TOWN OF LACONIA

Comprehensive Plan

CELEBRATING OUR ASSETS

BUILDING QUALITY PLACES

EXPANDING OUR OFFERINGS

TOWN PLANNING INITIATIVE
HARRISON COUNTY
The Town of Laconia

TOWN OF LACONIA, INDIANA
RESOLUTION NO. 2023-_01_

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
OF LACONIA APPROVING THE
LACONIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, Indiana Code 36-7-4-500, *et. seq.* empowers the Harrison County Plan Commission and Harrison County Board of Commissioners to prepare a Comprehensive Plan for the promotion of public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, or the general welfare and for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of development and to make periodic updates thereto; and

WHEREAS, Indiana Code 36-7-4-500, *et. seq.* authorizes a Comprehensive Plan to include a variety of elements, including but not limited to a statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction; a statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction; a statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities; and any factors that are part of the physical, economic, and social characteristics of the town; and
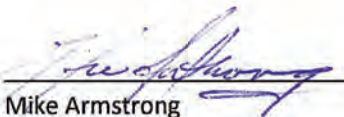
WHEREAS, the Harrison County Plan Commission, in conjunction with the Harrison County Community Foundation, Taylor Siefker Williams Design Group, and The Wheately Group, has undertaken a study to develop the Laconia Comprehensive Plan for the town; and
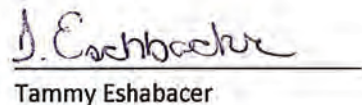
WHEREAS, the Laconia Town Council did certify the Laconia Comprehensive Plan with a _3-0_ vote and forwarded the Comprehensive Plan to the Harrison County Plan Commission with favorable support for adoption.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF LACONIA, INDIANA that the town council is in support of the Laconia Comprehensive Plan and desires for the Harrison County Plan Commission and Harrison County Board of Commissioners to proceed with the official public hearing in accordance with Indiana Code 36-7-4-500, *et. seq.* and all other required adoption processes in order to adopt the Laconia Comprehensive Plan.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LACONIA, INDIANA
ON THIS _02_ DAY OF _February_, 2023.

Scott Byrum   Mike Armstrong   Tammy Eshabacer

Acknowledgments

Preserving Laconia's rural character and improving the quality of life should be most emphasized.

- Community Survey Participant

CONTENTS

About the Plan

Serving as the introduction to the plan, this chapter explains the relationship between the the *Harrison County Town Planning Initiative* and *Laconia Comprehensive Plan*. Following the plan overview, the planning process is documented with highlights of the key findings from data collection and public input.

Planning efforts should always be rooted in a fundamental understanding of a community's existing demographic, market, and physical conditions which provide guidance for community leaders when making decisions for the future. While this chapter only hits on a few key findings from the existing conditions inventory and analysis, and the public engagement process, the complete summaries can be found in the appendix.

PLAN OVERVIEW

The Harrison County Town Planning Initiative, funded by both HCCF and Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Giving Indiana Funds for Tomorrow (GIFT) VII Implementation Grant, assisted each of the county's ten incorporated towns to complete a Comprehensive Plan and an Asset Management Plan, as required by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT).

What is the Harrison County Town Planning Initiative?

Planning for the future often begins as a grassroots effort within a community- meaning the issues that need to be solved and the big ideas for the future MUST come from the people, workers, and businesses of the town. Individuals and groups working together provide a base for the policies and development-related decisions, helping identify the projects and programs needed to help achieve the vision and goals for the future.

The *Harrison County Town Planning Initiative* was first introduced in the *2020 Harrison County Community Leadership Planning Initiative,* a plan that brought together the multiple governmental bodies, non-profits, and community organizations within Harrison County to provide a strategic and aligned direction related to the quality of life for those living and working in Harrison County. In response to this plan, the Harrison County Community Foundation (HCCF) recognized the importance and impact of providing the resources to each town for them to dream big and solve community issues. This initiative, funded by both HCCF and Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Giving Indiana Funds for Tomorrow (GIFT) VII Implementation Grant, provided assistance to the county's ten incorporated towns to complete a comprehensive plan and an asset management plan to provide a foundation for each community to make the positive changes they felt were most critical to the town's future.

The *Laconia Comprehensive Plan* encourages the community to improve upon its assets and create a successful future for the town and its residents. A comprehensive plan works to identify a community's goals and aspirations for the future based on community needs, data-driven trends, and public perceptions. At the end of the process, the plan should be used to guide decisions related to growth and development and also help prioritize projects and programs identified for the short, mid, and long-term.

PLANNING PROCESS

The development of this comprehensive plan was guided by the ideas and feedback shared by the community. The *Laconia Comprehensive Plan* took place over ten months, starting in February 2022 and ending in January 2023. The process consisted of three key phases:

PHASE 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS (FEBRUARY 2022 - APRIL 2022)

The beginning phase consisted of data collection and analysis in addition to identifying the community's major assets and challenges through existing demographics and socio-economic conditions, mapping analysis, and the first public engagement event. This phase acted as the starting point for defining the big ideas for the future and big issues to solve.

> **Public Engagement Round 1** – On March 3, 2022, the first public engagement opportunity was held at Laconia's town hall. Members from the town board and community gathered to share their ideas for the future with the project team. An online survey was also available for people that weren't able to participate in the event. The primary purpose of this opportunity was to identify places or things the community would like to change or preserve, understand the community's values, and brainstorm ideas for the future.

PHASE 2: STRATEGIC PLANNING (MAY 2022 - SEPTEMBER 2022)

The second phase included the development of strategies, including crafting and refining the vision statement, goals, and big ideas, as well as using previous analysis and public input to develop the draft plan. This phase included a public engagement event allowing participants to review and provide feedback on the plan's draft plan content.

> Because Laconia had a current comprehensive plan completed in 2014, this planning process relied heavily on engagement from the 2014 process. This is reason, the project team did not facilitate a public event during this phase.

PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES (OCTOBER 2022 - JANUARY 2023)

The final phase of the planning process focused primarily on implementation, including finalizing the prioritization of strategies and identifying supporting action steps for completing each strategy. This phase also included the final public engagement event, the public release of the draft plan, and the adoption process for the comprehensive plan.

> **Public Engagement Round 2** – On January 5, 2023, the second public engagement opportunity was held at Laconia's town hall. Residents were invited to attend a work session to review the big ideas and vet the top priorities for the future. An online survey was also available for people that weren't able to participate in the event. The primary purpose of this opportunity was to ensure the community was comfortable and confident in the draft plan recommendations before the project team finalized the plan.

DATA-DRIVEN
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

38
2020 POPULATION

14%
INCREASE IN
EDUCATIONAL
ATTAINMENT SINCE 2010

10
MILES TO
BRANDENBURG
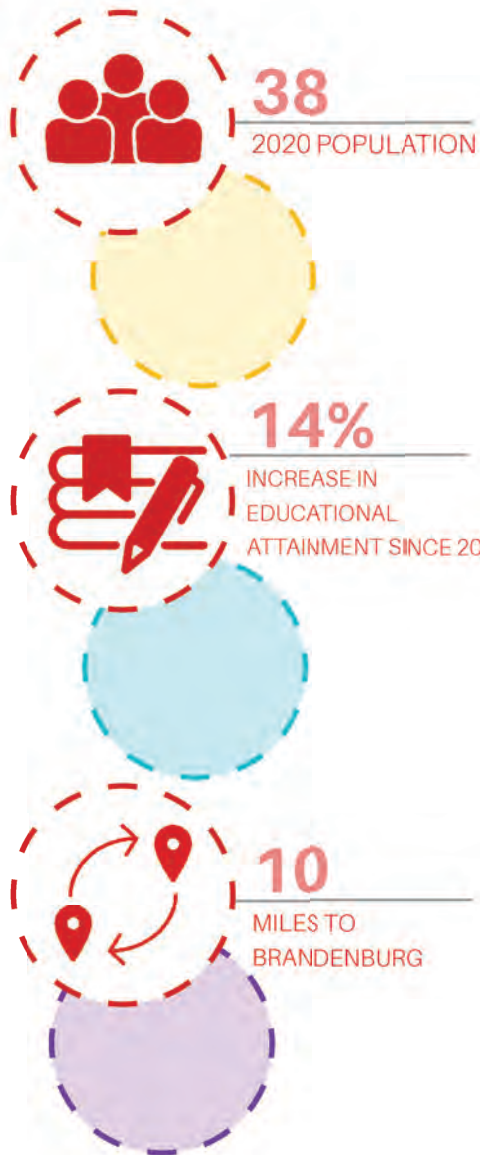
LACONIA'S OPPORTUNITIES

- **Laconia has a current comprehensive plan in place.** Unlike most of the other towns in Harrison County, Laconia has a current comprehensive plan that was completed in 2014. Over the last 5+ years, the town has been using the plan to guide community investments. Because of this, the town has a better understanding of comprehensive planning and has already done the heavy lifting of identifying a vision for the future. Through this process, the project team will be able to vet these ideas and continue expanding upon them.

- **For the size of the community, Laconia has several community assets.** For a community of 38 residents, Laconia has many community assets to be proud of including the general store, the park area behind the store, the community parks with a new shelter house, and the community center. These facilities are well-kept and high used facilities that contribute to the character and quality of life offered within Laconia.

- **Laconia's location makes it an easy commute to Brandenburg.** With only 10 miles from Brandenburg, residents can enjoy the rural characteristics of Laconia with convenient access to a large city. Many residents travel to Brandenburg for their errands, groceries, and sometimes employment. As new employers settle in Brandenburg, Laconia could be an attractive place to live for some of the newcomers.

- **Educational attainment levels are increasing at all levels.** Between 2010 and 2020 the percentage of the population over the age of 25 that had a high school diploma or higher increased by about 14%. Of With a trend in increased educational attainment, Laconia has an opportunity to capture the new younger educated generation who want to live in an area with a small-town feel area and still be within a short commuting distance to regional employment centers. A focus should be placed on keeping those younger residents as they graduate high school or college through providing essential quality of life amenities they desire.

- **Several members of the workforce are working from home.** With half of the labor force working from home, broadband connectivity comes to the forefront of top priorities. For these individuals and others, to be able to work from home, Laconia should be striving to improve not only access but also the quality and affordability of broadband.

During the planning process, a variety of demographic conditions were collected and assessed in addition to comments gathered directly from the public. The following pages show a high-level overview of Laconia. A more in-depth assessment can be found in the appendix on page 62.

LACONIA'S CHALLENGES

- **Laconia has limited capacity and financial resources to get things done.** While not unique to Laconia, smaller communities have few financial, technical, and staff resources. Because of this, the town likely depends on a select few individuals to keep things moving and struggle to see how things could be different than they are today.

- **Laconia is facing challenges related to aging utility infrastructure.** Even dating back to the 2014 Comprehensive plan, Laconia has expressed the need for several utility improvements including upgrades to the stormwater system and sewer system. The cost of maintenance and upgrades to utility infrastructure can become overbearing but it is a critical action for communities to take. Not doing does utilities impact current residents but it also plays a role in the community's ability to support future growth.

- **Laconia has a high vacancy rate.** Nearly 40% of Laconia's current housing stock is vacant. Data reveals the units that were once renter-occupied are not occupied any longer. This could be a result of the quality or condition of the units or conflicts with absentee landlords. The challenge with vacancy is that the longer the unit is vacant, the less likely it is to be cared for properly. As these units start to become dilapidated, it becomes a safety issue and impacts the property value of surrounding homes.

- **Maintenance and repair costs of an aging housing stock will continue to increase.** Without any new houses being built after 1969, maintenance and repair costs will continue to increase and may become burdensome for Laconia residents. While there was an increase in household income, major renovations and improvements can quickly become costly and some residents may be unable to maintain their existing structures. Laconia can assist homeowners with the financial costs of maintaining their properties by utilizing state and federal funding programs as well as any additional property management and upkeep.

24%
DECREASE IN POPULATION

40%
OF HOMES ARE LIKELY VACANT

78%
OF THE HOUSING STOCK WAS BUILT BEFORE 1950.

WHAT DID WE HEAR?

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The small town charm is my favorite thing about Laconia.

It would be very interesting if some type of space could be included for public art. Maybe a revolving display for student art or a permanent art piece that the students of the community could help create.

Lack of diverse housing and employment opportunities are two of our greatest challenges.

Our rural lifestyle and school system are both great assets to our community.

Preserving Laconia's rural character and improving the quality of life should be most emphasized.

We should consider working with the county to update and repair bad sidewalks along their right-of-way.

The planning process included three public engagement opportunities which provided community members several ways to share ideas and feedback either in person at a scheduled event or through an online survey. A few of the big ideas that were shared during the process are highlighted below. A more detailed summary of each public engagement event can be found on the project website (harrisoncountytownplanning.com).

HOW IS THE PLAN ORGANIZED?

A comprehensive plan serves many functions including but not limited to identifying a collective vision for the future, providing justification for growth and development-related decisions, shaping the appearance of the community, promoting economic development, balancing competing interests, and prioritizing strategic investments.

The *Laconia Comprehensive Plan* is organized into three chapters. Each chapter is outlined below.

Chapter 1: About the Plan
Serving as the introduction to the plan, this chapter includes a plan overview, an overview of the process used to complete the plan, highlights of key findings, and an outline of the plan's organization.

Chapter 2: The Path Forward
Utilizing community feedback and data-driven facts as the foundation, chapter two outlines the vision for the future and several supporting big ideas. This chapter is organized into three themes. Each theme covers a variety of topics and big ideas crucial to guiding growth and enhancing the quality of life in Laconia. The project and program recommendations within these big ideas should be utilized by town staff, elected officials, and community leaders when determining how to allocate resources within the community.

- Theme 1: Celebrate Our Assets – The first theme focuses on building upon the existing assets and resources in Laconia to create new opportunities based on placemaking, historic and natural assets, parks, recreation, and trails. Expanding Laconia's existing assets not only widens entertainment options and activities for current residents but can draw new visitors and residents to the community.

- Theme 2: Build Quality Places – The topics within this theme cover the physical aspects of Laconia including land uses, roads and sidewalks, utilities and broadband, and housing. These planning elements are critical components to supporting growth within the community because they provide the foundation needed for development to occur.

- Theme 3: Collaborate to Expand Our Offerings – The final theme addresses the additional programs and facilities which contribute to the quality of place and ensure the town is adequately addressing health and wellness, education, workforce, and economic development. These planning elements support a growing population and ensure current and future residents remain healthy and stay competitive within the workforce.

Chapter 3: Our Next Steps
Building on the highest priority strategies, chapter three provides additional details on the ten catalytic initiatives that were identified as the most critical strategies to implement. This chapter is intended to assist the town in implementing each one of these projects, programs, or policies. Each catalyst initiative highlights specific information including a description, action steps, partners, resources, and tools.

PLAN ORGANIZATION
THEMES, GOALS, AND TOPICS

THEME 1
CELEBRATE OUR ASSETS
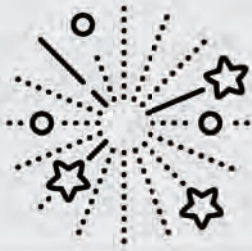
THE CELEBRATE GOAL
Reinforce the history and rural character of Laconia with high-quality programming, events, and facilities.

TOPICS EXPLORED
- PLACEMAKING
- HISTORIC & NATURAL ASSETS
- PARKS & RECREATION

THE BUILD GOAL
Strengthen the built environment (including land use, transportation, and utilities) in Laconia to promote a high standard of living.

TOPICS EXPLORED
- LAND USE
- TRANSPORTATION
- UTILITIES
- HOUSING

THEME 2
BUILD QUALITY PLACES

THEME 3
COLLABORATE TO EXPAND OUR OFFERINGS

THE COLLABORATE GOAL
Reinforce community identity by supporting economic development and an overall healthy community.

TOPICS EXPLORED
- HEALTH & WELLNESS
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Laconia will preserve its rural character while improving the quality of life for all residents.

The Path Forward

Chapter Two was created with the future in mind. This chapter starts by identifying the vision for the next 10 to 20 years. Following the vision, the chapter uses three themes to organize the goals, big ideas, and strategy statements. The strategies serve as the primary plan recommendations that should be implemented over time. Each strategy is ranked as a low, medium, or high priority. The high priority strategies are then carried forward to Chapter Three as catalyst initiatives.

DEFINING THE PLAN COMPONENTS

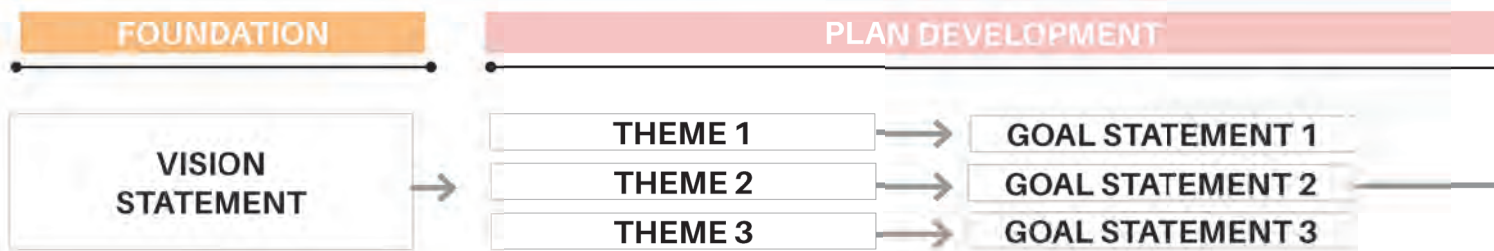While the composition of every comprehensive plan may vary slightly, there are a series of common planning components that work together to create the guidance document. These components represent a hierarchy of detail starting with the broadest elements, the vision statement, at the top and working downward. With each step down (or in this case, moving right across the bottom of the page), the planning components get slightly more specific. The graphic below defines each of the components and illustrates how the components are used to build upon one another.

Before making a plan, it is important to know where you want to go first. A vision statement is an overarching and forward-thinking idea that captures the values of the community and outlines what the community wants to do or become in the future. After establishing a clear understanding of the town's aspirations, the vision statement serves as the foundation for the goals, big ideas, and strategies.

The plan themes provide the organizational framework to ensure the comprehensive plan is addressing all the necessary topics. The goals, big ideas, and strategies transform the desired outcomes into an attainable, community-driven action plan. The plan recommendations are identified within the strategy statements. In essence, the strategies are the specific things the community needs to do in order to achieve the vision and goals.

By nature, a comprehensive plan covers a vast range of topics. Because of this, the number of strategy recommendations can quickly become overwhelming for plan users. **The catalyst initiatives help to narrow the focus by identifying the top priorities for the community.** The following chapter outlines the vision, themes, goals, big ideas, and strategies. The catalyst initiatives are outlined in Chapter Three: Our Next Steps.

Composition of Planning Components

FOUNDATION	PLAN DEVELOPMENT	
VISION STATEMENT	THEME 1 →	GOAL STATEMENT 1
	THEME 2 →	GOAL STATEMENT 2
	THEME 3 →	GOAL STATEMENT 3

The **vision statement** is a broad statement that highlights want the town wants to do or become in the future. The statement captures the values of the community and outlines what residents wish Laconia to strive for in the future.

The three **themes** are used as organizational elements to provide a consistent framework for all of the comprehensive plans completed as part of the Harrison County Town Planning Initiative. Within each theme, there are a number of topics explored.

The **goal statements** define what the town is striving to accomplish in order to achieve the vision over the next 10 to 20 years.

SETTING THE STAGE

The vision statement represents a blend of community values, aspirations, and commitments from local residents, staff and officials, business owners, and neighbors. It is a reflection of the community values and identifies the places, things, or characteristics that should be preserved. It documents the hopes and dreams for the future and demonstrates dedication to working towards the desired outcome. For Laconia, the town is striving to preserve its rural character while improving the quality of life for all residents.

This vision statement was developed based on the ideas and input that were collected throughout the public engagement process. The first round of engagement encouraged participants to dream big while sharing their ideas for the future. The second and third rounds of engagement were used to refine the statement and confirm the vision resonated with the community.

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

A vision statement is not about what the community is today but instead about what it want to do or become in the future.

*Building upon a safe and involved community, Laconia will **preserve its rural character** while **improving the quality of life** for all residents. The town will focus on addressing **infrastructure improvements**, providing **entertainment options**, and promoting **local events**. Laconia will improve upon its assets and create a successful future for the town and its residents.*

PLAN DEVELOPMENT		IMPLEMENTATION
BIG IDEA →	STRATEGY 1.1 →	CATALYST INITIATIVE
BIG IDEA →	STRATEGY 1.2	
BIG IDEA →	STRATEGY 1.3 →	CATALYST INITIATIVE
BIG IDEA →	STRATEGY 1.4	
BIG IDEA →	STRATEGY 1.5	

The **big ideas** are a collection of opportunities identified by the community or within a previous planning effort. These ideas link the desired outcome with a specific strategy for addressing a challenge or leveraging an asset or opportunity.

The **strategy statements** identify a specific project, program, or policy that can be used or implemented to achieve the vision and goals. The strategies are prioritized to help narrow the focus of the community.

The **catalyst initiatives** are the top priority strategies for the town. Additional information such as a initiative description, action steps, partners, and resources is identified to assist the town in implementation.

CELEBRATE OUR ASSETS

GOAL STATEMENT
Reinforce the history and rural character of Laconia with high-quality programming, events, and facilities.

1. PLACEMAKING
What does this mean for Laconia?

The character of a community is most recognizable through the structures, public spaces, and local events. A strong community character can be increased by placemaking to attract residents and visitors to an area. Placemaking capitalizes on local community assets and inspirations by creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being. This requires a balanced vision of merging both old and new elements of the community, the preservation of heritage, and the creation of new and exciting public spaces and programs.

PLACEMAKING BIG IDEAS
What do we want to achieve?

Big Idea: Gateways
Continue to maintain and enhance the exiting gateway sign on S Hwy 11 SE.

The town currently has a wooden "welcome" sign and a small planter along Hwy 11 at the town's northern corporate limit. Gateway signs not only provide directional and identification information but also can function as a welcoming landmark and help visitors recognize that they are in Laconia. The sign on the northern entrance to the town was updated previously with plantings. Since the sign is wood, it requires additional upkeep compared to a more durable sign material. Other upgrades can be done to enhance the gateway such as lighting and additional landscaping (such as shrubs, flowering plants, and grasses). New landscaping and lighting will create a stronger, more noticeable first impression for people traveling through town and also help to instill a sense of pride for residents.

Big Idea: Local Festival
Continue to support the Celebrate Laconia Festival.

The Celebrate Laconia Festival has been a cornerstone of the local events calendar as well as the biggest opportunity to bring people back to Laconia since its founding in 1999. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the last festival was held in October 2019. It is important for the town to continue supporting and helping to rebuild the momentum for this long-standing tradition by providing programming and logistical assistance to the planning committee. Laconia can assist with the promotion of this event and other festivals by partnering with area companies and sponsors, routine social media and online advertising, and holding contests with promotional item giveaways.

Big Idea: Farmer's Market

Partner with farmers and local vendors to develop a Farmer's Market.

The first step in establishing a farmers' market was to build a formal structure/place for the market to be held. In recent years, the town built the community shelter at the centralized intersection of N. Tobacco Landing Road and Cross Street SE that includes paved parking spots, a bathroom, and electrical hookups. Creating a local farmer's market can enrich a community by connecting residents and businesses, such as restaurants or local entrepreneurs (farmers and craft vendors). In addition to providing opportunities to access produce and engage in the community, a farmer's market can also be a place for local artists and vendors to sell their products and become a regional destination within the township and county, attracting visitors and increasing the activity. With a community facility in place, the next step is to work with partners, such as the Agricultural Extension Agent and other farmers markets in the county, about establishing a farmer's market and also start identifying potential vendors.

Big Idea: Public Art

Partner with the South Harrison Community School Corporation and Harrison County Arts to establish a revolving art display at the community shelter.

Public art is an important aspect of a community's character and identity. Laconia has the untapped resource of the local school system that can be leveraged to provide artwork to display at the community shelter. An art display can be created by working with local and regional students and artists to showcase their work underneath the shelter for an allotted time. Art installations could be displayed in a sealed case or built using outdoor-compatible materials. The various art installations could contribute to the overall aesthetic of the area as well as act as an attraction and destination for visitors.

CELEBRATE OUR ASSETS

GOAL STATEMENT
Reinforce the history and rural character of Laconia with high-quality programming, events, and facilities.

Big Idea: Entertainment

Continue to promote the use of the community shelter for weekend entertainment, such as live music performances.

The community shelter located at the main intersection of town has become a center point for various activities in Laconia. The facility provides a covered area, seating, electricity, bathrooms, and parking. The shelter currently hosts events centered around bluegrass music, holidays (such as Halloween and Christmas), and health awareness fairs. The value of this facility and the role it plays in enhancing the quality of life builds a strong case the importance of town staff and individuals to continue building it as an entertainment and social destination. A key part of planning a successful event is to ensure local and regional residents know about the event. The town can utilize a printed poster or sign displayed at the shelter and social media to promote the events and programming occurring at the shelter to the larger township and county audiences.

STRATEGIES
How will we achieve it?

	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
STRATEGY 1.1 – Create a plan with the Celebrate Laconia Festival Committee to assist with advertising, funding, and other organizational efforts. (See page 48)			●
STRATEGY 1.2 - Partner with regional farmers and vendors to organize a farmer's market at the town shelter. (See page 49)			●
STRATEGY 1.3 - Create a committee to work with the South Harrison Community School Corporation, Harrison County Artisan Center, and regional artists for commissioned or temporary art installations at the town shelter.		●	
STRATEGY 1.4 - Determine the feasibility of installing a new sign with lighting and new landscaping at existing gateway signs.		●	
STRATEGY 1.5 - Create a formal process for scheduling and promoting weekend entertainment at the town shelter. (See page 50)			●

CELEBRATE OUR ASSETS

GOAL STATEMENT

Reinforce the history and rural character of Laconia with high-quality programming, events, and facilities.

2. HISTORIC ASSETS

What does this mean for Laconia?

Laconia's historic and natural assets contribute to the quality of life enjoyed by its residents. While much of the land surrounding the town is dedicated to agricultural and rural residential, many areas along the rivers, streams, and wetlands still offer areas of native vegetation in close proximity to town. Conserving and adapting to the local environmental conditions help provide vital habitats for local wildlife as well as enhance the natural water filtration system that is utilized by residents. Along with the historic integrity of the local ecosystem, Laconia can tap into the historic events and people to further celebrate the rural character of the community.

HISTORIC ASSETS BIG IDEAS

What do we want to achieve?

Big Idea: Historic Markers

Pursue funding for historic markers and signs to tell Laconia's story.

When anticipating redevelopment and infill, it is important to protect and promote the rural character of Laconia. Historic markers are signs providing well-documented historic events and places that are easily accessible to the public. These signs and markers can be placed in public areas or embedded into sidewalks along Main Street and/or Cross Street. Examples of topics the markers can showcase include featuring Sydney D. Crosier, the Hoosier Art Pioneer, and "Son of Laconia" or featuring a Veterans memorial to celebrate those who have served in the armed forces.

STRATEGIES

How will we achieve it?

PRIORITY RANKING

	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
STRATEGY 2.1 - Work with Historical Society of Harrison County to identify people, places, and/or events that can be highlighted with the purchase and installation of historical signs.		●	
STRATEGY 2.2 - Apply for the Indiana State Historical Marker program.	●		

CELEBRATE OUR ASSETS

GOAL STATEMENT

Reinforce the history and rural character of Laconia with high-quality programming, events, and facilities.

3. PARKS AND RECREATION

What does this mean for Laconia?

Laconia's open space has the potential to provide the community with a wide range of recreational opportunities and maintain property values. Open space provides scenic opportunities and a way to preserve the small-town character of Laconia. This primarily refers to undeveloped areas within developed areas and includes environmentally sensitive areas, wooded areas, wetlands, and water bodies. Land near the Ohio River, directly south of the town, has been mostly cleared for farmland but there are some undisturbed areas along the Ohio River that are characterized by wetlands and large areas of deciduous trees.

PARKS AND RECREATION BIG IDEAS

What do we want to achieve?

Big Idea: River Access

Coordinate with Harrison County and Mauckport to utilize a river access for small watercraft onto the Ohio River.

> Mauckport is a town within Harrison County that is about a ten-minute drive west of town. There are current county plans to establish a more formal recreational access point to the Ohio River from the existing boat ramp. Currently, Laconia residents use North Tobacco Landing Road in Boone Township, directly south of Laconia, as an access point for swimming and launching small personal watercrafts. Laconia can coordinate with Harrison County and Mauckport once the access point is constructed to advertise the county-maintained access point for regional use.

Big Idea: Playground Equipment

Seek funding to purchase additional lighting and playground equipment for the park.

> Directly east of the community shelter, the town has added a small, residential-grade play set in recent years. The play set includes a few swings and a slide. The park is currently lit by only one street light that partially illuminates the park area. Laconia should identify funding through non-profit organizations, state grants, or crowd-funding to finance new commercial-grade playground equipment and additional lighting. Many organizations like United Way, the Coca-Cola Foundation, Indiana Park and Recreation Association, and Indiana DNR Outdoor Recreation grants, allocate funds for building or updating school and community playgrounds through grants. These organizations see the benefits playgrounds bring to a community and the development of children and can be used as a resource or funding tool.

PRIORITY RANKING

STRATEGIES
How will we achieve it?

	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
STRATEGY 3.1 - Advertise the location of the Mauckport river access point as an amenity, once constructed, in town marketing materials.	🟢	⚪	⚪
STRATEGY 3.2 - Identify desired playground improvements and seek grant funding. (See page 51)	⚪	⚪	🟢

BUILD QUALITY PLACES

GOAL STATEMENT

Strengthen the built environment (including land use, transportation, and utilities) in Laconia to promote a high standard of living.

4. LAND USE

What does this mean for Laconia?

The purpose of the land use section is to proactively plan for future development patterns. It is based on existing land uses, future growth projections, and input from Laconia residents, businesses, and property owners. The goals and strategies of this section build on Laconia's vision and guiding principles. With the vision of preserving the rural character of Laconia, land use patterns can play a significant role in defining community identity and addressing questions about the future built environment in Laconia. The location of houses, business, and public uses influences how people choose to live, work, and play in the community. The relationship between these uses reinforces the community's image and quality of life.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Legend

- Town Boundary
- Building Footprint
- Roadway
- Waterway
- Single-family Residential
- Community Facility
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Agriculture
- Undeveloped / Natural Area
- Proposed Growth Area

BUILD QUALITY PLACES

GOAL STATEMENT

Strengthen the built environment (including land use, transportation, and utilities) in Laconia to promote a high standard of living.

LAND USE BIG IDEAS
What do we want to achieve?

Big Idea: Housing Infill

Encourage residential development in areas that align with the future land use map.

> The lack of adequate and affordable housing was identified as an important issue to address due to the current high cost of development and lack of housing diversity in Laconia. New housing should be developed along the southern border of town and include large lot single-family homes as well as allow smaller lots and lower-maintenance options for the aging population. Providing a balanced combination of housing will satisfy the needs of both existing and future Laconia residents. Often times, older residents are looking for transitional housing options, such as apartments, patio homes, or senior living facilities, while young adults are looking for apartments and/or starter homes. Given the lack of undeveloped land within town limits, new housing development is best suited in areas adjacent to the town. As land becomes available over time, the town should consider voluntary annexation for future residential development that is served by town utilities and services.

Big Idea: Planned Growth

Promote planned growth that supports business needs and demands while minimally impacting the surrounding agricultural land.

> As opportunities for redevelopment or new development are presented, Laconia desires to remain a rural community. To achieve that, new growth considerations need to be in place that minimally impacts the surrounding agricultural land. The areas that are recommended for rural development patterns on the future land use map would allow neighborhood-scale rural commercial uses that should be built to meet the immediate needs of the population. Examples of such uses include a local restaurant or small grocery. Appropriate future development patterns in these areas outside of town limits will be vital to ensuring the smooth transition from the town center to the agricultural fields of the county.
>
> The future land use plan is a tool to assist elected officials in making decisions and policies for attracting new growth and development. The future land use plan focuses on creating new housing options (single-family detached, townhomes, and small-scale apartments) by increasing the amount of area designated for residential use.

STRATEGIES
How will we achieve it?

STRATEGY 4.1 - Focus on residential development along the southern border of the town. (See page 52) — HIGH

STRATEGY 4.2 - Consider voluntary annexation as additional land as it becomes available for future residential development and is served by town utilities and services. — MEDIUM

STRATEGY 4.3 - Communicate future land use map changes to the County Plan Commission when deemed necessary that ensure compatible uses and appropriate transitions in scale and setback. — MEDIUM

STRATEGY 4.4 - Provide incentives including density bonuses or programs similar to the USDA rural rental housing loan program offered by the town for redevelopment or rehabilitation of properties to enhance housing options (duplexes and senior). — LOW

STRATEGY 4.5 - Promote a historic style of structures that enhances Laconia's rural character through both rehabilitation of existing houses and new construction. — MEDIUM

BUILD QUALITY PLACES

GOAL STATEMENT
Strengthen the built environment (including land use, transportation, and utilities) in Laconia to promote a high standard of living.

5. UTILITIES
What does this mean for Laconia?

Utilities and services available to the residents and businesses of Laconia include public and private stormwater management, wastewater and water utilities, and broadband internet. While not always provided by the town itself, these utilities are a large factor in the lack of growth of Laconia and attraction of new residents and visitors. Maintaining and updating existing infrastructure is equally important as being able to expand services as needed. One of Laconia's primary challenges is the age of current aging sewer infrastructure making it difficult and costly to make improvements.

UTILITIES BIG IDEAS
What do we want to achieve?

Big Idea: Stormwater Drainage
Complete upgrades to the stormwater system to improve drainage and prevent flooding.

> While some areas within Laconia have improved stormwater drainage because homeowners have made improvements on their property, the town overall is still experiencing issues. Examples of these improvements include small vegetated areas that filter, direct, and retain stormwater. A town-wide flooding evaluation should be conducted to help assess the needed upgrades to specific locations. The town should work with Harrison County to improve the drainage ditches, driveway culverts, and other stormwater infrastructure along the county-owned roads. Continued maintenance including the removal of debris and general management, including mowing by the town and county will be needed to ensure they are functioning properly. Areas of focus should include Main Street north of the shelter and the far southeast portion of town. The town can use funding opportunities, like the OCRA Stormwater Improvements Program, to reduce flooding and improve natural water infiltration.

Big Idea: Sewer Capacity
Upgrade the sewer system for efficiency and explore feasibility to integrate into the Harrison County Regional Sewer District (RSD).

> The ability to provide sewer service to residents and business owners has become a large barrier in retaining and expanding the population in many rural communities. The existing sewer system in Laconia meets the capacity needs of current residents and business but is in need of key facility upgrades and on-going maintenance. Upgrades to the technology and infrastructure will increase efficiency and lower potential risks of system failures due to outdated infrastructure. The sewer system currently utilizes recirculating media filters (RMF) that require investment by the property owner, but it is then maintained by the town. However, this older technology introduces issues of additional expensive part replacements and upgrades that increase risk of system failure.

Utility maintenance and increased capacity will need to be considered as the town redevelops and grows. To further expand sewer system access and long-term capacity, Laconia should work with Harrison County to integrate Laconia's sewer system into the Harrison County Regional Sewer District. However, with the system type and age, increased cost of improvements and maintenance is a long-term issue. Integration of the town utilities into the larger district would reduce costs related to staff and management of a small system.

Big Idea: Broadband and Cellular Service
Partner with local providers to enhance high-speed internet and cell phone coverage, service, and cost.

Rural areas are less likely to have access to high-speed internet and cell phone service due to the distance between the users and the network towers. Currently, Laconia's limited internet services are provided by Frontier. Since rural homes and businesses are spread far apart, it costs service providers more money to lay fiber-optic cables across the miles that separate houses because there are fewer customers to pay for it. Until high-speed broadband and cell phones are considered a utility, rural residents will face the problem of reduced or non-existent internet access.

Harrison County recently completed the Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan that sets initial projects and actions to promote local broadband deployment. The plan states that since Laconia and the surrounding southern portion of the county have been declining in population in recent years, financial incentives will likely be needed to encourage broadband build-out. The plan recommends the establishment of a local procurement program that will target areas of need throughout the county. This new program would support providers seeking grants as well as support the county or a partner entity to contract directly with providers to encourage build-out of broadband infrastructure.

Similar to the broadband challenges that rural communities face, residents and visitors also struggle to find high-quality access to cell phone services. The lack of service creates two unique issues related to population attraction and safety. First, it is hard for smaller communities, like Laconia, to retain and attract residents when poor service frequently drops calls, fails to send text messages, or limits data use. Poor cell service is also a critical safety issue. When residents place a call from a cell phone, it is received by a tower located near Brandenburg, Kentucky. Someone calling would normally never know their call is using a tower across the state line. However, when someone calls 911 from Laconia, they are dispatched to the Meade County 911 center, who cannot dispatch emergency services in Indiana. The dispatch in Kentucky then must transfer the call to Harrison County 911 (which cannot always be done) or ask the caller to call back on a land line or call the emergency services directly. This challenge is not unique to Laconia; many communities along the Ohio River also have this problem.

BUILD QUALITY PLACES

GOAL STATEMENT
Strengthen the built environment (including land use, transportation, and utilities) in Laconia to promote a high standard of living.

STRATEGIES
How will we achieve it?

PRIORITY RANKING

STRATEGY	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
STRATEGY 5.1 - Work with Harrison County to complete a drainage and maintenance plan to reduce flooding and standing water during flooding events. (See page 53)	○	○	●
STRATEGY 5.2 - Explore the OCRA stormwater improvement program for funding to alleviate future flooding challenges.	○	●	○
STRATEGY 5.3 - Work with Harrison County Regional Sewer District to determine feasibility of integrating Laconia's system into the larger district.	○	●	○
STRATEGY 5.4 - Partner with Harrison County through the Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan to expand access to high-speed internet.	○	●	○
STRATEGY 5.5 - Facilitate the siting of a new tower to improve broadband connectivity and cell phone service. (See Page 54)	○	○	●

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BUILD QUALITY PLACES

GOAL STATEMENT

Strengthen the built environment (including land use, transportation, and utilities) in Laconia to promote a high standard of living.

6. TRANSPORTATION

What does this mean for Laconia?

Laconia's transportation system currently provides easy mobility and access throughout the community with few major problems. However, several transportation improvements could improve the community. The town's existing transportation system is simple and currently meets the travel needs of residents and visitors but does not add to the overall appearance of Laconia. Improvements to the road and adjoining privately owned land can positively impact the and strengthen the rural character of the town as well as create a greater sense of place once within town limits.

FUTURE TRANSPORTATION MAP

Legend
- Town Boundary
- Building Footprint
- Roadway
- Waterway
- Proposed County Improvements
- Proposed Town Improvements
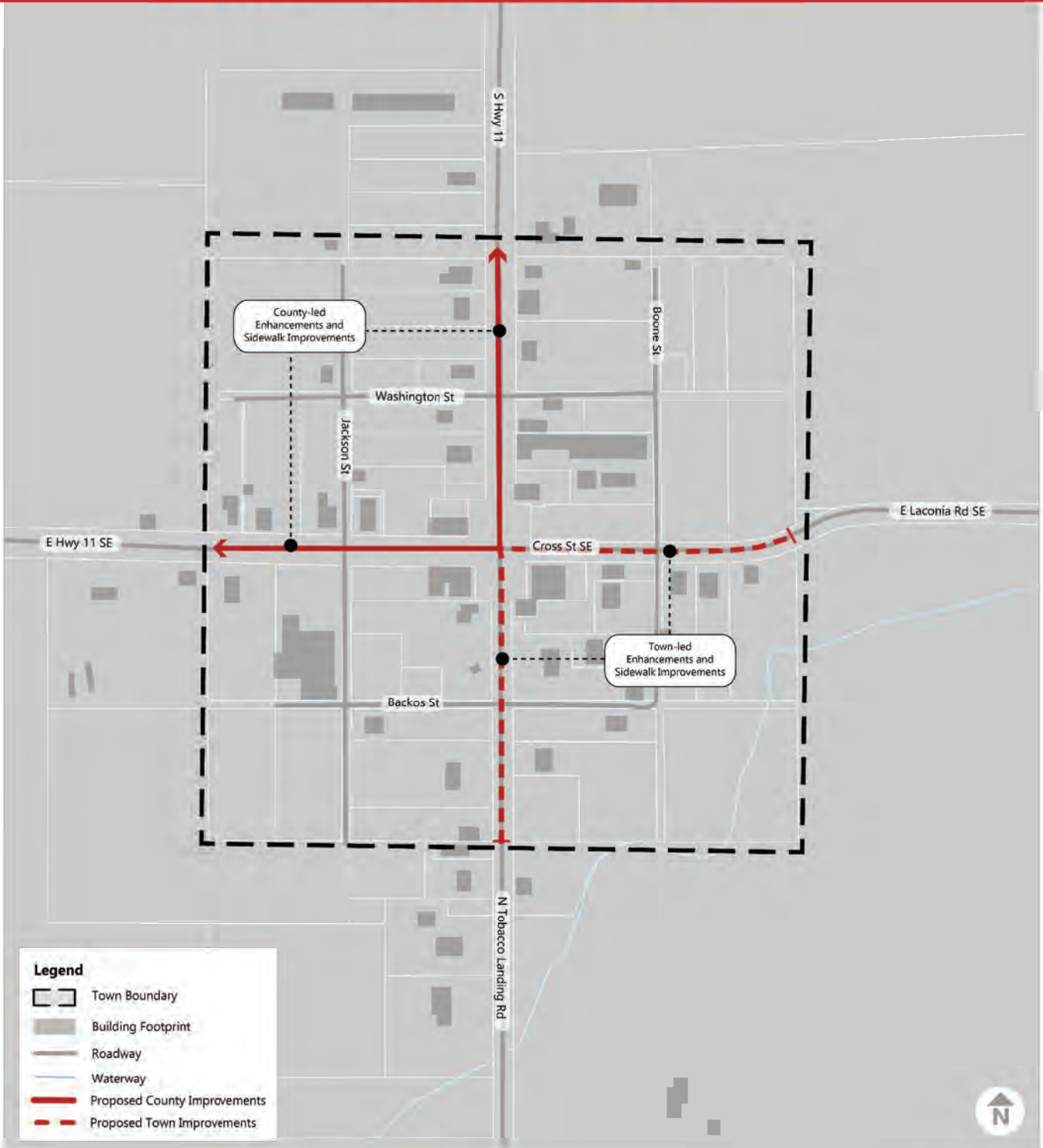
BUILD QUALITY PLACES

GOAL STATEMENT
Strengthen the built environment (including land use, transportation, and utilities) in Laconia to promote a high standard of living.

TRANSPORTATION BIG IDEAS
What do we want to achieve?

Big Idea: Road Improvements
Reinforce the rural character of Laconia and increase safety through streetscape improvements and new construction.

> In some cases, large roadway improvements, such as widenings, are not feasible or needed in a small town. Currently, the county owns and maintains Hwy 11. To provide improvements to these county-owned roads, the town should work with the county to improve lighting, curbs and gutters, street plantings, and other streetscape elements that impact the character of Laconia. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan identified two phases for improvements. Phase 1 consists of the county-owned roads (Old Hwy 11) and Phase 2 consists of roads owned by Laconia with improvements such as enhanced lighting, curbs and gutters, street plantings, and new or improved sidewalks.

Big Idea: Local Roadways
Upgrade current alleyways to meet local street standards.

> For the last several years, Laconia residents and leaders have treated several local access roads as alleyways. The town has recently been informed that Indiana Department of Transportation classifies those roadways as local street - which is positive news for the town regarding funding. Currently, these local streets are dirt paths with numerous potholes. There is a need and desire by residents and business owners to improve the conditions of the roadway and upgrade the surface to concrete pavement. Improving the local roadways will decrease the physical impact on vehicles as well as increased mobility. As Laconia seeks to enhance the appearance and functionality of the existing infrastructure, it is important to explore the use of state funding opportunities such as Indiana's Community Crossing grant.

Big Idea: County Sidewalks
Work with the county to repair and maintain complete sidewalks along Old Hwy 11.

> The condition of the sidewalks along Old Hwy 11 is an issue that needs to be addressed. It is envisioned that the repair and maintenance of the sidewalks along this main corridor will connect housing to future commercial and recreational sites throughout Laconia. Additional coordination with Harrison County will need to be conducted to better estimate the construction costs if there are missing segments for a complete network. Currently, this corridor is also a part of Phase 1 of the town-wide streetscape improvement plan (see Strategy 3.a Road Improvements) that includes expanding the sidewalk system.

The sidewalk network initiative will be a series of gradual improvements, stemming from the identified new sidewalks on the future transportation map, that creates a fully built out sidewalk system. Efforts would include a design and construction process of the sidewalks, culverts, and crosswalks along county owned roads.

Big Idea: Local Sidewalks
Expand the sidewalk system to both sides of Cross Street SE and North Tobacco Landing Road.

The county zoning and subdivision control ordinances have not required sidewalk construction with new developments for years, resulting in sections that are disconnected from one another. The result of this disconnected network is limited use and functionality in providing a way for people to safely walk around town without being on the roadside or on private property. Building sidewalks on both sides of Cross St SE and North Tobacco Landing Road will create a safe and functional network that can serve residents and visitors as both a recreational amenity and increased pedestrian mobility. A small portion of Cross St SE is a county road and therefore will require collaboration with the county to plan and fund the construction of sidewalks within Laconia.

STRATEGIES
How will we achieve it?

	PRIORITY RANKING		
	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
STRATEGY 6.1 - Partner with Harrison County to complete design and construction for streetscape improvements including sidewalks on Hwy 11.	○	●	○
STRATEGY 6.2 - Pursue funding to install sidewalks to improve safety on Cross St SE and North Tobacco Landing Road. (See page 55)	○	○	●
STRATEGY 6.3 - Explore the use of state funding opportunities to upgrade the local roadways. (See page 56)	○	○	●

BUILD QUALITY PLACES

GOAL STATEMENT

Strengthen the built environment (including land use, transportation, and utilities) in Laconia to promote a high standard of living.

7. HOUSING

What does this mean for Laconia?

Residential areas set the tone for community character, quality of life, and citizen morale. Housing plays an essential role in the vision for the future of Laconia. There are very few housing opportunities within Laconia town limits. As Laconia tries to grow, new residential options need to be created. By developing new areas based on the rural character traits of the community while respecting its agricultural environment, Laconia will continue to maintain its image as a rural community.

HOUSING BIG IDEAS

What do we want to achieve?

Big Idea: Property Management

Continue to clean up, rehabilitate, and/or demolish abandoned and substandard structures.

Laconia has made recent strides in the demolition and rehabilitation of abandoned or dilapidated structures in town. In parallel with the Housing Infill big idea within the Land Use goal, the town should continue to rehabilitate existing structures where possible. Additional initiatives can still be made to increase overall property management efforts like introducing a new ordinance. If property owners are not maintaining their properties, these ordinances provide a legal tool for the town to mow grass, clean up the property, or complete similar tasks. The town could then bill the property owner and/or place a lien on the property for the cleanup costs.

Even though Laconia has addressed and torn down multiple deteriorating buildings, there are still substandard structures that may become a public nuisance. The town can utilize state funding options like the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) Blight Clearance Program funding to address blighted and abandoned buildings beyond repair.

STRATEGIES
How will we achieve it?

STRATEGIES	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
STRATEGY 7.1 - Re-evaluate adoption of an abandoned property ordinance or property management ordinance.	●	○	○
STRATEGY 7.2 - Partner with Harrison County to apply for the IHCDA Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding program for owner-occupied structure rehabilitation.	○	●	○
STRATEGY 7.3 - Identify and apply structures that qualify for the OCRA Blight Clearance Program.	●	○	○

COLLABORATE TO EXPAND OUR OFFERINGS

GOAL STATEMENT
Reinforce community identity by supporting economic development and an overall healthy community.

8. HEALTH AND WELLNESS
What does this mean for Laconia?

A town should ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to health-related lifestyle programs and facilities. This may be achieved by supporting services that provide transportation needs to disadvantaged residents or creating programs to foster better health and fitness. In small communities, providing recreational amenities and programming can provide the dual purpose of entertainment while also encouraging a healthy, active lifestyle.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS BIG IDEAS
What do we want to achieve?

Big Idea: Community Programming
Utilize the community center and community park to provide reoccurring recreation and wellness programs for all ages.

> Community programming is incredibly important for a healthy, vibrant community. These health and wellness programs provide opportunities for residents to be active and to interact with other residents. These programs can focus on inclusivity, while fostering a culture of health and wellbeing in the communities they serve. Local community facilities can become essential to personal health and wellness, thereby reducing reliance on healthcare programs outside of town and activities and other costly social services that require additional time and travel. Also, these programs can also promote social interaction, volunteerism, and town pride. These spaces are meant for all ages, ethnicities, and skill levels and should promote cultural diversity and inclusion. Programs can cover topics including nutrition, mindfulness, and meditation as well as activities like neighborhood walks, yoga, and light movement and coordination.

Big Idea: Access to Health Care

Promote the existing transportation services in the region to healthcare facilities for at-need residents.

Since there are no health care facilities located in Laconia, residents must travel to neighboring communities for these services. The closest hospital is located in Corydon, approximately 18 miles north of town. For some residents, driving that distance adds hardship to their daily lives, and therefore, they may need other means of transportation. The Southern Indiana Transit System (SITS) is a door-to-door service that provides Crawford, Harrison, Scott, Washington, and Floyd County residents public transportation at a minimal cost. Current fares are priced by distance, but range between $2 to $4 per one way per person. If the destination is outside of the service area, there will be an additional charge of $1.25 per mile per one way, per person. Laconia can engage in a partnership with the SITS demand-response public transportation to increase the ability of Laconia to attract retirees and others to town. Laconia can also advertise this service to the residents that may not have a car or are unable to drive themselves as well as other community members through town publications and awareness programs.

PRIORITY RANKING

STRATEGIES
How will we achieve it?

LOW   MEDIUM   HIGH

STRATEGY	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
STRATEGY 8.1 - Conduct a community survey to identify missing or lacking programming opportunities in the area.	○	●	○
STRATEGY 8.2 - Partner with the Community Center to host health and wellness programs.	○	●	○
STRATEGY 8.3 - Work with SITS to create and distribute a marketing flyer to increase use and awareness of their services.	○	●	○

COLLABORATE TO EXPAND OUR OFFERINGS

GOAL STATEMENT

Reinforce community identity by supporting economic development and an overall healthy community.

9. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What does this mean for Laconia?

Economic development is a challenge in small towns. Many of the tools typically used are not feasible in small towns because of limited revenues. As such, Laconia is must sustain its residential tax base while trying to leverage small amounts of local dollars to gain other funding to invest in infrastructure. Laconia faces challenges in attracting potential homeowners because it is located far from primary job centers in Southern Indiana. Reinforcing Laconia as a great place to live will be instrumental in the survival and expansion of the town.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BIG IDEAS

What do we want to achieve?

Big Idea: Population Attraction

Leverage local attractions to increase visitors and attract retirees to live in Laconia.

Having well established and publicized facilities and attractions will assist in attracting new residents and visitors. The town can potentially leverage local attractions that are already pulling visitors into the area to increase the number of people that visit Laconia. This means offering and advertising things to see and do that are either unique or one of a kind to Laconia. Effective tourism development aims to give visitors an authentic, high-quality experience that they will remember for a long time. Regional attractions, including the Chariot Run Golf Course and South Harrison Parks, can be used to potentially draw tourists to the community. Places of natural and scenic significance, like lakes, forests, prairies, and craggy cliffs as well as outdoor recreational activities, can be further leveraged. In recent years, South Harrison Park has been identified by Harrison County Parks Department as a park facility for further development and expansion of facilities.

Population attraction, specifically retirees, can be impacted by either a job or specific facilities and community character. Attractions also include intangibles, such as friendly atmosphere, a safe environment, clean air, or a unique history and/or culture. These assets are valuable, not just to visitors but to residents too. Laconia can attract visitors and potential residents by marketing its quaint surroundings and small-town character to those who have this living preference (such as those from the Fort Knox region).

Big Idea: Online Engagement

Establish a web presence for the community.

With so many people connected to the internet to verify locations of businesses, events, and local news, even smaller cities and towns realize the need for an internet presence. Websites are used to keep its residents informed about local events and news as well as act as an administrative tool for the town. The website can serve as a public outreach tool informing the public of progress made on the *Laconia Comprehensive Plan* and the vision that was established as a result. The town could also use this portal to market land and property for sale. Website design technology has improved so much that the cost of a new, modern, and customized design is easier to create and maintain without a professional. Many small towns have taken advantage of this evolution in website design technology to offer custom, professionally designed websites to further attract residents and visitors. Laconia should create a web presence for the community to market the town as a place for living, locating businesses, and enjoying a rural setting.

Big Idea: Funding

Seek grant writing assistance from Harrison County Community Foundation for town improvements.

Grants can be a source of much-needed funding in small communities to assist with physical improvements, community events and programs, and other town led initiatives. This funding may come from government agencies like the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) or private sources including foundations, but competition for funding is typically high. Grant writing is a specialized form of writing and having someone experienced on the team is necessary to get the funds needed. Grant proposals may be very involved, including a cover letter, proposal, and supporting documentation. The proposal itself must do a good job of providing information about the applicant's past, present, and future activities and how the grant money would be used. Laconia can partner with Harrison County and non-profit organizations that have grant writers as staff members to assist town staff in the writing, editing, or a combination of efforts to assist in the procurement of grant funding.

STRATEGIES
How will we achieve it?

	PRIORITY RANKING		
	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
STRATEGY 9.1 - Partner with the Laconia Community Center and/or local high school to create a website. (See page 57)	○	○	●
STRATEGY 9.2 - Work with Harrison County Convention and Visitors Bureau to expand tourism opportunities beyond town boundaries in southern Harrison County.	●	○	○
STRATEGY 9.3 - Partner with the Harrison County Community Foundation for grant writing assistance when new funding opportunities are available. (See page 58)	○	○	●
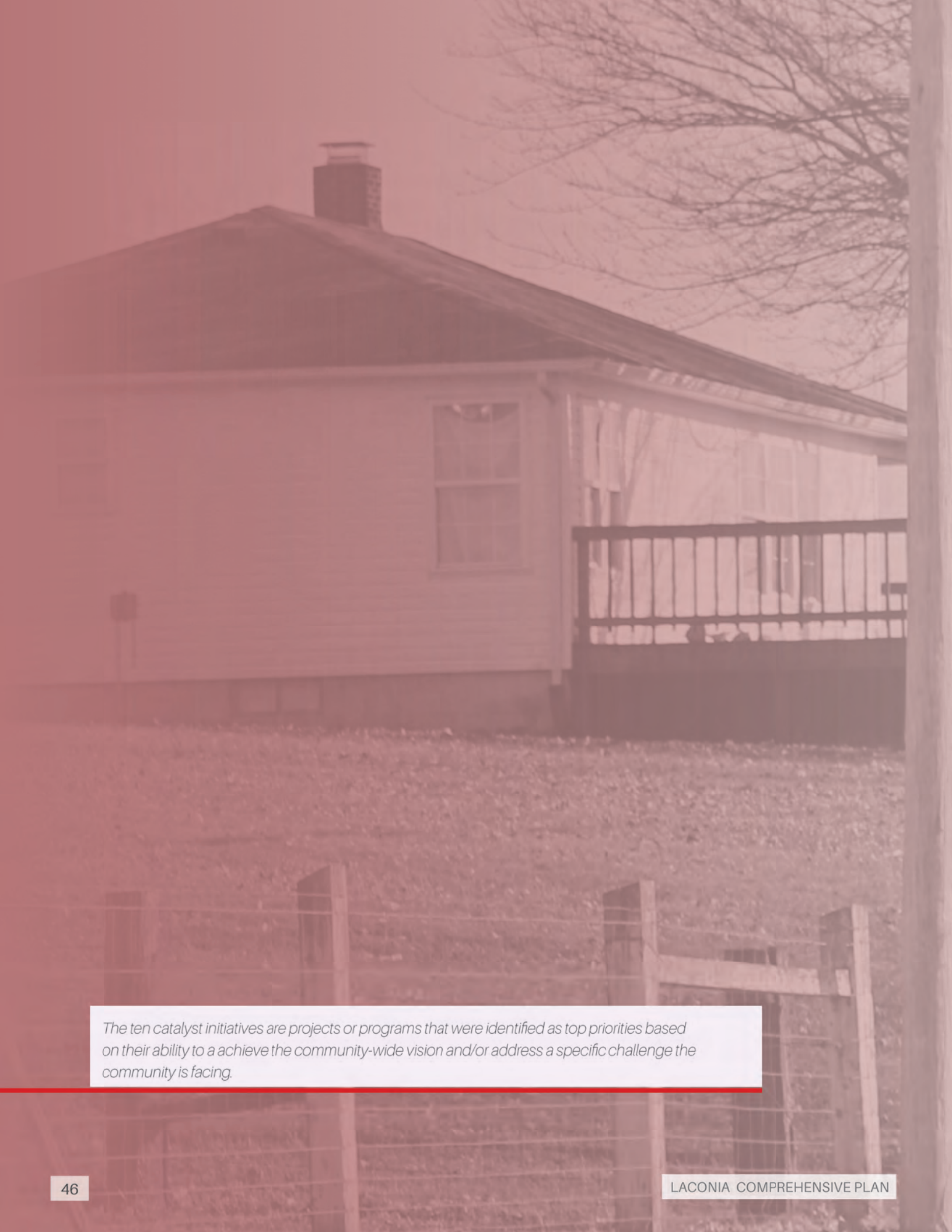
The ten catalyst initiatives are projects or programs that were identified as top priorities based on their ability to a achieve the community-wide vision and/or address a specific challenge the community is facing.

Our Next Steps

Building on the highest priority strategies, chapter three provides additional details on the ten catalytic initiatives that were identified as the most critical strategies to implement. This chapter is intended to assist the town in implementing each one of these projects, programs, or policies. Each catalyst initiative highlights specific information including a description, action steps, partners, resources, and tools.

CATALYST INITIATIVE 1
*Supports the **Local Events** Big Idea* (See Page 21)

PLACEMAKING STRATEGY 1.1
Create a plan with the Celebrate Laconia Festival Committee to assist with advertising, funding, and other organizational efforts.

DESCRIPTION

Festivals can foster community pride. They offer an organized activity, the chance to spend time with friends and loved ones, see live music artists, shop, and enjoy delicious local food. Held in the fall, the Celebrate Laconia Festival is a free festival that has previously included food and craft booths, contests, raffle drawings, music, fireworks, and attracts regional visitors to town. The festival also serves as a reunion-like event for families and loved ones to gather and celebrate with each other. Due to the Covid pandemic, many community events, including the Celebrate Laconia Festival, had to be canceled or postponed for multiple years. As communities start to reschedule and plan new events, the need for additional partnerships may be needed to reestablish the attendees. Laconia can assist the committee to expand the festival as well as reach a larger audience.

ACTION STEPS

- Determine if the previous members of the committee members are still interested in participating. If new committee members are needed, promote the volunteer opportunity on the town bulletin board.

- Hold regular meetings with the Celebrate Laconia Festival Committee to discuss the logistics of planning the event and ongoing projects and then determine where collaboration with the town is needed to ensure the success of future events.

- Craft a high-impact event promotion plan that includes social media, flyers, and other promotional materials for distribution.

- Aid the re-establishment of the Celebrate Laconia scholarship through fundraising and awareness.

- Aid the committee with booth registration and entertainment schedule.

PARTNERS

- Celebrate Laconia Festival Committee
- Local Churches
- Town Staff
- Local Volunteers

RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Indiana Office of Tourism Development
- Indiana Arts Commission (Art Events or Performances)
- Non-Profit Grants
- Event Sponsorships

CATALYST INITIATIVE 2

*Supports the **Farmers Market** Big Idea* (See Page 21)

PLACEMAKING STRATEGY 1.2
Partner with regional farmers and vendors to organize a farmer's market at the town shelter.

DESCRIPTION

Farmer's markets provide opportunities for local farmers and businesses to sell their products, as well as help meet the growing demand for locally-produced food. Being able to quickly and directly market their goods give vendors important income opportunities without the added costs of shipping and a traditional store. Beyond the economic benefits, farmer's markets give communities access to fresh, healthy foods, art, and small business goods. Markets can also feature live music, cooking demonstrations, gardening tips, and educational opportunities. The key to a launching a successful farmer's market is consistency with vendors, time, and location but also promotion of the market. A successful market will not happen overnight, it takes time and dedication.

ACTION STEPS

- Meet with a representative from the Harrison County Indiana Agricultural Extension Office to learn about best practices and guidance for creating a farmer's market.
- Form a planning team of three to five people and designate a market manager to lead the organization and management of the market.
- Identify potential vendors to support and commit to selling at a regular market to ensure enough variety and quantity to keep the market viable.
- Advertise stall fees and vendor information to local and regional farmers, artists, and other interested parties.
- Establish a system for allowing vendor input and feedback.
- Create a regional promotion plan to create awareness about the farmer's market.

PARTNERS

- Town Staff
- Harrison County Indiana Agricultural Extension Office
- Local Vendors
- Local Volunteers

RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Starting a Farmer's Market - Harrison County Indiana Agricultural Extension Office
- Five Steps for Founding a New Farmers Market

CATALYST INITIATIVE 3

*Supports the **Entertainment** Big Ideas (See Page 22)*

PLACEMAKING STRATEGY 1.5
Create a formal process for scheduling and promoting weekend entertainment at the town shelter.

DESCRIPTION

Community events are perfect for promoting positive change and town pride. One way to celebrate small towns is to support cultural entertainment at a local establishment. With the variety local talent, there is an opportunity to host an assortment of weekend entertainment at the town shelter that can vary in monthly themes. Events can include live music, movie nights, town pitch-in dinners, and private events like birthday parties or reunions. The shelter has electricity hookups as well as a bathroom that can be opened for events. A schedule of events should be posted online and on the town bulletin board for advertisement and scheduling purposes. An application form to host an event at the shelter should include time and date, host organization, needed facilities, schedule of set up and cleanup, and other details of the event. With the advertisement of the town shelter use, the town will also need to create a timeline and deadline for application decisions. This includes deadlines to submit an application and deadlines to approve the event.

ACTION STEPS

- Appoint a town staff to review and manage the scheduling of events at the shelter.
- Create an online fillable and paper application form for scheduling events.
- Determine the deadline and timeline needed for the event application process.
- Publish a calendar of events online, on the town bulletin board, and at the town shelter.
- Brainstorm how the success of the town shelter can be used to create opportunities for other events and festivals within the community.

PARTNERS

- Town Council/Town Staff
- Local Volunteers

RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Indiana Office of Tourism Development
- Marketing Asset Grant, IOTD
- Non-Profit Grants

CATALYST INITIATIVE 4

*Supports the **Playground Equipment** Big Idea* (See Page 26)

PARKS AND RECREATION STRATEGY 3.2
Identify desired playground improvements and seek grant funding.

DESCRIPTION

Playgrounds offer opportunities to learn through imagination and exploration. Keeping a playground "fun" and "safe" is an ongoing challenge. The existing playground equipment behind the town shelter includes a swing set and small adventure tower with a slide. Many communities and schools want to update or renovate play areas but are constrained by tight budgets. The town should survey residents to help prioritize site upgrades and improvements, such as additional or new playground equipment, lighting, shelter structures, or safety surfacing. If large site upgrades, such as surfacing or structures, are identified as desired improvements, a vendor or consultant can assist in the design and management of site improvement projects. Once a design has been created, Laconia can pursue local, state, or federal funding to assist with the cost of the improvements.

ACTION STEPS

- Survey residents and community members to decide what type of playground improvements are desired at the town shelter property.
- Create a budget and plan for seeking funding for the high-priority items identified through the survey.
- Hire a consultant to design the new park space.

PARTNERS

- Town Staff
- Residents

RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Non-Profit Grants
- Old National Bank Foundation Community Investment Grants
- Pacers Foundation Grant
- Private Donations
- Inspiring Sports Grant (Indiana Sports Corp)

CATALYST INITIATIVE 5

*Supports the **Housing Infill** Big Idea* (See Page 30)

LAND USE STRATEGY 4.1
Focus on new residential development along the southern border of the town.

DESCRIPTION

New residential development can increase population and activity to support local commercial services and attractions. Open and vacant land on the southern border of town along North Tobacco Landing Road, Backos Street, and Backes Aly is ideal for new residential development based on the lots surrounding residential uses and existing road access. New housing should be single-family, detached homes to match the surrounding existing homes. Property owners within these areas should be contacted to determine their interest in the potential of developing their property for residential use. This open discussion should focus on the existing property owner's interest in selling and the potential interest the town can generate with builders or developers. Coordination with the local builders association (BDASI) can assist in advertising the land for new development as well as connecting developers to property owners.

ACTION STEPS

- Contact property owners in key growth locations to determine interest of property owners in developing their property.

- If and when the property becomes available, coordinate with the Building and Development Association of Southern Indiana (BDASI) and developers to promote the availability of land for residential development as identified on the Future Land Use Map.

- Identify any financial incentives which could attract residential development to Laconia.

PARTNERS

- Town Council/Town Staff
- Harrison County Economic Development Corporation
- Harrison County Plan Commission
- BDASI/Local Home Builders/Developers

RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Financial Incentives
- HUD Exchange - New Construction of Single-Family Housing for Infill

CATALYST INITIATIVE 6
*Supports the **Stormwater Drainage** Big Idea* (See Page 32)

UTILITIES STRATEGY 5.1
Work with the Harrison County Drainage Board to complete a drainage and maintenance plan to reduce flooding and standing water during flooding events.

DESCRIPTION

Proper stormwater drainage is beneficial for the health of residents to reduce standing water and flooding as well as the maintenance of properties and sites. Without proper drainage, water can collect after a heavy rainfall, and during particularly strong storms, causing flooding. A given area may be susceptible to erosion and damage caused by uncontrolled water in large quantities. Drainage and maintenance plans can help design physical improvements that reduce risk of flooding by providing a thorough plan for maximum runoff efficiency and absorption. The Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) Stormwater Improvement Program seeks to assist communities with reducing flooding risks and other focuses. Types of activities eligible for this grant funding include stormwater improvements, including demolition and/or clearance. Laconia can apply for this program to assist in updating facilities/infrastructure and expand the existing drainage network and infrastructure in anticipation of future flooding challenges with new development.

ACTION STEPS

- Identify and report problem areas for flooding to Harrison County Drainage Board.
- Work with a grant administrator to apply for the OCRA grant funding and complete a stormwater maintenance plan to identify high priority infrastructure improvement projects to resolve existing flooding and drainage issues. This plan should identify high-priority improvements that are coordinated with the Harrison County Drainage Board, grant funding, and available local funding.

PARTNERS

- Local Property Owners
- Harrison County Drainage Board
- Town Council/Town Staff

RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Harrison County Commissioners / County Council
- Harrison County Community Foundation
- OCRA Planning Grant - Stormwater Improvement Program
- Indiana Finance Authority (IFA)/Indiana Bond Bank
- USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program
- USDA Rural Development - SEARCH - Special Evaluation Assistance for Rural Communities and Households in Indiana
- Private Consultant

CATALYST INITIATIVE 6

*Supports the **Broadband and Cell Service** Big Idea* (See Page 33)

UTILITIES STRATEGY 5.5
Facilitate the siting of a new tower to improve broadband connectivity and cell phone service

DESCRIPTION

Rural areas typically see higher levels of network quality problems due to the distance between the cellular user and the network towers. Based on feedback received by the public, Laconia residents do not have reliable, high-speed internet and/or cellular service. Reliable service in the Town of Laconia, and Harrison County as a whole, is desired to promote economic development and improve the quality of life for residents. Laconia should first work with the county and local providers to understand where a new tower could be located. The Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan is likely a good resource to reference.

Furthermore, the town should work with Harrison County 911 to identify the best solution for preventing 911 calls from being received by Meade County 911 due to tower locations. This likely will require a new tower location or new equipment on an existing tower that can capture the central, southern portion of the county as well as installing equipment on the Kentucky side of the Ohio River to bounce calls back to a new tower in Indiana.

ACTION STEPS

- Work with Harrison County to understand what their next steps are to improve broadband and cell phone service for rural residents.

- Meet with local providers to understand the major challenges with getting a new tower and other supporting infrastructure that better serves Laconia.

- Work with Harrison County 911 to identify and implement the upgrades needed for 911 calls.

PARTNERS

- Town Board Members
- Harrison County Commissioners
- Network Providers
- Harrison County 911

RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Rural Development Telecommunications Programs (USDA)
- Federal 911 Grant Program (USDOT)
- Federal Communication Commission Grants
- OCRA Grants: Next Level Connection Program, Broadband Readiness Pilot Program, and Indiana Connectivity Program

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY 6.2

Pursue funding for new sidewalks to improve safety on Cross Street SE and North Tobacco Landing Road.

DESCRIPTION

Sidewalks provide many benefits including safety, mobility, and healthier communities. In addition to reducing risk of cars hitting people who are walking along roads, sidewalks also provide facilities for residents to utilize for exercise and transportation purposes. Roads without sidewalks are more than twice as likely to have pedestrian crashes as sites with sidewalks on both sides of the street. Many people, including children, older adults, and people with disabilities cannot drive a vehicle and are reliant on walking. With the small scale of Laconia, residents and visitors can walk the entire town in a short distance, but most areas do not have sidewalks. Sidewalks are preferred in areas where people frequently walk, like the town shelter. Laconia should connect the outlying streets of Cross Street SE and North Tobacco Landing Road to the overall sidewalk network to improve safety and pedestrian mobility throughout the town.

ACTION STEPS

- Determine if there is enough space within the right-of-way to construct a sidewalk along Cross Street SE and North Tobacco Landing Road.
- Work with the County Engineer, contractor, or consultant to determine an estimated cost of new sidewalk infrastructure along Cross Street SE and North Tobacco Landing Road.
- Allocate funding in the town's annual budget for the new sidewalks.
- Hire an engineer to design the sidewalks and bid the project for construction.
- Construct the new sidewalk segments.

PARTNERS

- Town Staff / Officials
- Local Property Owners
- County Engineer

RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Laconia General Fund
- Non-Profit Grants
- INDOT Community Crossings Matching Grant
- INDOT LPA Program
- Local Public Agency Guide to INDOT

CATALYST INITIATIVE 8

*Supports the **Local Roadways** Big Idea* (See Page 38)

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY 6.3
Explore the use of state funding opportunities to upgrade the local roadways.

DESCRIPTION

Laconia has several local roads within town limits that have been treated as alleyways. Currently, these local streets are dirt paths with numerous potholes. The town should evaluate the conditions of the local streets and start prioritizing improvements. To be fully functional, these roadways should be leveled and paved. Laconia could utilize INDOT's the Community Crossings Matching Grant Program (CCMG) to help fund these improvements. The CCMG provides funding to cities, towns, and counties across Indiana to make improvements to local roads and bridges. INDOT holds two CCMG Call for Projects each year, one in January and one in July. Projects that are eligible for funding through Community Crossings include road and bridge preservation projects with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance in connection with these projects. Based on Laconia's population, the town would receive funds using a 75/25% match.

ACTION STEPS

- Inventory and prioritize local roadways with the greatest need based on the conditions and frequency of use.
- Secure a bid estimate for the cost of improvements and determine how the town will provide its match.
- Review the CCMG application process and start working to develop the required material such as the financial commitment level, detailed estimates, and the asset management plan approval letter.

PARTNERS

- Town Staff / Officials
- Indiana Department of Transportation
- County Engineer or consultant

RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Laconia's Asset Management Plan
- Indiana Department of Transportation Website
- Neighboring communities that have gone through the application process before.

CATALYST INITIATIVE 9

*Supports the **Online Engagement** Big Idea (See Page 45)*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 9.1

Partner with the Laconia Community Center and/or local high school to create a website.

DESCRIPTION

For many small towns, websites are the main avenue of communication with residents. Town websites can be used to find contact information, utility rates, and link visitors to regional resources, such as local festivals. Residents often rely on town websites for communication, public information, and access to helpful tools. Laconia's website should be user-friendly and easy to update without technical knowledge, making it a great resource for residents and visitors alike. Key components that should be included on the website are links to social media, alerts for emergency notices, contact information, information on local events and things to do, resources for residents and business owners, and emergency services information.

ACTION STEPS

- Organize a planning session with town staff and volunteers who can help create town website.
- Determine who is responsible for creating the website and how it can be easily maintained and updated.
- Choose a platform (like Wordpress or WIX) and reserve a domain.
- Outline the content that should be included and how it should be organized.

PARTNERS

- South Harrison Community School Corporation
- Town Council/Town Staff
- Laconia Community Center

RESOURCES / TOOLS

- IU Bloomington School of Public and Environmental Affairs and Center for Rural Engagement
- Eight Steps to Creating a Successful Government Website

CATALYST INITIATIVE 10

*Supports the **Funding** Big Idea* (See Page 45)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 9.3

Partner with the Harrison County Community Foundation for grant writing assistance when new funding opportunities are available.

DESCRIPTION

Private grant funding is crucial to the success of most small-town projects. However, the process of capturing grant funding can be highly competitive. Part of what makes grant writing so challenging is that typically every funder wants something different from a grant proposal. While most funders want to see the same core elements in a proposal, the narrative, space limitations, and formats can vary substantially. While a bulk of grant writing consists of crafting a compelling grant proposal, grant writing also requires researching possible grants, connecting with funders, maintaining grant calendars, managing active grant proposals, and reporting on how accepted grants were used. Town staff can participate in online grant writing workshops offered by the Harrison County Community Foundation Grantsmanship Center as well as other local and state organizations. The Grantsmanship Center is a training, publishing, and technical assistance organization that offers online and webinar training open to the public.

ACTION STEPS

- Appoint a representative of Laconia to participate in grant writing workshops.
- Create Microsoft Word (or similar) cover letter, executive summary, project fact sheet, schedule, and other supporting documentation templates.
- Research and maintain a list of potential grants, criteria, and deadlines annually.
- Research schedules and logistics of organizations that provide grant writing assistance and other funding opportunities.

PARTNERS

- Town Council/Town Staff
- Harrison County Community Foundation

RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Harrison County Community Foundation Grantsmanship Center
- Grant Professionals Association – Indiana Chapter
- Purdue Extension - Beginner's Guide to Grant Writing Workshop

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With an estimated population of 38 residents in 2020, Laconia is the second smallest of ten towns in Harrison County.

Appendix

Existing Conditions Summary

A clear and cohesive understanding of Laconia, as it exists today, is a critical building block in developing a comprehensive plan. The Laconia Comprehensive Plan will outline a community-wide vision with associated goals and recommendations for how to achieve the town's future wants and needs. It is important to complete a baseline assessment of the demographic and socioeconomic status, and inventory of the built environment, to identify issues and opportunities that should be considered as parts of the plan. Ultimately, the issues and opportunities identified will inform the town's goals and recommendations for meeting its overall vision.

FREDERICKSBURG

PALMYRA

150

MARENGO

GREENVILLE

MILLTOWN

135

NEW ALBANY

64

GEORGETOWN

CRANDALL

337

I-64

LANESVILLE

62

CORYDON

62

LEAVENWORTH

Harrison-Crawford
State Forest

O'Bannon Woods
State Park

NEW MIDDLETOWN

ELIZABETH

NEW AMSTERDAM

135

337

11

MAUCKPORT

LACONIA

KENTUCKY

Ohio River

Legend

Harrison County

Incorporated Area

Major Roadway

Waterway

Floodplain

Park and Open Space

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Located in Southern Indiana along the Ohio River, Harrison County is perfectly situated near a large metropolitan area (Louisville, KY) amongst rural landscapes. Harrison County neighbors several natural features including Cave Country and the State Parks that offer spelunking and hiking, and the Ohio River which offers all canoing, boating, and other water activities.

Harrison County is fortunate to have I-64 running through the center of the county with interchanges near Corydon and Lanesville. Several primary state routes provide connectivity between towns and the interstate. Laconia is also just ten miles from Brandenburg, Kentucky and 28 miles from Louisville, Kentucky.

Laconia is situated in the southern portion of Harrison County near the Ohio River. Laconia is very small with just over 30 acres of land within the town limits. The primary access point is CR 11 from the north and west.

PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

Crafting a comprehensive plan is an opportunity to build upon past planning efforts. The Town of Laconia was established in 1816. Since then, the town has continued to evolve into the community it is today. One of the beginning steps in the comprehensive planning process is to review any past planning documents to understand how those plans should inform the new plan. The following plans were considered as part of the planning process:

Harrison County Comprehensive Plan - 2009
The county's current comprehensive plan establishes a vision that emphasizes the value of the small towns and rural lifestyle and balances development opportunities with good stewardship of the land. The plan outlines eight key goals that range from providing responsible development and preserving the rural character to responding to lifelong educational needs and supporting the expansion and enhancement of services, programs, and facilities. Additionally, the implementation chapter focuses on updating policies, establishing new regulations, and conducting further plan-related studies.

Laconia Comprehensive Plan - 2014
The town went through a similar planning process to create the *Laconia Comprehensive Plan* that identified a vision, goals, and strategies for Laconia. The five goals focused on:

- Quality housing options
- History and Rural Character
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Businesses and Community Development
- Entertainment Options

Along with the above goals, the plan also included a strategic action plan that identified tools, programs, and funding sources that the town could utilize for implementation.

Harrison County Community Leadership Planning Initiative - 2020
This initiative focused on five areas that were identified as the highest priorities for the county's future that should be addressed through the combined efforts of the county's leadership. The five priorities included:

- A shared vision for Infrastructure and Land Use Planning
- Workforce and Education
- Diverse Housing Options
- Business Development and Support
- Substance Abuse, Health, and Wellness

This initiative identified the need to create comprehensive plans for each of the ten incorporated towns as well as the county as a whole. The *Laconia Comprehensive Plan* is one of ten town plans being completed as part of the *Harrison County Town Planning Initiative.*

DEMOGRAPHICS

PEOPLE | HOUSING | ECONOMICS

An analysis of Laconia's demographic and economic conditions was conducted to guide the planning process and provide the necessary background information for developing the comprehensive plan. This section provides detailed information on the population, economic, and housing characteristics of Laconia such as:

- Population characteristics – age, gender, race/ethnicity, household composition, etc.

- Economic features – education, income, poverty, employment, commuting, etc.

- Housing features – housing type, housing value, occupancy rates, etc.

The data used in this analysis was sourced through the U.S. Census Bureau (redistricting data) 2010 and 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Unless specified, the data in this analysis is from the 2020 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates.

The town's total population is decreasing.
With an estimated population of 38 residents in 2020, Laconia is the second smallest of ten towns in Harrison County. The town represents approximately 0.1% of Harrison County's total population of 40,164 people. Population change over the past two decades has been minor. In 2000, the town was home to 29 residents. Between 2000 and 2010, the population increased by about 72% (21 people) to total of 50 people. Between 2010 and 2020, the population decreased slightly by losing 12 people over the course of ten years. However, communities with a small population can see fluctuations in these statistics that are not necessarily accurate because one or two households that either complete or do not complete the census surveys can skew the datasets

The number of households, both family and single-person households, has decreased.
Since 2010, the number of households in Laconia has slightly decreased from 16 households to ten households in 2020. A household consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit, including the related family members and all the unrelated people who share the housing unit. A person living alone or

TOTAL POPULATION

Laconia Population Change
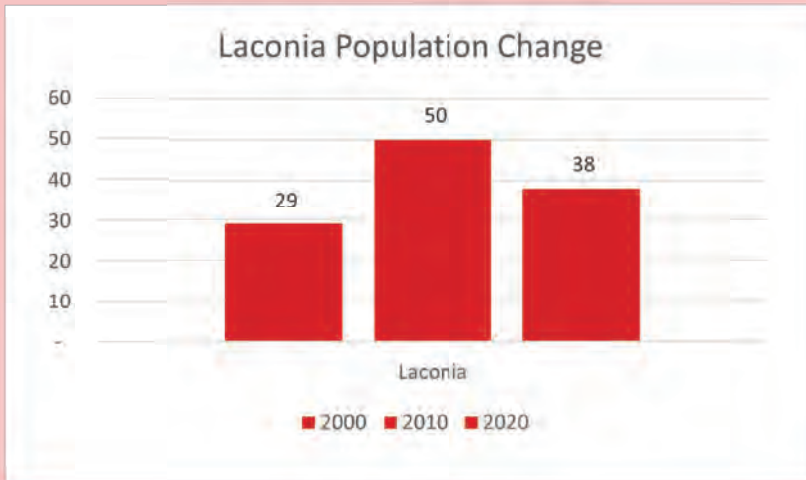
With an estimated population of 38 residents in 2020, Laconia is the third smallest of the ten towns in Harrison County.

POPULATION CHANGE

Population Change Between 2010 - 2020
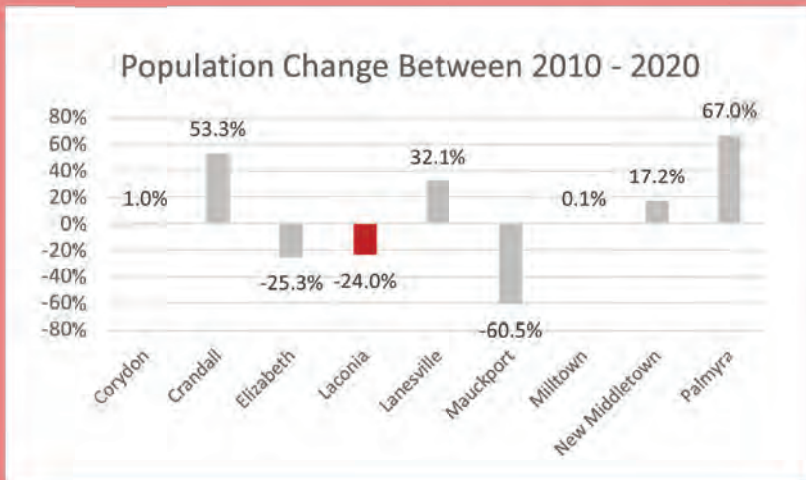
Between 2010 and 2020, the population decreased by 24%, one of the largest decreased compared to all ten towns.

HOUSEHOLDS

Household Size	2010	2020	Percent Change
Corydon	2.56	2.3	-10.2%
Crandall	2.03	2.39	17.7%
Elizabeth	2.18	2.69	23.4%
Laconia	2.7	3.22	19.3%
Lanesville	2.34	2.55	9.0%
Mauckport	2.94	2	-32.0%
Milltown	2.85	2.81	-1.4%
New Amsterdam	2	3.81	90.5%
New Middletown	3.26	4.04	23.9%
Palmyra	2.81	2.82	0.4%

While the number of households are decreasing, the size of households are getting larger.

a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit, such as partners or roomers, are also considered a household. Households exclude group quarters.

Additionally, there are two major categories of households, "family" and "non-family." A family household consists of two or more individuals who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption, although they also may include other unrelated people. Of the ten households in Laconia, eight are family households and two are non-family households. The number of family households has decreased by four (33.3%) between 2010 and 2020 while the average size of each household (owner-occupied and renter-occupied) increased, similar to Harrison County.

Laconia's racial composition is not changing. Race and ethnicity are considered two separate and distinct characteristics. Race refers to a person's physical characteristics, and ethnicity describes a person's origin or cultural identity. Regarding race, Laconia, as a whole, is not diverse with 100% of the population being Caucasian. This has remained the same since 2010. Laconia is similar to Elizabeth, Mauckport, New Amsterdam, and Crandall, all who have a 100% Caucasian population. In regards to ethnicity, Laconia has gained one person who identifies as Hispanic in origin between 2010 and 2020.

Laconia has an unbalanced age distribution. Median age is only characteristic used when analyzing the age structure of a population at a high level. The town's median age (43.5 years) is comparable to the county (39.7 years) and the majority of the other towns in the county. When looking for a more detailed analysis, a population pyramid can illustrate the distribution of a population by age group and sex.

A community with stable population growth generally has a similar number of people in all age groups, except the oldest, and appears as a rectangle shape. However, a population pyramid with a narrow top and wide base typically indicates high birthrates (or growing population), while an inverted pyramid (wide top and narrow base) generally represents low birthrates (naturally declining population). Based on Laconia's population pyramid (shown on the following page), the age structure of the current population is unequally distributed with a high percentage of females between the ages of 20-29 and males between the ages of 55-59. Compared to Harrison

County, the most notable finding is Laconia's high percentage (34.2%) of people between the ages of 20-29. This young adult population is significantly higher than the county with 10.6% of people within this age group. However, because Laconia's population is very small, this can be easily skewed by just a few people.

The household income has substantially increased. Median household income is based on all available incomes from everyone living within a household. The median household income could not be calculated for 2020 because the Census does not publish data at smaller geographic areas due to reliability or to protect the identity and privacy of those who did respond. However, a broader dataset can be used to identify trends.

In 2010, only 12.5% of households in Laconia reported a median household income between $50,000 and $74,999, and this increased to about 46% of household in Laconia were in this same range by 2020. This change in household income has significantly improved since the post-recession period of the late 2000's like many other areas of the county. Comparably, Harrison County experienced a slight decrease of households in this range ($50,000 to $74,999) from 2010 to 2020, 23.6% and about 21% respectively. Similar to other demographic trends in Laconia, changes between census surveys could be greatly influenced by how many people completed their surveys.

Educational attainment is on the rise in Laconia. Laconia is a part of South Harrison Community Schools (Pre-kindergarten to Grade 12). Laconia's population that is older than 24 years has higher educational attainment rates in 2020 compared to 2010. While Laconia and Harrison County's populations both have about 90% that have earned a high school degree or higher in 2020, Laconia significantly increased this from only 76% having a high school degree or higher in 2010.

Only about 10% of Laconia's population holds a bachelor's degree or higher, which is lower than the county (14%) and the state (27%). This is a large increase from 2010, when Laconia did not have anyone bachelor's degree or higher. This increase in educational attainment could be related to the increase in individuals between the ages of 20-29 but could also reflect just a few residents that either completed the census survey.
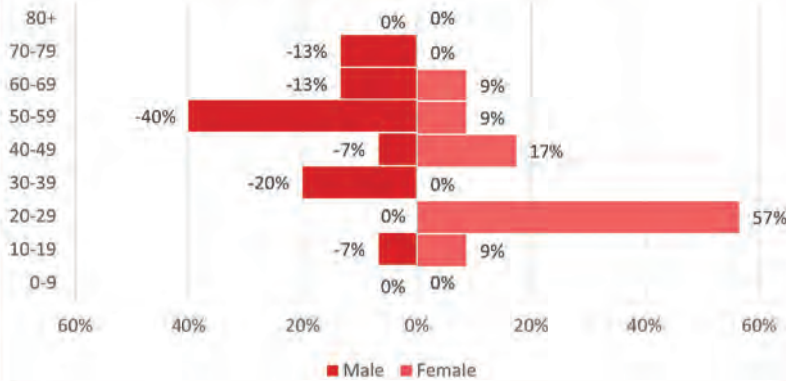
RACE & ETHNICITY

2020 Laconia Racial Makeup

Caucasian, 100.0%

Laconia, as a whole, is not diverse with 100% of the population being Caucasian. This has remained the same since 2010.

AGE STRUCTURE

2020 Laconia Population Pryamid

Age	Male	Female
80+	0%	0%
70-79	-13%	0%
60-69	-13%	9%
50-59	-40%	9%
40-49	-7%	17%
30-39	-20%	0%
20-29	0%	57%
10-19	-7%	9%
0-9	0%	0%

■ Male   ■ Female

The age structure of Laconia's current population is unequally distributed with a high percentage of females between the ages of 20-29 and males between the ages of 55-59.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Change in Household Median Income
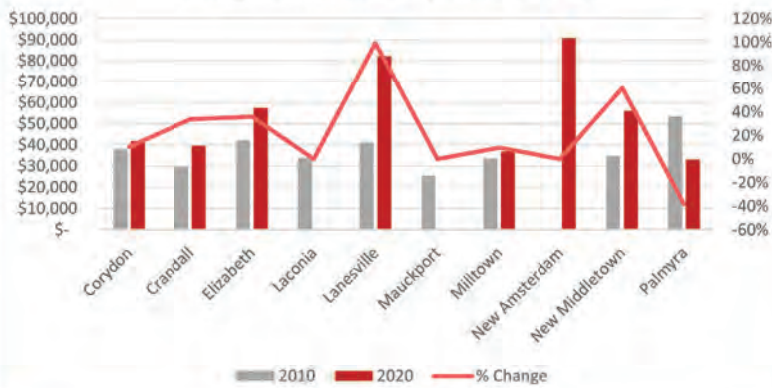
■ 2010   ■ 2020   — % Change

In 2010, only 12.5% of households in Laconia reported a median household income between $50,000 and $74,999, and this increased to about 46% of household in Laconia were in this same range by 2020.

PEOPLE - KEY CONCLUSIONS

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR LACONIA?

- **The town's population has not changed in the last 20 years.** Between 2010 and 2020 Laconia's population decreased by 12 people, with the town representing only 0.1% of the county's population. During the same period, Harrison County grew by about 800 people. Laconia's lack of population change is likely tied to the town's limited infrastructure needed to support additional growth. With limited utility infrastructure in place and limited developable land within town limits, Laconia will likely not have new residential development needed to support new residents.

- **Laconia is generally getting older but has a high percentage of young adults.** Between 2010 and 2020, Laconia's population has aged. In 2010, the median age was about 33-year-old and by 2020 it had increased to 43.5-year-old. As residents age, their preferences and needs evolve. Aging citizens require various housing types, alternative modes of transportation, and access to healthcare. While the median age has increased, Laconia's current population has a larger percentage of individuals in the 20-29 years old range. As these individuals advance in their careers and/or start a family, their desired preferences may change too. Retaining these young adults will help support the population.

- **Laconia's racial makeup is not changed.** The only race represented in Laconia, Caucasian, did not change between 2010 and 2020. While Harrison County and the communities included within it have a similar racial diversity, the majority of the communities had a slight fluctuation of racial diversification due to population change. Because Laconia is small, many people who live here are from the town, therefore the racial makeup has not shifted.

- **The population has an increasing household income.** An exact median household income could not be calculated for 2020 because the Census Bureau did not publish this data point due to a too high margin of error. However, the number of households within the income range of $50,000 to $74,999 did increase from 2010 (12.5%) to 2020 (46%). With an increase in wages and a lower cost of living, the population may have a larger amount of disposable income that could be spent at local businesses or attractions if they were offered in Laconia.

- **Educational attainment levels are increasing at all levels.** Between 2010 and 2020 the percentage of the population over the age of 25 that had a high school diploma or higher increased by about 14%. Of the 31 individuals over the age of 25 in Laconia, one person had received a bachelor's degree and two people have earned a graduate or professional degree. Similar to increased household income, higher educational levels may be a result of the change in occupations or the population continuing their education. With a trend in increased educational attainment, Laconia has an opportunity to capture the new younger educated generation who want to live in an area with a small-town feel area and still be within a short commuting distance to regional employment centers. A focus should be placed on keeping those younger residents as they graduate high school or college through providing essential quality of life amenities they desire.

HOUSING

The number of vacant housing units has increased. The number of housing units in Laconia decreased from 21 units in 2010 to 18 housing in 2020 due to three units being demolished. About 40% of housing units were vacant in 2020, an increase from about 24% vacant units in 2010. This vacancy rate is higher than Harrison County (15.4%) and Indiana (10.4%). Of the housing units, about 51% are owner-occupied, which remained relatively the same from 2010 to 2020. This could indicate that the units that were previously occupied by renters in 2010 are now vacant due to the percentage of renter-occupied units decreasing from about 29% to 11% in 2020. It is important to note that while the data is showing a decrease in renters, residents have expressed they do not feel this is true.

Laconia's current housing stock is primarily single-family, detached units. Laconia had an estimated 18 housing units in 2020, which was a decrease of three units from 2010. This decrease, while minor, impacts the availability of housing in Laconia if they are not replaced. Of the housing units available within Laconia, 15 units (83%) are single-family detached homes, and the remaining three units (17%) are mobile homes. Laconia also has senior living apartments available within the community center, but these units are not included in the Census counts. Senior living facilities are considered multi-unit housing types, however no multi-unit housing was reported on the 2020 C\ census data.

The value of homes in Laconia has increased. Even without any housing units being built after 1969, the value of the housing stock in Laconia has slightly increased. In 2010, the median home value was $40,000, but this increased in 2020 to $46,400. Compared to Indiana's increase in value of 21%, the town is not too far behind with a 16% increase. However, even though the overall value of the housing units has increased, the median value is still drastically lower than the county. In 2020, Harrison County's median home value was $159,500, which is significantly higher than Laconia's median home value of $46,400.

Rent is comparable to other communities in the County. With the size of Laconia, in both 2010 and 2020, the median rent was not able to be accurately calculated due to the small data set size in Laconia, similar to the median household income. However, in 2010, all reported rents ranged from $300 to $499 a month, and this increased to $500 to $999 a month in 2020. While the median contract rent was not reported precisely for Laconia, median rents throughout Harrison County and Indiana have increased from 2010 to 2020 along with the United States.

Laconia has a very old housing stock. There have been no additional housing units built after 1969. Laconia has a significantly higher percentage of houses built before 1950 (78%) compared to the county (26%) and the state (33%). There are sometimes safety challenges that come with older housing stock, including the cost to maintain and update the house, outdated building codes, unsafe building methods, or unsafe materials such as lead paint or asbestos.

HOUSING UNITS
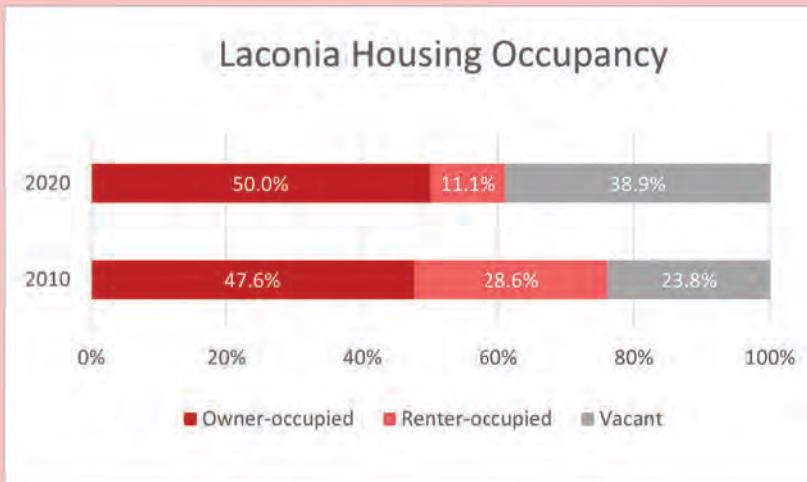
Laconia Housing Occupancy

	Owner-occupied	Renter-occupied	Vacant
2020	50.0%	11.1%	38.9%
2010	47.6%	28.6%	23.8%

About 40% of housing units were vacant in 2020, an increase from about 24% vacant units in 2010. This vacancy rate is higher than Harrison County (15.4%) and Indiana (10.4%).

HOUSING TYPES
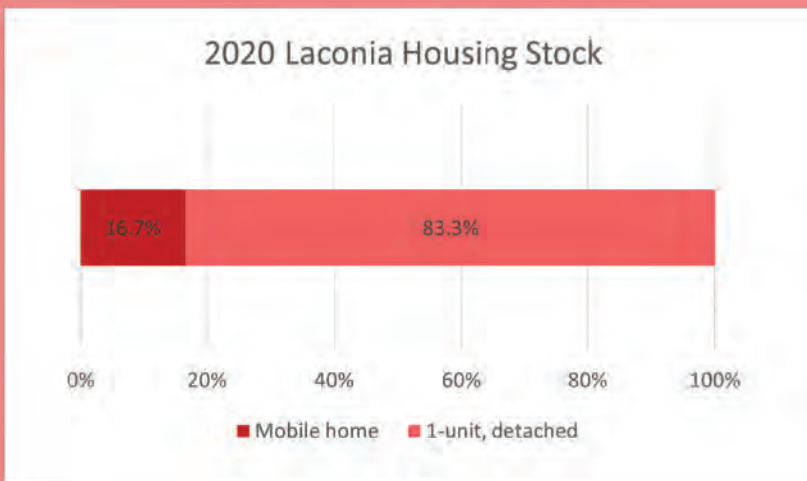
2020 Laconia Housing Stock

Mobile home: 16.7% — 1-unit, detached: 83.3%

Of the housing units available within Laconia, 15 units (83%) are single-family detached homes, and the remaining three units (17%) are mobile homes.

HOME VALUES

Median Home Value

	2010	2020
Indiana	$123,000	$148,900
Harrison County	$124,200	$159,500
Laconia	$40,000	$46,400
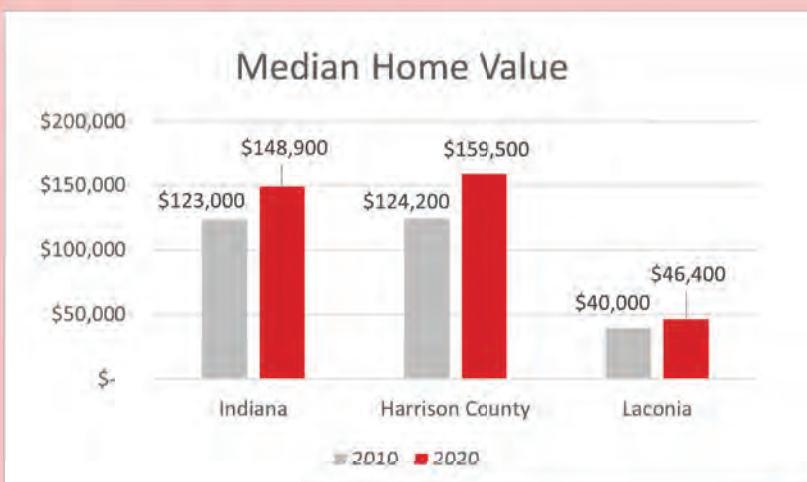
Laconia median home value is significantly lower than the state and Harrison County.

HOUSING - KEY CONCLUSIONS
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR LACONIA?

- **Units that were once renter-occupied are now likely vacant.** While the number of owner-occupied units stayed relatively the same from 2010 to 2020, data indicated that Laconia lost over half of the renter-occupied units in town. The loss of these renters impacts the vacancy rate as these units are now reported to the census as vacant. The longer the unit is vacant, the less likely it is to be cared for properly. As these units start to become dilapidated, it becomes a safety issue and impacts the property value of surrounding homes and town's character.

- **While the town's median home value is low compared to Harrison County, homes are continuing to sell at a similar rate.** Laconia's median home value is $46,000, which is nearly $115,000 less than the county's median home value. A lower home value is often impacted by the age and condition of the unit. It takes into consideration the value of the built structure but doesn't reflect the market demand or the sale price of homes. The median home value from the census is not necessarily accurate in a changing market because it is based on the resident's estimate of how much the property would sell for if it were for sale. According to Zillow, the average home sale price in Laconia was just over $150,000, which is only slightly lower than the county's average of $164,000. Ensuring that residents are maintaining and updating their homes, when needed, will have a positive impact on the value and sale prices in the future.

- **Maintenance and repair costs of an aging housing stock will continue to increase.** Without any new houses being built after 1969, maintenance and repair costs will continue to increase and may become burdensome for Laconia residents. While there was an increase in household income, major renovations and improvements can quickly become costly and some residents may be unable to maintain their existing structures. Laconia can assist homeowners with the financial costs of maintaining their properties by utilizing state and federal funding programs as well as any additional property management and upkeep.

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE

The labor force is decreasing in size. In 2020, there were 35 individuals over the age of 16 with only 9 (25.7%) actively participating in the workforce. Compared to 2010, there were 25 individuals (62.5%) participating in the workforce indicating a decrease of 16 workers over the last 10 years.

Harrison County's labor force has also decreased in overall participation since 2010. Furthermore, compared to the other towns in Harrison County, Laconia has a smaller percentage of the population participating in the labor force.

The town's industry diversification has shifted away from historically identified industries and occupations. By occupation, the data shows that in 2020 the majority of workers in Laconia were working in the sales and office occupation (44.4%) or the natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations (44.4%). These sectors together account for 88.8% of the local jobs. This is a large change from 2010 which reported a majority of employees (63.6%) worked in the service occupation however there were no reported workers in this industry in 2020.

On the other hand, there are only four industries represented in the very small workforce of Laconia. The highest concentration of the workforce is in the finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing industry with 44.4% of the workforce employed. In 2010, the arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services industry were the largest industry with 14 employed, however, there was no reported workforce in this industry in 2020. This can be correlated to the shift in the service occupation also reported from 2010 to 2020.

Laconia has a historically low unemployment rate. With a small labor force, Laconia has experienced historically lower unemployment rates. In 2020 the unemployment rate (0.0%) was lower than the county (5.0%), state (4.7%), and the nation (5.4%). Elizabeth, Lanesville, New Amsterdam, and Palmyra also reported a 0.0% unemployment rate in 2020. However, each of those communities had an unemployment rate in 2010 while Laconia was still reported at 0%.

LABOR FORCE

2020 Population 16+ within the Labor Force

Laconia	25.7%
Harrison County	58.6%
Indiana	63.8%
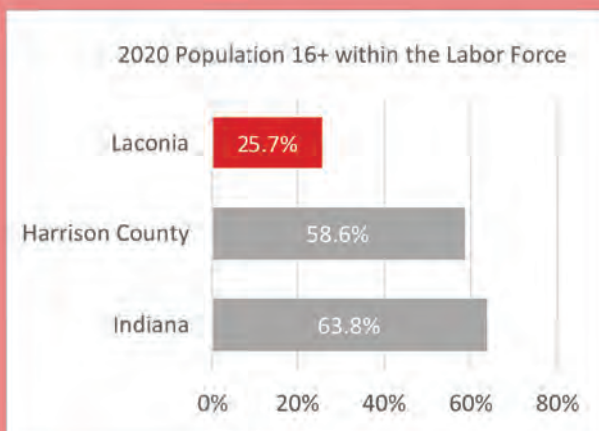
With only 9 people actively participating in the workforce, Laconia has a smaller percentage of the population participating in the labor force.

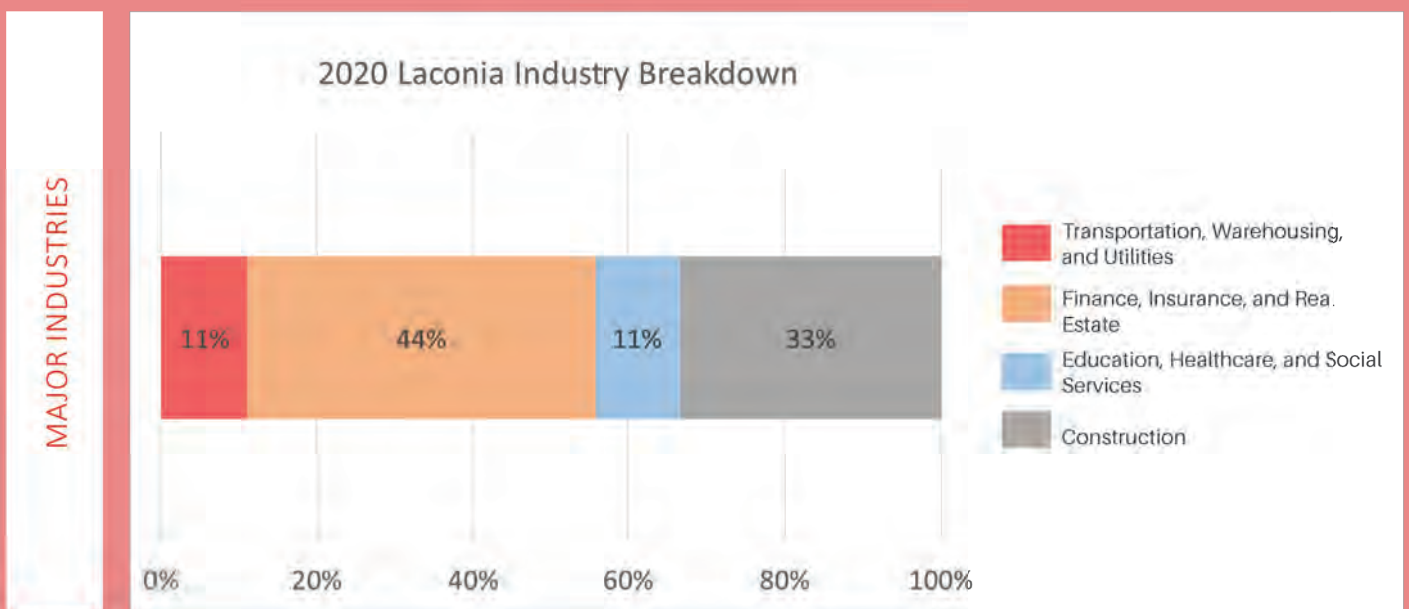## COMMUTING TRENDS

WORKED IN STATE OF RESIDENCE	55.6%
Worked in county of residence	44.4%
Worked outside county of residence	11.1%
WORKED OUTSIDE STATE OF RESIDENCE	44.4%

In 2020 nearly half (55.6%) of the workforce in Laconia leaves the town for a job with an average community time of 72 minutes.

The community loses population during the daytime. In 2020 nearly half (55.6%) of the workforce in Laconia leaves the town for a job. The remaining 44.4% of the workforce worked from home in 2020. This activity represents a daytime population loss of five people for the town. This trend of working outside of the town is similar to other communities in Harrison County. The average travel time is 72 minutes for the commuting workforce which is the longest of all the towns in Harrison County.

Of the five workers that commute, about two of them (44%) are traveling outside of Indiana, likely to Kentucky, for work.

2020 Laconia Industry Breakdown

MAJOR INDUSTRIES

11%	Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities
44%	Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate
11%	Education, Healthcare, and Social Services
33%	Construction

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

EMPLOYMENT & WORKFORCE - KEY CONCLUSIONS
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR LACONIA?

- **Laconia has shifted from relying on the arts and entertainment industry to the finance and construction industries.** With the decrease in workforce participation, also comes an industry and occupation shift. This shift could be a result of the shift in age structure and decrease in population. Because Laconia's workforce is so small, these types of shifts likely don't have any major repercussions for the town but it is noteworthy to document.

- **While the workforce is small, the current workers are employed.** For the last 10 years, Laconia's workforce has remained very small with less than 30 people participating in the labor force. While this number is small, all individuals have remained employed with an unemployment rate of 0.0%. No other community in Harrison County has had this trend. This could be a reflection of the job stability these individuals have and their commitment to commuting to work or having the opportunity to work from home.

- **Several members of the workforce are working from home.** With half of the labor force working from home, broadband connectivity comes to the forefront of top priorities. If the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it is the importance of reliable internet access. For these individuals and others, to be able to work from home, Laconia should be striving to improve not only access but also the quality and affordability of broadband.

- **Laconia has a very long commute time.** About a half of commuters leave the town for work outside Harrison County or Indiana. This not only influences decision-making regarding housing options and transportation infrastructure but also the quality of life. With half the workforce working from home and the other half commuting long distances, it could be very easy for these individuals to move elsewhere. It's important to maintain and enhance the rural living and small-town characteristics that Laconia residents value to keep these workers local.

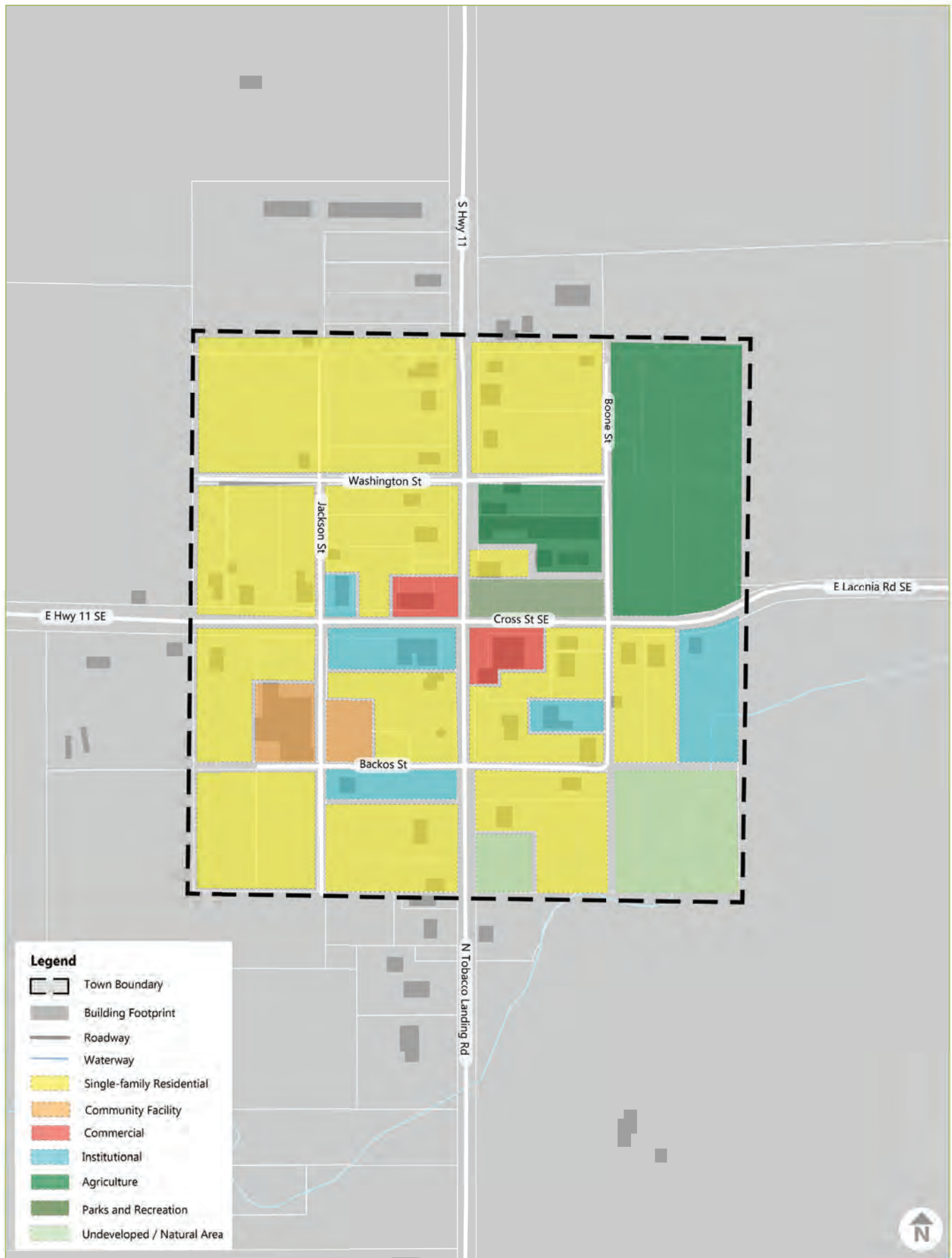*This page was intentionally left blank.*

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT
LAND USE | TRANSPORTATION | UTILITIES | COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Completing an inventory of the built environment can help to identify the issues or opportunities that exist on the ground today. The built environment includes land use and development, transportation infrastructure, and utilities. The following inventory and analysis provide an overview of the built environment, an explanation of its importance, and how it can impact future decisions and growth patterns.

EXISTING LAND USE

One of the primary requirements for comprehensive planning, set forth by the Indiana Code, is a statement of objectives for land use development. Land use refers to the type of activity that is occurring on the property or within the structure. There are many different types of land use categories but the five most common uses include residential, commercial, parks and recreation, industrial, and institutional. Before creating a future land use map, an inventory and analysis of the current land use pattern can be used to set the stage. A land use map is a visual representation of how the community has been, or wishes to be, developed.

Legend

- ⬛ Town Boundary
- ⬛ Building Footprint
- — Roadway
- — Waterway
- 🟨 Single-family Residential
- 🟧 Community Facility
- 🟥 Commercial
- 🟦 Institutional
- 🟩 Agriculture
- 🟩 Parks and Recreation
- 🟩 Undeveloped / Natural Area

The map is typically accompanied by written land use category descriptions. Each of the existing land use categories is described below.

- **Single-family Residential** – The single-family residential category represents land used exclusively for residential purposes and contains a single dwelling unit. Most dwelling units within this category are single-family detached.

- **Community Facility** – This category represents land that is used for community services. The Laconia Community Center is the only existing community facility.

- **Commercial** – This category represents land that is used for providing goods and services. For Laconia, the current commercial uses include a convenience store and a storage facility.

- **Institutional** – Institutional uses typically include religious, educational, medical, or civic uses. Uses within this land use category are exempt from property taxes. The US Post Office, along with several churches and town-owned properties are institutional uses.

- **Parks and Recreation** – The parks and recreation category represents land used for active recreation or passive open space. Laconia has a recreation facility at the corner of Cross Street and CR 11. This facility includes a public shelter house and a small playground.

- **Agriculture** – This category represents land being used for agricultural purposes including land dedicated to growing crops or pastureland used for livestock. There is a significant amount of agricultural land surrounding Laconia.

- **Undeveloped / Natural Area** – This category represents land that is not developed. There is undeveloped land in the southeast quadrant of the town.

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TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

This section describes the existing transportation system and current forms of mobility within Laconia's town limits. A transportation network is more than just roads, it can include bike and pedestrian infrastructure, public transit, and rail. While roads provide mobility and land access for a motorist, sidewalks and trails can provide pedestrian connectivity. In smaller communities like Laconia, residents rely primarily on their vehicles for longer commutes and sidewalks for short tips such as walking to the general store.

ROADS

Functional classification is a way to inventory how a road functions and the level of access and/or mobility of that road. This includes several factors such as the efficiency of travel, traffic circulation, access points, number of lanes, speed limits, and how the road is used. The Federal Highway Functional Classification system has six primary classes including interstate, freeway or expressway, principal arterial, minor arterial, major collector, and minor collector. Anything not classified is considered a local road.
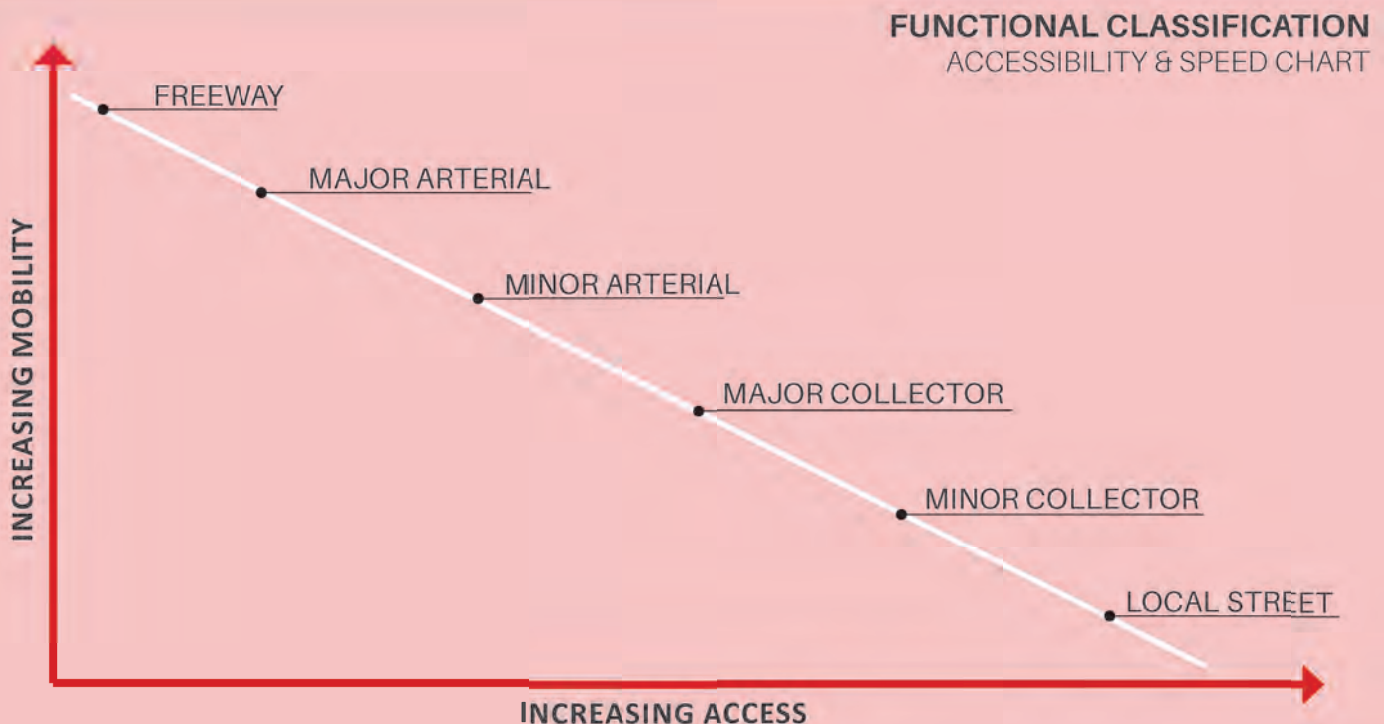
Laconia has one roadway segment (CR 11) that is classified as a major collector. Major collectors are responsible for connecting local streets with arterials.
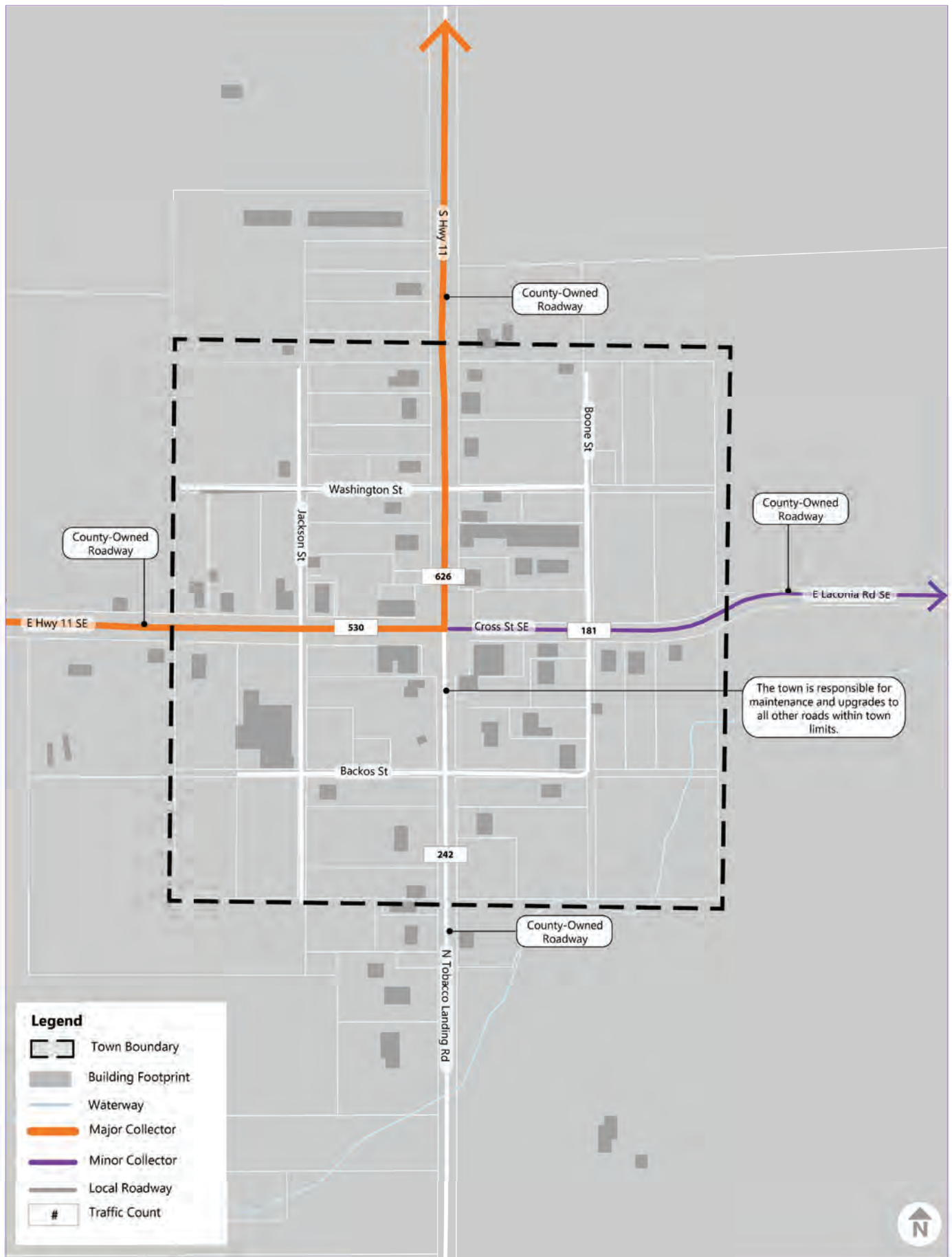
Collectors typically provide less mobility and have lower speed limits than arterials. Cross Street / E Laconia Road SE is also identified as a minor collector meaning it is responsible for collecting traffic from the local roadways.

In terms of traffic, the intersection of CR 11 and Cross Street has the highest level of traffic with about 600 cars a daily traveling through the intersection. Except for CR 11, the Town of Laconia is responsible for maintaining all the roadways within its current town limits. Anything outside of the town limits is owned and operated by Harrison County.

SIDEWALKS

Sidewalks not only serve as an alternative mode of transportation, but they also provide a recreational amenity for leisure walking and biking. Laconia's current sidewalk network is fairly incomplete with sidewalks being present in only a few portions of CR 11. In these areas, the sidewalk has a landscape/lawn buffer to protect pedestrians.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION
ACCESSIBILITY & SPEED CHART

INCREASING MOBILITY

FREEWAY
MAJOR ARTERIAL
MINOR ARTERIAL
MAJOR COLLECTOR
MINOR COLLECTOR
LOCAL STREET

INCREASING ACCESS

Legend

- Town Boundary
- Building Footprint
- Waterway
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Roadway
- # Traffic Count

County-Owned Roadway

County-Owned Roadway

County-Owned Roadway

County-Owned Roadway

The town is responsible for maintenance and upgrades to all other roads within town limits.

S Hwy 11

E Hwy 11 SE

Washington St

Jackson St

Boone St

Cross St SE

Backos St

N Tobacco Landing Rd

E Laconia Rd SE

626

530

181

242

BUS ROUTES

There is one public transit service available to Laconia residents. Working with the Harrison County Commissioners and Blue River Services, the Southern Transit System (SITS) serves the community with rural transit services. SITS is available to residents in Crawford, Harrison, Scott, Washington, and Floyd Counties. Their door-to-door service ensures safe transportation from the entrance of pick-up to the entrance of the destination. Transportation services have to be scheduled in advance by phone and costs range from $2-$4 one way, depending on mileage.

MULTI-USE TRAILS

There are no existing multi-use trails available within the town limits of Laconia.

UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

WATER, WASTEWATER, AND STORMWATER

South Harrison Water Corporation provides water utilities to Laconia and the surrounding area. Harrison County Regional Sewer District assists with wastewater and stormwater.

ELECTRIC

Electrical services are provided by Duke Energy and Harrison County REMC.
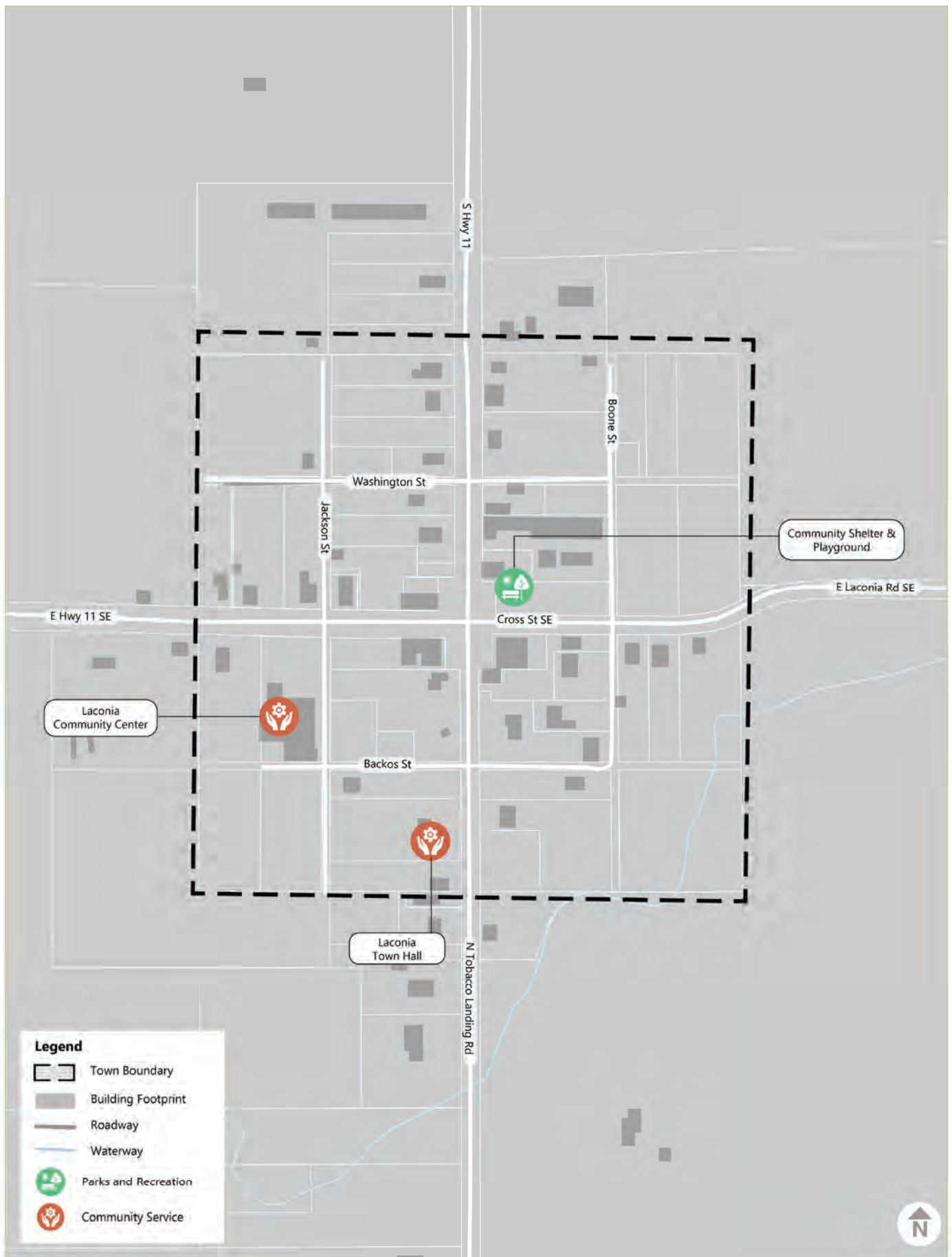
BROADBAND

According to Broadbandnow.com, there are 4 Internet providers for the town including Frontier, Viasat, HughesNet, and Earthlink. In terms of quality speed, Viasat and Earthlink provide the most effective services.

Over the last several years, Harrison County has prioritized improving broadband connectivity by investing over five-million dollars in broadband with MainStream Fiber. More recently, the Chamber of Commerce of Harrison County and the Harrison County Community Foundation launched a Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan. The Plan will identify areas in need of broadband infrastructure, find the greatest return on investment, and outline strategies for implementation. While the plan was completed at the county level, the town will reap the benefits as the recommendations are implemented.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities enhance the lives of residents in many ways by offering fundamental services to community members. Community facilities can range from healthcare and community support facilities to educational and recreational facilities. Laconia is home to 3 key public facilities that provide essential services to the community including:

- **Laconia Town Hall** – The town owns a small building located on Main Street to host civic meetings. The Town Board meets at this facility on the first Thursday of every month. The town water sampling laboratory is also located within this building.

- **Laconia Community Center** – Once known as Clay Hill College in the early 1930s, Laconia has its community center located along Jackson Street.

- **Laconia Community Park** – A more recent addition to the Town of Laconia, the park's focal point is a public shelter house at the corner of SR 11 and Cross Street. The shelter provides a community gathering space with picnic tables, restroom facilities, and a small playground for children. This space is used for community events with live performances during the summer.

Legend

- **Town Boundary**
- **Building Footprint**
- **Roadway**
- **Waterway**
- **Parks and Recreation**
- **Community Service**

Map labels:
S Hwy 11
Boone St
Washington St
Jackson St
Community Shelter & Playground
E Laconia Rd SE
E Hwy 11 SE
Cross St SE
Laconia Community Center
Backos St
Laconia Town Hall
N Tobacco Landing Rd

KEY CONCLUSIONS
Laconia's Strengths & Opportunities

This document informs the planning process by revealing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats based on what the community has to offer today and what it could offer in the future. The following statements serve as the key conclusions for this analysis. Moving forward these conclusions should be taken into consideration as the vision, goals, and recommendations of the *Laconia Comprehensive Plan* are developed.

- **Laconia has a current comprehensive plan in place.** Unlike most of the other towns in Harrison County, Laconia has a current comprehensive plan that was completed in 2014. Over the last 5+ years, the town has been using the plan to guide community investments. Because of this, the town has a better understanding of comprehensive planning and has already done the heavy lifting of identifying a vision for the future. Through this process, the project team will be able to vet these ideas and continue expanding upon them.

- **For the size of the community, Laconia has several community assets.** For a community of 38 residents, Laconia has many community assets to be proud of including the general store, the park area behind the store, the community parks with a new shelter house, and the community center. These facilities are well-kept and high used facilities that contribute to the character and quality of life offered within Laconia.

- **Laconia's location makes it an easy commute to Brandenburg.** With only 10 miles from Brandenburg, residents can enjoy the rural characteristics of Laconia with convenient access to a large city. Many residents travel to Brandenburg for their errands, groceries, and sometimes employment. As new employers settle in Brandenburg, Laconia could be an attractive place to live for some of the newcomers.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

Laconia's Challenges & Threats

- **Laconia has limited capacity and financial resources to get things done.**
  While not unique to Laconia, smaller communities have few financial, technical, and staff resources. Because of this, the town likely depends on a select few individuals to keep things moving and struggle to see how things could be different than they are today.

- **Laconia is facing challenges related to aging utility infrastructure.** Even dating back to the 2014 Comprehensive plan, Laconia has expressed the need for several utility improvements including upgrades to the stormwater system and sewer system. The cost of maintenance and upgrades to utility infrastructure can become overbearing but it is a critical action for communities to take. Not doing does utilities impact current residents but it also plays a role in the community's ability to support future growth.

- **Laconia has a high vacancy rate.** Nearly 40% of Laconia's current housing stock is vacant. Data reveals the units that were once renter-occupied are not occupied any longer. This could be a result of the quality or condition of the units or conflicts with absentee landlords. The challenge with vacancy is that the longer the unit is vacant, the less likely it is to be cared for properly. As these units start to become dilapidated, it becomes a safety issue and impacts the property value of surrounding homes.

TOWN PLANNING INITIATIVE

HARRISON COUNTY

The Town of Laconia