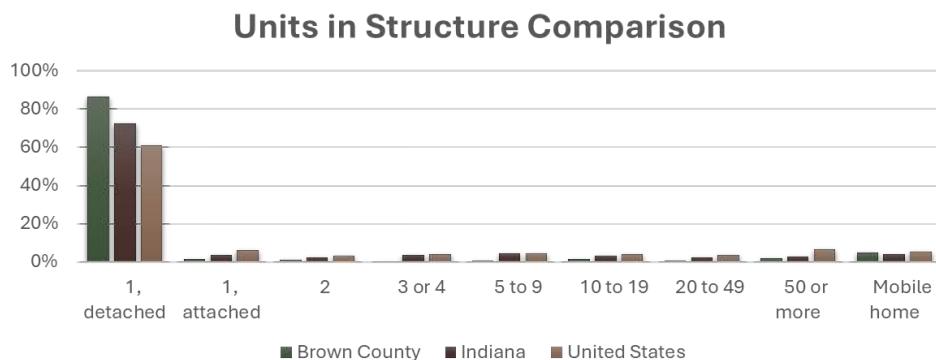


Figure 13: Total Units in Housing Structure, Source: US Census Bureau, B25024

Most housing units in Brown County are characterized as single-unit, detached structures, accounting for 87% of all structures. This percentage surpasses the State of Indiana and national averages. The distribution of multi-unit structures reveals Brown County has a lower proportion compared to all regions in almost every other category. However, the county has a higher percentage of structures in the Mobile home category than Indiana at 5%.

The lack of multi-unit structures in Brown County suggests a housing landscape that predominantly leans towards detached homes and indicates a phenomenon known as “missing middle housing”. This is characterized by a lack of medium-density units that appeal to a range of renters and buyers. Strategies for introducing a more varied range of housing options, including multi-unit structures, (duplexes, triplexes, etc.), townhomes, or condominiums could enhance housing affordability and accommodate a broader range of residents within Brown County.

Demographics

EDUCATION

Brown County demonstrates a strong educational profile compared to state and national averages. Only 7.7% of residents have less than a high school education, outperforming both Indiana (10.71%) and the United States (11.14%).

Additionally, 35.2% of residents are high school graduates, slightly above the state average of 33.9% and significantly higher than the national average of 27.68%.

The county also shows strong representation in the category of "some college or associate degrees," with 31.58% of residents achieving this level of education, exceeding both state (30.45%)

and national (30.56%) averages. Notably, 25.48% of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, surpassing the state average of 24.94% but trailing the national average of 30.62%.

These statistics highlight Brown County's relatively strong educational attainment and its potential for leveraging a well-educated population to support workforce development and economic growth. At the same time, they indicate opportunities to continue expanding access to higher education and professional training to ensure long-term competitiveness.

Educational Attainment Comparison

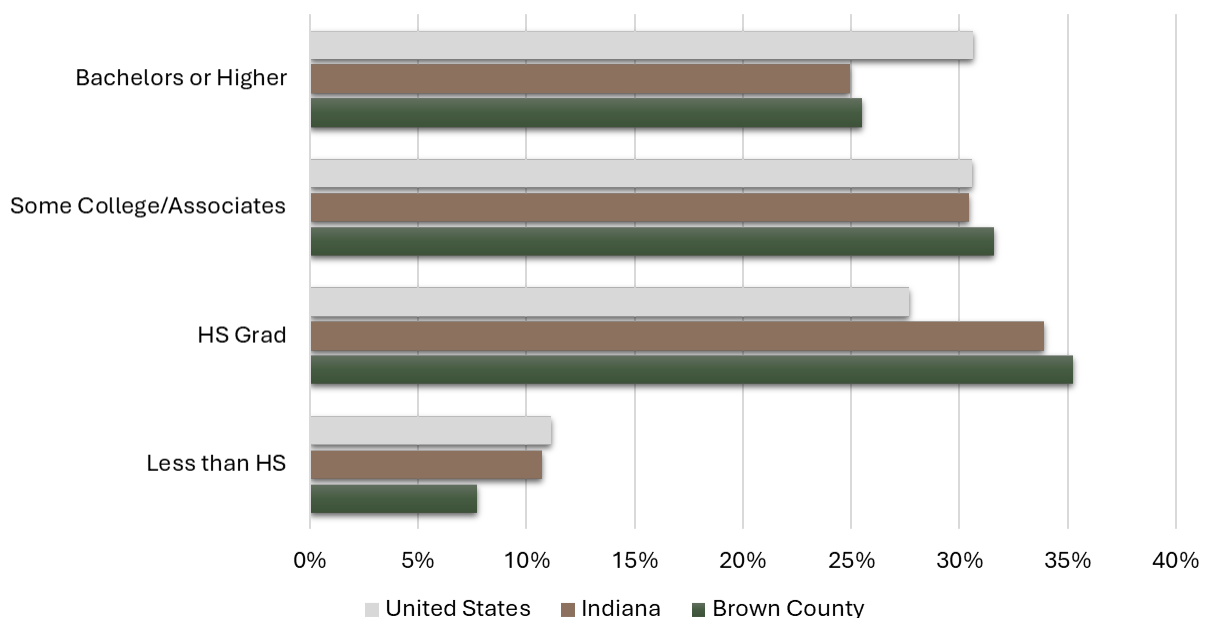


Figure 14: Educational Attainment Comparison, Source: US Census Bureau S1501

Median Earnings by Education Level

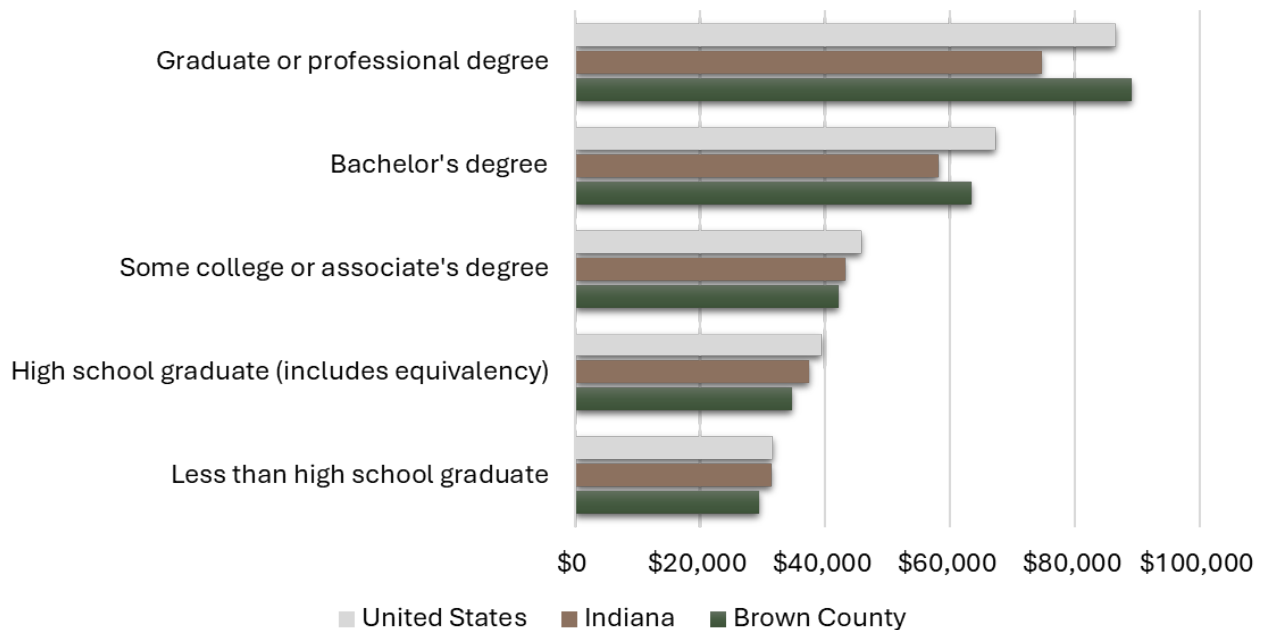


Figure 15: Median Earnings by Education Level, Source: US Census Bureau S2001

Brown County's economic landscape reflects a range of median earnings across educational attainment levels, generally falling behind state and national averages. Residents with less than a high school diploma earn a median income of \$29,423, slightly below both the state average of \$31,415 and the national average of \$31,660. High school graduates in Brown County earn \$34,778, which also falls below state (\$37,447) and national (\$39,428) averages.

In contrast, individuals with some college or an associate degree earn a median income of \$42,280, closely matching state (\$43,375) and

national (\$45,924) averages. Brown County residents with a bachelor's degree earn a notable \$63,457, surpassing the state average of \$58,184 but falling below the national average of \$67,256. Those with a graduate or professional degree in Brown County earn \$89,125, significantly outpacing both state (\$74,722) and national (\$86,524) averages.

Figure 15 provides insight into the varying income levels within the county and highlights the importance of aligning community planning and development efforts with the economic realities of its residents.

ECONOMY

Understanding the economic landscape is critical to shaping a comprehensive plan, as it sheds light on the factors influencing Brown County's growth and prosperity. This section examines household income, total employment, historical job trends, industry characteristics, and occupation profiles to provide a detailed picture of the county's economic strengths, challenges, and opportunities. These insights serve as the foundation for informed strategies that promote sustainable economic growth and community well-being.

Household income offers a glimpse into residents' earning power and economic equity, highlighting disparities and opportunities to foster inclusivity. Total employment and historical job trends help track workforce activity and the county's economic evolution, offering context for planning efforts that address future workforce needs and emerging opportunities.

Industry characteristics provide a view of the sectors driving Brown County's economy, emphasizing areas of growth and investment potential. Meanwhile, occupation profiles reveal the types of jobs held by residents, offering insight into skill levels and workforce development needs. Together, these economic indicators provide a roadmap for fostering a resilient, thriving economy that supports the community's long-term prosperity.



Economy

Figure 16 illustrates both historical trends and future projections for job growth in the area, highlighting the challenges of recent years and the opportunities ahead. From 2018 to 2020, the number of jobs declined from 3,656 to 3,331, reflecting the economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the local economy showed resilience, with jobs rebounding to 3,507 in 2021 and steadily increasing to 3,840 by 2023, surpassing pre-pandemic levels. Looking ahead, job projections indicate consistent growth, with employment expected to rise from 3,840 in 2024 to 4,185 by 2028.

This steady growth trajectory presents significant opportunities for the community, underscoring the importance of aligning infrastructure, housing, and workforce development efforts with the expanding labor market. The recovery and projected growth highlight the adaptability of the local economy and the potential for strategic investments in high-growth industries and training programs to sustain this upward trend. This positive outlook sets the stage for thoughtful economic planning to ensure continued prosperity and resilience.

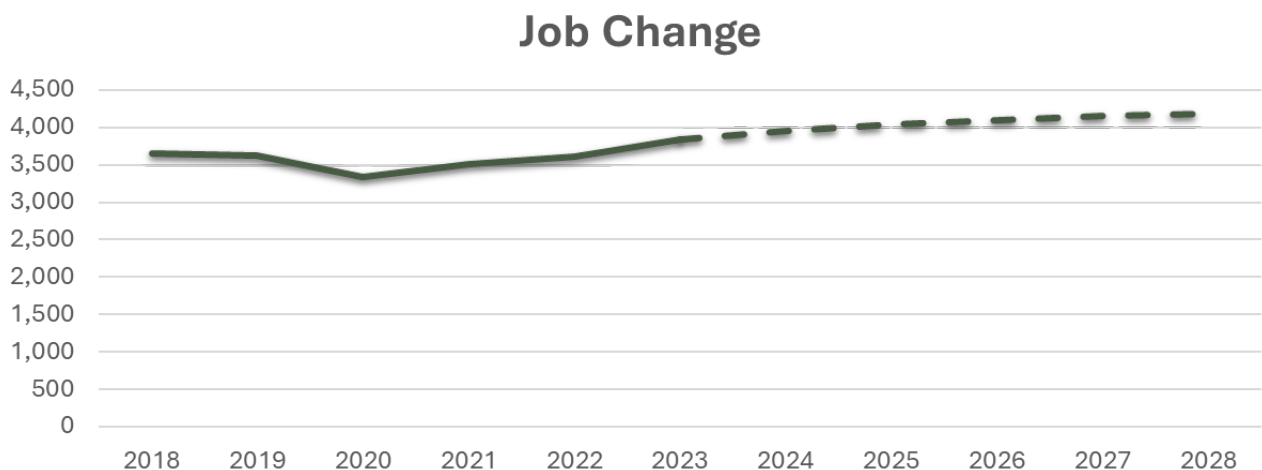


Figure 16: Job Change, Source: Lightcast Economy Overview

Economy

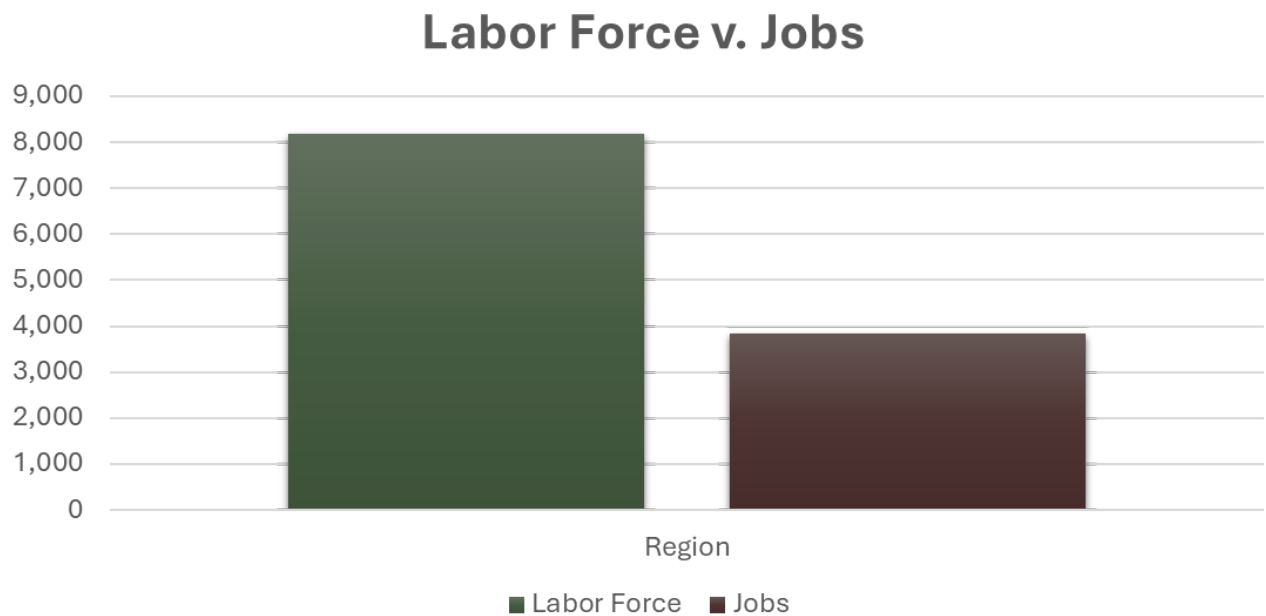


Figure 17: Labor Force v. Jobs, Source: Lightcast Economy Overview

Figure 17 reflects a significant imbalance between the labor force and the number of jobs available within the region. With a labor force of 8,187 and only 3,840 jobs, the region experiences a substantial gap, suggesting that many residents may need to seek employment opportunities outside the area. This disparity underscores the importance of economic development strategies that focus on attracting and retaining businesses to create more local job opportunities. Such efforts would not only help align the job market with the available workforce but also contribute to reducing commuting burdens and supporting local economic growth.



The median household income (Figure 18) in Brown County is \$73,933, placing it above the state average for Indiana at \$67,173 but slightly below the national median of \$75,149. This income level suggests that Brown County is relatively well-positioned economically within the state, with residents generally earning more than the average Indiana household. However, the slightly lower income compared to the national average highlights potential opportunities to strengthen local economic conditions further. Enhancing job opportunities and addressing the labor force and job gap could help raise household incomes and align the region more closely with national economic benchmarks.

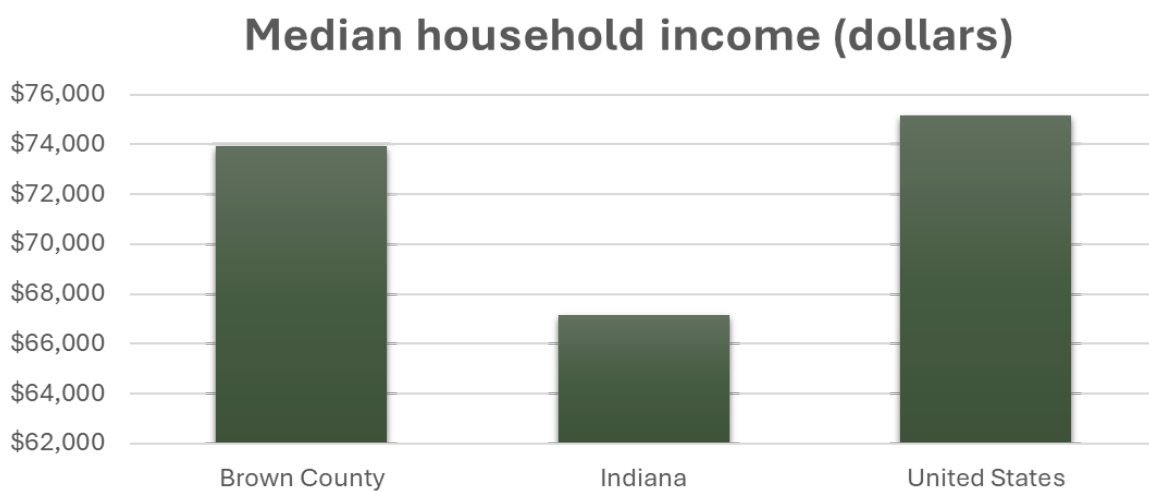


Figure 18: Median Household Income, Source: Lightcast Economy Overview

The household income distribution in Brown County showcases both strengths and areas of concern when compared to state and national trends. On the positive side, Brown County has a notably lower proportion of households earning less than \$10,000 annually (2.74%) compared to Indiana (5.23%) and the United States (4.92%), indicating a reduced prevalence of extreme poverty. Similarly, the county outperforms both the state and national averages in several mid-to-upper income brackets, particularly among households earning \$75,000 to \$99,999 (15.30%) and \$100,000 to \$124,999 (10.84%), which reflects a relatively affluent population.

However, the data also highlights some areas of concern. Brown County has an unusually high percentage of households earning \$25,000 to \$29,999 annually (5.55%), well above the averages for Indiana (3.72%) and the U.S. (3.74%). This suggests that a segment of the population may be clustered just above the low-income threshold, which could indicate economic vulnerabilities within this group. Additionally, the proportion of households earning \$200,000 or more (8.27%) lags behind the national average (11.41%), suggesting potential opportunities to attract higher-income residents or industries that could bolster the county's economic profile.

Economy

Overall, while Brown County demonstrates strong representation in middle and upper-middle income brackets, the income distribution also reveals a need to address economic challenges faced by lower-income residents and to explore strategies to further diversify and strengthen the county's economic base.

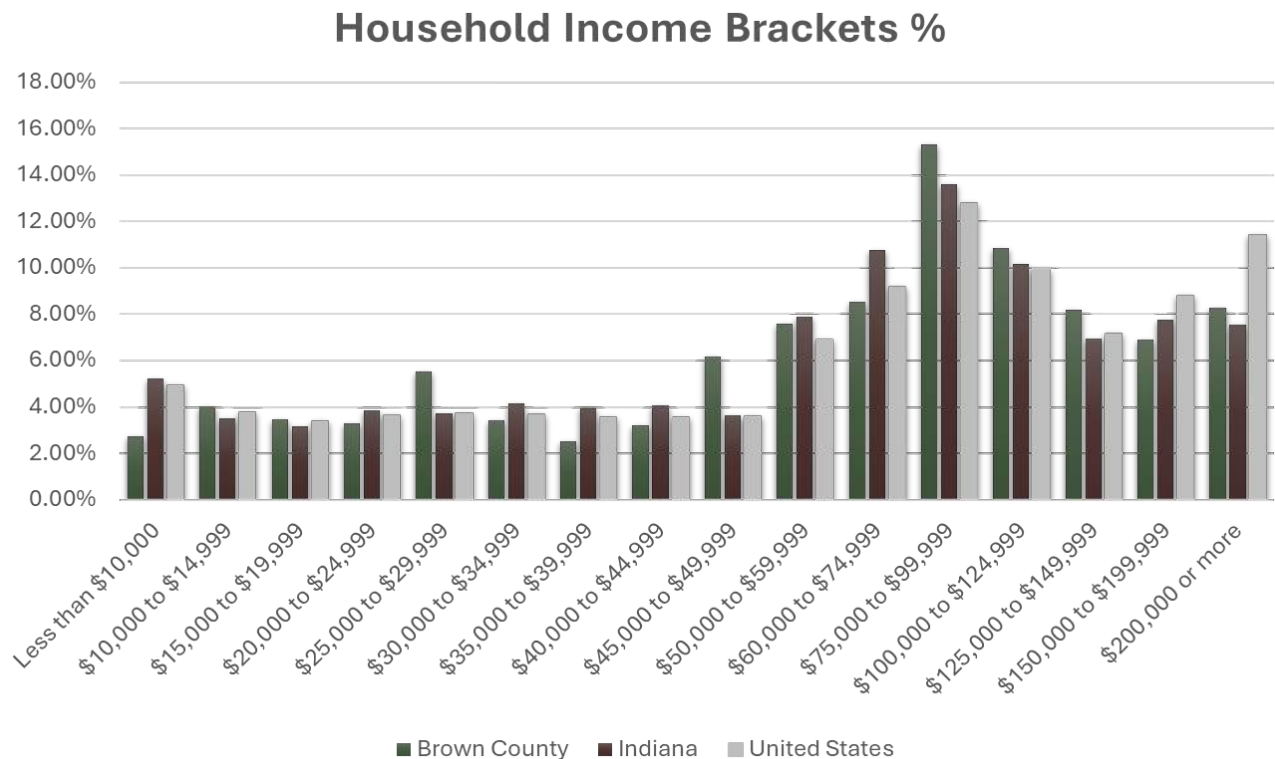


Figure 19: Household Income Bracket %, Source: Census Bureau, B19001

INDUSTRY



The industry section provides a comprehensive analysis of Brown County's economic structure, highlighting the distribution of jobs across various sectors, projected growth or decline, and average earnings by industry. This data offers critical insights into the key drivers of the local economy, areas of strength, and sectors requiring strategic intervention. Industries such as tourism, healthcare, and government play a dominant role in employment, while emerging sectors like professional services and educational services present opportunities for future growth. Understanding the dynamics of industry employment, growth trends, and earning potential is essential for fostering economic resilience, supporting workforce development, and ensuring sustainable growth.

Economy: Industry

Figure 20 provides an analysis of the current distribution of jobs across various industries in Brown County, highlighting sectors that play a significant role in driving the local economy. The data reveals areas of economic strength while identifying opportunities for diversification. Key industries such as tourism, government, and retail trade emerge as major contributors to employment, with smaller sectors like professional services and manufacturing indicating potential for growth and impact.

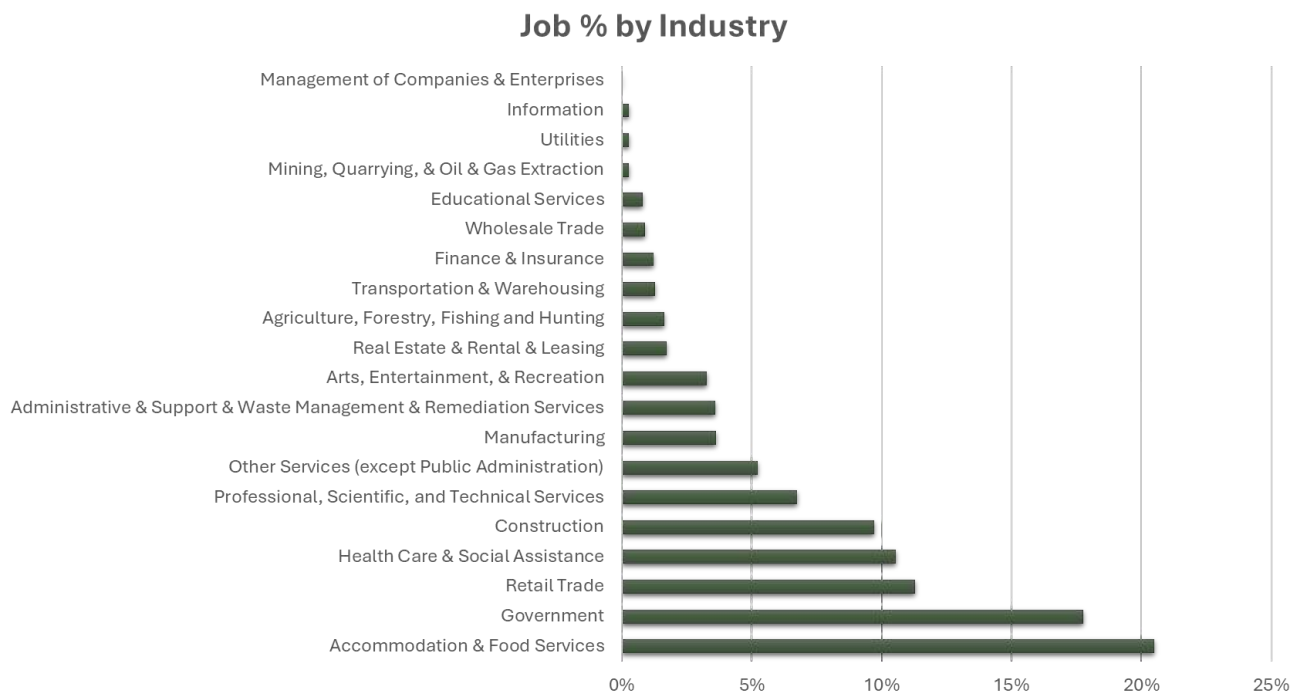


Figure 20: Job % by Industry, Source: Lightcast

Key insights:

- **Accommodation and Food Services** (20.48%) accounts for the largest share of employment, underscoring the critical importance of tourism to the county's economy.
- **Government** (17.76%) and **Retail Trade** (11.27%) represent stable and essential sources of employment, reflecting their role in serving residents and visitors.
- **Construction** (9.72%) and **Professional Services** (6.75%) demonstrate opportunities for expansion in skilled labor and knowledge-based industries.

Figure 21 highlights projected job growth and decline across industries over two decades, providing valuable insights for aligning workforce training, business incentives, and investment strategies with anticipated economic trends. The rapid growth of certain sectors signals emerging opportunities, while declining industries present challenges that require targeted support to maintain economic stability.

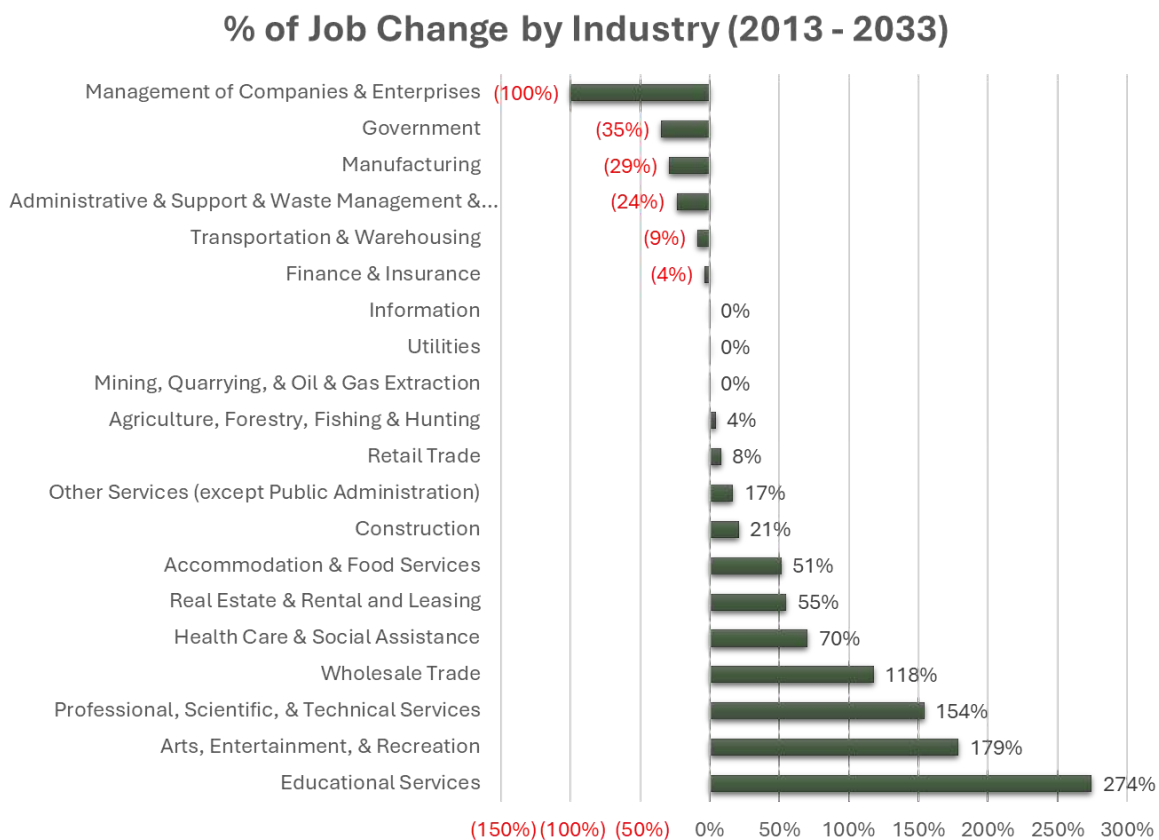


Figure 21: % of Job Change by Industry, Source: Lightcast

Key insights:

- **Educational Services** (274%) is projected to experience the highest growth, reflecting increased demand for education and training-related roles.
- **Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation** (179%) is positioned as a growing sector, emphasizing the county's appeal as a cultural and tourist destination.
- Declines in **Government** (-35%) and **Manufacturing** (-29%) suggest potential vulnerabilities that require proactive strategies to support economic transition and workforce adaptation.

Economy: Industry

Figure 22 illustrates average earnings across different sectors in Brown County, highlighting disparities in wage levels and identifying industries with the highest earning potential. The data underscores the importance of balancing job creation with economic equity and emphasizes the need to support both high-earning sectors and wage improvements in lower-earning industries.

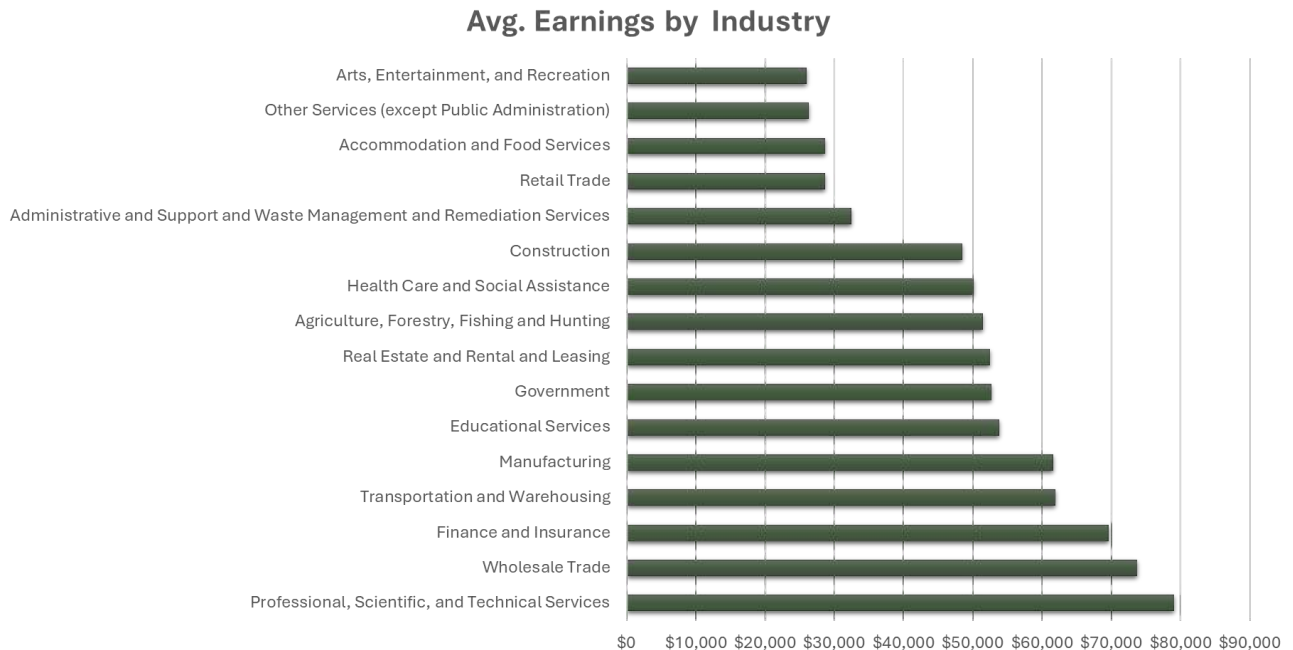


Figure 22: Avg. Earnings by Industry, Source: Lightcast

Key insights:

- **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services** (\$79,056) represents the highest earnings, demonstrating potential for high-paying, skilled jobs that contribute to economic resilience.
- **Accommodation and Food Services** (\$28,619), while the largest employer, ranks low in earnings, emphasizing the need for strategies to enhance job quality and wage growth.
- **Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation** (\$25,955) plays a key role in tourism and cultural activities but also highlights wage disparities requiring attention for balanced economic growth.



Figure 23: Local Nashville Artist Creating “Soaring”
Source: indystar.com

The analysis of industries in Brown County underscores the significant role of key sectors such as tourism, government, and healthcare in driving the local economy while highlighting opportunities for diversification and growth in emerging fields. While established industries provide a stable employment base, projected declines in areas such as manufacturing and government employment emphasize the need for proactive planning to address economic vulnerabilities. High-growth sectors like educational services, professional services, and arts and entertainment represent areas where strategic investments can yield substantial returns in employment and economic resilience. The insights gained from this analysis provide a roadmap for strengthening existing industries, fostering new opportunities, and creating a balanced and sustainable economic future for Brown County.

Economy

WORKFORCE / OCCUPATION

The workforce section delves into the composition of Brown County's workforce, analyzing the distribution of jobs by occupational categories, anticipated changes in employment over the next two decades, and median annual earnings by role. This data reveals the skill sets most prevalent within the community and highlights occupations poised for significant growth, such as technology and healthcare-related fields. It also underscores challenges in low-earning, high-employment roles like food service and personal care. By addressing the needs of both emerging and at-risk occupations, this section provides a foundation for targeted workforce strategies and economic development initiatives to support long-term prosperity.



Figure 24 provides an overview of the occupational distribution in Brown County, emphasizing the types of jobs that comprise the workforce. The data highlights sectors with the highest employment levels and provides insights into the occupational focus of the local economy. By identifying areas with significant representation, this chart aids in understanding the workforce's skill base and potential areas for economic diversification.



Figure 24: Job % by Occupation, Source: Lightcast

Key insights:

- **Food Preparation and Serving** (14.66%) leads employment, reflecting the county's reliance on tourism and hospitality.
- **Office and Administrative Support** (9.52%) and **Sales and Related** (9.38%) highlight the presence of essential service-oriented roles within the workforce.
- Smaller yet notable sectors, such as **Construction and Extraction** (7.19%) and **Management** (7.19%), demonstrate the diversity of skills present in the local economy.

Economy: WORKFORCE / OCCUPATION

Figure 25 forecasts occupational growth and decline, highlighting emerging opportunities and potential challenges. By examining trends over a two-decade period, the data provides valuable direction for workforce training, economic development, and policy alignment to support both high-growth and at-risk occupations.



Figure 25: % of Job Change by Occupation, Source: Lightcast

Key insights:

- **Computer and Mathematical** (196%) shows the fastest growth, underscoring the increasing demand for technology-related skills.
- **Healthcare Practitioners and Technical** (82%) and **Food Preparation and Serving** (74%) are expected to expand significantly, reflecting demographic changes and the sustained importance of hospitality.
- Declines in occupations such as **Educational Instruction and Library** (-45%) and **Building and Grounds Cleaning** (-20%) highlight areas requiring attention to mitigate workforce transitions.

Economy

Figure 26 illustrates wage comparisons across occupations in Brown County compared to Indiana, showcasing both high-earning and lower-earning roles. By identifying where wages are strongest and weakest relative to state averages, the data supports strategies to promote economic equity and foster growth in occupations with higher earning potential.

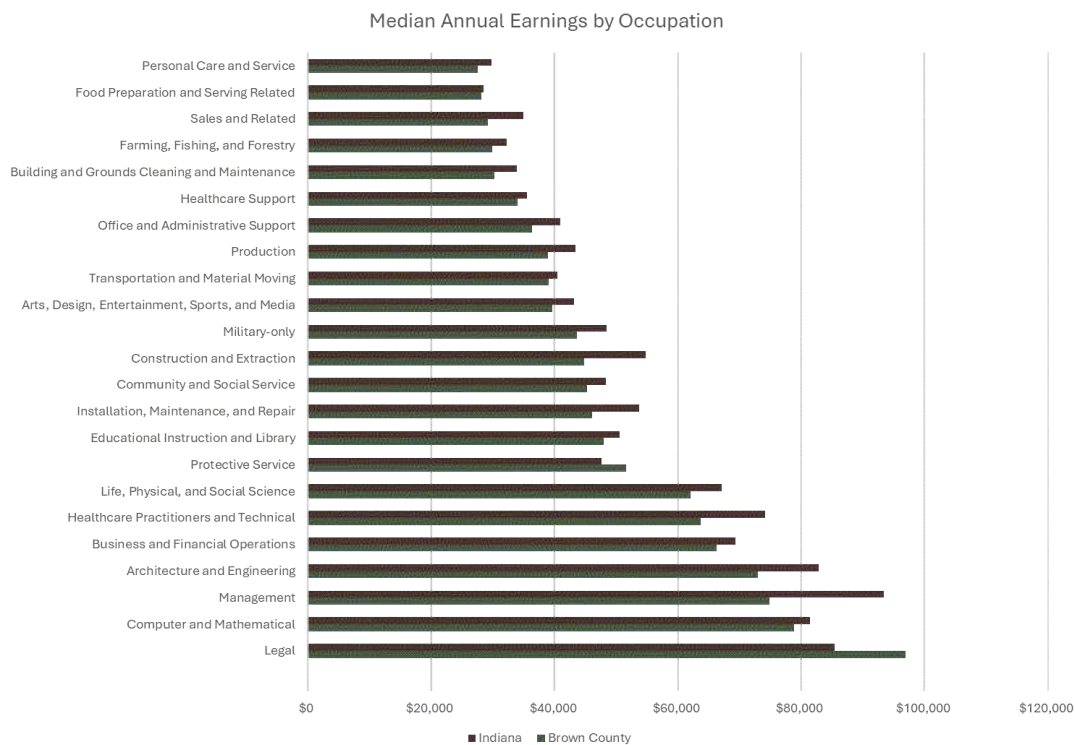


Figure 26: Median Annual Earnings by Occupation, Source: Lightcast

Key insights:

- **Legal (\$96,895)** remains the highest earning occupation in Brown County, surpassing the state average of **\$85,438**, highlighting strong local opportunities for specialized skill development in this sector.
- **Computer and Mathematical (\$78,809)** roles in Brown County slightly trail the state average of **\$81,396**, indicating competitive local wages but a potential need to attract more advanced roles to close the gap.
- **Management (\$74,794)** wages fall significantly below the state average of **\$93,441**, suggesting an opportunity for wage growth and leadership development initiatives within the county.
- **Healthcare Practitioners and Technical (\$63,704)** roles also lag behind the state average of **\$74,115**, emphasizing the need for investment in this critical field.
- **Food Preparation and Serving (\$28,146)** and **Personal Care and Service (\$27,493)** remain among the lowest-paying roles in Brown County, closely mirroring state trends but highlighting the importance of addressing wage disparities for high-employment fields.

Economy: WORKFORCE / OCCUPATION



The occupational analysis highlights the skill sets within Brown County's workforce while pointing to both opportunities and challenges for the future. Growth in occupations like technology, healthcare, and business reflects shifting demands for talent. At the same time, disparities in earnings among high-employment roles, such as food service and personal care, underscore the importance of addressing wage equity and job quality.

Comparing Brown County wages to Indiana as a whole reveals that while some sectors are competitive, others fall below state averages, particularly in management, technical services, and construction-related roles. This section demonstrates the need to align workforce strategies with economic trends, ensuring that residents are equipped to thrive in high-growth fields while maintaining a balanced approach to supporting essential roles across all sectors. These insights lay the groundwork for fostering an adaptable, skilled, and prosperous workforce that meets the evolving needs of the community.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Understanding the physical and land use characteristics of Brown County is essential for creating a comprehensive plan, as it provides insight into the factors shaping development patterns, community access, and environmental balance. This section examines the county's current zoning, protected areas, infrastructure, and environmental constraints, offering a foundation for informed decision-making and strategic growth.

Land use patterns reveal the balance between residential, commercial, industrial, and protected areas, highlighting how the county prioritizes conservation while accommodating growth. The extensive presence of federal lands and protected areas underscores Brown County's commitment to environmental preservation and tourism, while limited industrial zoning may indicate a challenge for economic diversification.

Infrastructure plays a critical role in community connectivity and development opportunities. While Brown County has a robust road network, many roads are narrow and lack sufficient accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians. Given the county's reliance on tourism and outdoor recreation, improving accessibility for non-vehicular movement could enhance visitor experiences and support sustainable tourism.

Environmental constraints, such as flood-prone areas, present additional challenges for development. Thoughtful land use planning in these zones is essential to reduce risk and ensure infrastructure resiliency, balancing growth with safety and sustainability.

By examining these current conditions, this section provides a comprehensive view of Brown County's development landscape, guiding strategies that balance growth, environmental stewardship, and community connectivity for the county's future.

Current Conditions

LAND USE

Brown County's land use patterns reflect a careful balance between residential growth, environmental conservation, and limited commercial and industrial activity. The existing zoning designations define how land is utilized, with residential areas, protected lands, and commercial hubs strategically distributed across the county.

Residential Areas

Residential zoning (R1, R2, LR, etc.) covers significant portions of the county, particularly near the Town of Nashville and along primary transportation corridors. The concentration of residential development in these areas suggests a focus on housing availability and community-centered growth. Most residential zones accommodate lower-density housing, contributing to the county's rural character while allowing for moderate expansion. However, the limited presence of higher-density residential zones may restrict housing diversity and affordability, potentially impacting long-term growth and accessibility for a wider range of residents.

Protected Areas and Federal Land

A substantial portion of Brown County is dedicated to protected areas and federally owned lands, including Hoosier National Forest, Brown County State Park, and NRCS easement boundaries. These areas, represented by extensive green and cross-hatched patterns on the land use map, highlight the county's commitment to environmental conservation. The presence of these protected lands plays a dual role—preserving natural habitats while serving as key drivers of the local tourism economy. However, the large footprint of federally owned and protected land also presents limitations on developable areas, which can impact both residential expansion and economic diversification.

Commercial and Industrial Use

Commercial and industrial zoning areas (GB, AB, Industrial) are primarily concentrated along key transportation routes and within the Town of Nashville. These zones support small-scale retail, service-based businesses, and light industrial activities that cater to both residents and tourists. The focus on small commercial nodes reflects the county's tourism-driven economy, while the limited presence of industrial zones indicates minimal large-scale manufacturing or heavy industry activity. Expanding appropriately scaled commercial and mixed-use areas could enhance local business diversity and provide more employment opportunities without compromising the county's rural charm.

Land Use Composition Conclusion

Brown County's land use emphasizes residential development, conservation, and limited commercial and industrial activity. Low-density zoning supports rural character but limits housing diversity and affordability. Protected areas like Hoosier National Forest and Brown County State Park promote conservation and tourism but restrict development space. Commercial and industrial zones near Nashville and key roads support small businesses but allow little room for large-scale growth. Balancing housing expansion and commercial growth while preserving protected lands will be key to sustainable development.

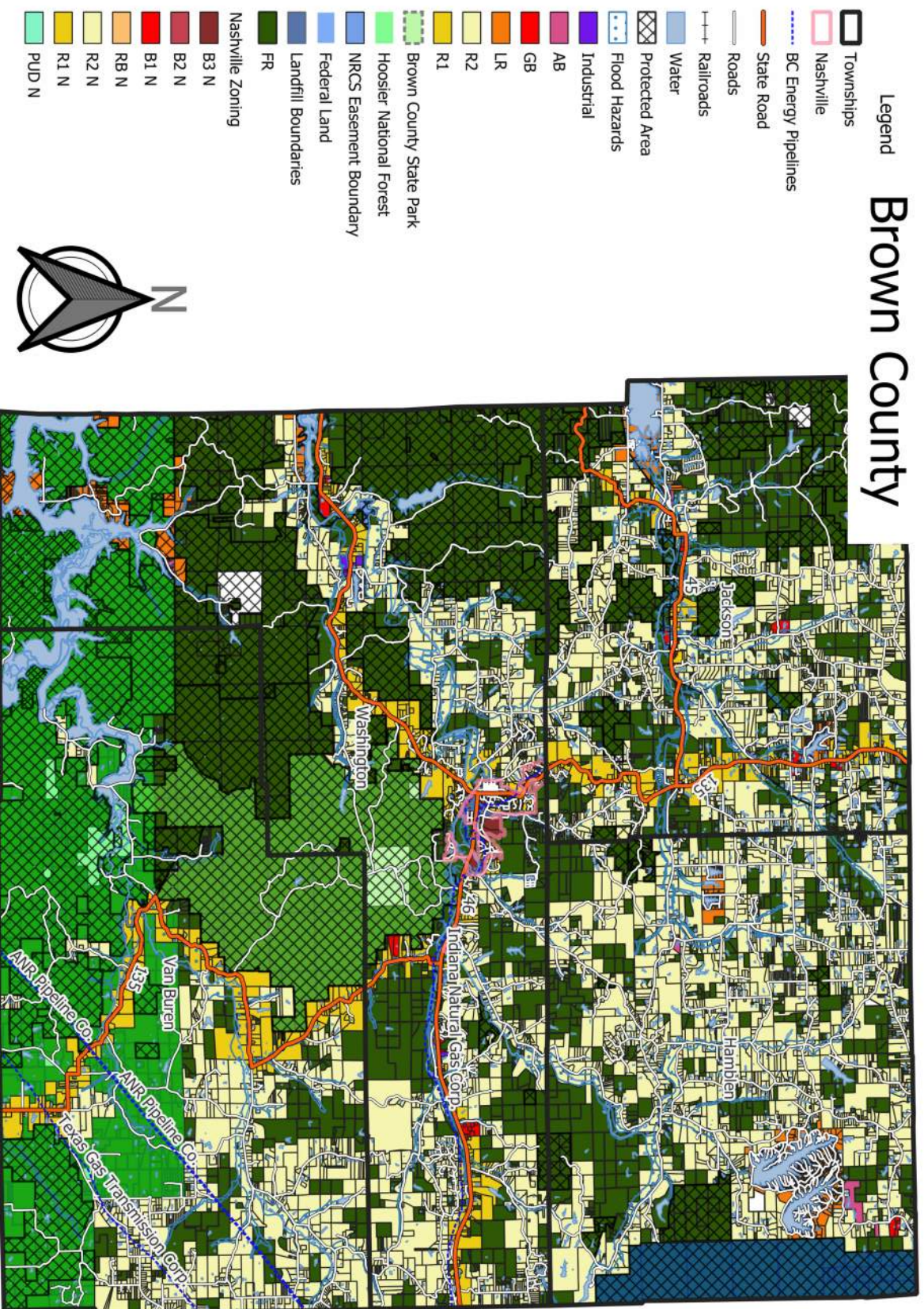


Figure 27: Land Use Map, Brown County

Current Conditions

ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS

Brown County's land use demonstrates a strong commitment to environmental conservation, with extensive areas dedicated to federally protected lands and natural spaces. These environmental designations play a significant role in the county's identity and development patterns.

Federal Land and Protected Areas

A substantial portion of Brown County is covered by protected lands and federally owned properties, including the Hoosier National Forest, Brown County State Park, and NRCS easement areas. These lands are designated to preserve natural habitats, protect wildlife, and maintain the region's ecological integrity. Represented on maps by dark green and cross-hatched zones, these areas also contribute significantly to the local economy by supporting outdoor recreation and tourism-based activities such as hiking, camping, and nature exploration. However, the extent of protected lands also reduces the availability of space for new residential or commercial development, presenting a challenge for balanced growth.

Flood Hazards and Environmental Constraints

Brown County has identified and mapped flood hazard zones, represented by dotted blue areas. These zones highlight areas where development could be at higher risk due to natural flooding patterns, emphasizing the county's awareness of environmental risks. By clearly marking flood-prone areas, the county acknowledges the importance of risk reduction in development planning. Proper land use strategies, such as limiting new construction in these zones or implementing flood mitigation infrastructure, will be essential for reducing potential property damage and ensuring long-term community safety.

Environmental Focus Conclusion

Brown County places significant emphasis on environmental protection, with a large portion of its land dedicated to federal and protected areas that support both ecological preservation and tourism. While these areas contribute to the county's natural beauty and economic activity, they also limit space for future development. Additionally, the identification of flood hazard zones reflects an understanding of environmental risks, though continued planning will be necessary to balance growth with safety. Moving forward, careful land management strategies will be essential to maintain Brown County's environmental health while supporting responsible development.



ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Brown County's economic landscape is shaped by its emphasis on tourism, limited industrial development, and service-oriented activities. The county's land use patterns and zoning designations reflect a focus on preserving its natural assets while supporting economic activity tied to its rural charm and tourism-driven appeal.

Tourism as a Primary Economic Driver

Tourism plays a significant role in Brown County's economy, as evidenced by the presence of extensive protected lands and the concentration of commercial activity near Nashville. The county's natural attractions, including Brown County State Park and Hoosier National Forest, drive substantial visitor activity, particularly for outdoor recreation, arts, and cultural experiences. The zoning patterns near Nashville, with mixed-use and commercial areas strategically placed along key transportation corridors, reflect efforts to support tourism-based businesses such as retail shops, dining, lodging, and entertainment venues.

This tourism focus has supported local businesses and service-based industries, making tourism a key pillar of the county's economic stability. However, it also makes the local economy vulnerable to seasonal fluctuations and shifts in tourism trends, which could impact revenue and job stability in related sectors.

Limited Industrial Development

Industrial activity in Brown County is minimal, with industrial zoning primarily limited to small areas near Nashville and along major transportation routes. This limited footprint suggests the county's economy relies more on service-based industries, tourism, and government employment rather than manufacturing or large-scale industrial operations. While this focus aligns with the county's natural preservation efforts and small-town identity, it also restricts opportunities for economic diversification. A stronger industrial presence could provide greater economic resilience, job creation, and opportunities for workforce expansion, particularly in sectors such as light manufacturing or artisan production that align with the county's rural character.

Economic Activity Conclusion

Brown County's economy is heavily influenced by tourism, with protected lands and commercial activity near Nashville supporting a visitor-driven marketplace. While this strategy has successfully maintained the county's natural character and supported small businesses, it creates economic vulnerability due to seasonal tourism patterns. Additionally, the limited industrial zoning restricts opportunities for broader economic diversification and long-term stability. To strengthen the county's economic resilience, future strategies could explore expanding service-based businesses, promoting light industry, and leveraging existing tourism assets for year-round economic benefit.

Current Conditions

NASHVILLE'S CENTRAL ROLE

Nashville serves as the economic, cultural, and social hub of Brown County, with a dense mix of zoning types that reflect its importance in the region. Its central location and unique identity make it a focal point for both residents and visitors, but the relationship between the town and the broader county presents challenges in terms of collaboration and coordinated growth.

Mixed Zoning and Economic Influence

The land use patterns within Nashville reveal a compact blend of commercial (B1 N, B2 N) and residential areas, with businesses, housing, and tourism-driven development closely intertwined. This zoning mix supports small businesses, local artisans, and service providers, reinforcing Nashville's role as the county's primary destination for commerce and cultural experiences. The town's proximity to key natural attractions, such as Brown County State Park, enhances its role as a gateway for tourism activity.

The concentration of commercial zoning near the town center ensures accessibility for visitors while supporting the local economy. However, this dense zoning also brings challenges, such as traffic congestion, limited parking, and a reliance on tourism, which can fluctuate seasonally. The limited availability of housing types in Nashville, alongside its tourism focus, may also create affordability challenges for residents who work in the service sector.

Coordination Challenges Between Nashville and Brown County

Despite Nashville's central economic importance, the town and the county often face challenges in working collaboratively on land use and policy decisions. The town operates with its own zoning designations and governance structures, which can lead to misalignment with broader countywide planning efforts. Disjointed decision-making has made it difficult to implement cohesive strategies for growth, infrastructure improvements, and tourism management that benefit both Nashville and the surrounding county.

Nashville's Central Role Conclusion

Nashville's role as the economic, cultural, and social hub of Brown County is both a strength and a challenge. Its dense mix of commercial and residential land use supports a vibrant local economy driven by tourism, small businesses, and cultural attractions. However, the town's reliance on tourism, seasonal economic fluctuations, and limited housing diversity present obstacles to long-term sustainability and affordability for its workforce.

Collaboration between Nashville and Brown County is essential to address these challenges. Enhanced coordination on land use planning, infrastructure improvements, and economic strategies can help align growth efforts and ensure mutual benefits for both the town and the broader county. By working together, Nashville and Brown County can balance economic vitality with community needs, creating a more resilient future.

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Brown County's transportation network provides essential connections between residential, commercial, and recreational areas, playing a key role in supporting economic activity and community connectivity. While the road infrastructure is extensive, its design primarily prioritizes vehicle traffic, presenting challenges for alternative forms of transportation and overall accessibility.

Road Network and Connectivity

The county benefits from a well-established road network, with major state roads such as State Road 46 and State Road 135 serving as primary corridors for movement across the county. These routes effectively connect residential areas with key commercial zones, particularly around Nashville, while also providing access to major recreational destinations like Brown County State Park and Hoosier National Forest. The transportation system supports local businesses by ensuring visitor access to tourism hubs and retail areas, which is essential for the county's tourism-driven economy.

The focus on vehicle-centric infrastructure creates limitations for alternative transportation modes. Many roads are narrow and lack sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, or pedestrian pathways, making non-vehicular travel difficult and unsafe in most areas. This design not only affects resident mobility but also impacts the tourism experience, as many visitors come to the county seeking outdoor recreation but are limited to car-based travel due to the absence of walkable or bike-friendly infrastructure.

Road Safety and Capacity Issues

The narrow design of many county roads can create safety concerns, particularly in high-traffic areas near Nashville where tourism activity peaks. Limited road width, minimal pedestrian infrastructure, and a lack of traffic calming measures contribute to congestion and potential safety hazards. As the county continues to grow, road capacity and maintenance may become pressing issues, especially during peak tourist seasons when traffic volume increases significantly.



Current Conditions

Accessibility and Inclusion Challenges

The limited availability of non-vehicular infrastructure also impacts accessibility for residents without personal vehicles. This creates barriers for lower-income residents and aging populations who may rely more on pedestrian infrastructure for daily needs. Furthermore, public transit options are nearly nonexistent, making personal vehicles the only viable means of transportation for most people in the county.

Transportation and Accessibility Conclusion

Brown County's transportation network effectively connects key residential, commercial, and recreational zones through a system of major state roads and rural connectors. However, the emphasis on vehicle traffic, combined with narrow roads and a lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, presents challenges for both resident mobility and the tourism experience. Addressing these issues through improved road design, expanded pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and enhanced safety measures will be critical for supporting long-term accessibility, tourism sustainability, and resident quality of life.



Figure 28: SR-46, Source: aaroads.com

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Brown County Comprehensive Plan was developed with extensive community engagement to ensure the voices of residents, business owners, and stakeholders were at the heart of shaping the county's future. A variety of public engagement methods were used to gather input on key aspects of the plan, including an online survey and two public meetings held at different locations within the county. These opportunities allowed residents to share their perspectives on development priorities, funding strategies, and growth considerations, ensuring the comprehensive plan reflects the community's vision.

The public survey, which was hosted online between November 4, 2024 and December 1, 2024, garnered 390 responses, reflecting strong participation from a broad cross-section of the county. Survey respondents provided valuable insights into the community's preferences for future development, housing needs, and funding opportunities, offering a foundation for data-driven decision-making.

Additionally, Veridus Group, Inc. and Context Design facilitated two public meetings on November 16th designed to gather in-depth feedback from the community. These sessions focused on listening to residents' recommendations regarding the types and locations of potential developments, priorities for investment, and strategies for sustainable growth. Visual tools, including maps and imagery, encouraged attendees to explore specific issues such as the character of growth, housing preferences, and revenue-generating opportunities. Together, these public input opportunities provided critical insights that shaped the goals, strategies, and recommendations of the Brown County Comprehensive Plan.

Community Engagement

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The community meetings held on November 16th offered a valuable platform for residents to share their vision for Brown County's future. These open forums fostered meaningful discussions and provided insights into key topics, including the character of potential growth, funding strategies, investment priorities, housing types, and preferred locations for development. This feedback serves as a critical foundation for ensuring that the comprehensive plan reflects the community's values and priorities.

When considering the character of future growth, the people of Brown County emphasized a desire to preserve the natural environment. Residents expressed strong preferences for development that includes significant buffers, maintains low visibility from roadways, and integrates seamlessly into the surrounding landscape. For areas with higher visibility, there was a clear call for character-rich architecture that reflects the unique charm and identity of Brown County.

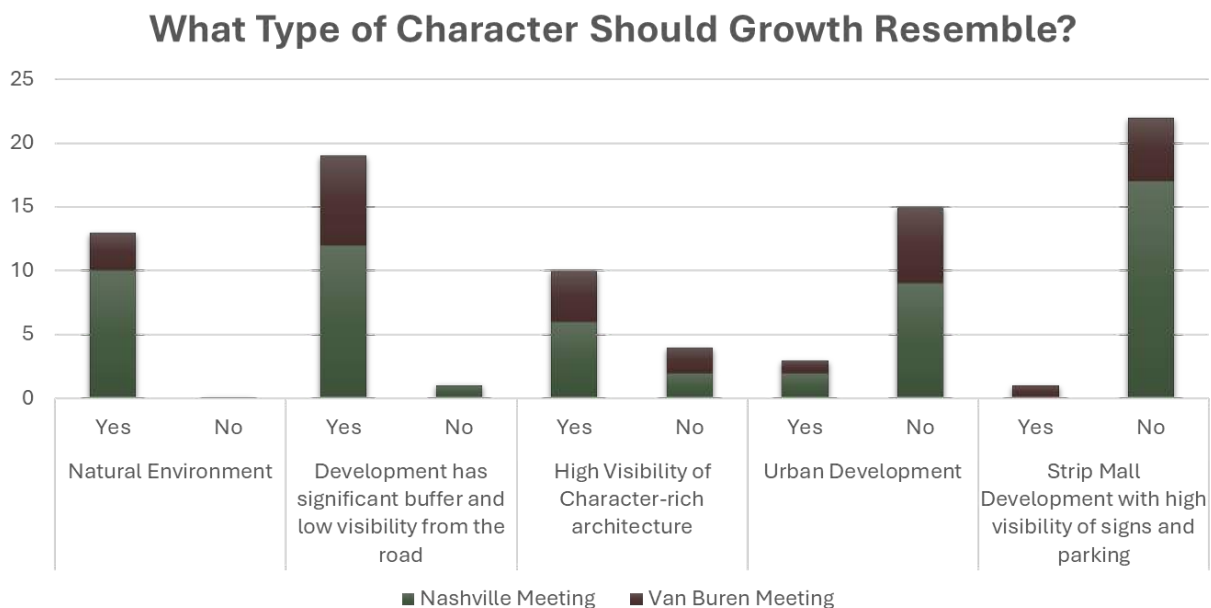


Figure 29: Type of Character, Source: Community Meetings

When exploring potential funding opportunities for growth, residents highlighted several key considerations. These included increasing property tax rates for non-residents, diversifying land use and types of development, expanding tourism and its associated tax revenues, and fostering the growth of light industry and manufacturing. These strategies reflect a balanced approach to generating revenue while aligning with the community's priorities and economic goals.

How Should Brown County Increase Funding Opportunities?

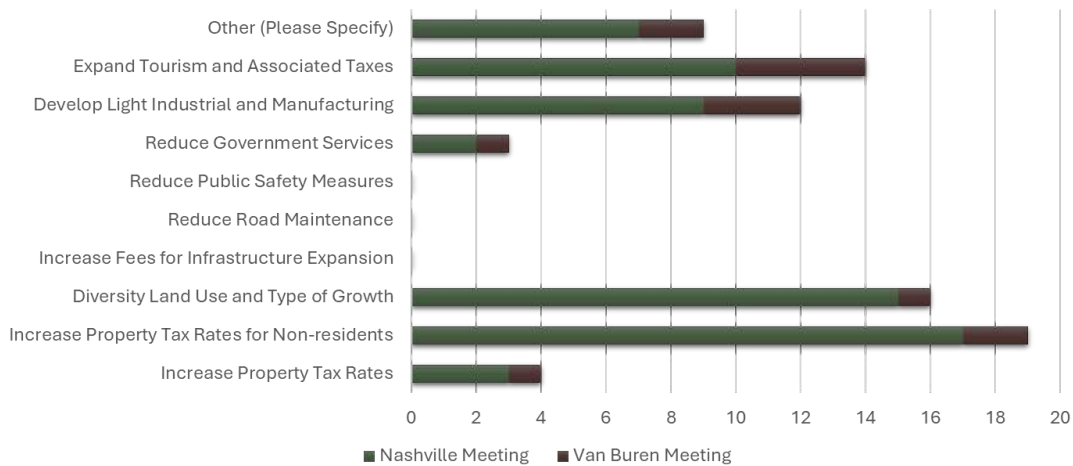


Figure 30:
Type of
Funding

Source:
Community
Meetings

Residents also provided input on prioritization of investment, emphasizing the importance of expanding infrastructure, supporting small business entrepreneurship, preserving local history and heritage, and programming more community events and festivals. Secondary priorities included developing additional housing and mixed-use developments, reducing lot sizes to increase housing density, and enhancing tourism. These responses highlight a focus on strengthening community foundations while addressing growth-related needs.

How would YOU Prioritize Investment to Encourage Growth In Brown County?

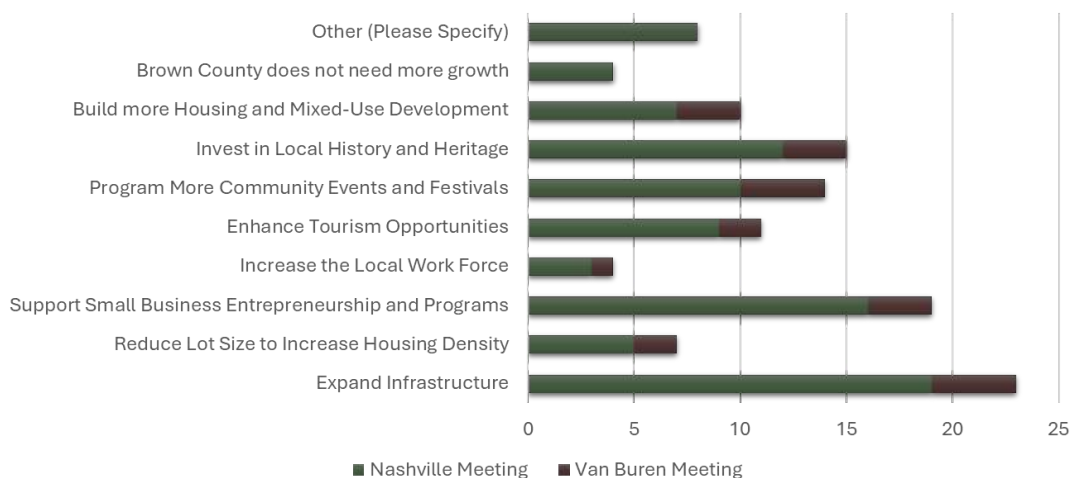


Figure 31:
Prioritization
of
Investment

Source:
Community
Meetings

Community Engagement: COMMUNITY MEETINGS

When considering housing, residents expressed a preference for specific types of developments, with single-family homes in subdivisions, apartment buildings, and privately owned townhomes and condos receiving the majority of support. These preferences reflect a desire for housing options that balance community needs with various living arrangements.

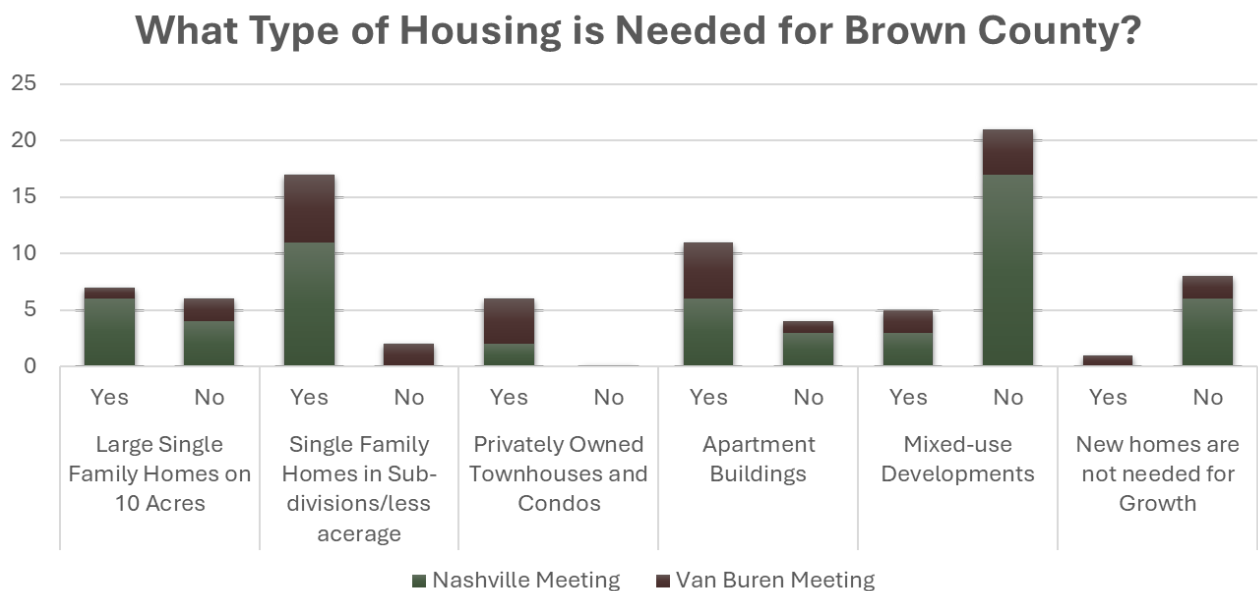


Figure 32: Types of Housing, Source: Community Meetings



Figure 33: Large Single Family Home on Acreage, Source: browncounty.com

Residents identified several key areas in the county for new growth. Industrial and commercial development was largely focused along the corridor between Nashville and Graw Bone, with additional industrial growth suggested west of Beanblossom. Residential development was primarily centered around Nashville and Beanblossom, reflecting a strategic approach to balancing growth while preserving the county's rural character.

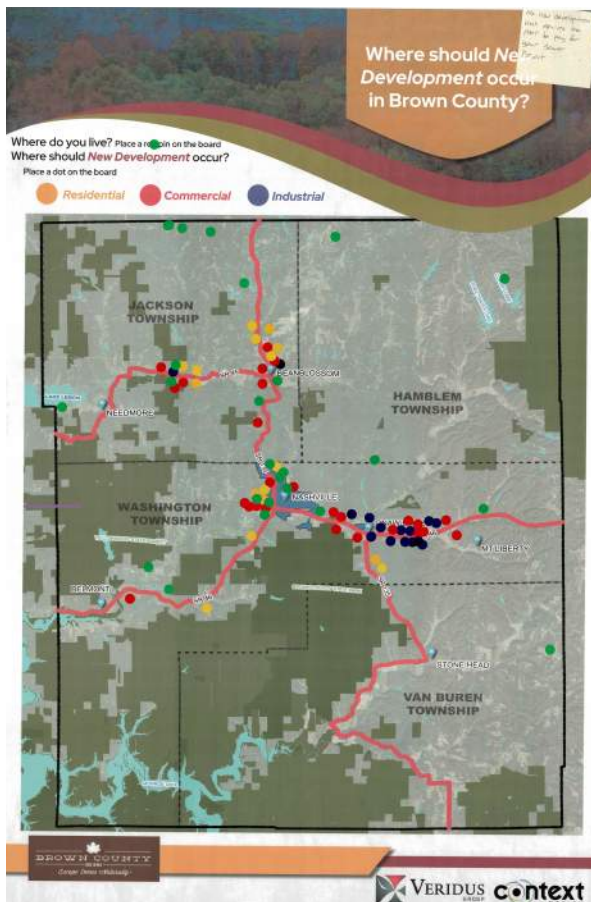


Figure 34: Location of Growth 1
Source: Community Meeting Nashville

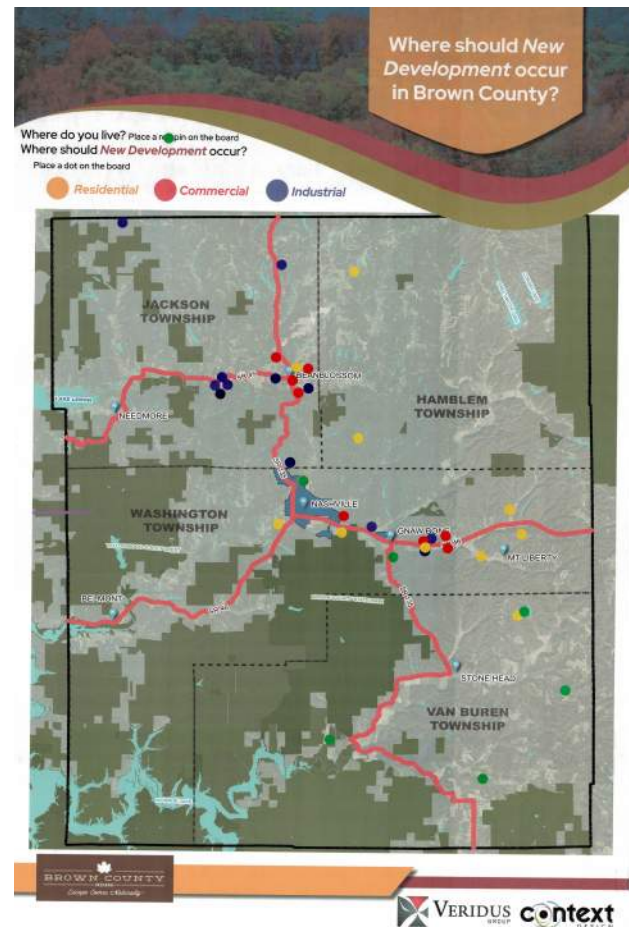


Figure 35: Location of Growth 2
Source: Community Meeting Van Buren

Community Engagement

PUBLIC SURVEY

The public survey, launched on November 4, 2024, with 390 responses, was designed to align closely with the discussions held during the community meetings, ensuring consistency in the input gathered across all engagement platforms. The survey featured a series of ranking questions that allowed respondents to prioritize key issues and opportunities. These options were informed by feedback from the stakeholder committee, ensuring the survey addressed the most pressing topics and offered actionable insights for the comprehensive plan.

To accurately reflect community preferences, the survey used a weighted ranking system where respondents ranked options from 1 (most preferred) to 5 (least preferred). A ranking of 1 received the highest weight, while a 5 was weighted the lowest. Higher overall scores in the data indicate greater support for those options, as they received more top rankings compared to lower rankings.

Survey questions focused on themes such as managing growth, expanding infrastructure, diversifying employment opportunities, addressing housing needs, and identifying suitable locations for potential development. By concentrating on these areas, the survey provided clear guidance on community priorities, complementing the feedback gathered during in-person meetings and offering additional data to inform the comprehensive planning process.





TIME LIVED IN COUNTY

Long-Term Residents Dominate

The majority of respondents (43.59%) have lived in the county for over 20 years, reflecting strong input from individuals with deep connections to the community and historical perspective on its development.

Non-Residents Participate

A small group of respondents (4.62%) are not residents, likely reflecting input from stakeholders who work in or have other ties to the community.

Newer Residents Are Active

A notable portion of respondents (36.67%) have lived in the county for less than 20 years, with 15.13% being residents for under five years. This indicates engagement from individuals who may bring fresh perspectives and priorities.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Predominantly Older Population

A majority of respondents (60.56%) are 55 and older, with 36.08% aged 65 and above, highlighting strong engagement from older residents invested in the community's future.

Middle-Aged Representation

Respondents aged 35-54 represent 32.22% of the total, demonstrating a significant voice from working-age individuals who may be focused on economic opportunities and family needs.

Engaging Younger Residents

With just 7.22% of respondents under 35, there's an opportunity to engage younger residents in shaping plans that address their needs and priorities.

Community Engagement: PUBLIC SURVEY

As the third question in the survey, respondents were asked to rank key efforts related to growth in Brown County, offering insights into community preferences. The results highlight a balanced approach to growth, with specific areas of focus emerging as priorities.

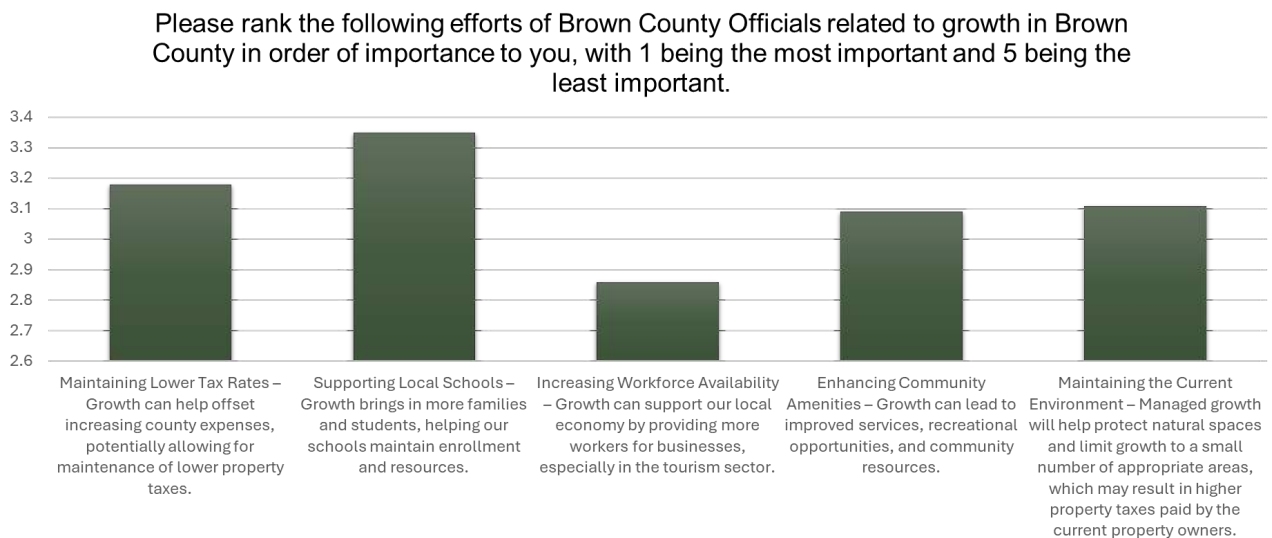


Figure 36: Question 3, Source: Brown County Survey

KEY TAKEAWAYS Q3

- **Supporting Local Schools** ranked as the highest overall priority, emphasizing the community's recognition of the role schools play in maintaining enrollment, resources, and the long-term success of families in the area.
- **Maintaining Lower Tax Rates** was the most frequently chosen top priority, reflecting a strong desire to offset rising county expenses while minimizing financial burdens on residents.
- **Maintaining the Current Environment** ranked third, demonstrating significant support for managed growth that protects Brown County's natural spaces, even if it means higher property taxes.
- **Enhancing Community Amenities** and **Increasing Workforce Availability** were lower priorities, though both received moderate support, indicating their relevance to the community's long-term goals.

This question reinforces the importance of growth strategies that directly benefit schools and reduce financial pressures while balancing environmental preservation and community development.

Building on the responses from Question 3, which asked residents to rank priorities for growth in Brown County, Question 4 invited feedback on "other" priorities for the future. Residents provided thoughtful and varied input, emphasizing a desire for balanced growth that aligns with the community's character and values. While opinions varied, clear themes emerged, offering deeper insight into the collective vision for the county's development.

KEY TAKEAWAYS Q4

1) Preservation of Natural Beauty and Unique Character

- o Residents prioritized protecting Brown County’s natural environment and small-town charm by limiting overdevelopment and preserving forests to maintain its distinct identity.

2) Affordable Housing and Community Livability

- o Affordable housing was a key concern, with rising costs and short-term rentals highlighting the need for innovative solutions to support families, workers, and community sustainability.

3) Infrastructure Maintenance and Expansion

- o Residents highlighted the need for better roads, utilities, and broadband to enhance quality of life and support sustainable growth, emphasizing infrastructure as key to meeting current and future needs.

4) Balanced Growth and Economic Diversification

- While there was resistance to unchecked development, many respondents supported targeted efforts to attract light industry, expand tourism responsibly, and diversify the economic base to reduce reliance on a single sector.

5) Transparent and Open Governance

- Residents emphasized the need for transparency, ethical leadership, and open decision-making, highlighting trust and collaboration as vital for addressing growth challenges and opportunities.



Figure 37: Question 4 Word Cloud
Source: Brown County Survey

Feedback from Questions 3 and 4 highlights the complexity of addressing growth in Brown County, emphasizing shared priorities like maintaining tax rates and enhancing amenities alongside concerns about preserving natural beauty and limiting overdevelopment. The insights reveal a preference for balanced growth that supports economic stability while safeguarding the county's rural character, underscoring the need for planning that integrates structured goals with community input.

Community Engagement: PUBLIC SURVEY

As the fifth question in the survey, respondents were asked to rank priorities for sanitary sewer and water infrastructure expansion in Brown County. This question highlights the community's focus on public health, preserving county character, and supporting targeted growth and economic development, offering clear guidance for infrastructure planning.

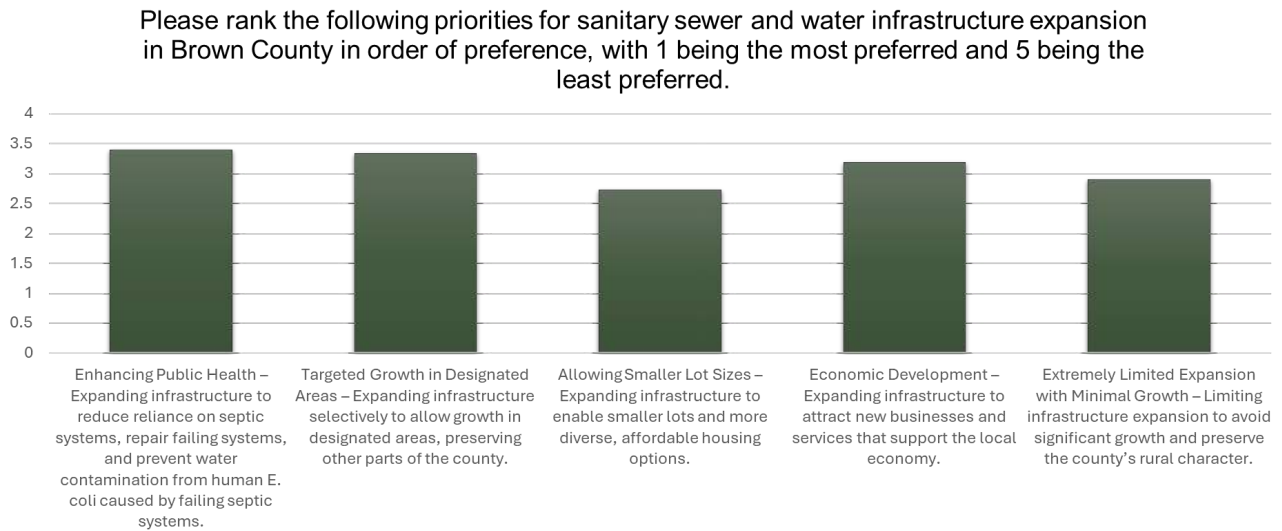


Figure 38: Question 5, Source: Brown County Survey



KEY TAKEAWAYS Q5

- **Enhancing Public Health** (Weighted Average: 3.40) emerged as the top priority, with 30.64% of respondents ranking it as their first choice. This underscores the importance of addressing failing septic systems and preventing water contamination to protect community health.
 - **Targeted Growth in Designated Areas** (Weighted Average: 3.34) ranked as the second preference. This option emphasizes a selective approach to infrastructure expansion, allowing for growth in specific areas while preserving other parts of the county.
 - **Economic Development** (Weighted Average: 3.19) ranked third, with 20.17% identifying it as their top priority. This reflects interest in leveraging infrastructure expansion to attract new businesses and support the local economy.
 - **Extremely Limited Expansion with Minimal Growth** (Weighted Average: 2.90) ranked fourth, with 27.08% choosing it as their first priority. This highlights a significant segment of the population that prioritizes preserving the county's rural character over broader growth initiatives.
 - **Allowing Smaller Lot Sizes** (Weighted Average: 2.73) ranked as the lowest priority, with only 15.52% ranking it as their top choice. This suggests that enabling smaller lots and different housing options is a less pressing concern compared to other infrastructure priorities.
-

Community Engagement: PUBLIC SURVEY

The sixth survey question asked respondents to rank options for funding improvements to infrastructure, public safety, roads, and general operations in Brown County. The results provide clear insights into community preferences for sustainable and effective funding strategies.

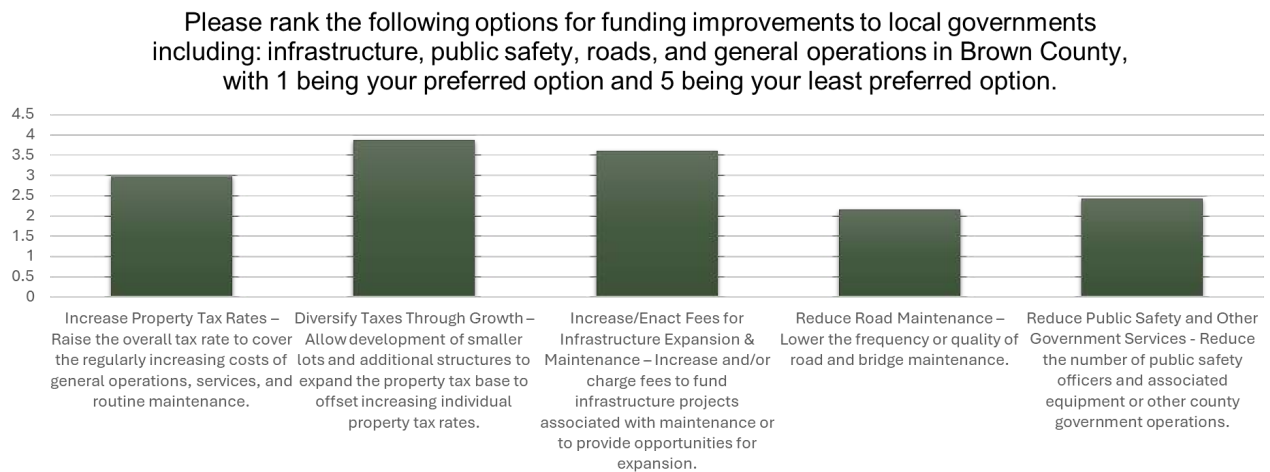


Figure 39: Question 6, Source: Brown County Survey



KEY TAKEAWAYS Q6

- **Diversify Taxes Through Growth** (Weighted Average: 3.88) emerged as the top priority, with 42.22% ranking it as their first choice. This preference highlights strong support for expanding the property tax base through development rather than raising taxes on existing property owners.
 - **Increase/Enact Fees for Infrastructure Expansion & Maintenance** (Weighted Average: 3.6) ranked second, with a notable portion (21.65%) identifying it as their top priority. This suggests support for targeted fees to fund infrastructure needs without broadly increasing tax rates.
 - **Increase Property Tax Rates** (Weighted Average: 2.99) ranked third, reflecting moderate support for raising property tax rates to cover increasing costs. While some respondents prioritized this option, it appears less favorable compared to diversifying the tax base or charging fees for specific projects.
 - **Reduce Road Maintenance** (Weighted Average: 2.16) and **Reduce Public Safety and Other Government Services** (Weighted Average: 2.43) were the least preferred options, with both receiving minimal support as first or second priorities. These findings demonstrate the community's strong opposition to reducing essential services and maintenance.
-

This question highlights a clear preference for funding strategies that minimize the financial burden on existing taxpayers while maintaining or enhancing essential services and infrastructure. Diversifying the tax base through managed growth and leveraging targeted fees emerge as the most viable options to meet these goals.

Community Engagement: PUBLIC SURVEY

The seventh question asked respondents to prioritize strategies for diversifying employment options in Brown County while recognizing tourism as the largest employment sector. The results reflect strong preferences for expanding existing industries and fostering new economic opportunities.

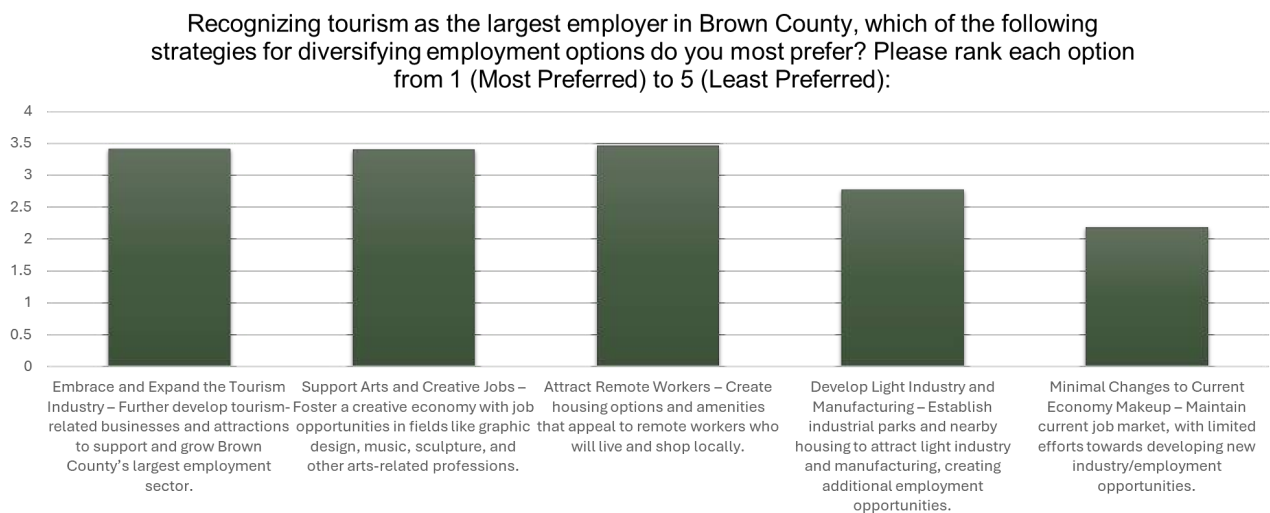


Figure 40: Question 7, Source: Brown County Survey

The results highlight a community-wide interest in balancing tourism growth with efforts to attract remote workers and foster creative industries, while also exploring opportunities for industrial development to diversify employment further. These preferences emphasize a proactive approach to building a resilient and multifaceted local economy.





KEY TAKEAWAYS Q7

- **Attract Remote Workers** (Weighted Average: 3.47) ranked as the top strategy, with 26.15% selecting it as their first priority, highlighting interest in leveraging remote work trends through housing and amenities to boost the local economy.
- **Embrace and Expand the Tourism Industry** (Weighted Average: 3.42) ranked second, with 26.76% of respondents selecting it as their top choice, highlighting support for growing the county's largest employment sector.
- **Support Arts and Creative Jobs** (Weighted Average: 3.41) ranked closely behind, with strong support for fostering a creative economy, showcasing the community's interest in diversifying employment options through arts-related fields.
- **Develop Light Industry and Manufacturing** (Weighted Average: 2.78) ranked lower, with fewer respondents prioritizing industrial expansion as a key strategy for employment diversification.
- **Minimal Changes to Current Economy Makeup** (Weighted Average: 2.19) was the least favored, with 52.47% ranking it lowest, indicating strong support for pursuing new economic opportunities over maintaining the status quo.

Community Engagement: PUBLIC SURVEY

The eighth question asked respondents to rank various housing density options to address housing needs in Brown County. The results reveal preferences for strategies that balance increased housing availability with the county's character.

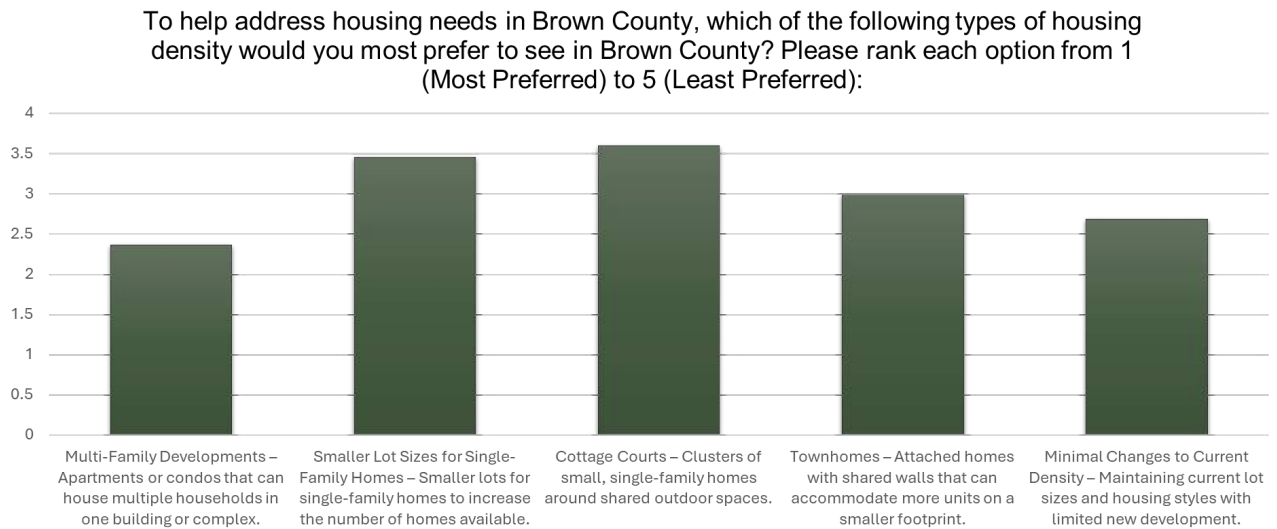


Figure 41: Question 8, Source: Brown County Survey

The results indicate a preference for moderate-density housing solutions, such as cottage courts and smaller lot sizes, balancing the need for housing diversity with the desire to preserve Brown County's rural character.





KEY TAKEAWAYS Q8

- **Cottage Courts** (Weighted Average: 3.6) emerged as the top preference, with 23.44% ranking it as their first choice and 36.36% selecting it as their second. This option reflects support for innovative housing solutions that maintain community-oriented living through shared outdoor spaces.
- **Smaller Lot Sizes for Single-Family Homes** (Weighted Average: 3.46) ranked second, with 33.17% of respondents selecting it as their top choice. This indicates strong interest in increasing housing availability while maintaining traditional single-family home styles.
- **Townhomes** (Weighted Average: 2.99) ranked third, with moderate support as a middle-priority option, suggesting it appeals to some as a space-efficient housing solution but lacks broad consensus.
- **Minimal Changes to Current Density** (Weighted Average: 2.69) was a lower priority, with 44.61% ranking it as their least preferred option. This result highlights the community's recognition of the need for change to meet housing demands.
- **Multi-Family Developments** (Weighted Average: 2.37) received the least support, with 33.01% ranking it fourth and 31.07% ranking it fifth, indicating limited interest in higher-density housing options like apartments or condos.

Community Engagement: PUBLIC SURVEY

The ninth question focused on ranking housing strategies to align with the expansion of sewer and water infrastructure in Brown County, aimed at supporting affordable, attainable, and safe housing. The results indicate a community preference for balanced and varied housing approaches.

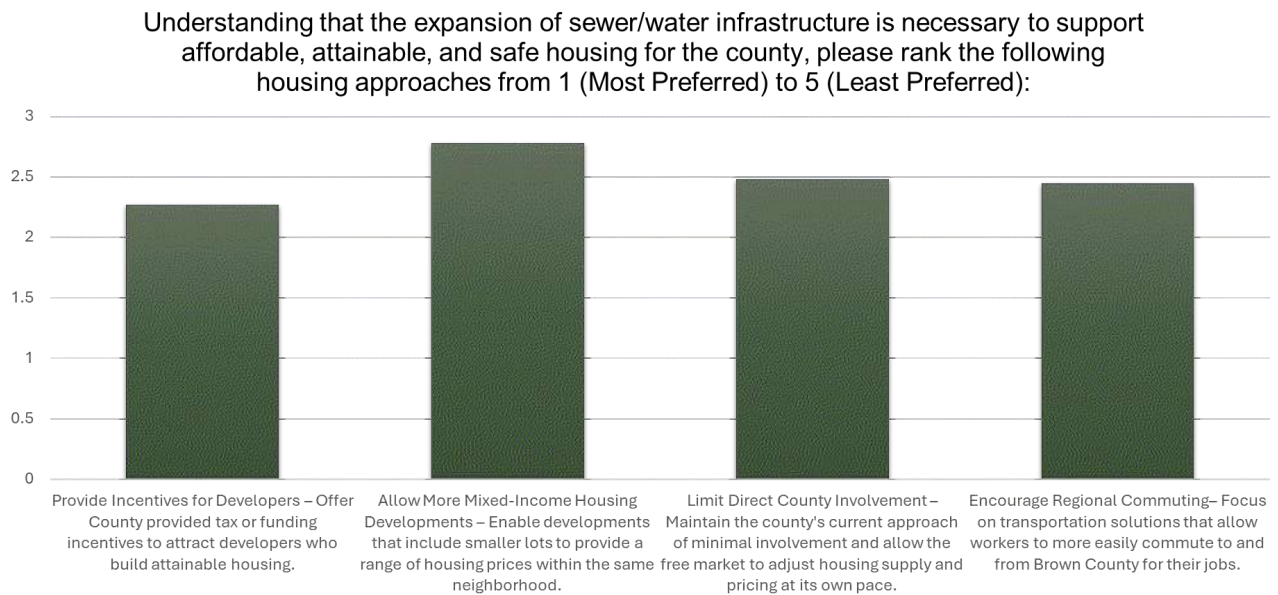


Figure 42: Question 9, Source: Brown County Survey



The results highlight a preference for active efforts to promote mixed-income housing developments and attract attainable housing projects while balancing minimal government involvement. These insights can guide planning efforts to address infrastructure and housing challenges in a manner that aligns with community preferences.

KEY TAKEAWAYS Q9

- **Allow More Mixed-Income Housing Developments** (Weighted Average: 2.78) ranked as the top preference, with 33.80% selecting it as their first priority. This option reflects strong support for neighborhoods offering a range of housing prices, promoting inclusivity and affordability.
- **Limit Direct County Involvement** (Weighted Average: 2.48) was ranked third, with a notable 31.92% selecting it as their first priority. This highlights a segment of the community that prefers minimal government intervention and reliance on market dynamics.
- **Provide Incentives for Developers** (Weighted Average: 2.27) ranked second, with moderate support for using tax or funding incentives to attract developers focused on attainable housing projects.
- **Encourage Regional Commuting** (Weighted Average: 2.45) ranked fourth, with mixed support as a housing strategy. While 30.33% ranked it as their second priority, others viewed it as less effective for addressing local housing needs.



Community Engagement: PUBLIC SURVEY

The tenth question sought to identify preferred areas for additional growth in Brown County. Respondents ranked five corridors, providing insights into which locations align best with community preferences for expansion.

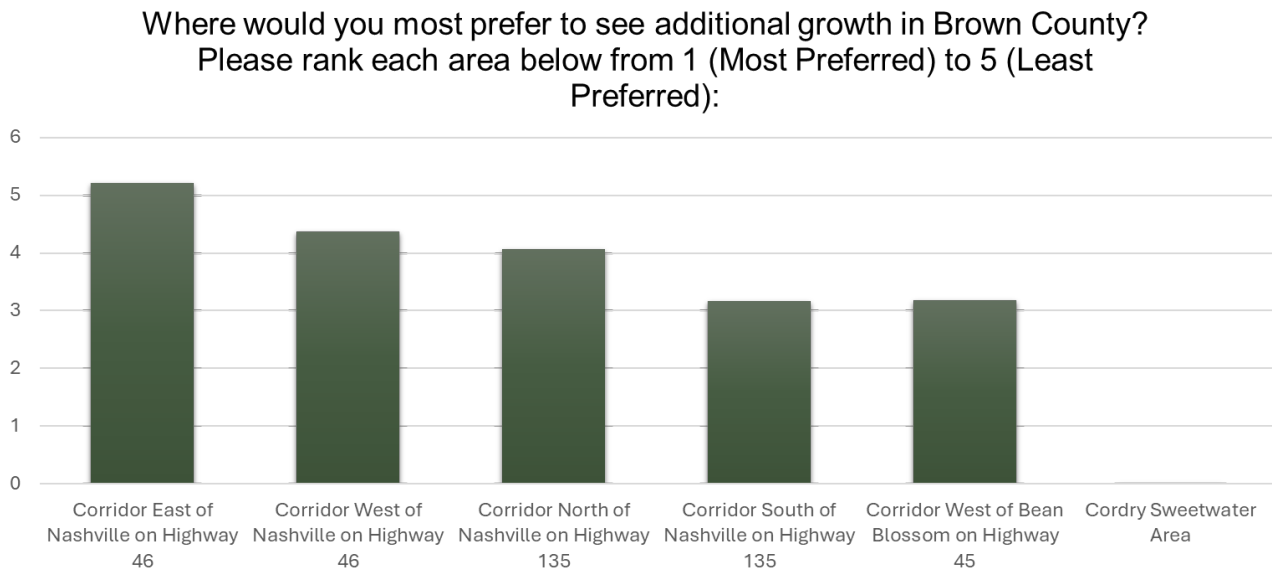


Figure 43: Question 10, Source: Brown County Survey

The results highlight a clear preference for focusing growth along Highway 46, particularly east of Nashville, while showing less interest in corridors to the south or west. These findings can guide strategic planning efforts to align future development with community priorities.



KEY TAKEAWAYS Q10

- **Corridor East of Nashville on Highway 46** (Score: 5.21) was the overwhelming top choice, with 59.36% ranking it as their most preferred area for growth. This indicates strong support for focusing expansion efforts in this corridor, likely due to its accessibility and existing infrastructure.
 - **Corridor West of Nashville on Highway 46** (Score: 4.37) ranked second, with 20.55% selecting it as their top priority. This area also received significant second and third-place rankings, reflecting moderate support for growth west of Nashville.
 - **Corridor North of Nashville on Highway 135** (Score: 4.07) was the third preference, with balanced responses across second, third, and fourth rankings, suggesting it is viewed as a viable but less favored option compared to Highway 46 corridors.
 - **Corridor South of Nashville on Highway 135** (3.16) and **Corridor West of Bean Blossom on Highway 45** (3.18) were the least preferred growth areas, indicating they may not align with community priorities.
 - **Cordry Sweetwater Area** received no rankings, indicating no interest in prioritizing growth in this location.
-

Community Engagement: PUBLIC SURVEY

Following Question 10, which explored residents' preferences for areas of growth and protection, additional feedback further emphasized the community's varied perspectives. While responses varied widely, several key themes emerged from the insights shared.

KEY TAKEAWAYS Q11

1) Preservation of Brown County's Natural Environment and Character

- Many responses stressed preserving the county's natural beauty, forests, and rural charm, with residents voicing concerns about sprawl and large-scale development diminishing its appeal.

2) Targeted Growth in Strategic Locations

- Growth suggestions centered on Highway 46 East and West and communities like Bean Blossom and Gnaw Bone, highlighting their potential for economic expansion with infrastructure improvements like sewer systems.

3) Revitalization of Existing or Underutilized Areas

- Some responses suggested revamping neglected spaces like Ski World and Opry, emphasizing sustainable, community-focused rehabilitation.

4) Infrastructure-Led Planning

- Residents suggested focusing growth in areas with existing infrastructure or where utilities can be efficiently expanded to reduce costs and environmental impacts while meeting development needs.

5) Housing Affordability and Accessibility

- A recurring theme was the need for affordable housing near schools and existing neighborhoods, with mixed-use developments and clustered housing suggested to meet housing needs and foster community cohesion.

Community Engagement: PUBLIC SURVEY

The final question invited residents to share any additional priorities or concerns they felt the plan should address, providing an opportunity to highlight issues not covered in previous questions. The responses revealed several recurring themes that reflect the community's concerns and aspirations. Key takeaways include:

KEY TAKEAWAYS Q12

1) Preservation of Brown County's Character

- A significant portion of respondents emphasized the importance of maintaining the county's natural beauty, rural charm, and unique identity. Concerns were raised about the risks of overdevelopment, excessive tourism, and the potential loss of the county's distinctive character.

2) Affordable Housing

- Many comments pointed to the urgent need for affordable and attainable housing options for residents, particularly for young families and the working population. Suggestions included limiting short-term rentals like Airbnbs and focusing on housing development that supports permanent residents.

3) Infrastructure and Services

- Respondents highlighted the need for improved infrastructure, including sewer systems, water quality, high-speed internet, and road maintenance. Expanding infrastructure to support sustainable growth while avoiding strain on existing resources was a recurring concern.

4) Community-Centered Growth

- There was a strong call for community-focused planning, including better education, family recreational spaces, and efforts to attract young professionals and remote workers, with emphasis on economic development that aligns with local values and benefits residents.

5) Transparency and Collaboration

- Several respondents called for greater transparency and accountability from local government and officials. Collaborative efforts between county departments, schools, and community organizations were seen as essential to align long-term strategies and foster trust.

FUTURE OBJECTIVES

The future objectives for Brown County’s comprehensive plan represent a thoughtful and forward-looking framework developed through a community-driven process. Shaped by valuable input from residents, local officials, and key stakeholders, these objectives are designed to guide growth, development, and preservation efforts while safeguarding the qualities that make Brown County unique.

Over the course of this planning process, the appointed steering committee, local elected and appointed officials, and representatives from the Town of Nashville worked collaboratively to ensure the objectives reflect both county-wide priorities and the interconnected goals of surrounding communities. This coordinated approach helps balance strategic growth with fiscal responsibility, natural preservation, and the long-term well-being of all residents.

These objectives aim to provide a clear direction for decision-making, ensuring that growth is intentional, infrastructure is developed sustainably, and the needs of current and future residents are met. They will serve as a foundation for guiding policy updates, zoning revisions, capital improvements, and targeted investments that align with the community’s vision for the future.

By maintaining focus on long-term priorities while preserving the county’s natural character and cultural heritage, these objectives will help ensure that Brown County continues to thrive as a vibrant, connected, and resilient community for generations to come.



Future Objectives

PRIMARY FUTURE GOALS

GOAL ONE:

LAND USE AND ZONING MODERNIZATION

To address the evolving needs of Brown County, it is essential to modernize the county's zoning ordinance to better align with modern land use practices and eliminate outdated, repetitive categories. The revised ordinance should be more robust yet user-friendly, clearly defining how land is currently used and how it is intended to be used in the future. A key proposal includes the creation of a Heritage Mixed-Use District on the fringe of existing urban town areas, which would allow for higher-density development to encourage growth while preserving the county's character. The new ordinance should focus on effective and efficient land use designations that provide appropriate property protections.

Furthermore, the increasing presence of short-term rentals necessitates a proactive approach through zoning updates and the implementation of a permitting program. Establishing such a program would ensure proper oversight, helping to regulate housing usage while generating revenue to address financial shortfalls within the zoning office. By maintaining clear zoning procedures and introducing a structured permitting process, the county can better manage growth and protect the integrity of residential areas.

Finally, to increase property values, enhance public health and safety, and stimulate tourism, it is recommended that property maintenance standards be established, accompanied by an enforcement framework to ensure compliance.



Future Objectives: PRIMARY FUTURE GOALS

GOAL TWO:

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION

To promote sustainable industrial and commercial growth, Brown County should focus on expanding development along major transportation corridors. This growth strategy should be guided by the creation of a comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that identifies key areas for expansion and targeted industries.

As part of this effort, the county should prioritize the extension of utility lines to these areas, ensuring that infrastructure supports future growth. In regions where topography or distance from existing infrastructure presents challenges, the county should explore the use of micro sanitary sewer treatment plants to provide cost-effective solutions.

Over the long term, the county should focus on developing industrial sites that align with the Economic Development Strategy, ensuring they are ready to attract and support new businesses. Throughout this process, elected officials should continue engaging in discussions with regulatory stakeholders, advocating for additional funding to address the fiscal challenges posed by the significant amount of state-owned land within the county.

GOAL THREE:

QUALITY OF PLACE

The county should focus on creating a range of housing options, including dense multi-family units, family-oriented suburban developments, and housing that is accessible to support employees in the county. There should be a concerted effort to identify and prioritize sites for dense multi-family development that are strategically located near key infrastructure and utility hubs to reduce costs and encourage efficient land use. By offering housing that accommodates a range of demographics, including young professionals, families, and retirees, the county can strengthen its year-round population base. Additionally, ensuring that housing is accessible and appropriately located for the county's essential workforce will contribute to long-term community stability and economic resilience.

GOAL FOUR:

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Transportation and community connectivity are critical to supporting the county's growth and enhancing the quality of life for residents. To foster stronger connections, the county should prioritize the development of a comprehensive transportation plan that includes the expansion of roads, the addition of passing lanes, and the creation of bike and pedestrian trails. These initiatives will improve access to key housing areas, employment hubs, and recreational spaces, ensuring that all residents and visitors can easily move between communities and enjoy essential services. By focusing on transportation infrastructure, the county can enhance mobility, reduce congestion, and promote sustainable development, ultimately creating a more connected and accessible environment for residents, visitors, and businesses alike.



Future Objectives

FUTURE MAPS AND ORDINANCES

This section serves as a guide for advancing Brown County's long-term vision, leading into key mapping tools and proposed zoning strategies critical to the county's growth and preservation efforts. The following pages include the Future Land Use Map, Future Transportation Map, and Future Growth Areas Map, which collectively provide a visual foundation for planning decisions and the early stages of implementation.

These maps, along with the data created during the development of this plan, directly support many of the action steps and tasks outlined in the Implementation Matrices. The maps can be used to inform zoning updates, infrastructure improvements, and growth management strategies in alignment with the county's priorities.

Due to the broad scope of this plan, more specialized maps may be necessary when called for in the Implementation Section to support specific goals and initiatives effectively.

Additionally, this section introduces the proposed Heritage Mixed-Use District, designed to encourage higher-density residential development while preserving the natural beauty and character that defines Brown County. This district emphasizes balanced growth, blending community expansion with environmental stewardship.

It is essential that these maps, data points, and the proposed district guidelines are continuously referenced throughout the implementation process, ensuring alignment with Brown County's future objectives and sustainable development goals.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The future land use map is a crucial tool for visualizing Brown County's long-term planning vision and serves as a complement to the written goals and policy objectives outlined in this Plan. It integrates various elements of the comprehensive plan, offering a cohesive representation of the County's desired development patterns and land use priorities. The map reflects the community's aspirations for growth, preservation, and sustainability, guiding decision-making for future land use changes. The Brown County Plan Commission will utilize the future land use map to evaluate proposals and assess their alignment with current market trends, community needs, and potential impacts on surrounding properties, ensuring thoughtful and balanced development.

Organization

The Brown County Future Land Use Map identifies key areas for medium-density growth, residential expansion, and industrial development near urbanized areas, taking advantage of proximity to existing infrastructure. It also introduces a proposed Heritage Mixed-Use District, designed to collaborate with other municipal governments to support denser residential housing options that meet the needs of the county's workforce, while also preserving open spaces and preventing overdevelopment. The map provides a strategic framework that emphasizes development form, access, and community amenities, offering guidance for local leaders and staff to make informed decisions about future growth while maintaining flexibility to adapt to economic and market changes.

Using the Map

The Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map, which focuses on specific regulations and development requirements for individual parcels. Instead, the Future Land Use Map serves as a broader, strategic tool to guide land use decisions and shape the long-term vision for Brown County. County officials, staff, and community stakeholders should reference the map when evaluating public and private development proposals to ensure alignment with the County's goals and priorities. It provides a framework for making informed decisions that balance growth, preservation, and community needs while maintaining flexibility to adapt to changing conditions over time.

Future Zoning & Land Use Opportunities

The Future Land Use Map serves as a strategic guide for Brown County's long-term development vision, providing a foundation for informed land use decisions. One key recommendation of the comprehensive plan is the update and modernization of the county's current zoning map to better align with future growth goals. As this process moves forward, the areas highlighted in the Future Land Use Map present valuable opportunities to implement zoning that supports appropriate growth while ensuring the preservation of the county's natural spaces. By aligning zoning regulations with the land use vision, Brown County can foster balanced development that meets the needs of residents and businesses while protecting the scenic and rural character that defines the community.

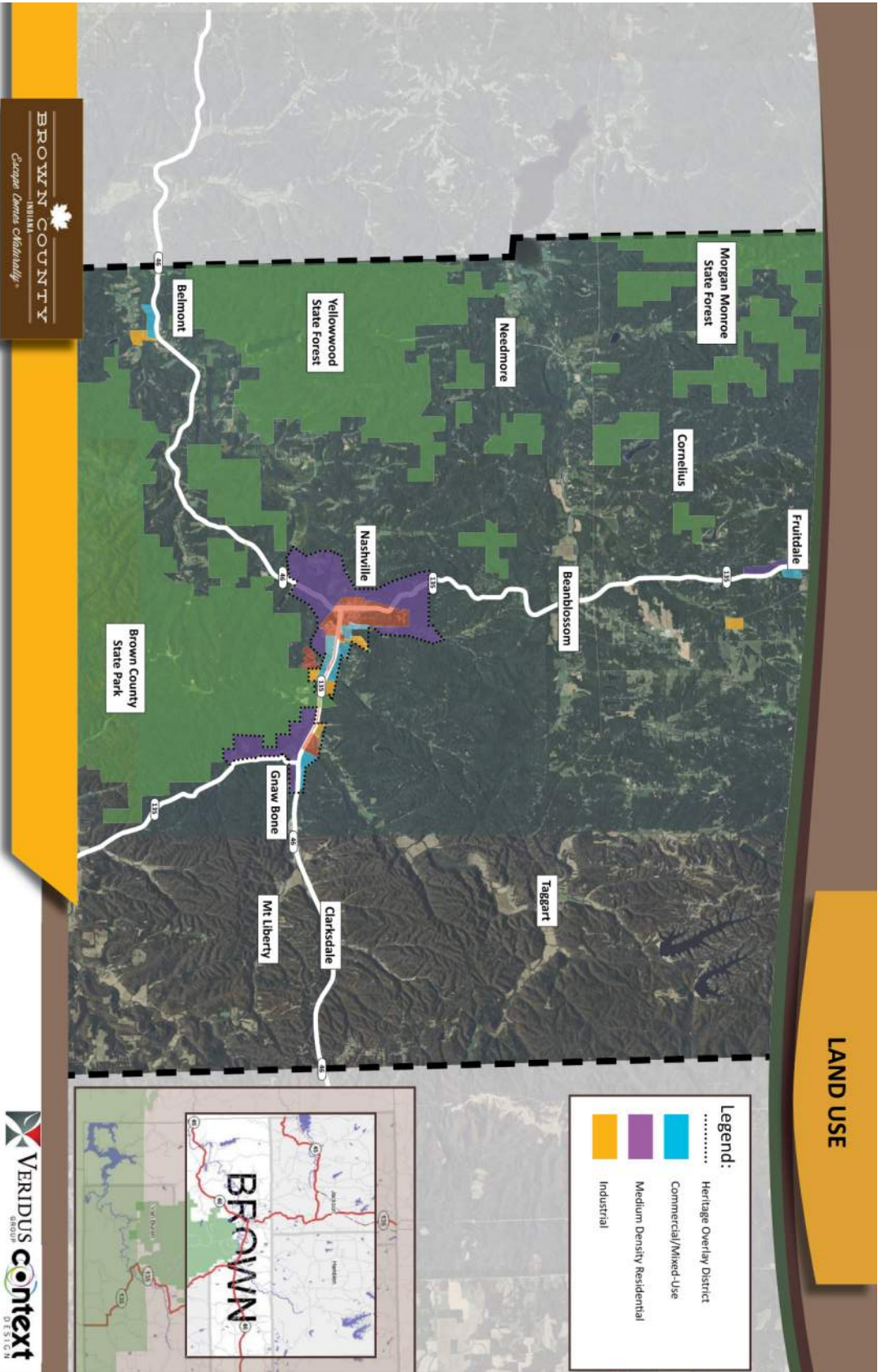


Figure 46: Future Land Use Map: Context Design - From Community Meetings

Future Objectives: FUTURE MAPS AND ORDINANCES

FUTURE LAND USE MAP: PROPOSED HERITAGE MIXED USE DISTRICT

The Heritage Mixed Use District is designed to promote higher-density residential and mixed-use development in areas where public sewer and water infrastructure already exist or can be easily extended. This district supports various housing types, including single-family homes in cottage court configurations, townhomes, multi-story flats, condominiums, and apartment units, fostering a community-oriented, urban-style environment. Development in this district is intended to complement the character and aesthetic of adjacent urbanized areas while encouraging walkability, bike access, and connectivity to schools, parks, and other amenities. This district prioritizes long-term residential stability by prohibiting short-term rental uses like Airbnb or VRBO, encouraging single-family ownership and extended rental opportunities to create a cohesive and vibrant community. Development amenities and characteristics include the following.

Permitted Uses:

- Single-family homes in cottage court arrangements.
- Townhomes and row houses.
- Multi-story apartment buildings and flats.
- Condominiums and co-housing arrangements.

Design and Aesthetic Standards:

- Construction styles that complement existing urbanized areas.
- Buildings designed with attention to scale, architectural detail, and community aesthetics.
- Streetscapes with consistent landscaping, lighting, and signage standards.

Infrastructure Requirements:

- Developments must connect to public water and sewer systems.
- Sidewalks and bike lanes to ensure safe pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Road networks designed for connectivity and ease of navigation.

Community and Accessibility Features:

- Proximity to schools, parks, and essential amenities.
- Shared open spaces, courtyards, and community gardens within developments.
- Accessibility features for people of all abilities, including ADA-compliant pathways.

Land Use Restrictions:

- Prohibition of short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnb, VRBO) to ensure long-term community stability.
- Mixed-use allowances for small-scale commercial spaces that serve the local community (e.g., cafes, convenience stores).

Sustainability and Mobility:

- Energy-efficient building practices and materials encouraged.
- Integration of green infrastructure, such as stormwater management systems and permeable pavements.

Future Objectives: FUTURE MAPS AND ORDINANCES

FUTURE TRANSPORTATION MAP

Brown County officials should view transportation improvements through the lens of prioritizing maintenance and enhancements rather than creating new roads. The transportation strategy focuses on utilizing funding effectively by prioritizing projects based on "use," which includes both the volume and type of traffic. For example, industrial traffic corridors may require different improvements compared to those serving tourism-related activities. Additionally, transportation planning incorporates bike and pedestrian paths to encourage movement into urban areas, where businesses can capitalize on increased tourism activity. By addressing both vehicular and non-vehicular traffic needs, the County can create a balanced transportation network that supports economic growth and community accessibility.

Objectives

The Transportation Map identifies areas where targeted improvements can enhance connectivity and safety. These include practical additions such as bike lanes, passing lanes to accommodate slow-moving industrial traffic, and proposed trails to link tourists with urban centers. Highlighting these areas helps ensure that investments in transportation align with broader growth objectives, promoting efficient movement of people and goods while minimizing congestion. The map serves as a visual guide for prioritizing transportation projects that contribute to the County's long-term development goals.

Using the Map

The Transportation Map is a strategic tool designed to guide decision-making rather than dictate specific projects or property uses. It provides a framework for evaluating the potential impacts and benefits of transportation improvements, ensuring they align with the County's growth priorities. County officials and stakeholders should reference the map to identify opportunities for enhancing connectivity, supporting tourism, and addressing industrial traffic needs. By leveraging the insights provided by the map, the County can make informed decisions that balance immediate transportation demands with long-term planning goals.

TRANSPORTATION

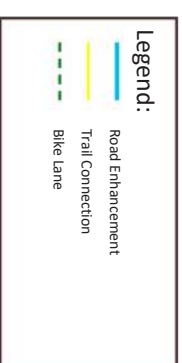
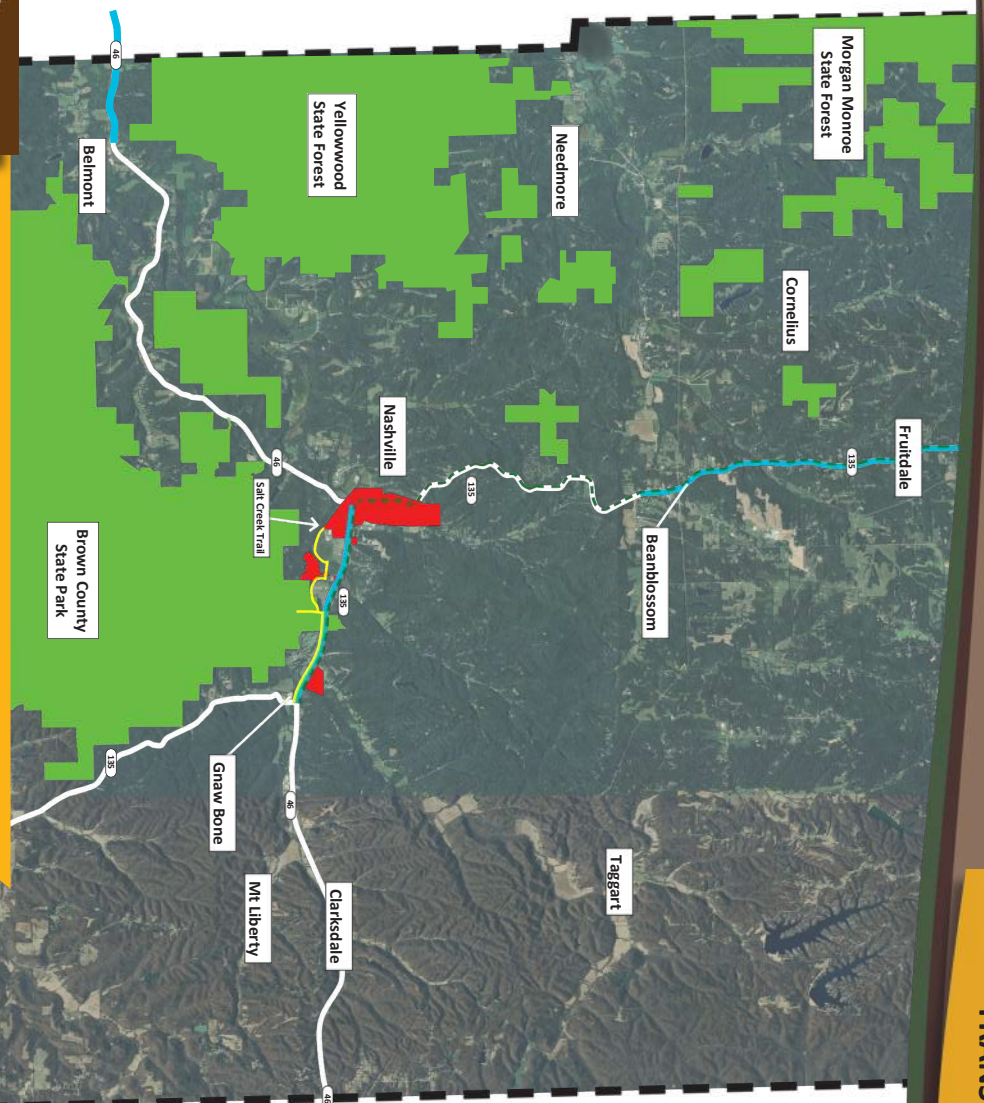


Figure 47: Transportation Map: Context Design - From Community Meetings

Future Objectives: FUTURE MAPS AND ORDINANCES

FUTURE GROWTH AREAS MAP

The future growth areas map is a key tool for visualizing Brown County's long-term planning vision, complementing the written goals and policy objectives in this Plan. It provides a cohesive representation of the County's desired development patterns and growth priorities, highlighting projected growth near existing urban centers where infrastructure expansion is most practical. Concentrating development in these areas allows the County to support higher-density housing and industrial growth while preserving its rural character and natural beauty. The Brown County Plan Commission will use the map to evaluate proposals, ensuring alignment with market trends, community needs, and potential impacts on surrounding properties for balanced development.

Organization

The Brown County Future Growth Areas Map includes distinct growth categories that highlight areas conducive to various types of development, such as mixed-use housing and retail near urban centers, or industrial growth along major transportation corridors. These designations are intended to guide development toward areas where infrastructure can be most effectively extended, supporting efficient and practical growth. By focusing on areas best suited for specific activities, the map helps ensure that development aligns with community objectives while accommodating varying economic and residential needs. A specific zoning districts near urbanized zones further enhance this effort by establishing specific design standards and allowable uses, fostering cohesive and context-sensitive growth.

Using the Map

The Future Growth Areas Map is not a zoning map, which focuses on specific regulations and development requirements for individual parcels. Instead, the Future Growth Areas Map serves as a broader, strategic tool to guide growth-related decisions and shape the long-term vision for Brown County. County officials, staff, and community stakeholders should reference the map when evaluating public and private development proposals to ensure alignment with the County's goals and priorities. It provides a framework for making informed decisions that balance growth, preservation, and community needs while maintaining flexibility to adapt to changing conditions over time.

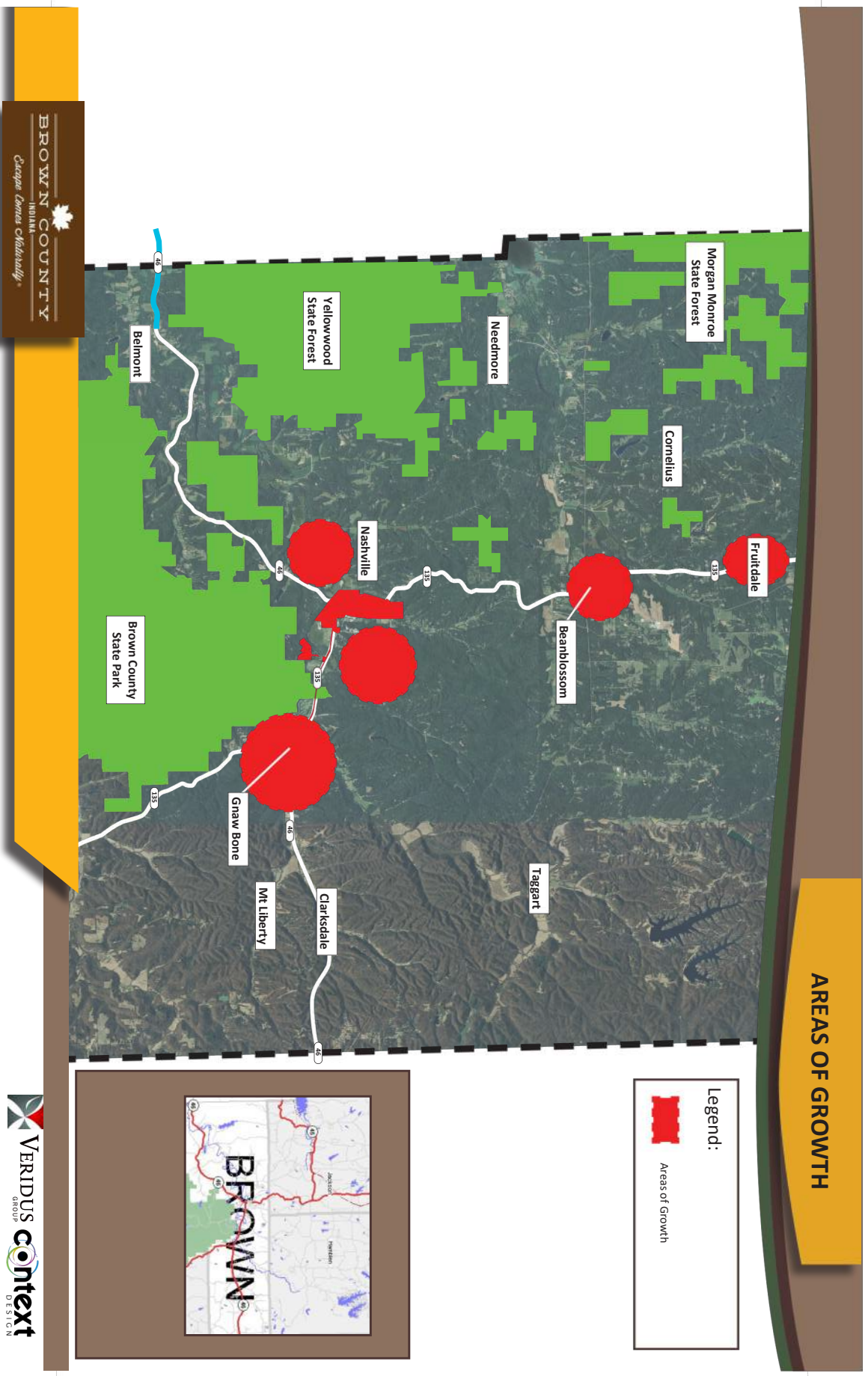


Figure 48: Growth Map: Context Design - From Community Meetings

IMPLEMENTATION

This implementation section provides a structured framework for advancing Brown County's long-term planning priorities through two comprehensive matrices. These matrices serve as tools for guiding decision-making, resource allocation, and project management to ensure each priority is addressed effectively and within a timely manner.

The first matrix outlines each priority along with its associated goals. For each goal, the matrix identifies:

- **Responsible Parties:** The key agencies, departments, or organizations tasked with leading the effort.
- **Potential Funding Sources:** Opportunities for financial support, including grants, public-private partnerships, and local funding streams.
- **Priority Level:** The relative importance and urgency of each goal to help with project sequencing.
- **Timeline:** An estimated timeframe for goal completion to maintain accountability and progress.

The second matrix provides a detailed breakdown of each goal by identifying the specific action steps required for successful completion. It outlines the tasks necessary to advance the goals outlined in the first matrix, ensuring clarity on the steps needed to achieve measurable outcomes.

Together, these matrices are designed to offer a clear and actionable roadmap for implementing Brown County's comprehensive planning priorities. They should be used as a reference tool for project coordination, resource management, and progress tracking, helping the county maintain focus and momentum throughout the implementation process.

Implementation

LAND USE AND ZONING MODERNIZATION

GOAL:

Modernize Brown County's zoning and land use practices to promote sustainable growth, clarify regulations, address short-term rentals, establish maintenance standards, preserve natural areas, and improve accessibility through online GIS mapping.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Priority	Timeline
1	Revamp and modernize the zoning code	Plan Commission	Operational budget	High	18 - 24 months
1a	Evaluate short-term rentals	Plan Commission	- Operational budget - Business Licenses	High	18 - 24 months
1b	Create property maintenance standards	Create sub-department of zoning	Code enforcement	High	18 - 24 months
1c	Continued natural preservation standards	- Elected officials - Plan commission	Operational budget	Medium	18 - 24 months
2	Move zoning and land use maps to online GIS software	- Zoning department - County GIS	County funding	High	2 - 5 years

Implementation: LAND USE AND MODERNIZATION

STRATEGY 1: REVAMP AND MODERNIZE THE ZONING CODE

Objectives	Tactics
Conduct a Comprehensive Zoning Code Review	• Identify outdated regulations and align zoning categories with modern land use practices. • Consult with planning experts and legal advisors to ensure compliance with state standards.
Develop Heritage Mixed-Use District	• Expansion of utilities into fringe areas next to current urban town areas. • Master plan growth areas to maximize residential and mixed-use opportunities.
Evaluate Short-Term Rentals	• Review current short-term rental regulations for gaps and inconsistencies. • Engage stakeholders, including rental owners and residents, for feedback. • Develop licensing requirements and financial structures to support enforcement and planning needs.
Create Maintenance Standards	• Research property maintenance ordinances from peer communities. • Develop clear standards addressing structural safety, landscaping, and waste management. • Establish an enforcement framework with designated compliance officers and reporting systems.
Natural Preservation	• Identify environmentally sensitive areas for protection under zoning codes. • Develop standards for buffer zones and limitations on development near preserved areas. • Partner with conservation organizations to ensure best practices for land protection.

STRATEGY 2: MOVE ZONING AND LAND USE MAPS TO ONLINE GIS SOFTWARE

Objectives	Tactics
Evaluate Current Mapping Systems	• Review existing zoning maps for accuracy and compatibility with GIS platforms. • Identify data gaps and areas needing improved mapping clarity.
Implement GIS Mapping Technology	• Collaborate with GIS professionals to migrate zoning and land use maps to a digital platform. • Ensure data layers include zoning designations, growth areas, and natural features.
Provide Training and Accessibility	• Train staff and key stakeholders on GIS tool usage. • Develop a public-facing GIS portal for residents to explore zoning data easily.
Establish an Ongoing Maintenance Plan	• Schedule regular updates for the GIS database to reflect zoning changes. • Create an annual review process for zoning map accuracy and effectiveness.

Implementation

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION

GOAL:

Advance Brown County's economic growth by developing a strategic plan, expanding utilities with micro sewer treatment options, securing industrial development sites, obtaining state funding to support public safety services, and implementing an updated marketing strategy to attract industries and enhance tourism.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Priority	Timeline
1	Economic development strategy	Elected Officials	- Operational Budget - Chamber of Commerce - Local Foundation	High	18 - 24 months
2	Expand Utilities	- Economic Development - Utilities	- Rate increase - Grants	Medium to High	1.5 - 5 years
2a	Micro Sewer Treatment Plants	Utilities	- Rate increase - Grants	Medium	3 - 8 years
3	Secure sites for industrial development	- Economic Development - Utilities - Highway	- Rate Increase - Grants - Tax ROI	Medium	2 - 5 years
4	Secure state funding for public safety services	Elected Officials	Operational Budget	High	2 - 5 years
5	Update Marketing plan	- Economic development - Tourism - Chamber of Commerce	- Operational Budget - Chamber of Commerce - Local Foundation	Medium	2 - 5 years

STRATEGY 1: CREATE AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Objectives	Tactics
Assess Current Economic Conditions	• Conduct a county-wide economic analysis to identify strengths, gaps, and growth opportunities. • Engage local businesses, chambers of commerce, and stakeholders for input.
Create a Comprehensive Strategy Document	• Outline targeted industry sectors for growth and investment. • Include workforce development initiatives and incentive programs. • Incorporate sustainability and long-term economic resilience goals.
Promote and Implement the Strategy	• Host public forums to present the strategy and gather community feedback. • Partner with local economic development agencies for coordinated implementation. • Establish annual benchmarks to measure progress and adjust strategies as needed.

Implementation: ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION

STRATEGY 2: EXPAND UTILITIES TO SUPPORT GROWTH

Objectives	Tactics
Identify Priority Areas for Expansion	• Conduct GIS analysis to map areas needing utility improvements. • Collaborate with utility providers to assess infrastructure capacity and cost estimates.
Develop Utility Expansion Plans	• Create a phased plan for expanding water, sewer, and broadband services. • Engage the community to prioritize utility improvements aligned with growth zones.
Explore Micro Sewer Treatment Plants	• Identify areas where traditional sewer extension is cost-prohibitive. • Conduct feasibility studies and cost-benefit analysis for micro sanitary systems. • Partner with engineering firms for design and pilot implementation.
Secure Funding for Utility Expansion	• Apply for state and federal infrastructure grants. • Develop public-private partnerships for funding utility upgrades. • Establish cost-sharing models with developers for expansion projects.

STRATEGY 3: SECURE SITES FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Objectives	Tactics
Identify Potential Industrial Sites	• Conduct GIS mapping to locate suitable sites near infrastructure and transportation hubs. • Evaluate current land use designations for industrial readiness.
Prepare Sites for Development	• Develop shovel-ready sites by ensuring proper zoning and infrastructure. • Work with property owners to confirm interest and development potential.
Market Sites to Targeted Industries	• Create promotional materials showcasing site advantages and readiness. • Engage regional and state economic development organizations for outreach. • Develop incentive packages tailored to attract desired industries.
Monitor and Track Industrial Growth	• Establish metrics to measure site activation and job creation. • Provide annual reports on industrial site usage and economic impact.

Implementation: ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION

STRATEGY 4: SECURE STATE FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

Objectives	Tactics
Identify Funding Needs and Gaps	• Conduct a cost analysis of current public safety services, particularly in areas near state-owned lands. • Document the strain placed on local services due to non-taxable properties.
Advocate for State Funding	• Collaborate with state legislators and agencies to present funding needs. • Develop a legislative package outlining financial impacts and proposed solutions.
Engage the Community	• Educate residents on the need for public safety funding. • Encourage public participation in advocacy efforts.
Monitor and Report Progress	• Track the amount of state funding secured and its impact on public safety services. • Provide annual updates to the community and stakeholders.

STRATEGY 5: UPDATED MARKETING STRATEGY

Objectives	Tactics
Develop a Dual-Focused Marketing Plan	• Attract targeted industries by highlighting Brown County’s skilled workforce, business-friendly environment, and opportunities for growth in specific sectors such as arts, entertainment, small-scale manufacturing, and tourism support services. • Enhance tourism marketing to focus on the county’s unique natural attractions, like Brown County State Park, and its cultural assets, including art galleries, live music events, and local artisan communities.
Strengthen Digital Marketing Presence	• Develop a user-friendly website or portal to showcase business opportunities, visitor attractions, and key events. • Leverage targeted social media campaigns to promote Brown County as a destination for tourism and a hub for creative industries.
Promote Partnerships for Marketing Alignment	• Partner with local tourism boards, chambers of commerce, and state economic development agencies to ensure consistent messaging. • Collaborate with local businesses and attractions to create co-marketing opportunities that strengthen the visibility of the county’s offerings.
Showcase Unique Assets and Events	• Focus marketing efforts on key attractions, including Brown County State Park, historic downtown Nashville, and annual events such as music festivals, art fairs, and outdoor adventure races. • Highlight the county’s thriving creative community and its reputation as a destination for artisans and outdoor enthusiasts.

Implementation

QUALITY OF PLACE

GOAL:

Enhance housing opportunities in Brown County by identifying sites for multi-family development and promoting accessible housing to meet community needs.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Priority	Timeline
1	Identify properties for multi-family development	Economic Development	Operational Budget	Medium	1 - 5 years
2	Master Plan Growth Areas	- Elected Officials - Economic Developmt	Operational Budegt	Medium	1 - 5 years
3	Accessible Housing	Economic Development	Developer Incentives	Medium	1 - 5 years

STRATEGY 1: IDENTIFY PROPERTY FOR MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Objectives	Tactics
Conduct a Housing Needs Assessment	• Analyze current housing supply and demand data. • Identify gaps in multi-family housing availability. • Use GIS tools to map areas suitable for higher-density housing.
Identify and Prioritize Suitable Properties	• Conduct GIS mapping to locate underutilized or vacant properties. • Prioritize sites near infrastructure, public services, and employment hubs. • Engage property owners to assess interest and development potential.
Update Zoning to Support Multi-Family Development	• Review existing zoning codes and adjust where necessary to allow for multi-family projects. • Consider creating a zoning overlay district for multi-family housing expansion.

Implementation: QUALITY OF PLACE

STRATEGY 2: MASTER PLAN GROWTH AREAS

Objectives	Tactics
Conduct a Comprehensive Growth Area Analysis	• Use GIS tools to identify and map key growth areas based on proximity to infrastructure, public services, and employment hubs. • Analyze demographic trends and housing needs to align growth areas with current and future demands.
Engage Stakeholders and the Community	• Host workshops and public meetings to gather input on proposed growth areas and address community concerns. • Collaborate with developers, businesses, and local organizations to align growth plans with economic and community objectives.
Develop Land Use and Infrastructure Plans for Growth Areas	• Outline zoning updates and infrastructure improvements needed to support residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments in designated growth areas. • Prioritize areas near existing utility lines and transportation networks to reduce costs and promote efficient land use.
Incorporate Strategies for Housing Diversity	• Integrate plans for multi-family, mixed-income, and workforce housing in designated growth areas. • Develop guidelines to balance density with environmental preservation and community character.
Secure Funding and Incentives	• Identify state and federal grant opportunities to support infrastructure expansion and housing initiatives in growth areas. • Offer developer incentives, such as tax abatements or reduced permit fees, to encourage investment in targeted growth zones.
Monitor and Evaluate Growth Area Progress	• Establish benchmarks and metrics to track development progress in growth areas. • Conduct periodic reviews to ensure alignment with the master plan and community goals.

STRATEGY 3: PROMOTE ACCESSIBLE HOUSING OPTIONS

Objectives	Tactics
Assess Current Housing Options and Gaps	• Use the housing data already gather and gather more if needed to identify areas with limited accessible housing availability. • Analyze housing costs in relation to local income levels.
Incentivize Various Housing Options	• Develop incentives, such as reduced permit fees or expedited approvals, for developments that meet accessible housing goals. • Explore public-private partnerships to support mixed-income housing developments.
Identify Key Sites for Accessible Housing Development	• Use GIS tools to identify properties near employment hubs, public services, and transportation networks. • Prioritize areas where accessible housing could benefit workforce stability and community growth.
Engage Developers and Community Partners	• Collaborate with developers, non-profits, and housing agencies to expand housing choices. • Host stakeholder meetings to align housing projects with community needs.
Promote Housing Choice and Inclusivity	• Develop public messaging to highlight the importance of various housing types. • Emphasize the connection between accessible housing, economic growth, and community health.
Monitor Progress and Impact	• Track the number of new accessible housing units developed annually. • Provide regular reports on housing availability and market balance.

Implementation

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

GOAL:

Improve mobility and safety in Brown County by developing a county-wide transportation plan that includes bike and pedestrian trails, as well as bike and passing lanes for better connectivity and accessibility.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Priority	Timeline
1	County-Wide Transportation Plan	Highway Dep.	Operational Budget	High	18 - 24 months
1a	Establish Bike/ Pedestrian Trails	- Parks Dep. - Highway Dep.	Grant Funds	Low	5 - 10 years
1b	Establish Bike and Passing Lanes	Highway Dep.	- Operational Budget - CCMG - Fed. Funds	Medium	5 - 10 years

STRATEGY 1: DEVELOP A COUNTY-WIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Objectives	Tactics
Assess Current Transportation Infrastructure	• Conduct a county-wide assessment of existing roads, trails, and transportation facilities. • Identify gaps in connectivity, safety concerns, and areas with high traffic congestion.
Engage Stakeholders for Collaborative Planning	• Host public workshops and stakeholder meetings to gather feedback on mobility needs. • Collaborate with local municipalities, school districts, and public safety officials
Create a Comprehensive Transportation Strategy	• Develop a long-term transportation framework addressing urban, suburban, and rural areas. • Incorporate strategies for bike and pedestrian trails, as well as bike and passing lanes. • Focus on multimodal transportation, emphasizing safety, accessibility, and sustainability. • Enhance wayfinding systems to improve navigation across the county: Develop consistent signage for roads, trails, and key destinations, and integrate digital tools such as mobile apps and interactive maps to guide residents and visitors efficiently.
Secure Funding and Partnerships	• Identify state and federal grants for transportation infrastructure improvements.
Monitor Implementation and Impact	• Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to track improvements in safety, traffic flow, and connectivity. • Provide annual progress reports to stakeholders and the public.

Implementation: TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

STRATEGY 2: ESTABLISH BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN TRAILS

Objectives	Tactics
Incorporate Trail Development into the Transportation Plan	• Ensure the transportation plan identifies and prioritizes areas for trail expansion. • Develop trail design standards and safety measures within the plan for consistency.
Leverage Plan Guidance for Implementation	• Use the plan to identify key areas for trail expansion, prioritizing connectivity and accessibility. • Follow established design standards and ADA compliance measures outlined in the plan.
Secure Funding Based on Plan Recommendations	• Apply for grants and state funding aligned with the transportation plan's priorities. • Use the plan's data and recommendations to strengthen funding applications.
Monitor and Maintain Trail Network	• Track progress on trail expansions using metrics established in the transportation plan. • Implement the maintenance strategies outlined in the plan for long-term trail sustainability.

STRATEGY 3: ESTABLISH BIKE AND PASSING LANES

Objectives	Tactics
Incorporate Lane Expansion into the Transportation Plan	• Ensure the plan includes criteria for identifying roads suitable for bike and passing lanes. • Develop standard design guidelines for lane expansion, emphasizing safety and efficiency.
Use the Plan to Guide Lane Expansion Projects	• Reference the transportation plan when prioritizing roadways for bike and passing lane improvements. • Ensure alignment with safety goals, traffic flow data, and community input outlined in the plan.
Secure Funding Aligned with the Plan's Goals	• Use the transportation plan's recommendations to strengthen grant applications. • Partner with local and state agencies based on priority corridors identified in the plan.
Monitor and Assess Lane Expansions	• Use the transportation plan's success metrics to track improvements in safety and traffic efficiency. • Report progress through the transportation plan's annual review process.

APPENDIX

A. Proposed Plans / Ordinances

B. Maps / Figures

C. Survey

D. Current Land Use Types

Appendix A: PROPOSED PLANS / ORDINANCES

PROPOSED PLANS



The [Zionsville Wayfinding Master Plan](#) shows what Brown County could do by enhancing visitor navigation, strengthening branding, supporting local businesses, and using a phased, cost-effective approach. These strategies align with Brown County's need to improve tourism and economic development.



VILLAGE OF GLEN ELLYN, ILLINOIS
FINAL COMMUNITY SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING PLAN
DESIGN INTENT DRAWINGS AND STANDARDS REPORT
MARCH 14, 2016

Prepared For:
Village of Glen Ellyn

Prepared By:
LAKOTA
WR



The [Glen Ellyn Wayfinding and Signage Plan](#) is an example of what Brown County could do by improving navigation to key destinations, creating cohesive branding, and supporting local businesses through clear, attractive signage. This aligns with Brown County's goals to enhance tourism and economic growth.



The [Pittsburg State Wayfinding and Signage Design Guidelines](#) demonstrate what Brown County could do by establishing consistent, functional signage to improve navigation, enhance branding, and create a welcoming environment. This approach supports Brown County's goals for better visitor experience and stronger community identity.



Appendix A: PROPOSED PLANS / ORDINANCES

PROPOSED PLANS



The Steuben County 2023 Strategic Plan is a best practice for Brown County as it outlines a comprehensive approach to economic growth through infrastructure investment, workforce development, and regional collaboration. By prioritizing measurable goals and aligning with broader regional strategies, it demonstrates how strategic planning can drive sustainable development. This plan's focus on leveraging local strengths while addressing challenges offers a clear framework Brown County can adapt to foster economic resilience and community advancement.



The Yorktown Downtown Redevelopment Plan is a best practice for Brown County as it demonstrates how strategic planning can enhance infrastructure, boost accessibility, and create vibrant public spaces. By integrating wayfinding and signage with community revitalization, it supports local businesses and strengthens the area's identity. The plan's emphasis on stakeholder collaboration and a phased, adaptable approach offers a scalable framework that Brown County can use to balance preservation with sustainable growth.



PROPOSED SHORT TERM RENTAL ORDINANCE

Pursuant to Indiana state law, Brown County has the authority to regulate short-term rentals through both zoning variance requirements and a permit fee system. Under IC 36-1-24-9, the County may require a special exception, special use, or zoning variance for short-term rental properties that are not owner-occupied and are located within residential zoning districts. While such regulations are permissible, they must not be enforced in a manner that effectively prohibits or unreasonably restricts short-term rental operations, and any denials are subject to appeal. Additionally, under IC 36-1-24-11, the County may adopt an ordinance requiring property owners to obtain an annual permit for short-term rentals. The ordinance may stipulate necessary application details, including ownership, property management contacts, and marketing information. Furthermore, the County has the authority to impose an annual permit fee of up to \$150, which can assist in covering administrative costs and enforcement efforts.

A sample ordinance has been provided on the following pages for your review and consideration to establish a clear and enforceable framework that aligns with state regulations while addressing the specific needs of Brown County.

Appendix A: PROPOSED PLANS / ORDINANCES

PROPOSED SHORT TERM RENTAL ORDINANCE

SAMPLE ORDINANCE

BROWN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ORDINANCE No. [XXXX]

BROWN COUNTY SHORT TERM RENTAL ORDINANCE

WHEREAS, Indiana law provides that powers not specifically reserved for the State are delegated to local government and may be regulated by a municipality [Home Rule], as delineated in I.C. 36-1-3; and

WHEREAS, I.C. 36-1-5 empowers and authorizes Brown County, Indiana (“County”) to revise, amend, restate, codify, and compile existing ordinances and new ordinances not heretofore published and to incorporate such ordinances into code form (“County Code”); and

WHEREAS, Brown County has experienced an increase in property owners utilizing residential properties as short-term rentals and advertising the same on platforms such as Airbnb, VRBO, and other short-term rental platforms; and

WHEREAS, I.C. 36-1-24, et seq., provides that a municipality may require an owner of a short-term rental to obtain a permit for each property utilized as a short-term rental in order to protect public health and safety related to fire and building safety, sanitation, transportation, traffic control, and pollution control; and

WHEREAS, the Brown County Board of Commissioners finds that it is in the best interest of the County and its residents to establish a permitting process for short-term rentals within the County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Brown County Board of Commissioners as follows:

CHAPTER XX – SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Purpose, Intent, and Scope

- It is hereby declared that there exists within the County short-term rentals, both owner-occupied and non-owner-occupied, which by reason of operation, use, or occupancy affect or are likely to affect public health, safety, and general welfare.
- The purpose of this ordinance is to protect public health, safety, and welfare by requiring licensing of short-term rental property owners and regulating their operations.

- These standards are intended to ensure compatibility between short-term rentals and the residential character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Definitions

- Administrator – The officer responsible for administration of this ordinance, appointed by Brown County.
- Owner – A person holding title to or possessing an interest in a property offered as a short-term rental.
- Short-term rental – The rental of a single-family home, a dwelling unit within a multi-family building, or similar property for a term of less than thirty (30) days.
- Permit – A short-term rental permit issued under this ordinance.
- Short-term rental platform – An online entity that facilitates short-term rental bookings.

Operation of Short-Term Rentals

- Off-street parking must be provided on designated paved portions of the lot.
- Owners must provide renters with maximum occupancy limits, emergency contact information, and parking regulations.
- The rental must be operated in a manner that does not disrupt the residential character of the neighborhood.
- Properties must be properly maintained to prevent nuisances such as noise and waste accumulation.

Short-Term Rental Permits

- Permit Requirement: Owners must obtain a permit for each property used as a short-term rental.
- Application Process: Owners must submit an application with required fees and supporting documents.
- The initial permit application fee is \$150.
- Annual renewal fees will be \$150.
- Transferability: Permits are not transferable upon change of ownership.

Violations and Penalties

- Violations of this ordinance will result in fines and potential revocation of the permit.
- A short-term rental permit may be revoked after three (3) violations within a calendar year.

Effective Date

This ordinance shall take effect on [DATE], following passage and publication as required by Indiana law.
 PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE BROWN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS THIS ____ DAY OF _____, 20XX.

Brown County Board of Commissioners
 [Signatures]

Appendix A: PROPOSED PLANS / ORDINANCES

PROPOSED PROPERTY MAINTENANCE ORDINANCE

Pursuant to Indiana state law, Brown County has the authority to regulate property maintenance through the adoption and enforcement of local ordinances aimed at ensuring public health, safety, and welfare. The proposed Brown County Property Maintenance Ordinance establishes minimum standards for the upkeep of properties to prevent blight, protect property values, and promote the overall quality of life within the county. To facilitate the enforcement of this ordinance, the County will establish a Code Enforcement Office tasked with ensuring compliance, conducting inspections, and addressing violations in a fair and consistent manner. The ordinance is intended to balance the rights of property owners with the broader community's need for clean, safe, and well-maintained neighborhoods, while providing a structured process for addressing nuisance properties and public safety concerns.

A sample ordinance has been provided for your review and consideration to establish a clear and enforceable framework that aligns with state regulations while addressing the specific needs of Brown County.

SAMPLE ORDINANCE

BROWN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
ORDINANCE No. [XXXX]

BROWN COUNTY, INDIANA PROPERTY MAINTENANCE ORDINANCE

WHEREAS, Indiana law provides that powers not specifically reserved for the State are delegated to local government and may be regulated by a municipality [Home Rule], as delineated in I.C. 36-1-3; and

WHEREAS, I.C. 36-1-5 empowers and authorizes Brown County, Indiana ("County") to revise, amend, restate, codify, and compile existing ordinances and new ordinances not heretofore published and to incorporate such ordinances into code form ("County Code"); and

WHEREAS, Brown County has experienced issues related to the maintenance and upkeep of residential and commercial properties, leading to concerns regarding public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, I.C. 36-7-9, et seq., provides that a municipality may regulate property maintenance to ensure public health and safety, prevent blight, and protect property values; and

WHEREAS, the Brown County Board of Commissioners finds that it is in the best interest of the County and its residents to establish a comprehensive property maintenance ordinance to address these concerns and promote the general welfare of the community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Brown County Board of Commissioners as follows:

CHAPTER 1: GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1 Purpose and Scope

This ordinance establishes regulations to ensure public health, safety, and general welfare by maintaining property standards within Brown County. It addresses nuisances related to property maintenance, including but not limited to abandoned vehicles, unsafe structures, weed control, and other nuisances.

1.2 Definitions

For the purpose of this ordinance, the following definitions shall apply:

- Abandoned House: A chronically vacant and uninhabitable unit indicated by lack of utilities, delinquent taxes, and neglect by the owner.
- Abandoned Lot: A parcel of land without a structure where the owner has neglected maintenance responsibilities.
- Approved: Authorized by the relevant code enforcement official or governing body.
- Authority: The Brown County Code Enforcement Department or its designated officers.
- Building: Any structure designed or intended for sheltering people, animals, or property.
- Building Code: The set of regulations adopted by the County to govern construction, alterations, and maintenance of buildings.
- Building Commissioner: The official responsible for enforcing building regulations within the County.
- Code Official: An authorized representative responsible for enforcing compliance with this ordinance.
- Condemn: To declare a structure unfit for occupancy or use by official order.
- Debris: Discarded materials, including garbage, rubbish, and other waste that pose safety or environmental concerns.
- Dwelling: A building or portion thereof designed or used for residential occupancy.
- Exterior Property: The open space on the premises that is exposed to public view.
- Extermination: The removal or control of pests, insects, rodents, or vermin from a property.
- Fire Code: The regulations adopted to address fire safety standards and hazard prevention.
- Garbage: Organic waste materials resulting from food preparation and consumption.
- Hazardous Condition: Any condition likely to cause injury, damage, or pose a threat to public safety.
- Infestation: The presence of insects, rodents, vermin, or other pests within or near a structure that pose a health risk.
- Operator/Manager: Any person responsible for managing or controlling a property on behalf of the owner.
- Owner: The individual or entity holding legal title or control over a property.

Appendix A: PROPOSED PLANS / ORDINANCES

- Person: An individual, firm, partnership, corporation, or any recognized legal entity.
- Person in Control: Any person who occupies, manages, or has authority over a property.
- Premises: A lot, plot, or parcel of land including any structures thereon.
- Public Nuisance: Any condition that endangers public health, safety, or welfare, including unsanitary conditions and property neglect.
- Rubbish: Non putrescible waste materials such as paper, cardboard, wood, metal, and glass.
- Structure: Anything constructed or erected with a fixed location on the ground, including buildings and sheds.
- Substantial Property Interest: Any right in real property that is recorded and affects ownership or occupancy rights.
- Tenant: A person who occupies property under a lease or rental agreement.
- Trash: Accumulated waste materials including discarded household items and debris.
- Unsecured Structure: A building with open or missing windows, doors, or structural components allowing unauthorized entry.
- Vacant Building: A structure that is unoccupied for a period exceeding 90 days and shows signs of neglect, including but not limited to overgrown vegetation, accumulation of trash, or lack of maintenance.
- Yard: The open space on a property surrounding a building or structure.

CHAPTER 2: PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to protect public health, safety, and welfare in all residential and non-residential premises by establishing minimum requirements and standards for premises, structures, equipment, and facilities for light, ventilation, space, heating, sanitation, protection from the elements, life safety, safety from fire and other hazards, and for safe and sanitary maintenance; fixing the responsibility of owners, operators, and occupants; regulating the occupancy of existing structures and premises; and providing for administration, enforcement, and penalties.

2.2 Intent

The intent of this chapter is to ensure that all buildings and premises, both residential and non-residential, are maintained in a condition that safeguards public health, safety, and welfare. It is intended to facilitate the continued safe occupancy of buildings by establishing reasonable property maintenance standards, preventing blight, and promoting the overall well-being of the community.

CHAPTER 3: ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY

3.1 General

The code official shall be authorized to enforce the provisions of this code.

3.2 Right of Entry

For the purposes of inspection, code enforcement will utilize roads, sidewalks, alleyways, or other public property, or a neighbor's property if the neighbor is the complainant. All photographs shall be conducted from public property or neighboring property if permission is granted by the neighbor. Inspections will be limited to areas and purposes covered by this chapter.

3.3 Right of Entry of Abandoned Structures and Lots

Abandoned structures and lots shall be subject to unrestricted, complete, and thorough code inspections, including legal right of entry into those structures found unsecured. All abandoned structures and lots shall be subject to vigorous code enforcement, and it shall be the duty of the code official to give abandoned structures and lots priority enforcement to ensure public safety and welfare.

3.4 Coordination of Enforcement

Inspection of premises, the issuance of notices and orders, and enforcement thereof shall be the responsibility of the code official so charged by Brown County. Whenever inspections are necessary by any other department, the code official shall make reasonable efforts to arrange for the coordination of such inspections so as to minimize the number of visits by inspectors and to confer with the other departments for the purpose of eliminating conflicting orders before any are issued. A department shall not, however, delay the issuance of any emergency orders.

3.5 Rule-Making Authority

The Chief Administrative Officer or Building Commissioner shall have power as necessary in the interest of public health, safety, and general welfare to adopt and promulgate rules and regulations, to interpret and implement the provisions of this code to secure the intent thereof and to designate requirements applicable because of local climatic or other conditions. Such rules shall not have the effect of waiving structural or fire performance requirements specifically provided for in this code or of violating accepted engineering practice involving public safety.

3.6 Restriction of Employees

An official or employee connected with the enforcement of this code shall not be engaged in, or directly or indirectly connected with, the furnishing of labor, materials, or appliances for the construction, alteration, or maintenance of a building, or the preparation of construction documents thereof, unless that person is the owner of the building; nor shall such officer or employee engage in any work that conflicts with official duties or with the interests of the department.

CHAPTER 4: PROPERTY MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

4.1 Abandoned and Unlicensed Vehicles

- No property owner shall allow the storage of abandoned or unlicensed vehicles on their premises.
- Vehicles must be operable and display valid registration.

Appendix A: PROPOSED PLANS / ORDINANCES

- Violators will receive a written notice with a 15-day compliance period, after which the County may remove the vehicle at the owner's expense.

4.2 Unsafe Structures

- Brown County adopts the Indiana Unsafe Building Law (IC 36-7-9).
- The County's enforcement authority shall have the power to inspect and order repairs, demolition, or securing of unsafe structures.
- Owners of unsafe structures shall receive a written notice specifying corrective actions and a reasonable compliance timeline.

4.3 Weed and Rank Vegetation Control

- Property owners must maintain vegetation below 10 inches in height.
- Owners failing to comply within 7 days of notice will be subject to abatement by the County with cost recovery via property tax assessment.
- Property owners must maintain vegetation below 10 inches in height.
- Complaints regarding overgrown properties must be filed with the Office of Code Enforcement.
- Owners failing to comply within 7 days of notice will be subject to abatement by the County with cost recovery via property tax assessment.

4.4 General Nuisances

- The following conditions are declared public nuisances and subject to enforcement:
- Accumulation of trash, debris, or hazardous materials.
- Obstructing public streets or rights-of-way.
- Dilapidated fencing, signage, or exterior property conditions that present safety hazards.
- Maintenance of pools or water features in a condition that promotes mosquito breeding.

4.5 Exterior Property Areas

- Sanitation. All exterior property and premises shall be maintained in a clean, safe and sanitary condition. The occupant shall keep that part of the exterior property, which such occupant occupies or controls, in a clean and sanitary condition.
- Grading and Drainage. All premises shall be graded and maintained to prevent the erosion of soil and to prevent the accumulation of water thereon, or within any structure located thereon.
- Exterior Use or Storage of Indoor Furniture Prohibited. No person occupying or having control of any premises shall allow the use or storage of furniture which is upholstered or not designed for outdoor use in an uncovered or exposed area where it is likely to decay, decompose, or retain moisture causing a health hazard.
- Exterior Maintenance. The exterior of a structure shall be maintained in good repair, structurally sound and sanitary so as not to pose a threat to the public health, safety, welfare or be a public nuisance.

- **Protective Treatment.** All exterior surfaces, including, but not limited to, doors, door and window frames, cornices, porches, trim, balconies, decks and fences shall be maintained in good condition. Exterior wood surfaces, other than decay-resistant woods, shall be protected from the elements and decay by painting or other protective covering or treatment. All siding and masonry joints as well as those between the building envelope and the perimeter of windows, doors, and skylights shall be maintained weather-resistant and watertight. All metal surfaces subject to rust or corrosion shall be coated to inhibit such rust and corrosion, and all surfaces with rust or corrosion shall be stabilized and coated to inhibit future rust and corrosion. Oxidation stains shall be removed from exterior surfaces. Surfaces designed for stabilization by oxidation are exempt from this requirement.
- **Exterior Walls.** All exterior walls shall be free from holes, breaks, and loose or rotting materials; and maintained weatherproof and properly surface-coated where required to prevent deterioration.
- **Roofs and Drainage.** The roof and flashing shall be sound, tight and not have defects that admit rain. Roof drainage shall be adequate to prevent dampness or deterioration in the walls or interior portion of the structure.

CHAPTER 5: ADMINISTRATION

5.1 Enforcement Authority

- The Brown County Code Enforcement Department is designated as the enforcement authority.
- Inspectors shall have the right to access properties with proper notice to verify compliance.

5.2 Unsafe Building Fund

Fees and fines collected under this ordinance shall be deposited into the Brown County Code Enforcement Fund to be used for abatement activities.

CHAPTER 6: ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES

6.1 Notice of Violation

- A written notice shall be issued to property owners outlining the violation, necessary corrective action, and the compliance deadline.
- Notices will be sent via certified mail.

6.2 Appeals Process

- Property owners may appeal violation notices within 10 days of receipt to the Brown County Hearing Board.
- The Board's decision shall be final unless appealed in Circuit Court.

6.3 Failure to Comply

- Non-compliance within the specified timeframe will result in County action to abate the nuisance.

Appendix A: PROPOSED PLANS / ORDINANCES

- Code enforcement shall issue a bill to the owner of the real property for costs incurred by the county for bringing the property into compliance.
- Unpaid costs incurred by the County shall be assessed to the property owner and recorded as a lien against the property.

6.4 Penalties

- Violations of this ordinance shall result in fines up to \$500 per day, with continued violations accruing additional penalties.
- Failure to pay fines will result in legal action to recover costs.

Effective Date

This ordinance shall take effect on [DATE], following passage and publication as required by Indiana law.

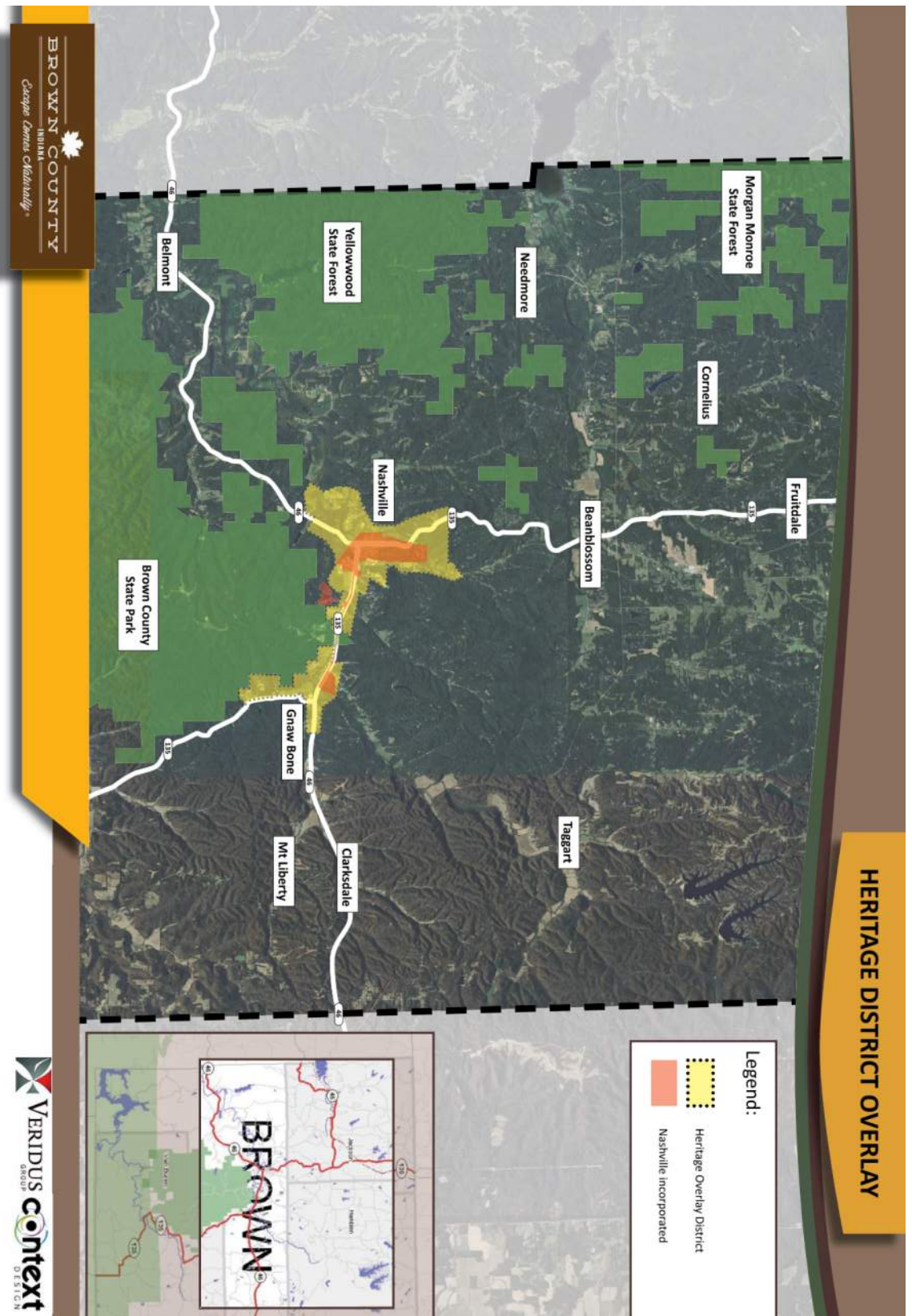
PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE BROWN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS THIS ____ DAY OF _____, 20XX.

Brown County Board of Commissioners

[Signatures]

Appendix B: MAPS / FIGURES

Figure 49: Growth Map: Context Design - From Community Meetings



Appendix B: MAPS / FIGURES

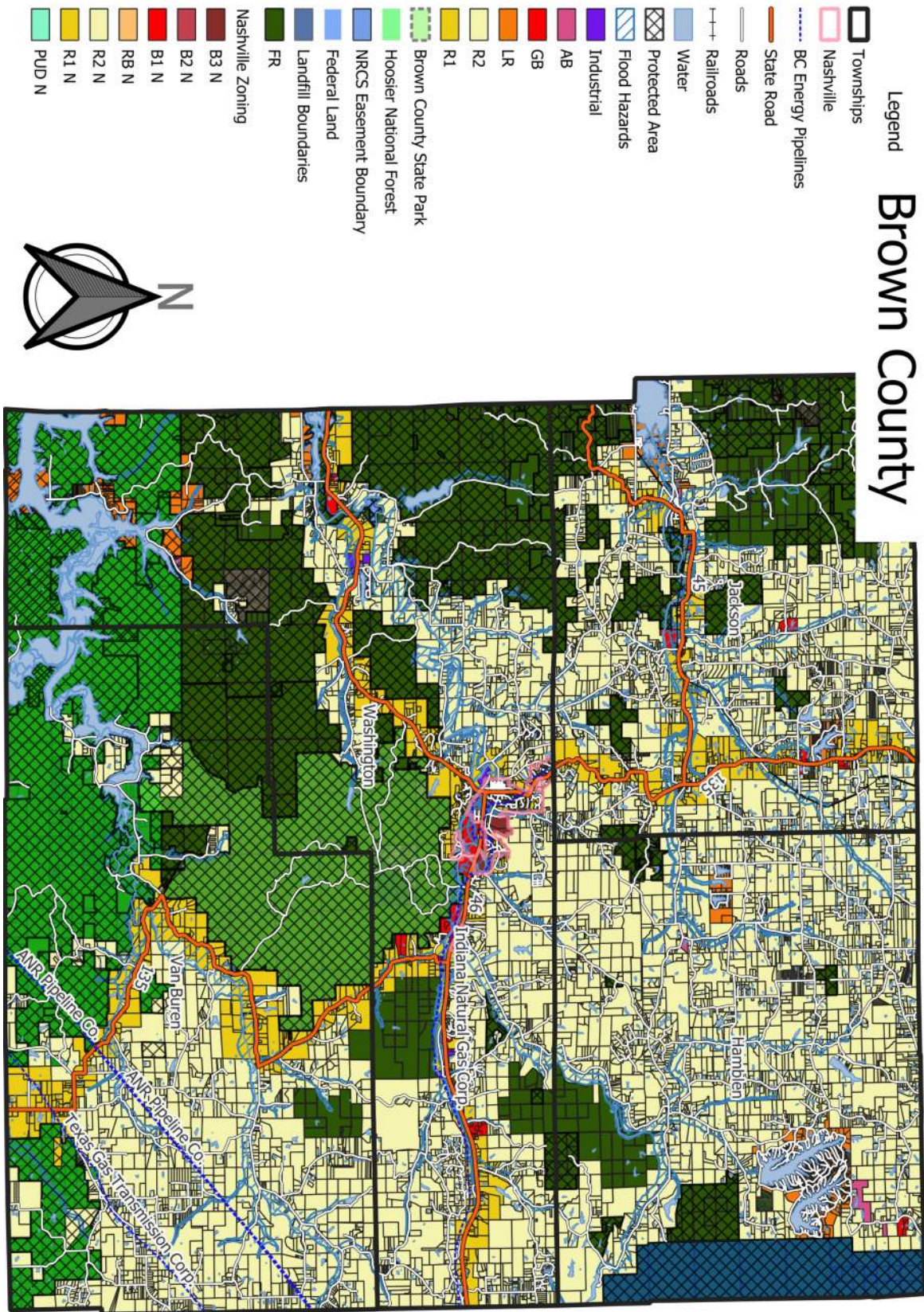


Figure 50: Current Land Use Map: Brown County

Hamblen Township

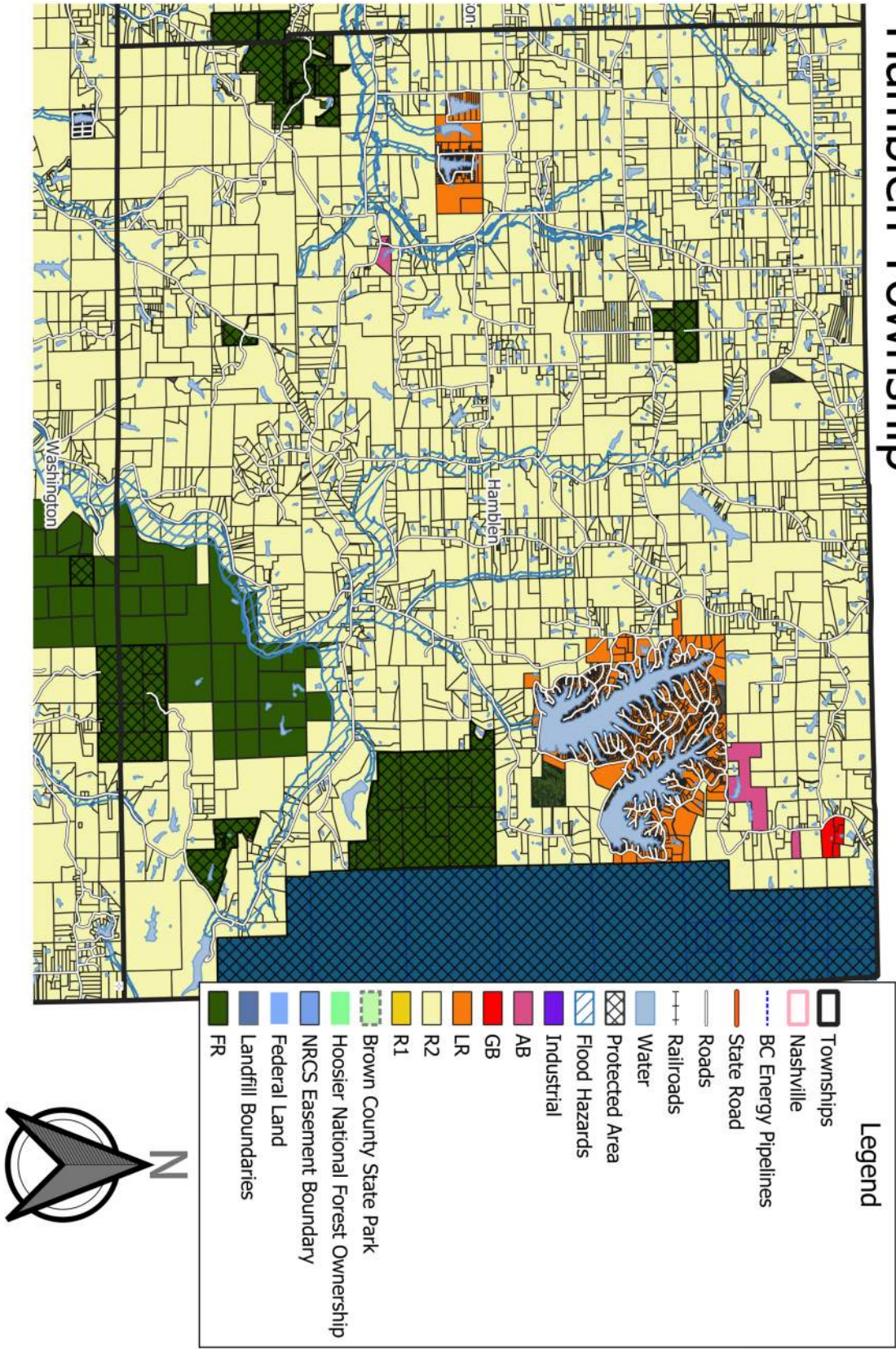


Figure 51: Current Land Use Map: Hamblen Township

Jackson Township

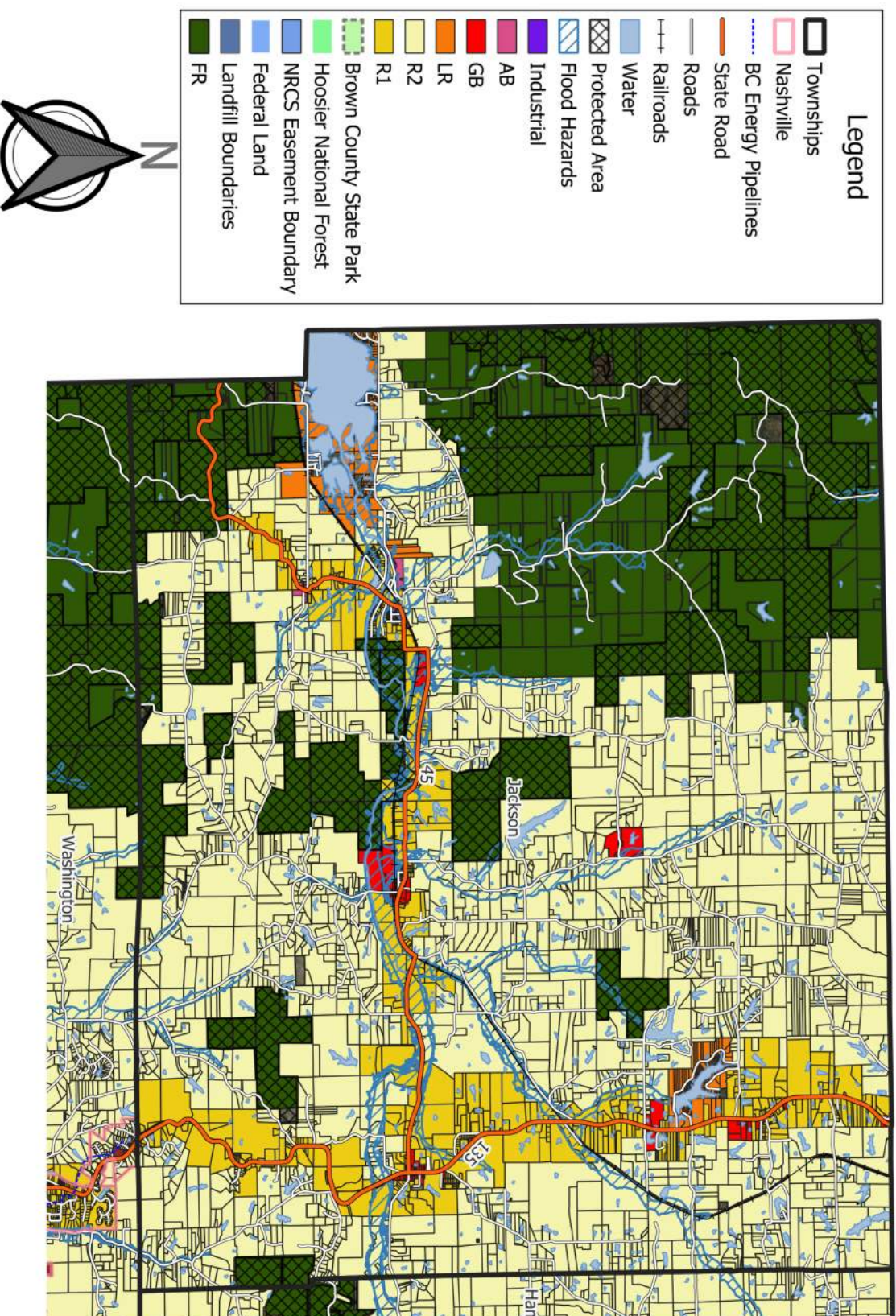


Figure 52: Current Land Use Map: Jackson Township

Washington Township (East)

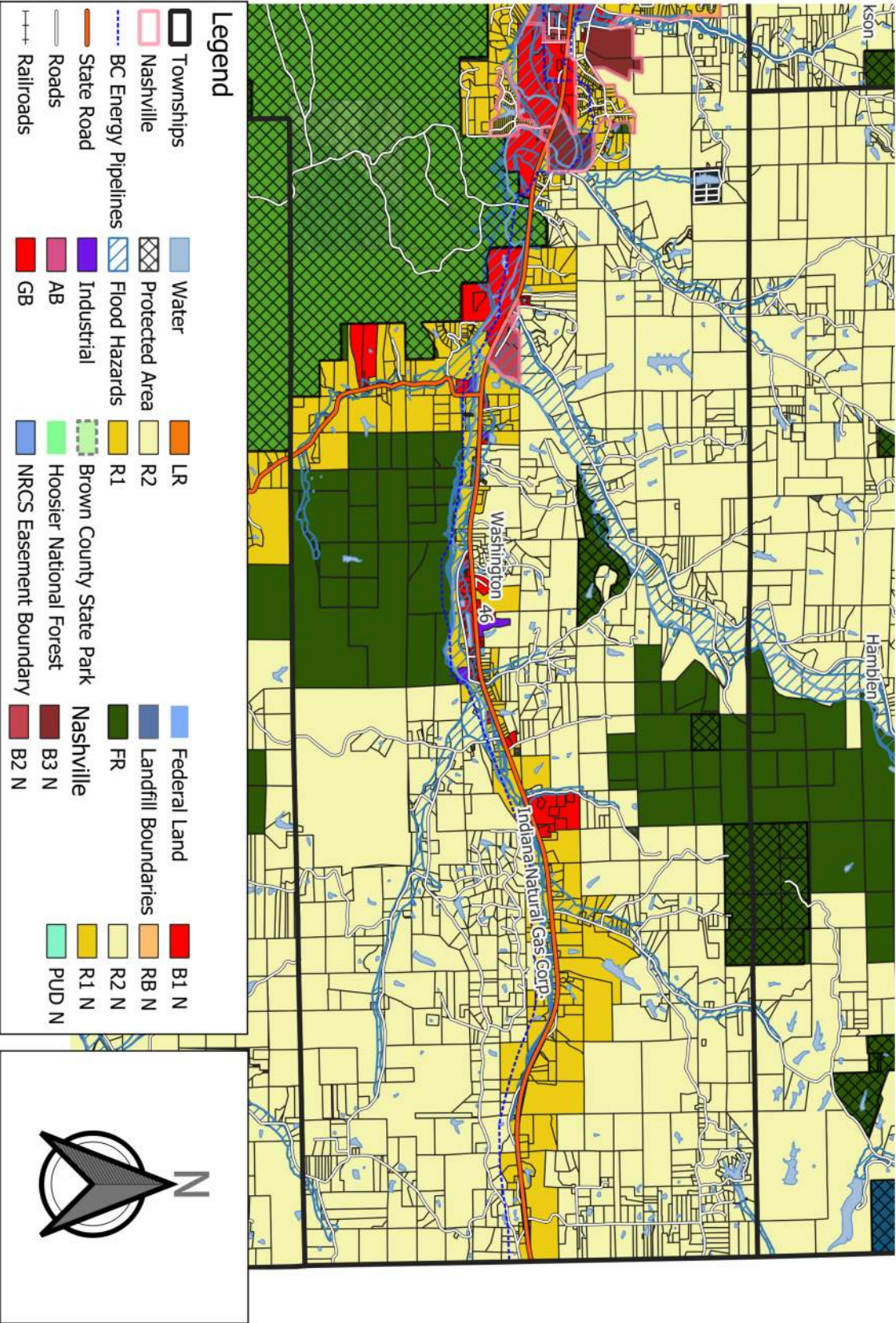


Figure 53: Current Land Use Map: East Washington Township

Appendix B: MAPS / FIGURES

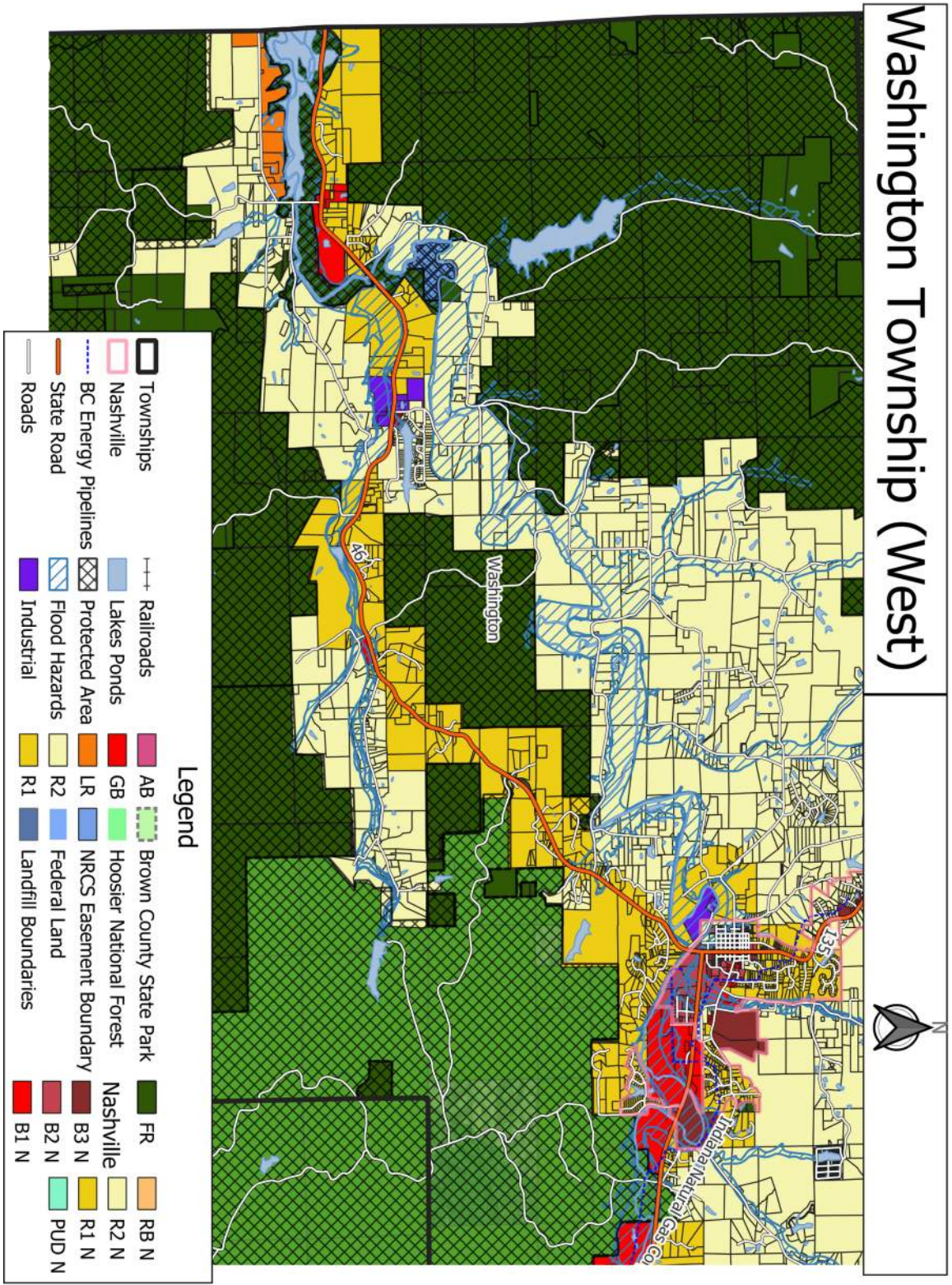


Figure 54: Current Land Use Map: West Washington Township

Washington Township (South)

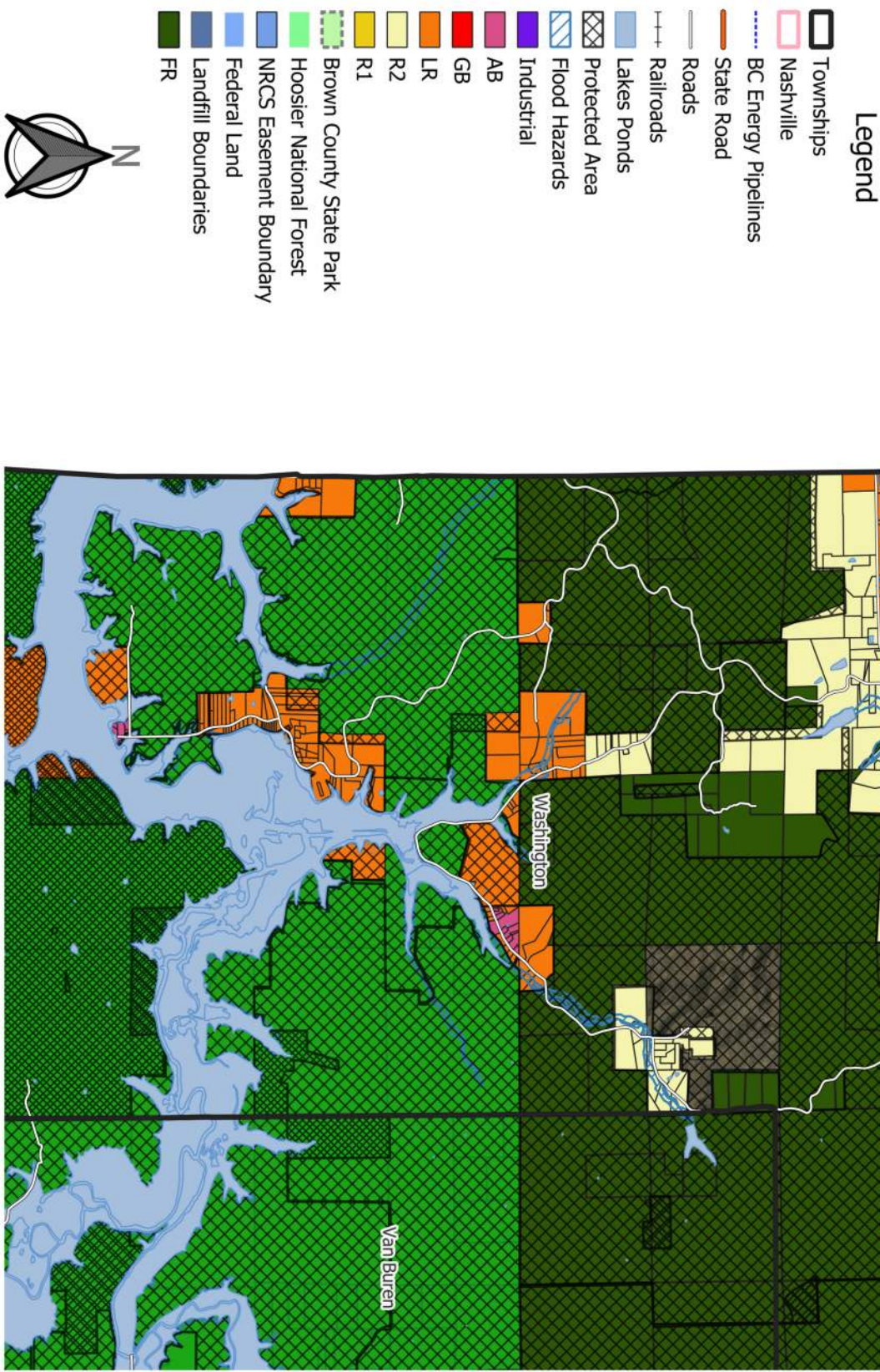


Figure 55: Current Land Use Map: South Washington Township

Van Buren Township

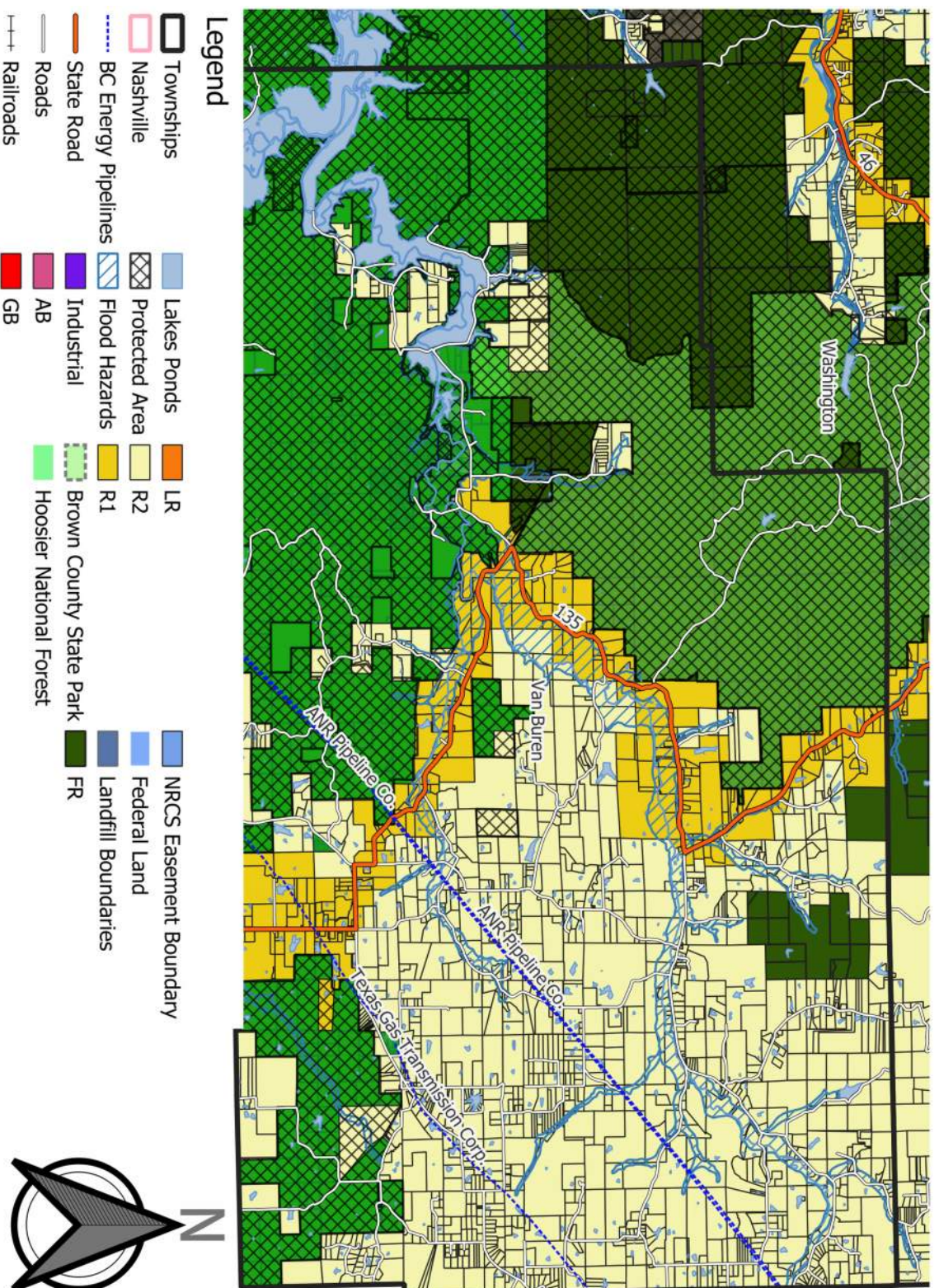


Figure 56: Current Land Use Map: Van Buren Township

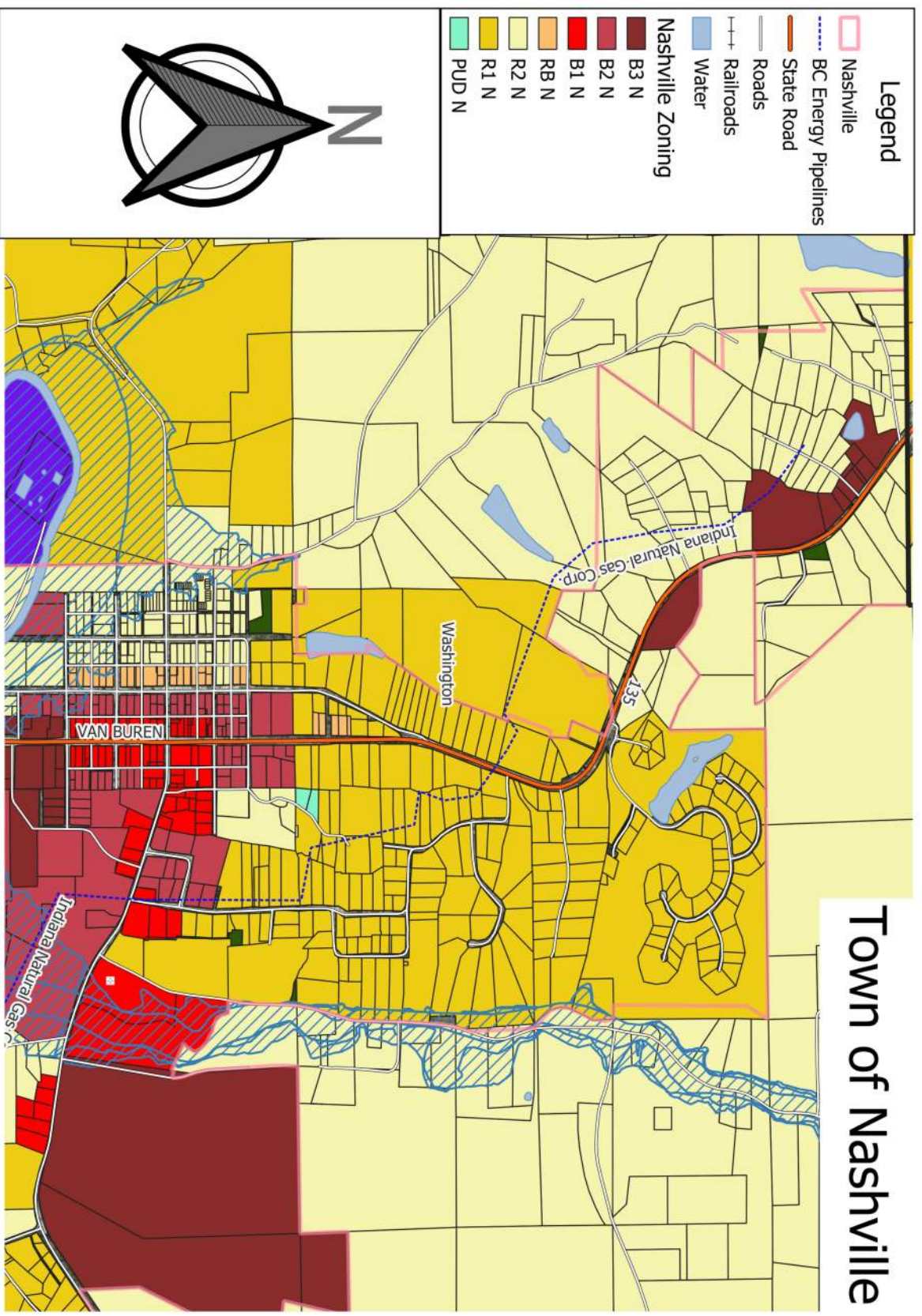


Figure 57: Current Land Use Map: Nashville 1

Appendix B: MAPS / FIGURES

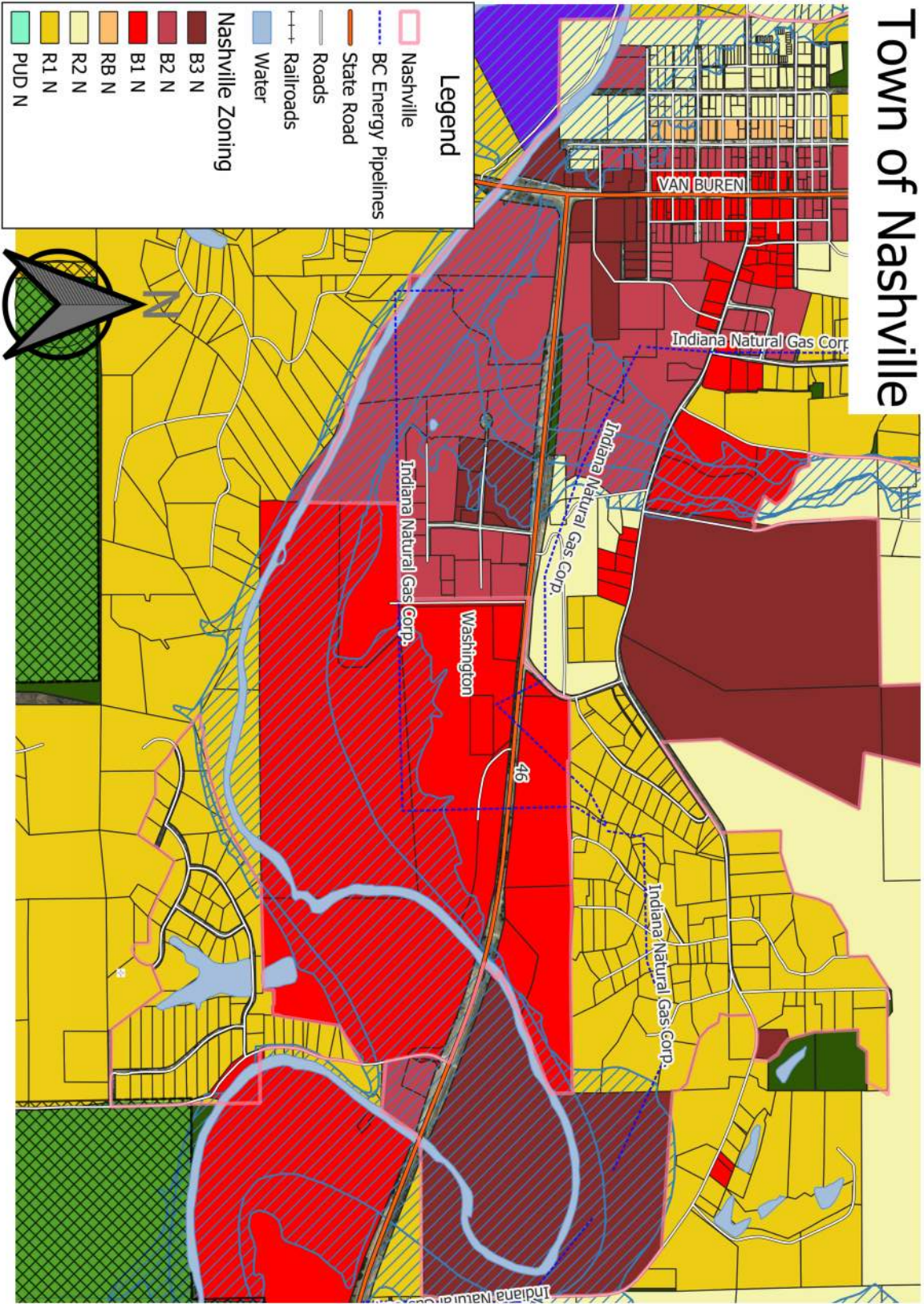


Figure 58: Current Land Use Map: Nashville 2

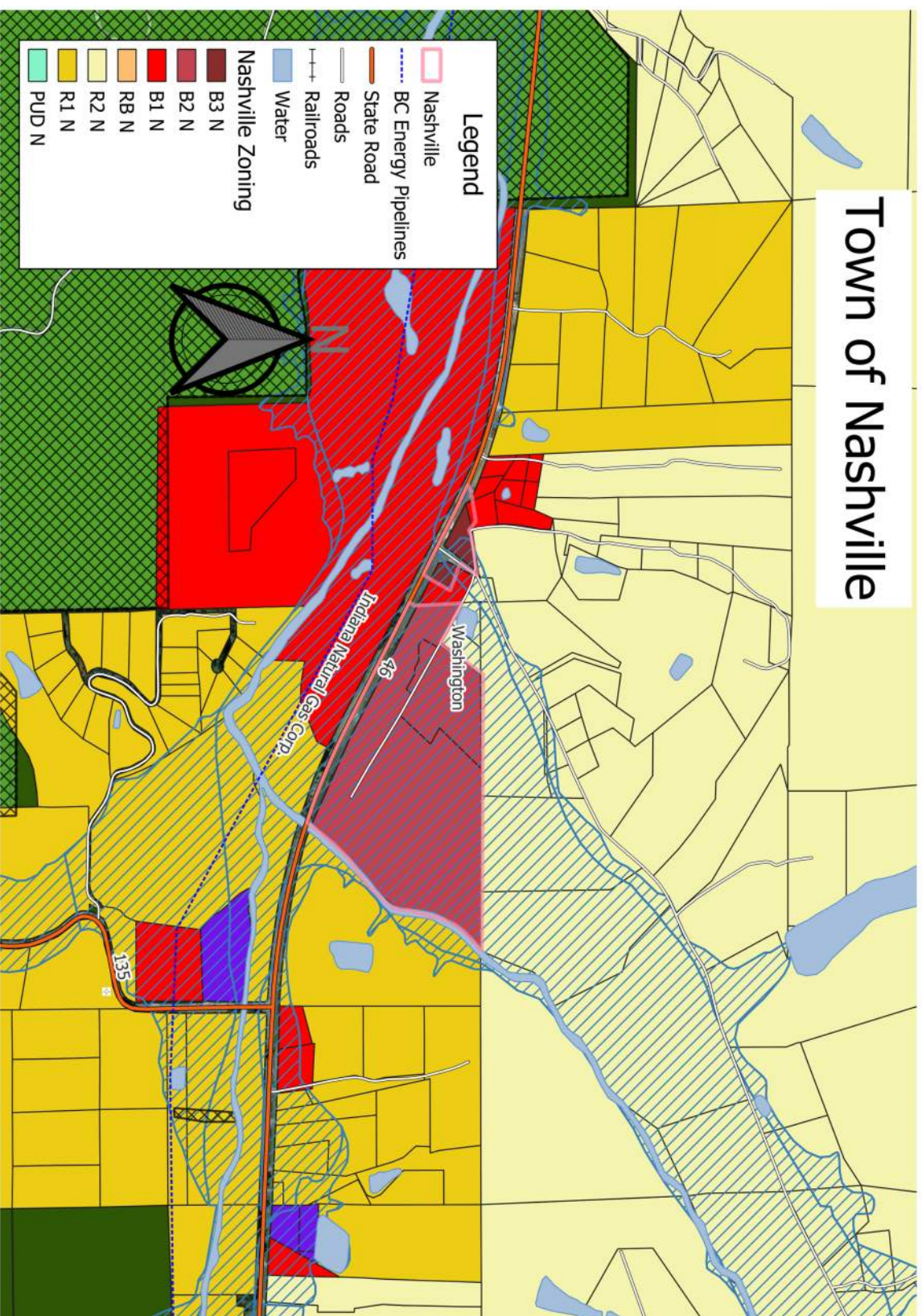


Figure 59: Current Land Use Map: Nashville 3

Appendix B: MAPS / FIGURES

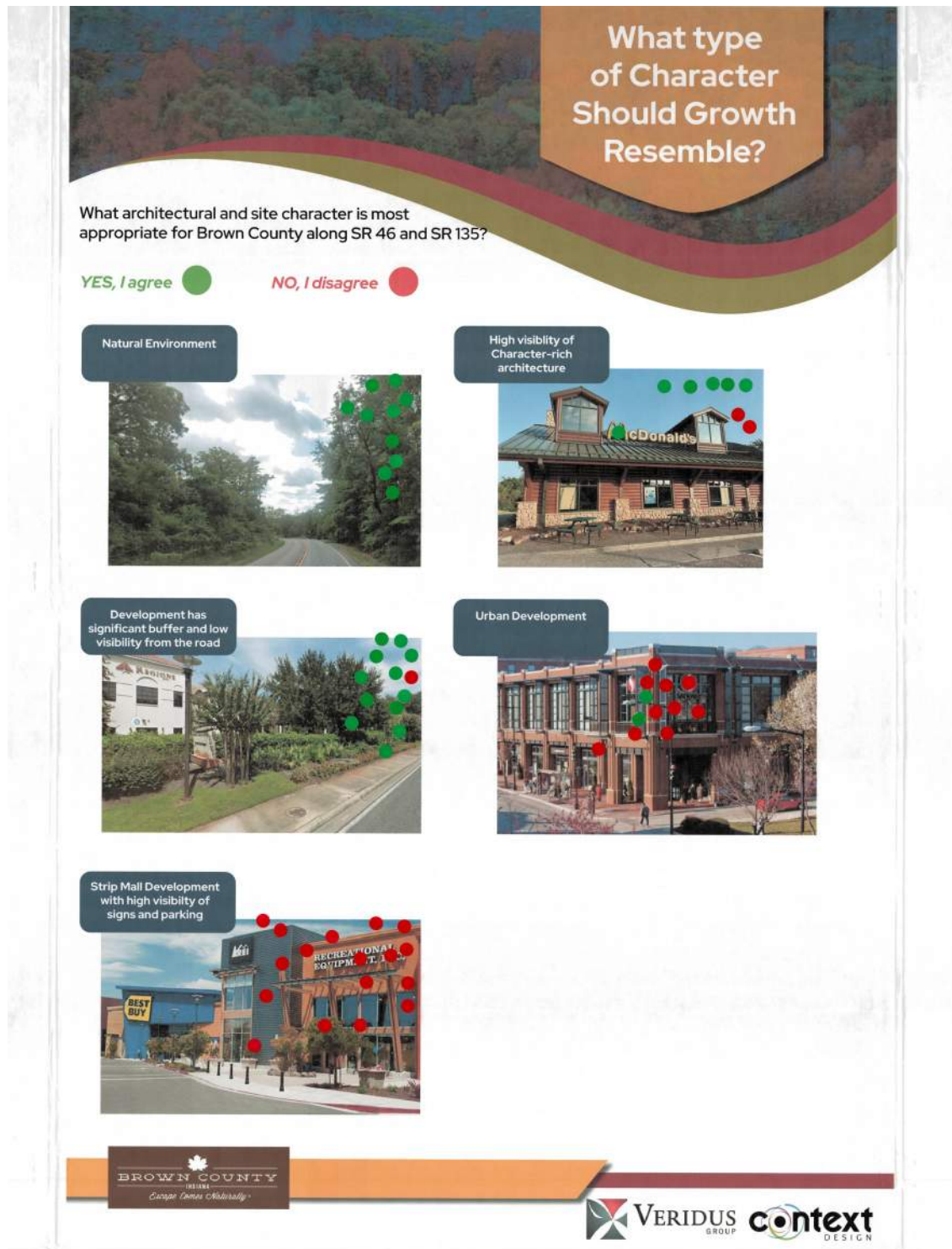


Figure 60: Character of Growth 1, Source: Community Meeting Nashville

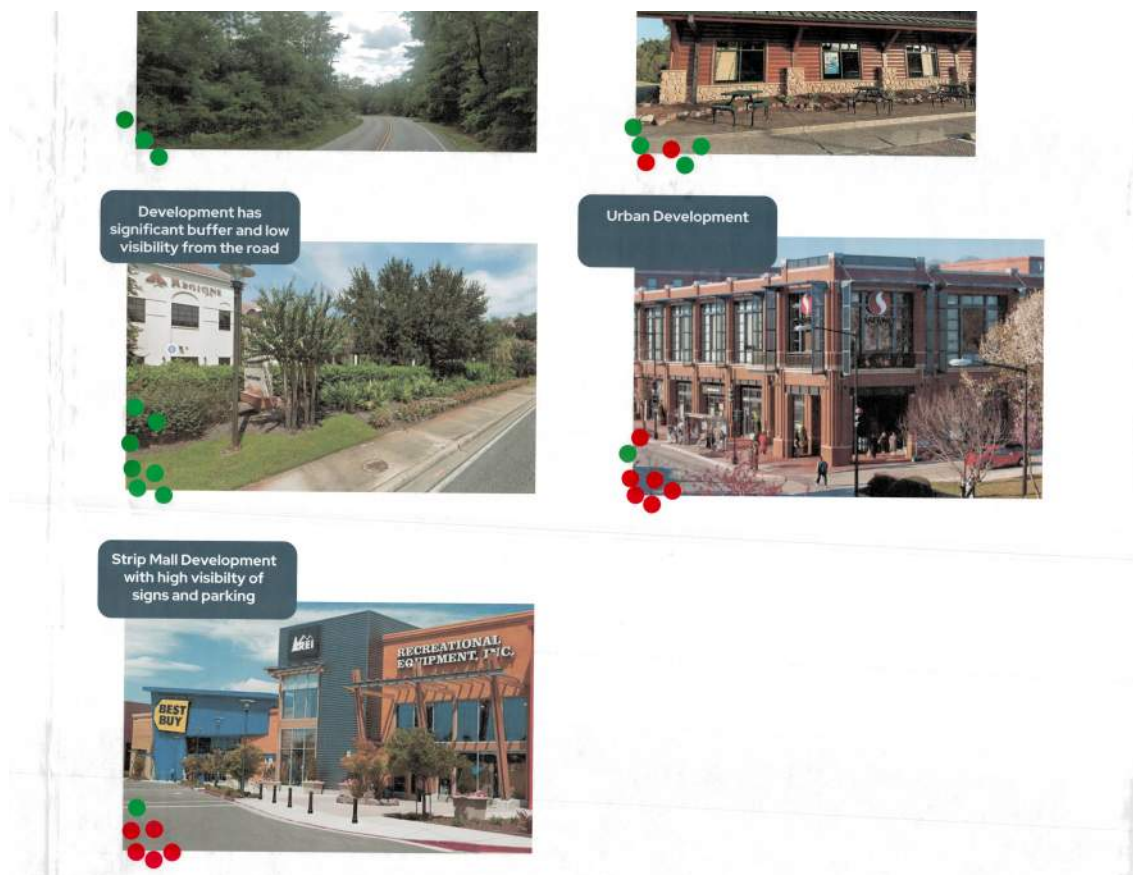


Figure 61: Character of Growth 2, Source: Community Meeting Van Buren

Appendix B: MAPS / FIGURES



Figure 62: Funding 1, Source: Community Meeting Nashville

How should Brown County increase funding opportunities?

What is the most viable way to increase revenue for Brown County?

Select the TWO most important **revenue generating** opportunities for Brown County from the following options:

Increase Property Tax Rates 	Increase Property Tax Rates for Non-residents 	Diversify Land Use and Type of Growth 	Increase Fees for Infrastructure Expansion 	Reduce Road Maintenance
Reduce Public Safety Measures 	Reduce Government Services 	Develop Light Industrial and Manufacturing 	Expand Tourism and Associated Taxes 	Other (Please Specify) • Office park for remote workers • consolidate Brown County schools

BROWN COUNTY
INDIANA
Cascades Comes Naturally

VERIDUS GROUP **context**
DESIGN

Figure 63: Funding 2, Source: Community Meeting Van Buren

Appendix B: MAPS / FIGURES

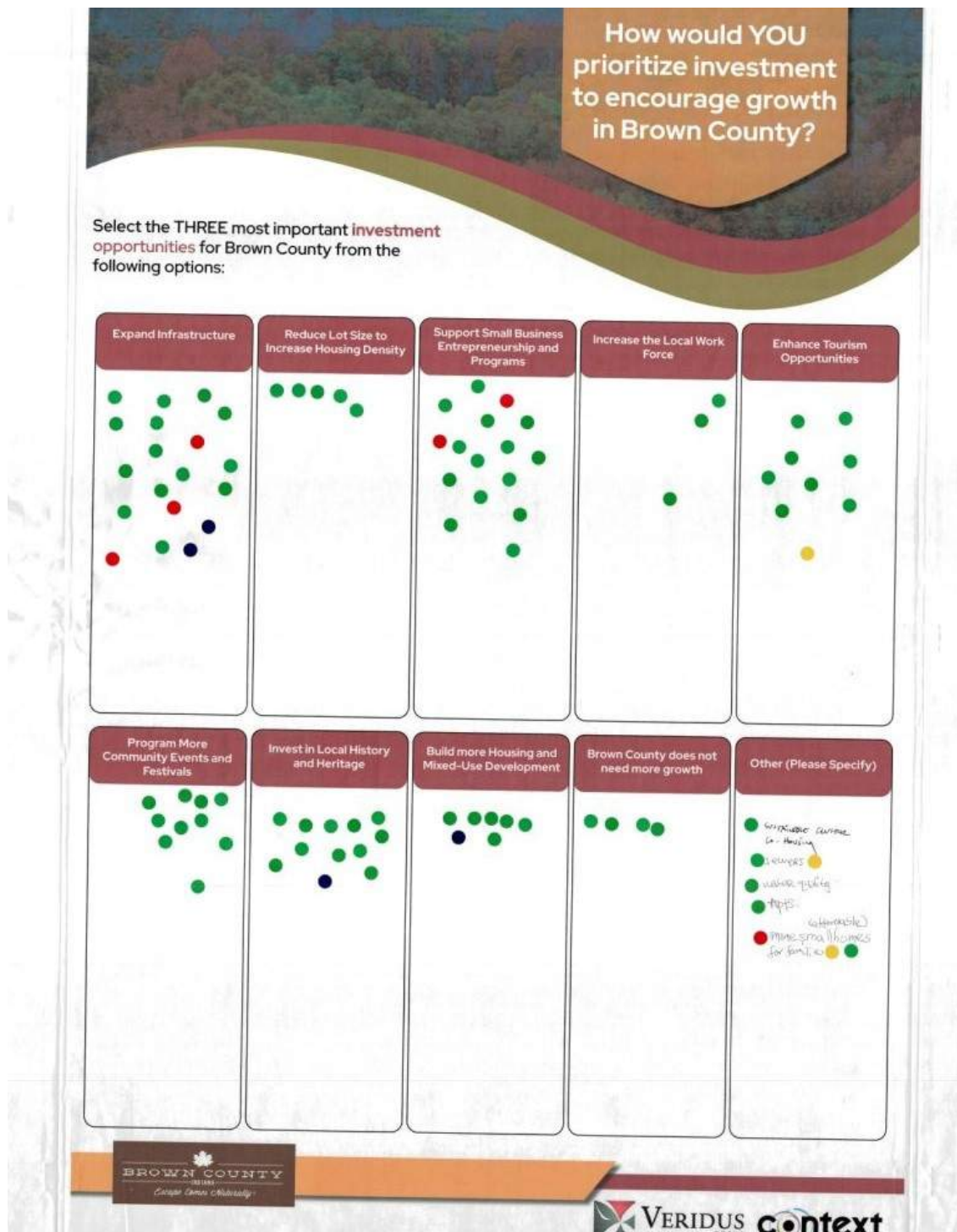


Figure 64: Prioritization 1, Source: Community Meeting Nashville

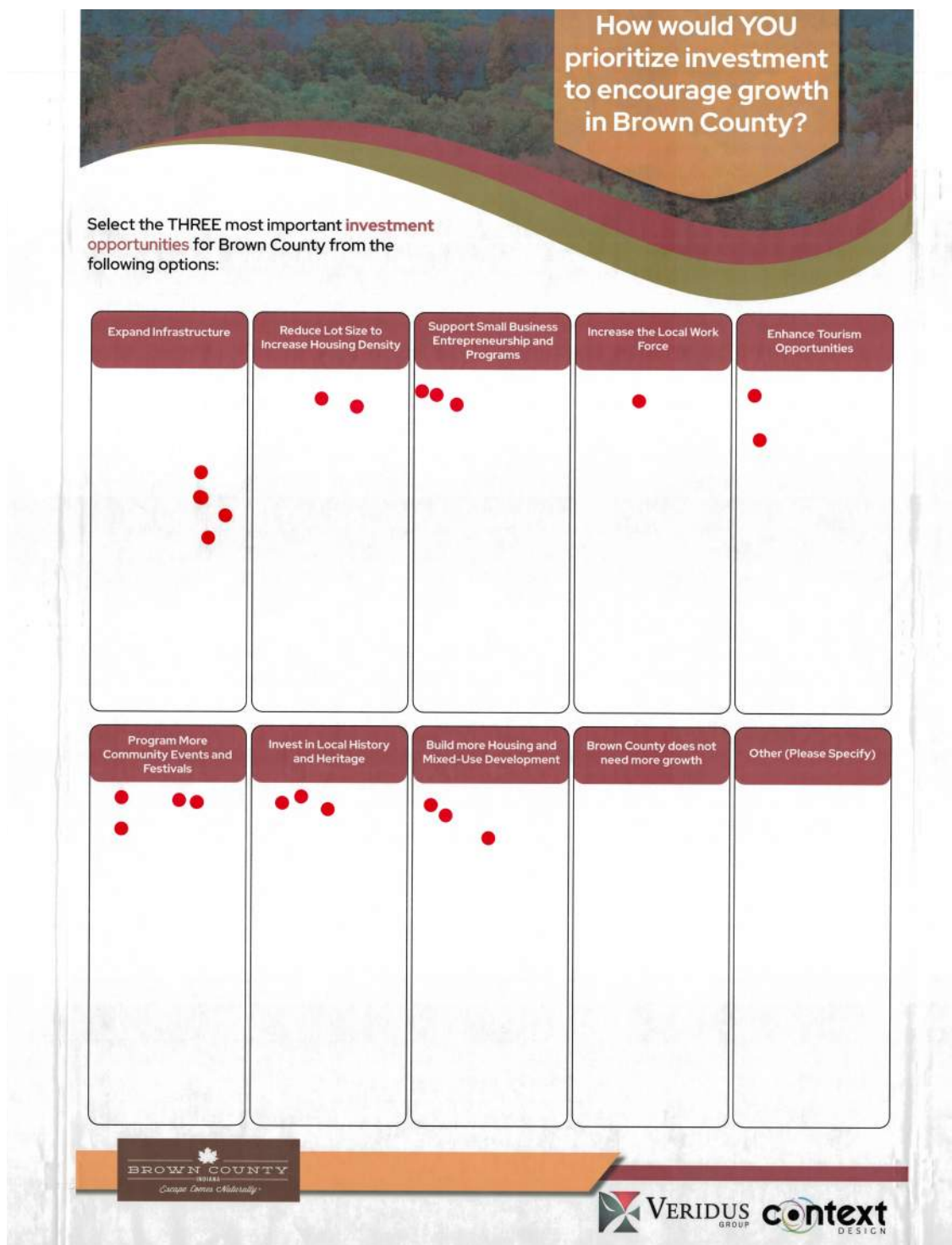


Figure 65: Prioritization 2, Source: Community Meeting Van Buren

Appendix B: MAPS / FIGURES



Figure 66: Housing Type 1, Source: Community Meeting Nashville

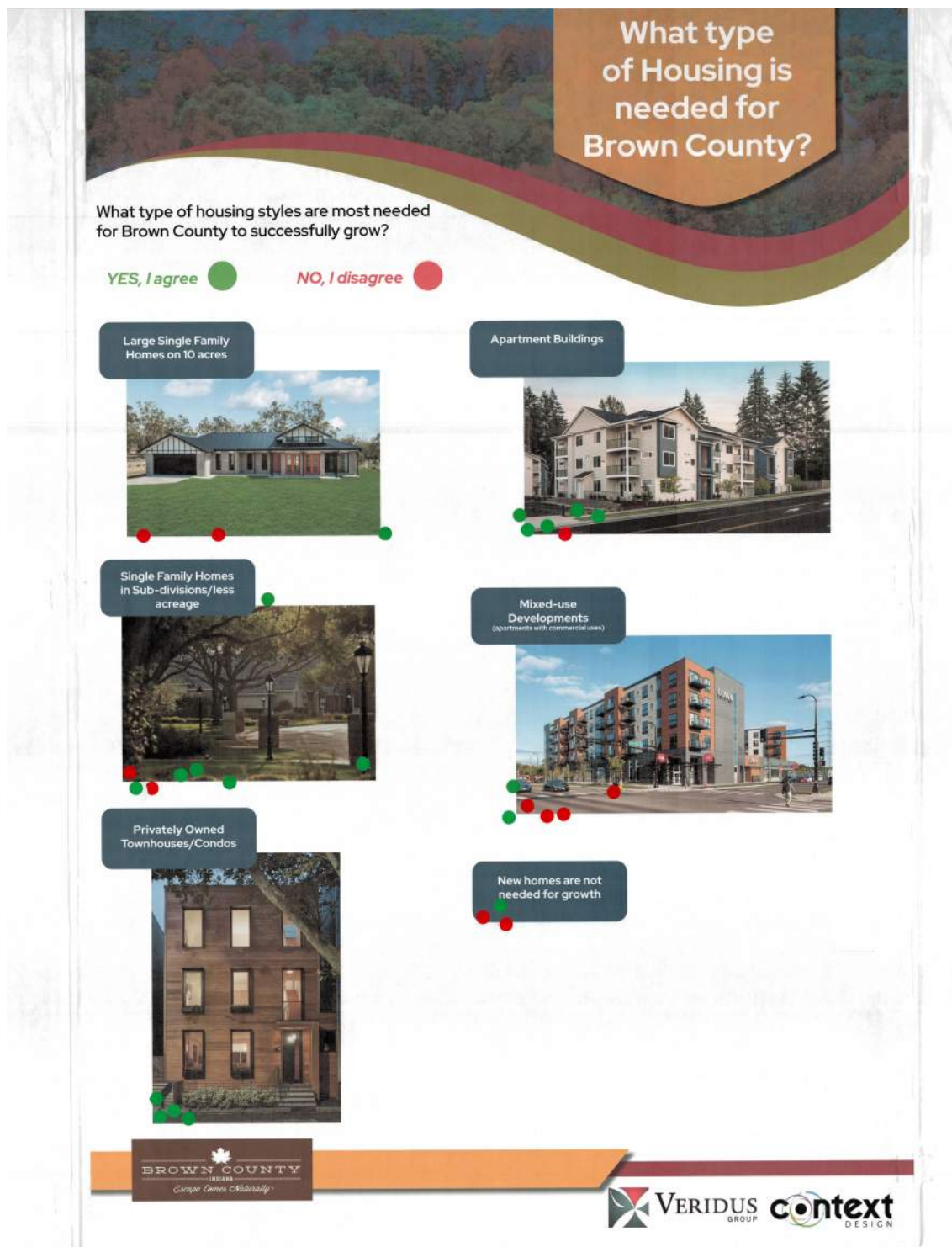


Figure 67: Housing Type 2, Source: Community Meeting Van Buren

Appendix B: MAPS / FIGURES

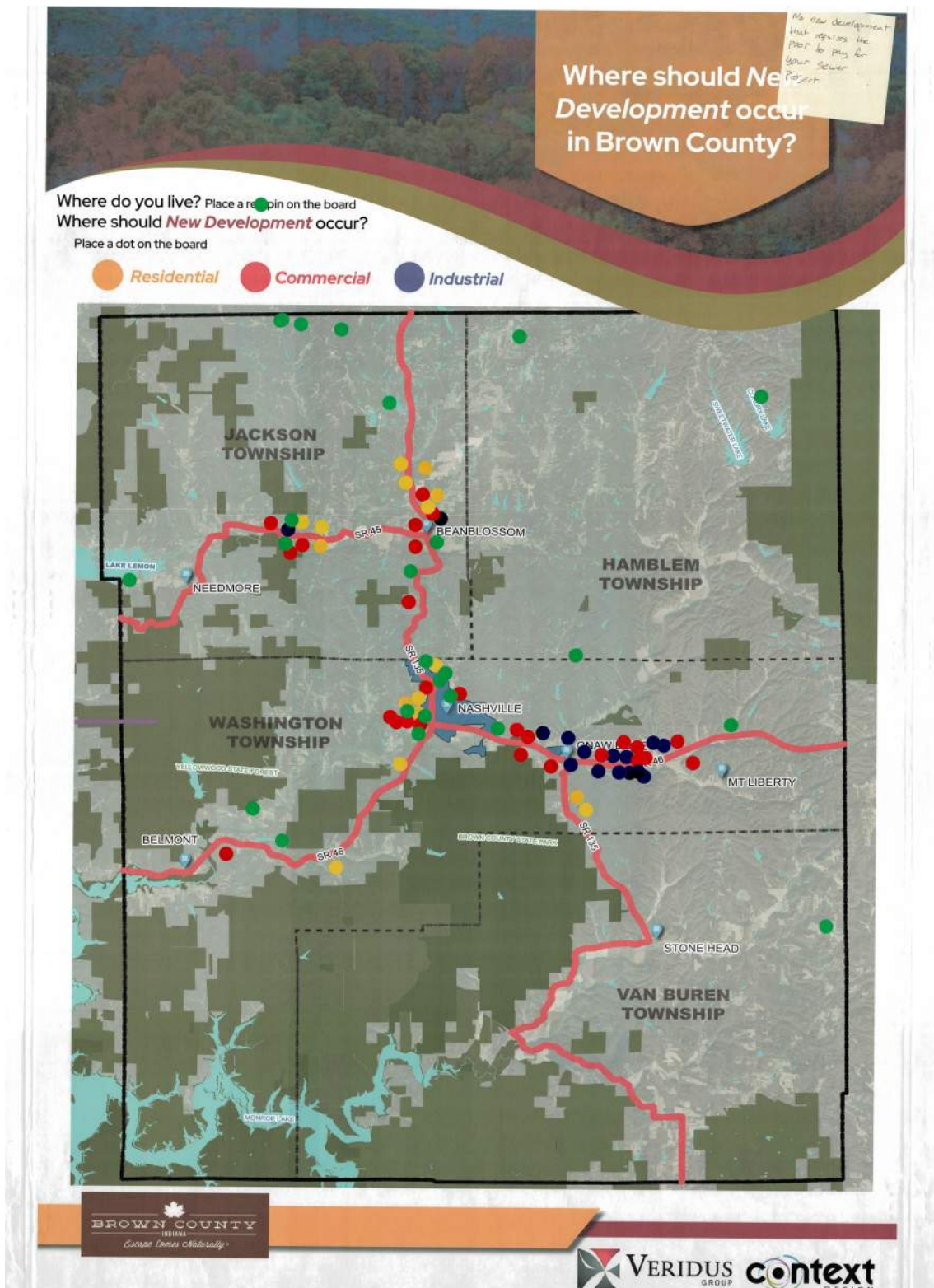


Figure 68: Location of Growth 1, Source: Community Meeting Nashville

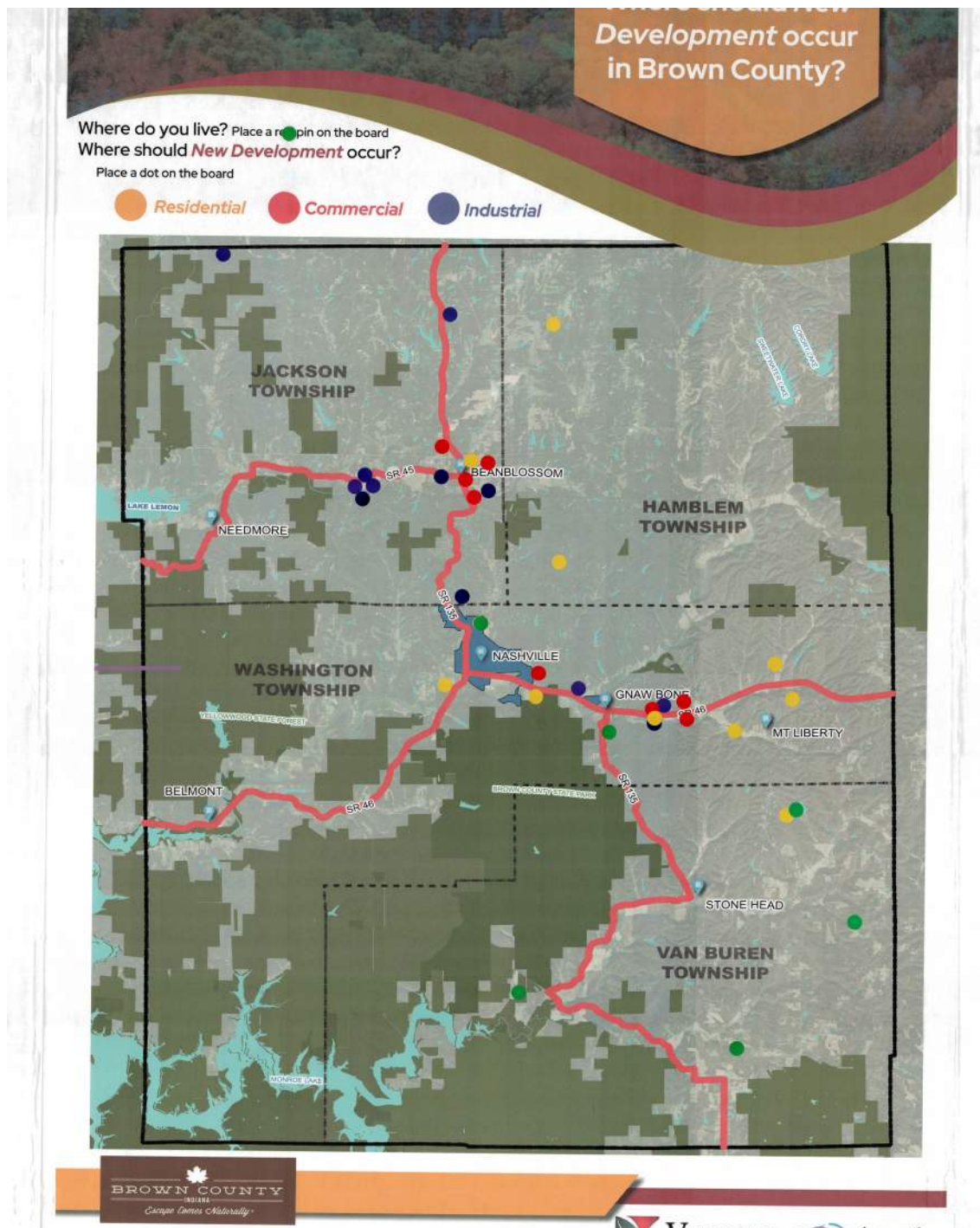


Figure 69: Location of Growth 2, Source: Community Meeting Van Buren

Appendix C: SURVEY

QUESTION 1

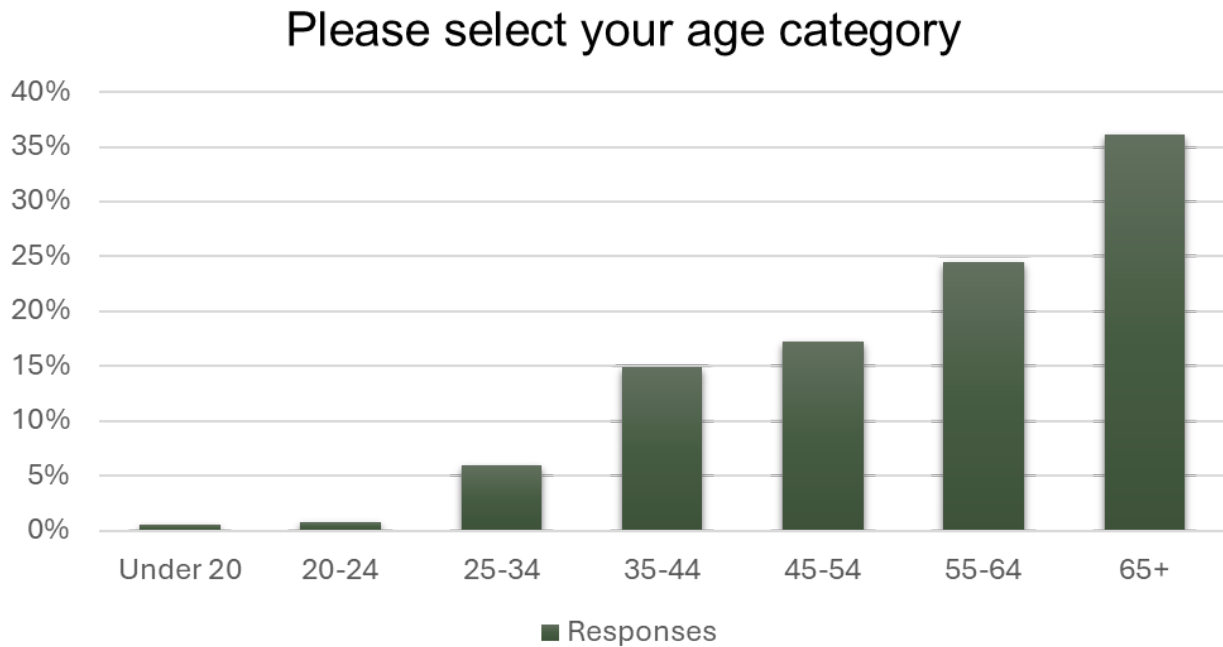


Figure 70: Location of Growth 2, Source: Community Meeting Van Buren

Answer Choices	Responses	
Under 20	0.52%	2
20-24	0.77%	3
25-34	5.93%	23
35-44	14.95%	58
45-54	17.27%	67
55-64	24.48%	95
65+	36.08%	140
	Answered	388
	Skipped	2

QUESTION 2

How long have you lived in Brown County?

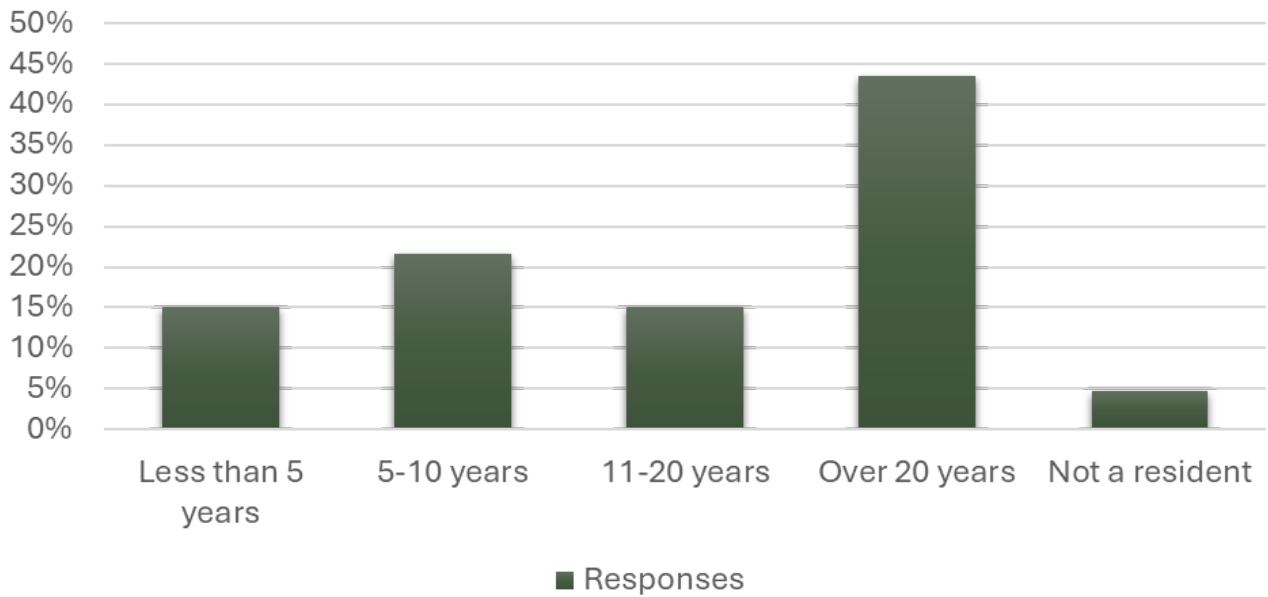


Figure 71: Location of Growth 2, Source: Community Meeting Van Buren

Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 5 years	15.13%	59
5-10 years	21.54%	84
11-20 years	15.13%	59
Over 20 years	43.59%	170
Not a resident	4.62%	18
	Answered	390
	Skipped	0

Appendix C: SURVEY

QUESTION 3

Please rank the following efforts of Brown County Officials related to growth in Brown County in order of importance to you, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.

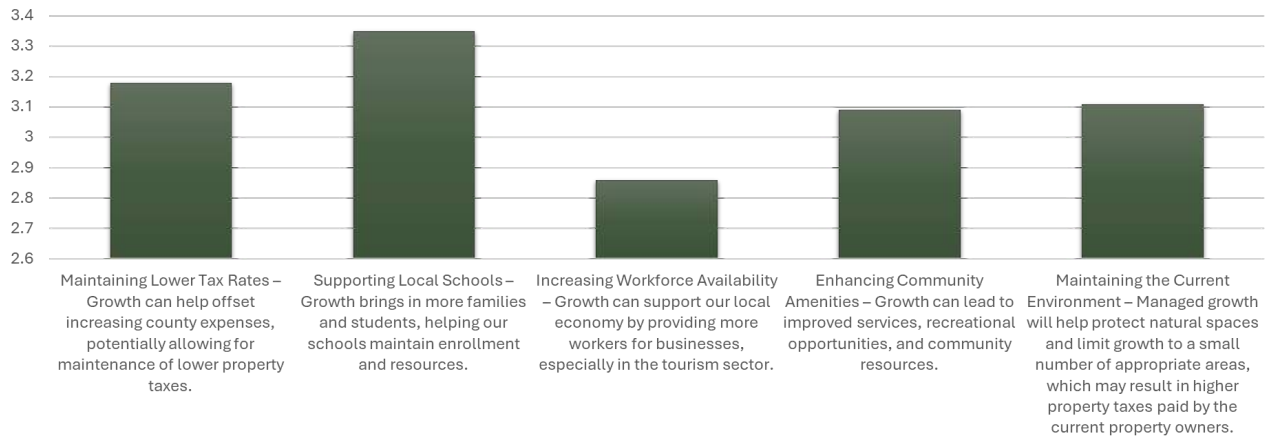


Figure 36: Question 3, Source: Brown County Survey

	#1 Priority	#2 Priority	#3 Priority	#4 Priority	#5 Priority	Total	Weighted Average
Maintaining Lower Tax Rates – Growth can help offset increasing county expenses, potentially allowing for maintenance of lower property taxes.	75	37	40	43	50	245	3.18
Supporting Local Schools – Growth brings in more families and students, helping our schools maintain enrollment and resources.	60	66	51	39	30	246	3.35
Increasing Workforce Availability – Growth can support our local economy by providing more workers for businesses, especially in the tourism sector.	25	53	57	61	37	233	2.86
Enhancing Community Amenities – Growth can lead to improved services, recreational opportunities, and community resources.	37	57	57	47	32	230	3.09
Maintaining the Current Environment – Managed growth will help protect natural spaces and limit growth to a small number of appropriate areas, which may result in higher property taxes paid by the current property owners.	68	39	46	39	54	246	3.11
						Answered	269
						Skipped	121

QUESTION 4

What "other" priorities do you want officials to explore in Brown County?	
Answered	132
Skipped	258



Figure 37: Question 4 Word Cloud, Source, Brown County Survey

Appendix C: SURVEY

QUESTION 5

Please rank the following priorities for sanitary sewer and water infrastructure expansion in Brown County in order of preference, with 1 being the most preferred and 5 being the least preferred.

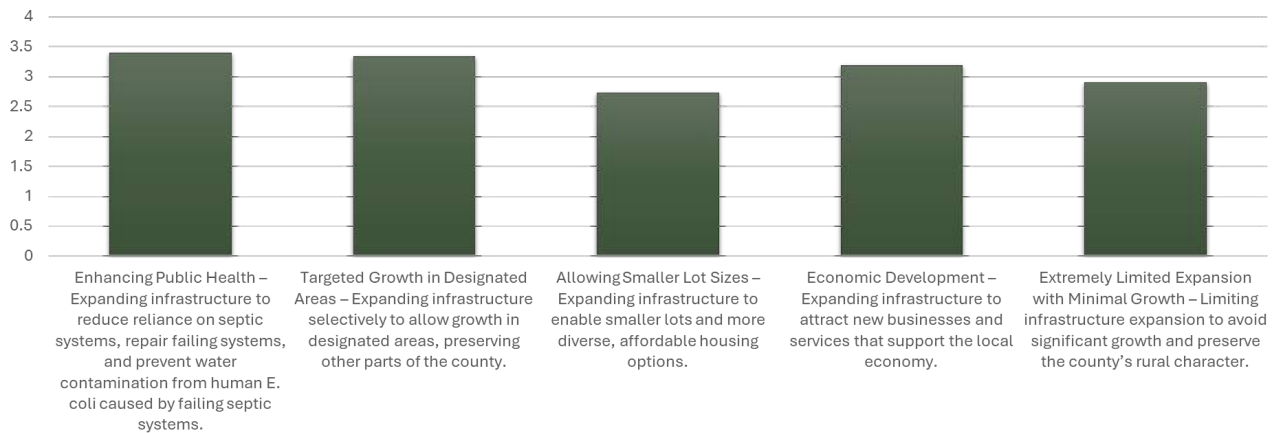


Figure 38: Question 5, Source: Brown County Survey

	#1 Priority	#2 Priority	#3 Priority	#4 Priority	#5 Priority	Total	Weighted Average
Enhancing Public Health – Expanding infrastructure to reduce reliance on septic systems, repair failing systems, and prevent water contamination from human E. coli caused by failing septic systems.	72	42	55	41	25	235	3.4
Targeted Growth in Designated Areas – Expanding infrastructure selectively to allow growth in designated areas, preserving other parts of the county.	41	75	69	49	12	246	3.34
Allowing Smaller Lot Sizes – Expanding infrastructure to enable smaller lots and more diverse, affordable housing options.	36	38	45	54	59	232	2.73
Economic Development – Expanding infrastructure to attract new businesses and services that support the local economy.	48	56	62	38	34	238	3.19
Extremely Limited Expansion with Minimal Growth – Limiting infrastructure expansion to avoid significant growth and preserve the county's rural character.	65	42	19	32	82	240	2.9
Other (please specify)						50	
						Answered	269
						Skipped	121

QUESTION 6

Please rank the following options for funding improvements to local governments including: infrastructure, public safety, roads, and general operations in Brown County, with 1 being your preferred option and 5 being your least preferred option.

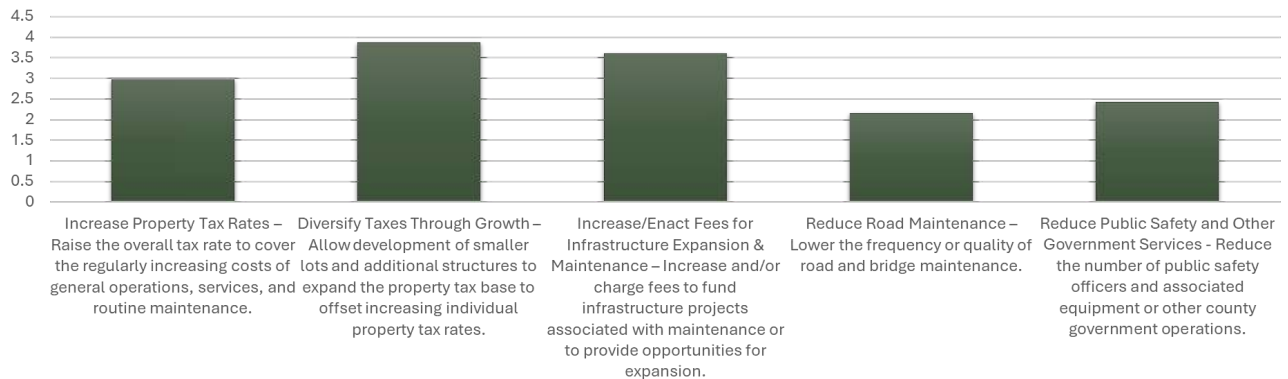


Figure 39: Question 6, Source: Brown County Survey

	#1 Priority	#2 Priority	#3 Priority	#4 Priority	#5 Priority	Total	Weighted Average
Increase Property Tax Rates – Raise the overall tax rate to cover the regularly increasing costs of general operations, services, and routine maintenance.	35	47	49	24	48	203	2.99
Diversify Taxes Through Growth – Allow development of smaller lots and additional structures to expand the property tax base to offset increasing individual property tax rates.	95	62	30	22	16	225	3.88
Increase/Enact Fees for Infrastructure Expansion & Maintenance – Increase and/or charge fees to fund infrastructure projects associated with maintenance or to provide opportunities for expansion.	50	75	76	23	7	231	3.6
Reduce Road Maintenance – Lower the frequency or quality of road and bridge maintenance.	11	19	35	86	71	222	2.16
Reduce Public Safety and Other Government Services - Reduce the number of public safety officers and associated equipment or other county government operations.	30	24	39	65	77	235	2.43
						Answered	249
						Skipped	141

Appendix C: SURVEY

QUESTION 7

Recognizing tourism as the largest employer in Brown County, which of the following strategies for diversifying employment options do you most prefer? Please rank each option from 1 (Most Preferred) to 5 (Least Preferred):

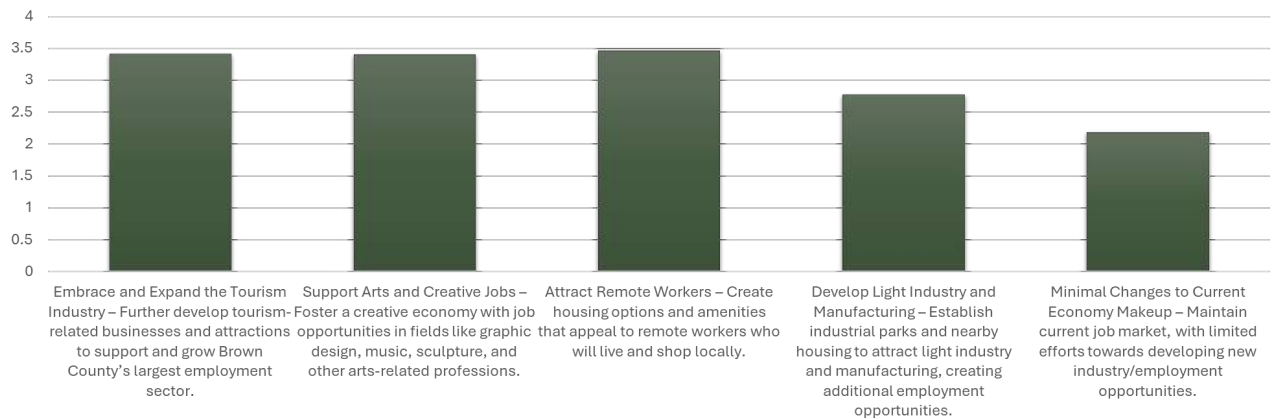


Figure 40: Question 7, Source: Brown County Survey

	#1 Priority	#2 Priority	#3 Priority	#4 Priority	#5 Priority	Total	Weighted Average
Embrace and Expand the Tourism Industry – Further develop tourism-related businesses and attractions to support and grow Brown County's largest employment sector.	57	46	58	34	18	213	3.42
Support Arts and Creative Jobs – Foster a creative economy with job opportunities in fields like graphic design, music, sculpture, and other arts-related professions.	43	66	49	47	9	214	3.41
Attract Remote Workers – Create housing options and amenities that appeal to remote workers who will live and shop locally.	57	53	58	36	14	218	3.47
Develop Light Industry and Manufacturing – Establish industrial parks and nearby housing to attract light industry and manufacturing, creating additional employment opportunities.	39	40	35	57	55	226	2.78
Minimal Changes to Current Economy Makeup - Maintain current job market, with limited efforts towards developing new industry/employment opportunities.	30	21	28	27	117	223	2.19
Are there other areas of business recruitment that should be prioritized?						43	
						Answered	234
						Skipped	156

QUESTION 8

To help address housing needs in Brown County, which of the following types of housing density would you most prefer to see in Brown County? Please rank each option from 1 (Most Preferred) to 5 (Least Preferred):

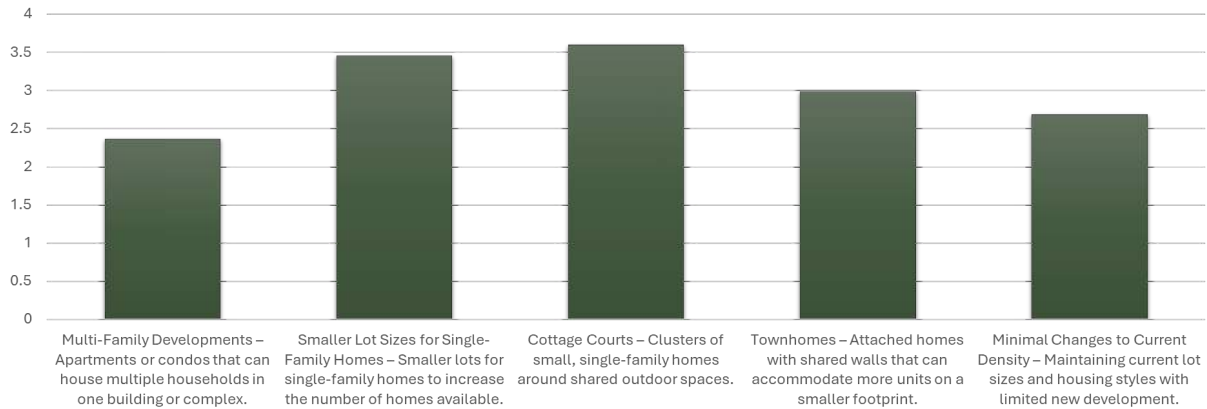


Figure 41: Question 8, Source: Brown County Survey

	#1 Priority	#2 Priority	#3 Priority	#4 Priority	#5 Priority	Total	Weighted Average
Multi-Family Developments – Apartments or condos that can house multiple households in one building or complex.	20	27	27	68	64	206	2.37
Smaller Lot Sizes for Single-Family Homes – Smaller lots for single-family homes to increase the number of homes available.	69	42	38	34	25	208	3.46
Cottage Courts – Clusters of small, single-family homes around shared outdoor spaces.	49	76	46	27	11	209	3.6
Townhomes – Attached homes with shared walls that can accommodate more units on a smaller footprint.	11	53	82	53	12	211	2.99
Minimal Changes to Current Density – Maintaining current lot sizes and housing styles with limited new development.	64	12	15	22	91	204	2.69
Is there an alternative type of housing option needed or that should be evaluated?						36	
						Answered	220
						Skipped	170

Appendix C: SURVEY

QUESTION 9

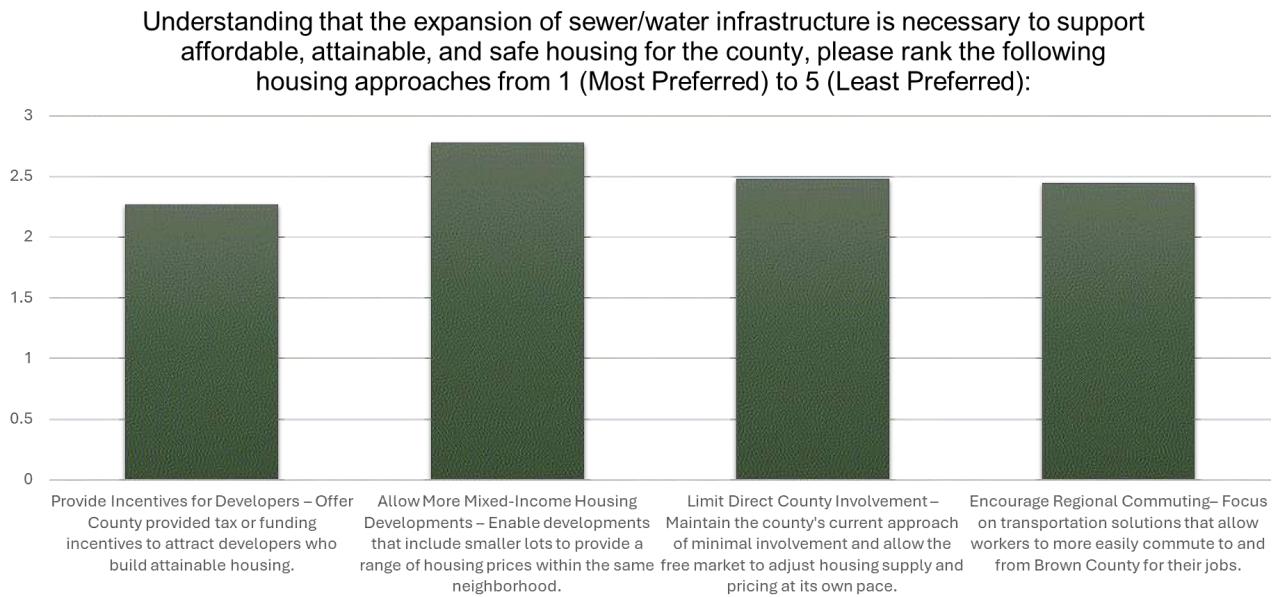


Figure 42: Question 9, Source: Brown County Survey

	#1 Priority	#2 Priority	#3 Priority	#4 Priority	Total	Weighted Average
Provide Incentives for Developers – Offer County provided tax or funding incentives to attract developers who build attainable housing.	38	51	54	69	212	2.27
Allow More Mixed-Income Housing Developments – Enable developments that include smaller lots to provide a range of housing prices within the same neighborhood.	73	57	52	34	216	2.78
Limit Direct County Involvement – Maintain the county's current approach of minimal involvement and allow the free market to adjust housing supply and pricing at its own pace.	68	37	38	70	213	2.48
Encourage Regional Commuting– Focus on transportation solutions that allow workers to more easily commute to and from Brown County for their jobs.	36	64	71	40	211	2.45
					Answered	220
					Skipped	170

QUESTION 10

Where would you most prefer to see additional growth in Brown County?
Please rank each area below from 1 (Most Preferred) to 5 (Least Preferred):

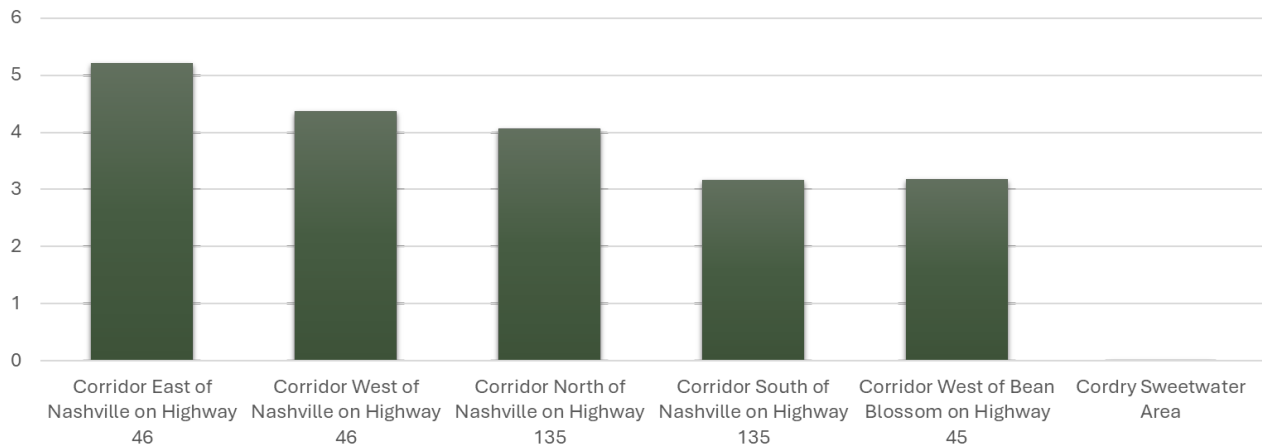


Figure 43: Question 10, Source: Brown County Survey

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Score
Corridor East of Nashville on Highway 46	130	40	25	14	10	0	219	5.21
Corridor West of Nashville on Highway 46	45	75	42	31	26	0	219	4.37
Corridor North of Nashville on Highway 135	28	54	69	42	26	0	219	4.07
Corridor South of Nashville on Highway 135	4	21	47	81	66	0	219	3.16
Corridor West of Bean Blossom on Highway 45	12	29	36	51	91	0	219	3.18
Cordry Sweetwater Area	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
							Answered	219
							Skipped	171

Appendix C: SURVEY

QUESTION 11

Is there another area the you believe should be prioritized?	
Answered	37
Skipped	353



Figure 44: Question 11 Word Cloud, Source: Brown County Survey

QUESTION 12

Is there anything else you would like to add or feel is important for the future of Brown County?	
Answered	98
Skipped	292



Figure 45: Question 12 Word Cloud, Source: Brown County Survey

Appendix D: CURRENT LAND USE TYPES

FLOOD PLAIN DISTRICT

The Flood Plain District is established to protect areas susceptible to flooding and to ensure the safety of people and property. This district is intended to preserve the natural functions of floodplains, mitigate potential flood hazards, and maintain water quality by restricting intensive development and encouraging activities that are compatible with periodic inundation. Appropriate uses in the Flood Plain District include agriculture, recreation, conservation, and certain public infrastructure projects that do not impede the natural flow of water. Development within this district is carefully regulated to minimize environmental impact and ensure compliance with state and federal floodplain management standards.

DEVELOPMENT AMENITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Permitted Uses:

- Agriculture, including crop production and grazing.
- Recreational areas such as parks, golf courses, and nature trails.
- Wildlife habitats and nature preserves.
- Public infrastructure such as bridges, roads, and utilities, provided they do not obstruct water flow.

Development Restrictions:

- Structures must be flood-proofed or elevated above the regulatory flood elevation.
- No residential buildings permitted in designated floodways.
- No storage of hazardous materials or pollutants.

Environmental Features:

- Preservation of natural vegetation to reduce soil erosion.
- Maintenance of floodplain as open space to support groundwater recharge and wildlife habitats.

Safety Considerations:

- Development proposals must include hydrologic and environmental impact assessments.
- Compliance with state and federal floodplain permits and regulations.

This approach ensures that the Flood Plain District supports sustainable land use while prioritizing safety and environmental integrity.

FLOOD-WAY DISTRICT

The Flood-Way District is designated to manage and protect areas critical for the natural flow of floodwaters during significant storm events. This district ensures that the conveyance of water is unimpeded, reducing the risk of upstream and downstream flooding. Activities in the Flood-Way District are limited to those that have minimal impact on water flow, such as agriculture, recreation, and conservation efforts. Development is highly restricted to prevent obstruction or alteration of the natural waterway, with exceptions granted for essential public infrastructure projects that comply with strict regulatory standards.

DEVELOPMENT AMENITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Permitted Uses:

- Agriculture, including crop cultivation and pastureland.
- Parks, trails, and other recreational spaces.
- Wildlife refuges and nature preserves.

Development Restrictions:

- No construction of residential, commercial, or industrial structures.
- No storage of debris, hazardous materials, or equipment that could be displaced during flooding.
- Limited public infrastructure projects, such as bridges or utility crossings, only with appropriate permits.

Environmental Features:

- Preservation of riparian zones and natural vegetation to maintain water quality and habitat.
- Open space maintained to accommodate water overflow and minimize erosion.

Safety Considerations:

- Any proposed use must comply with state and federal floodway management regulations.
- Detailed hydrological assessments required for any permitted activity to ensure no adverse impacts on floodwater flow or neighboring properties.

This district prioritizes safety and environmental sustainability, serving as a natural buffer zone that protects communities from flood-related hazards while supporting compatible land uses.

Appendix D: CURRENT LAND USE TYPES

FLOOD-WAY FRINGE DISTRICT

The Flood-Way Fringe District is designated for areas adjacent to floodways that are subject to occasional flooding but not as critical to the direct flow of floodwaters. This district allows for more flexibility in land use compared to the Flood-Way District while still prioritizing safety and environmental preservation. Activities in the Flood-Way Fringe District may include limited development, provided appropriate flood mitigation measures are taken, as well as recreational, agricultural, and conservation uses. Structures in this district must be designed to minimize flood damage and comply with elevation and flood-proofing standards.

DEVELOPMENT AMENITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Permitted Uses:

- Residential development with elevated or flood-proofed structures.
- Parks, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities.
- Agriculture, including gardens, orchards, and grazing lands.
- Commercial or industrial uses with flood-resilient construction, subject to specific zoning approval.

Development Restrictions:

- Structures must meet elevation requirements, with lowest floors above the regulatory flood protection grade.
- No construction or activities that would significantly alter natural water flow or increase flood risks.
- Limited storage of materials or equipment that could cause harm if displaced by floodwaters.

Environmental Features:

- Preservation of open space for water absorption and runoff management.
- Encouragement of green infrastructure, such as rain gardens and permeable surfaces, to reduce runoff.

Safety Considerations:

- Development proposals must include flood mitigation plans and hydrological impact assessments.
- Adherence to state and federal floodplain management guidelines to ensure minimal risk to property and community.

The Flood-Way Fringe District balances the need for development flexibility with the imperative to reduce flood risks and protect the natural floodplain functions, fostering a resilient and responsible approach to land use.

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT

The Forest Preserve District is established to protect and manage areas of significant forested land that contribute to Brown County's natural beauty, biodiversity, and environmental health. This district prioritizes conservation, sustainable forestry practices, and outdoor recreation while limiting intensive development to maintain the ecological integrity of these areas. Activities in the Forest Preserve District focus on preserving natural habitats, supporting passive recreational uses, and allowing for limited agricultural and forestry operations that align with conservation goals. The district plays a critical role in safeguarding wildlife corridors, water quality, and scenic landscapes for future generations.

DEVELOPMENT AMENITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Permitted Uses:

- Conservation areas and wildlife habitats.
- Low-impact recreational activities such as hiking, birdwatching, and camping.
- Sustainable forestry operations, including selective logging and forest management.
- Limited agricultural activities, such as grazing and non-invasive crop cultivation.

Development Restrictions:

- No intensive residential, commercial, or industrial developments permitted.
- Structures, if allowed, must have minimal environmental impact and adhere to strict design guidelines.
- Preservation of native vegetation and prohibition of activities that could lead to soil erosion or habitat loss.

Environmental Features:

- Maintenance of forest cover to support carbon sequestration and climate resilience.
- Protection of water quality through preservation of riparian zones and forested watersheds.
- Encouragement of native species planting and invasive species control.

Recreational Amenities:

- Development of trails, picnic areas, and informational signage for educational purposes.
- No motorized recreation facilities or activities that disrupt natural habitats.

Safety Considerations:

- Activities must comply with state and federal environmental regulations.
- Forestry operations require sustainable management plans approved by relevant authorities.

This district ensures that Brown County's forested landscapes remain a cornerstone of its ecological, recreational, and cultural heritage while fostering responsible land use and management practices.

Appendix D: CURRENT LAND USE TYPES

PRIMARY RESIDENCE DISTRICT

The Primary Residence District is intended to accommodate and promote residential development in areas that are well-suited for permanent housing due to their accessibility to utilities, transportation, and community services. This district is designed to foster a stable and cohesive residential environment with a focus on single-family homes and compatible uses that support residential living. Activities in the Primary Residence District include housing, community-oriented amenities, and limited home-based businesses that do not detract from the district's residential character. The district ensures a high quality of life for residents by maintaining development standards that preserve neighborhood aesthetics and functionality.

DEVELOPMENT AMENITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Permitted Uses:

- Single-family homes and duplexes.
- Community facilities such as schools, parks, and places of worship.
- Home-based businesses that meet zoning and operational guidelines.

Development Restrictions:

- Prohibition of industrial and heavy commercial uses.
- Limited multi-family housing developments, subject to specific approval.
- Strict setback, lot size, and building height requirements to maintain neighborhood character.

Infrastructure and Utilities:

- Access to public water and sewer systems or approved private systems.
- Adequate road infrastructure to support residential traffic.
- Availability of utility services such as electricity and telecommunications.

Neighborhood Features:

- Encouragement of sidewalks, streetlights, and landscaping for pedestrian safety and visual appeal.
- Compatibility with surrounding residential areas in terms of architectural style and density.

Recreational and Community Amenities:

- Access to local parks, playgrounds, and open spaces for recreation.
- Opportunities for community gathering spaces, such as neighborhood centers or clubhouses.

This district supports the creation and maintenance of vibrant and livable residential neighborhoods that meet the needs of current and future residents while preserving the community's character and appeal.

SECONDARY RESIDENCE DISTRICT

The Secondary Residence District is designed to accommodate residential development in areas that have experienced scattered or incremental urbanization, often along county highways and in less centralized locations. This district allows for a mix of single-family and limited multi-family housing, supporting a range of residential options while maintaining a semi-rural character. Activities in the Secondary Residence District focus on providing housing opportunities with flexibility for home-based businesses and small-scale community services that complement residential uses. Development standards are aimed at ensuring compatibility with the surrounding environment and maintaining a balance between residential living and open spaces.

DEVELOPMENT AMENITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Permitted Uses:

- Single-family homes and duplexes.
- Limited multi-family housing, subject to approval.
- Small-scale home-based businesses that do not disrupt the residential character.

Development Restrictions:

- Prohibition of industrial uses and large-scale commercial developments.
- Setback and lot size requirements to maintain spaciousness and semi-rural ambiance.
- Limitations on building height to ensure compatibility with surrounding residences.

Infrastructure and Utilities:

- Availability of on-site septic systems or connection to public utilities, where feasible.
- Roadways designed to handle residential traffic without extensive urban infrastructure.
- Provision for utilities such as electricity and telecommunications in more dispersed areas.

Neighborhood Features:

- Support for open spaces, natural buffers, and minimal light pollution to preserve rural qualities.
- Encouragement of architectural styles that reflect the community's character.

Recreational and Community Amenities:

- Access to local parks, trails, and natural areas for recreation.
- Potential for small community-oriented facilities, such as playgrounds or neighborhood centers.

The Secondary Residence District offers a flexible framework for residential development that accommodates growth while preserving the semi-rural charm and livability of Brown County's outlying areas

Appendix D: CURRENT LAND USE TYPES

LAKE RESIDENCE DISTRICT

The Lake Residence District is intended to support residential development in areas adjacent to significant bodies of water, where the natural landscape and access to the lake create a unique living environment. This district prioritizes the preservation of water quality and the scenic character of the lakefront while allowing for seasonal and permanent residential use. Activities in the Lake Residence District focus on residential living, water-based recreation, and conservation of natural resources. Development is carefully managed to ensure compatibility with the lake environment, with standards that encourage low-impact construction, buffering, and integration with the natural setting.

DEVELOPMENT AMENITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Permitted Uses:

- Single-family homes designed for seasonal or permanent occupancy.
- Recreational facilities such as docks, boathouses, and fishing piers, subject to approval.
- Conservation areas and natural preserves.

Development Restrictions:

- Structures must be set back from the lake to protect water quality and minimize erosion.
- Prohibition of industrial uses and large-scale commercial developments.
- No discharge of pollutants or wastewater directly into the lake.

Environmental Features:

- Preservation of riparian zones with native vegetation to reduce runoff and improve water quality.
- Restrictions on deforestation or extensive land grading near the lakefront.
- Encouragement of stormwater management practices, such as rain gardens and permeable surfaces.

Neighborhood Characteristics:

- Low-density development to maintain the tranquility and exclusivity of the lakefront.
- Architectural designs that blend with the natural surroundings.
- Well-defined access points to the lake for residents, with public access areas where appropriate.

Recreational and Community Amenities:

- Walking trails and picnic areas that enhance the outdoor experience.
- Water-based activities such as kayaking, fishing, and boating.
- Community docks or marinas for shared lake access in larger developments.

This district ensures that residential development near lakes aligns with environmental conservation and community enjoyment, fostering a sustainable and serene living environment.

GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The General Business District is intended to accommodate a broad range of commercial and service-oriented activities that serve the needs of both residents and visitors. This district is strategically located to maximize accessibility and visibility, supporting businesses that provide retail, professional services, dining, and entertainment opportunities. Activities in the General Business District are designed to promote economic growth and vitality while ensuring compatibility with surrounding areas through thoughtful planning and design. Development standards prioritize pedestrian-friendly environments, efficient traffic flow, and aesthetic appeal to create a dynamic and inviting commercial hub.

DEVELOPMENT AMENITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Permitted Uses:

- Retail establishments, including shops, grocery stores, and department stores.
- Professional offices, such as medical, legal, and financial services.
- Food and beverage services, including restaurants, cafes, and bars.
- Entertainment venues, such as theaters, bowling alleys, and event spaces.

Development Restrictions:

- Prohibition of heavy industrial uses to maintain a commercial focus.
- Structures must adhere to height and setback regulations to ensure consistency with the district's character.
- Adequate buffering from adjacent residential areas to minimize noise and visual impact.

Infrastructure and Accessibility:

- Ample on-site parking to accommodate customers and employees.
- Sidewalks and crosswalks to enhance pedestrian safety and connectivity.
- Access to public utilities, including water, sewer, and electricity.

Design and Aesthetic Features:

- Attractive storefront designs with consistent signage and landscaping.
- Outdoor seating and gathering spaces to encourage customer engagement.
- Lighting that ensures safety while minimizing light pollution.

Community and Economic Features:

- Flexibility to support mixed-use development, integrating residential units above commercial spaces.
- Opportunities for small and locally-owned businesses to thrive alongside larger enterprises.
- Strategic placement near major roads and intersections for ease of access.

The General Business District provides a framework for vibrant commercial activity that meets the community's needs while fostering a welcoming and economically sustainable environment.

Appendix D: CURRENT LAND USE TYPES

ACCOMMODATION BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Accommodation Business District is designed to support businesses that cater to the needs of tourists and visitors, particularly in areas near recreational destinations and lakefronts. This district emphasizes services and amenities that enhance the visitor experience, such as lodging, dining, retail, and entertainment. Activities in the Accommodation Business District are intended to complement the character of surrounding residential and recreational areas while promoting economic opportunities through tourism. Development within this district prioritizes walkability, aesthetic compatibility with the local environment, and accessibility to key attractions.

DEVELOPMENT AMENITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Permitted Uses:

- Lodging facilities, such as hotels, motels, and inns.
- Restaurants, cafes, and casual dining establishments.
- Specialty retail shops, including gift stores, boutiques, and art galleries.
- Recreational businesses, such as rental shops for bikes, kayaks, or other outdoor equipment.

Development Restrictions:

- Structures must align with the architectural style of the surrounding area to maintain a cohesive aesthetic.
- Prohibition of heavy industrial uses or businesses incompatible with tourism-focused development.
- Limits on signage to ensure it is consistent with the district's character and does not detract from natural scenery.

Infrastructure and Accessibility:

- Paved sidewalks, bike paths, and pedestrian-friendly connections to nearby attractions.
- Adequate parking facilities for both visitors and employees.
- Access to public utilities and high-speed internet to support modern business needs.

Design and Aesthetic Features:

- Landscaped public areas, including small plazas or seating areas for visitors.
- Outdoor dining or gathering spaces that enhance the visitor experience.
- Lighting and signage designed to be visually appealing and non-intrusive.

Community and Tourism Features:

- Opportunities for small, locally-owned businesses to operate alongside larger establishments.
- Proximity to recreational areas, such as lakes, trails, or parks, to serve as a hub for tourist activity.
- Integration of information kiosks or signage to guide visitors to local attractions and amenities.

INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

The Industrial District is intended to accommodate manufacturing, processing, warehousing, and other industrial activities that contribute to economic development and job creation in Brown County. This district is strategically located to maximize accessibility to transportation networks, utilities, and other infrastructure necessary for industrial operations. Activities in the Industrial District are designed to minimize environmental impacts and ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses through appropriate buffering and development standards. The district supports a variety of industrial operations while maintaining safety, efficiency, and adherence to local and state regulations.

DEVELOPMENT AMENITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Permitted Uses:

- Light manufacturing and assembly plants.
- Warehousing and distribution centers.
- Research and development facilities.
- Industrial parks and multi-tenant industrial buildings.

Development Restrictions:

- Prohibition of residential uses and non-industrial activities incompatible with heavy operations.
- Structures must adhere to height, setback, and lot coverage regulations to ensure orderly development.
- Adequate buffering and screening required to separate industrial uses from adjacent residential or commercial areas.

Infrastructure and Accessibility:

- Access to major roadways, highways, or rail lines for efficient transport of goods and materials.
- Connection to public utilities, including water, sewer, and electricity, to support high-demand industrial processes.
- Adequate on-site parking for employees, trucks, and heavy equipment.

Design and Environmental Features:

- Implementation of stormwater management systems to mitigate runoff and protect water quality.
- Noise, vibration, and emission controls to minimize impacts on nearby areas.
- Landscaping and green buffers to enhance aesthetics and provide environmental benefits.

Safety and Compliance Features:

- Compliance with local, state, and federal safety and environmental regulations.
- Adequate fire suppression systems and access for emergency services.
- Secure facilities with controlled access to ensure operational safety.

