

WELLS COUNTY, INDIANA

HOUSING ASSESSMENT & Growth Strategy

*understanding the future needs of housing in
Wells County*



created September 2017

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INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

The Wells County Economic Development Corporation engaged Development Concepts, Inc., in December 2016 to conduct a Housing Study & Infrastructure Needs Analysis for Wells County. The Study was to generate three specific outcomes which were defined as follows as part of its scope of services:

1. The Analysis Phase, will document Wells County's existing conditions and define a regional trade area from which a demographic, real estate and market snapshot will be created. The snapshot will provide base information needed to evaluate current and future community housing needs and identify housing demand.
2. Strategies will be designed to respond to the issues and opportunities identified in the Analysis Phase. The strategies will be sensitive to the different market segments that have been identified – likely ranging from affordable / workforce housing to mid - to upper income level market-rate housing options.
3. The final component of the Wells County Housing Study is a detailed work plan that will assist those individuals and organizations involved in moving from a planning phase to an implementation outcome responding to specific housing opportunities.

The Analysis Phase involved the collection of demographic, housing and economic data for Wells County. It also involved interviewing over two dozen local leaders, businesses and residents in order to collect first-hand information regarding community perceptions and real time information pertinent to the Housing Study.

The Analysis Phase documented that Wells County is growing slowly – especially compared to the Ft. Wayne Metro Area (hereinafter Metro Area) of which it is a part, and the State of Indiana. This slow growth combined with several other important demographic and economic indicators offer some reason for concern. Several data points worth highlighting include:

KEY MARKET INDICATORS DEMOGRAPHICS

- Limited population growth (36 new residents 2000-2010)
- Modest growth scattered in more rural areas
- Population relatively old
- Age cohorts 20-24 & 25-29 smaller compared to Metro Area or State

HOUSEHOLDS

- Households versus population growth rate higher due to smaller average household size
- New household growth mostly in rural areas
- Bluffton new household growth lowest in County over the past 15+ years

KEY MARKET INDICATORS

HOUSING

- 30% of Wells County housing was built in 1939 or earlier
- Home values lower than Metro Area or State
- Rent levels low - impede new multi-family development
- High rate of homeownership, but is declining
- New housing is a result of Wells County households in transition -- not new residents into County
- Lack of land and in some cases infrastructure a perceived impediment to new housing development

ECONOMICS

- Higher % of middle income households than Metro Area and State
- By contrast reduced number of lower and upper income households than the State
- Significant workforce shortages impede Wells County economic activity

The market indicators do not tell the complete story. In the interviews and working meetings with Wells County's leadership it was clear that there are voids in the County that impact its ability to grow and to attract new residents, businesses and investment. On the positive side public safety and schools are seen as central elements to the overall quality of life in Wells County. The river and outdoor activities associated with it are also seen as a valued natural feature. Universally residents and local leadership offered this assessment. There were no other economic or quality of life indicators mentioned

in over 6 months of community engagement that approached a consensus view or even frequent mention - just the opposite was true. For the most part common community assets such as shopping, groceries, restaurants, arts and entertainment, health and wellness, social outings all were seen as incomplete and in need of attention. The conclusion seemed to be that Wells County is a good place to live but many of its residents' needs are addressed outside their home County.

Following the collection of data that allowed for a real time profile of the demographic, economic and housing conditions in Wells County combined with first hand input from local leadership, businesses and residents, it was clear that the lack of consistent meaningful growth is the biggest threat to Wells County's overall well-being. While the location and diversity of housing is a very real issue it should not be viewed as the critical concern. From 2010-2016 Wells County averaged 45 new residents annually (12 in 2015-16) while the Metro Area averaged 2,400 residents each year. Some areas of Wells County encountered a decline in population while other areas had only negligible growth. Eighty-five percent of the County is agricultural but this is where it appears most of the growth is occurring – not in established neighborhoods and towns. The Analysis Phase and the findings it produced led the consultant team and its local working committee to the following:

CONCLUSION

CLEARLY THE COUNTY'S RURAL SETTING OFFERS NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR MANY OF ITS LONG TERM RESIDENTS – BUT IT IS IN PERIL IN MAINTAINING A NET POSITIVE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE. ANY DISCUSSION OF CREATING A VIABLE HOUSING STRATEGY MUST FIRST ADDRESS HOW WELLS COUNTY ENCOURAGES GROWTH.

This conclusion resulted in two questions, that it was felt, should influence future strategies related to population, housing and economic growth.

1. *Where does the County currently experience growth, and is it in the right places? and*
2. *Where does the County need to encourage growth and what must be done to generate it?*

In the past given the rural history of the County and the role agriculture has played these questions were not likely to be asked by local leadership. Today agriculture accounts for only 3.5% of the County’s workforce in spite of its 85% land use. It is a vital part of the County, but it will not be the primary growth driver going forward. What the growth driver will be is not clear as of this moment. It is recommended that a multi-faceted growth strategy be established that focuses on two key elements; 1) Contemporary Land Use, and 2) Community Programming.

The land use recommendations suggests the establishment of a more **Contemporary Land Use** policy created to preserve rural open spaces and encourage significant growth and investment in 2-3 targeted areas - helping to answer the two questions posed earlier in this section. It was felt, that the ad hoc nature of the little growth that is occurring in Wells County jeopardizes its rural nature and undermines its built environment. The ability to respond to the local desire for more and improved services and amenities is enhanced with strategically positioned growth. The creation of a growth district concept is introduced as a key growth tool. Growth Districts that encourage new housing development and that make it more likely that community assets can be supported and connected directly responds to the issues identified in the Analysis Phase of this Study. In addition the rural nature of the County is worthy of preservation and enhancement. If development is to occur in the rural areas, “transition zones” should be considered that work to focus development activity while protecting the agricultural heritage of the County. These transition zones are intended to offer a rural alternative to the growth districts but in a different form than the traditional residential sub-division. Organizing the transition zones to offer diverse housing product, strategically and economically placed infrastructure, and unique quality of life features, all of which are attractive to the broader market place is recommended.

While future land use planning is critical to a growth strategy, just as important is support programming. It is clear that promoting reasonable growth in Wells County is not on anyone’s agenda. Little has been done from a policy or programming perspective to encourage growth. A well thought-out **Community Programming** initiative is suggested. Programming starts with informing and expanding the leadership base that commits to growth as a key priority for the community. A capable army of local leaders will be able to, in a persistent fashion, address impediments such as the lack of; workforce development, business development, and investment in community amenities and assets – all identified as elements of a

PROPOSED WELLS COUNTY GROWTH STRATEGY



future Wells County Growth Strategy. Wells County clearly has talented and energetic businesses, political and resident stakeholders that once encouraged to engage on this topic will greatly increase the local capacity to encourage growth.

The elements of the [Contemporary Land Use](#) and [Community Programming](#) growth strategy components were organized into a multi-year implementation program – the final chapter in this report. The Implementation Work Program identifies key local organizations to lead and be accountable for refining the recommended strategies and assuring that progress is made beginning in year one and each following year. It is made clear in the Implementation Work Program that it all begins with organized and trained leadership. Without this local capacity, Wells County is likely to be one of the 50+ Indiana counties projected for nominal or, worse yet, negative growth in the future.

The Wells County Growth Strategy envisions several specific outcomes. First and foremost, Wells County will develop an [increased local capacity](#) to support a long term growth strategy. The “soft infrastructure” required to understand, respond to and successfully realize healthy sustained growth in Wells County will be developed and activated. This infrastructure will consist of contemporary policies and programming focused on creating growth outcomes and that are supported by a broader and deeper Wells County leadership base. This capacity will set its attention on [creating vibrant anchor communities](#) (Growth Districts) and elevate [distinct places](#) which highlight what is special and appealing about Wells County to both its residents – current and future. Finally there is an opportunity to address a much more diverse set of housing market needs throughout the County. New markets including young talent (millennials) and an ever growing empty nester sector, can play a role in a well-organized local economic development initiative linked to business and service growth. Such a program implemented over time will create

a demand for [updating Wells County’s older historic housing](#) as well as the provision of more modern and diverse housing options.

Realizing these outcomes will justify the hard work that lies ahead. As Stephen Covey says in [The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People](#)

or Counties in this case –

“Begin with the End in Mind.”

2 MARKET ANALYSIS

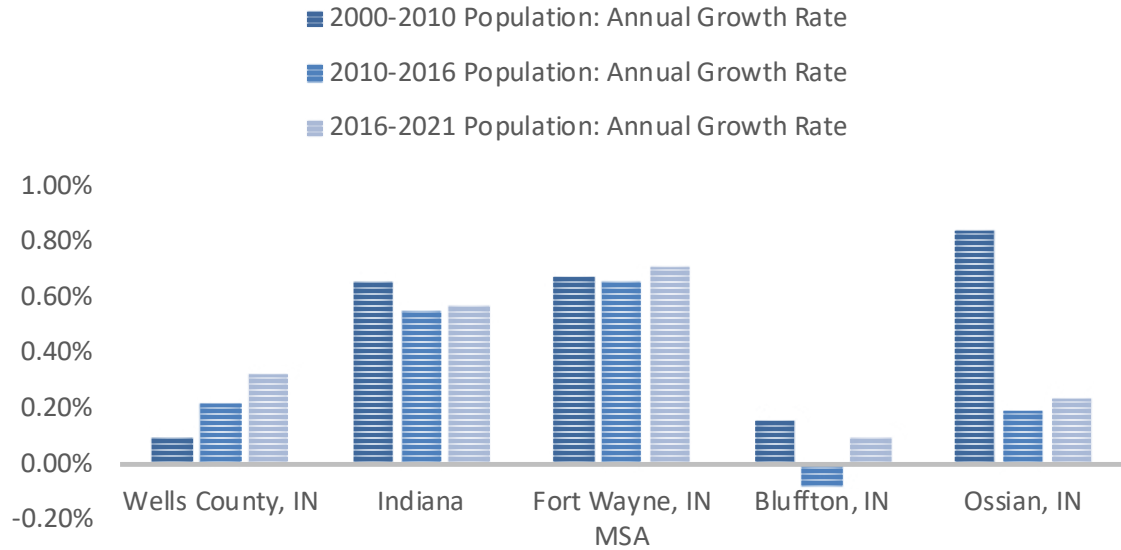
METHODOLOGY

This analysis serves to describe the current state of the housing market in Wells County, Indiana and the various demographic and market factors that will define future challenges and opportunities related to housing investment. This Study relies on several data sources including the U.S. Census, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, ESRI and the American Community Survey for its sources. Qualitative data and regional background information was garnered through the Wells County Comprehensive Plan, a series of working meetings with County leadership and over two dozen interviews with local officials.

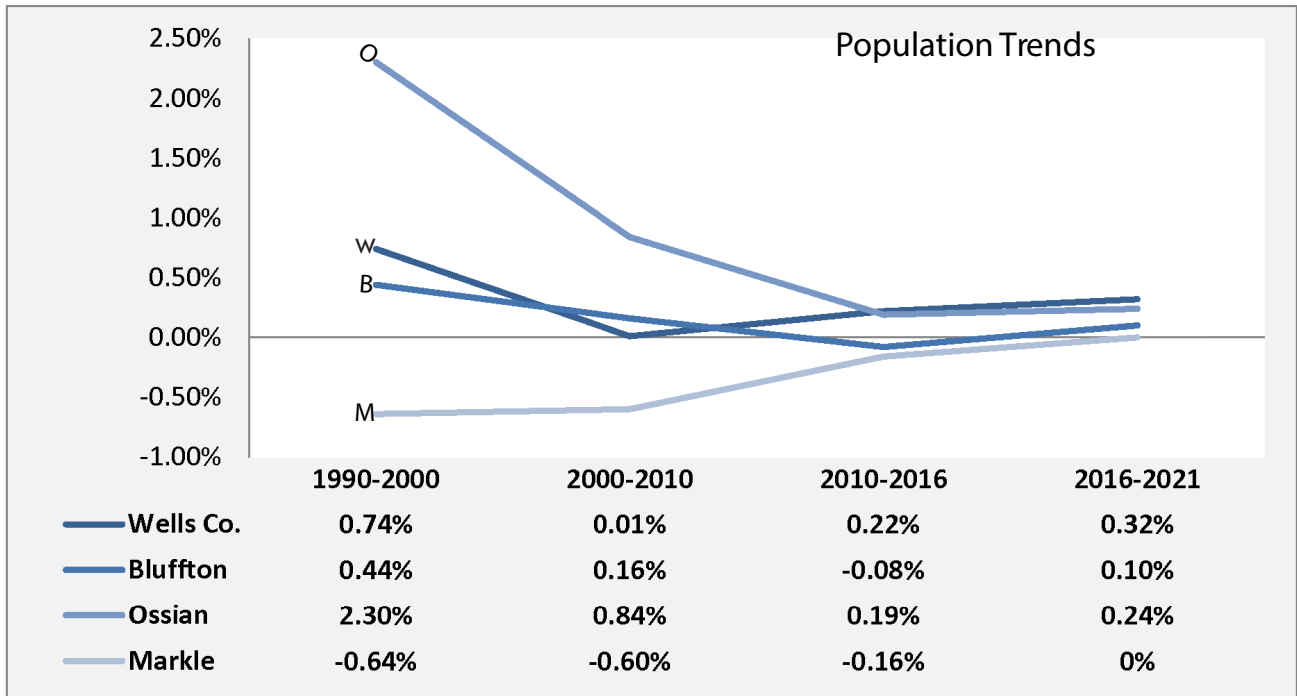
POPULATION

The population of Wells County was approximately 27,999 as of 2016. The County ranks 56th in population for the State of Indiana out of 92 total counties. The highest population density rates within the County are in Bluffton, 1215 people per square mile and Ossian, 2002 people per square mile, while the majority of residents can be found sprawled throughout the rural landscape of the County. Wells County is 370 square miles in size.

Population Growth Rate



Source: DCI Analysis, ESRI



KEY POPULATION STATS: REGIONAL

- Population growth in Wells County was anemic from 2000-2010 with a growth rate of 0.01%, gaining only 36 residents
- Metro Area (0.67%) and State of Indiana (0.66%) saw a significantly higher annual rate of growth than Wells County from 2000-2010
- Annual growth rate increased in Wells County from 2010-2016 to 0.22%
- Annual growth rate of the Metro Area from 2010-2016 was 0.66% and 0.55% for the State
- Annual rate of increase in Wells County is projected to rise to 0.32% from 2016 to 2021 projecting a population of 28,453 by 2021
- Annual growth rate still lags the Metro Area (0.71%) and State (0.57%) through 2021

KEY POPULATION STATS: WELLS COUNTY

Annual growth rate is inconsistent among urban areas of the County

BLUFFTON

- As of 2000 the population of Bluffton was 9,744
- Bluffton experienced steady growth during the 1990's maintaining an Annual growth rate of 0.44% from 1990 to 2000
- Growth was anemic with an annual rate of 0.16% from 2000-2010. As of 2010 the population was 9,897
- Population in Bluffton declined from 2010-2016 by -0.08% (9,847) per year for a decrease of 50 less residents
- Bluffton's population is projected to increase to 9,894 by the year 2021, 150 more residents than in 2000

OSSIAN

- As of 2000 the population of Ossian was 3,035
- Ossian experienced a period of substantial annual growth (2.30%) in the 1990's
- Growth was greatly curtailed around 2000-2010 though still high relative to the rest of County
- Population continued to slow 2010 to 2016 with an annual growth rate of 0.19% per year
- Population forecasts predicts 0.19% annual rate of increase from 2016-2021
- Total population of 3,367 by the year 2021

MARKLE

- In 2000 the population of Markle was 1,164
- Markle declined steadily through the 1990's with an annual growth rate of -0.64% from 1990 to 2000
- Population continued a downward trend with an annual growth rate of -0.60% from 2000-2010
- Population continued to decline from 2010 to 2016 with an annual growth rate of -0.16% and is predicted to continue a no growth trend through 2021
- Census forecasts predict an annual growth rate of 0% from 2016 to 2021
- Markle's population as of 2016 was 1,083

The decline in annual growth rates in parts of Wells County's urbanized places while seeing gains in the suburbs and rural regions, suggests that Bluffton experienced an exodus of more affluent households to outlying areas of the County. In viewing overall growth rates in Wells County, the urbanized and rural places growth patterns are sporadic and uneven.

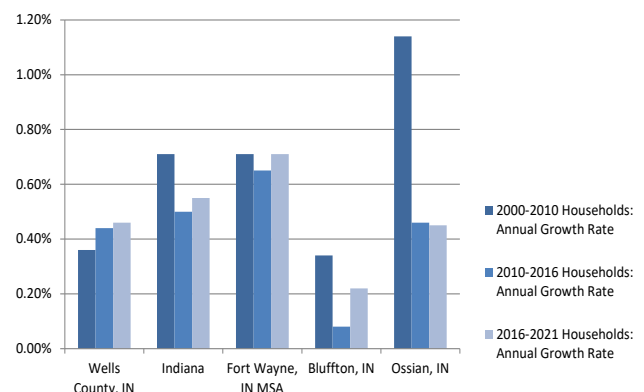
HOUSEHOLDS

There were approximately 11,063 households in Wells County as of 2016. The average household size of 2.49 persons is below the national rate of 2.59, but is comparable to both the Metro Area the State at 2.5 persons per household.

Average Household Size for Region

Adams County	2.85
Jay County	2.60
Allen County	2.54
State of Indiana	2.53
Huntington County	2.50
Wells County	2.49
Blackford County	2.41
Grant County	2.34

Household Growth Rate



KEY HOUSEHOLD (HH) STATS: REGIONAL

- From 2000 to 2010 there was slow but consistent HH growth in Wells County 0.36%, exceeding the population growth rate
- HH growth was 0.71% in the Metro Area and the State from 2000 to 2010
- Wells County HH growth increased 2010-2016 to 0.44%. With projected growth increase of 0.46% from 2016-2021 compared to Metro Area 0.71% and State 0.55%
- HH growth is expected to outpace population growth through 2021

KEY HOUSEHOLD STATS: WELLS COUNTY

BLUFFTON

- Bluffton's HH growth over the last decade and a half has consistently been among the lowest in the County
- From 2000 to 2010 the annual HH growth rate for Bluffton was 0.34%
- From 2010 to 2016 the annual HH growth rate diminished to 0.08%
- HH growth in Bluffton is projected to remain marginal with an annual growth rate of 0.22% from 2016 to 2021

OSSIAN

- From 2000 to 2010 Ossian experienced the highest HH growth rate in the County at 1.14%. Also exceeded the Metro Area and State.
- The HH growth rate from 2010 to 2016 decreased to 0.46% annually, likely the by-product of the 2008 recession and limited land availability
- Ossian's HH growth rate is projected to remain consistent with an annual rate of 0.45% from 2016 to 2021

The average Wells County household size has decreased steadily since 2000 from 2.61 to 2.49 person per household in 2016. Family size demonstrates a similar pattern decreasing from 3.00 in 2010 to 2.96 in 2016 in Wells County. Through 2021 household and family size is projected to continue to decline annually. Wells County's household and family size is shrinking while the growth rate of households continues to exceed that of population. The result of having a reduced household size coupled with an increase in the number of households results in an increased demand for residential units. The design and size of residential units is changing as a result of smaller household size. The demand for residential housing units should not be confused for significant population growth however.

HOMOGENOUS AND AGING POPULATION

Race/Ethnicity

Wells County lacks racial and ethnic diversity compared to both the Metro Area and the State. The majority of residents are Caucasian, comprising 96.35% of the population. Compared to both the

Metro Area at 79.69% and the State at 82.67%. Hispanics make up the second highest group in Wells County consisting of 2.79% of the population trailing the rates of the Metro Area (6.87%) and the State (6.9%). The African American population is far below that of the Metro Area (10.33%) and the State (9.44%) at 0.58% in Wells County.

Aging Population

The population in Wells County is relatively old, with a median age of 41.1 compared to 36.9 in the Metro Area and 37.9 for the State. The largest cohorts are adults age 55 to 59 (15.1%) and 50-54 (14.8%). Nearly one third of the County's population falls within these cohorts (50-59). The Baby Boomers (52-70 years old) as a whole are well represented in the County, comprising 54.6% of the total population compared to 48% in the Metro Area and 49% in the State of Indiana.

KEY AGE STATS: WELLS COUNTY

- The smallest age cohort in Wells County is residents age 70 and older
- The next smallest are young adults 20 to 24 (11.4%) and 25 to 29 (12.2%)
- In the State of Indiana, young adults 20 to 24 is the largest cohort comprising nearly 15% of the total population for Indiana
- Nationally the 20 to 24 age cohort is the second largest to the baby boomers and ideally should be more prominently represented in Wells County

BLUFFTON

- The median age is slightly younger than the County at 38.9 years
- Millennials aged 20 to 29 are better represented comprising 25.6% of the population compared to 21.8% in Wells County
- Young children are better represented than in the County. Children 0-9 years of age make up 27.5% of Bluffton's population compared to 24.8% in Wells County

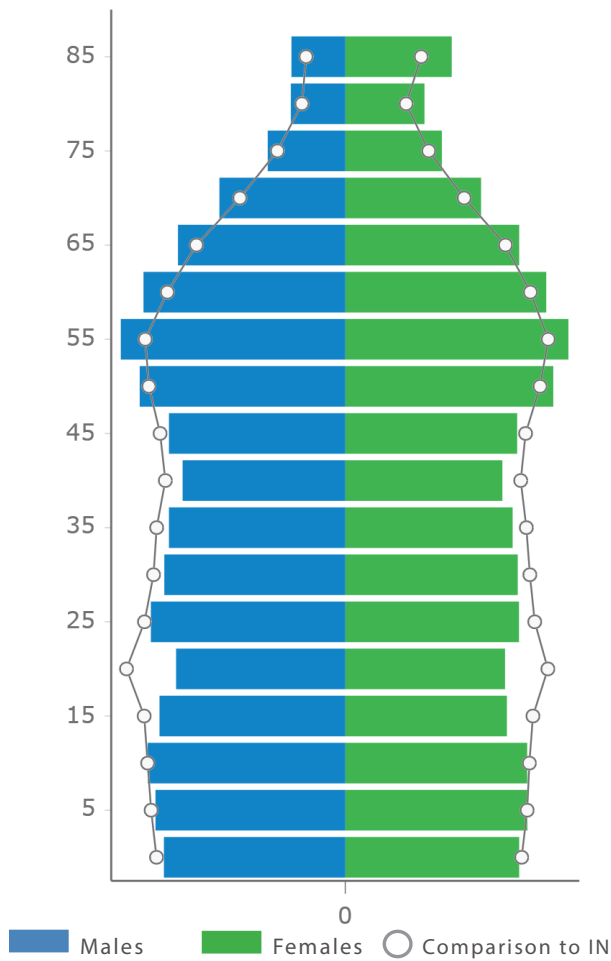
OSSIAN

- Ossian has the lowest median age in the County at 37.6 years old
- The largest cohort are young adults 30 to 34 making up 15% of the population followed by adults 50 to 55 making up 14%
- Ossian also has one of the largest populations of children aged 10-14 years old making up 13.8%
- There is a higher concentration of young families in Ossian than elsewhere in the County

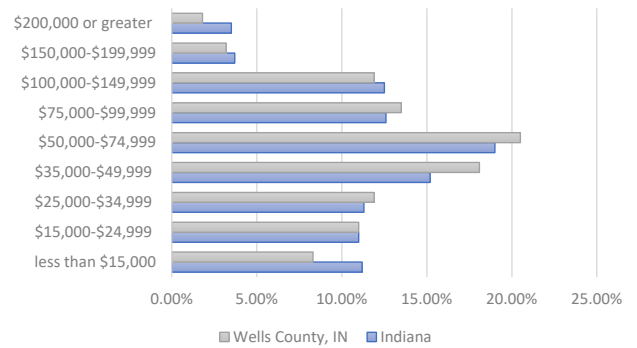
INCOME

Wells County residents earn a healthy median household income (\$49,777) but trail both the Metro Area (\$50,793) and the State (\$50,189) markets. The per capita income for Wells County is \$24,575 and also marginally lags behind the Metro Area (\$25,674) and the State (\$25,583).

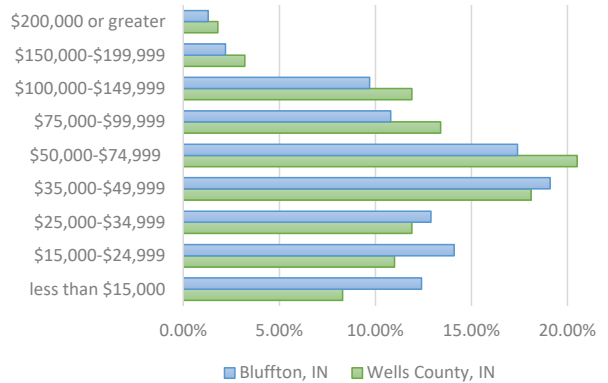
Wells County Age Pyramid



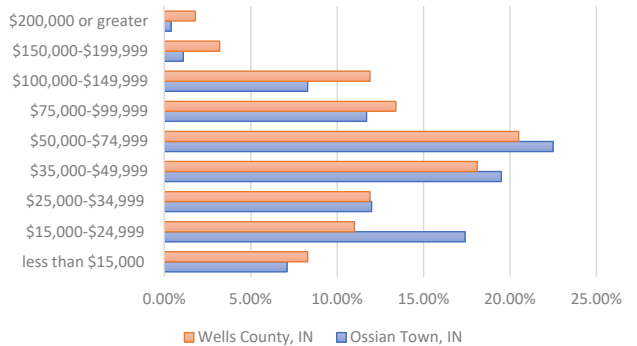
Households By Income-Wells County 2017



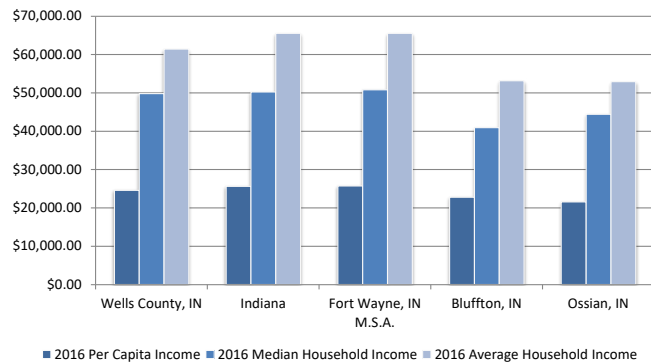
Households By Income -Bluffton 2017



Households By Income -Ossian 2017



Income Comparison



KEY INCOME STATS: Wells County

- Median HH income is \$49,777
- Average HH income is \$61,394
- 14.7% of HH's earning more than \$100,000 annually
- Largest HH income group at 21.9%, earns between \$50,000-\$74,999 in Wells County
- Smallest HH income group, at 1.4% earns \$200,000 or above in Wells County
- 41% of HH's classified as low income

BLUFFTON

- Median HH income is \$40,912
- Average HH income is \$53,131
- 11.5% of HH's earning more than \$100,000 annually
- Largest HH income group, at 19% earns between \$35,000-\$49,999 in Bluffton
- Smallest HH income group, at 1.1% earns \$200,000 or above in Bluffton
- 49% of HH's classified as low income

OSSIAN

- Median HH income \$44,397
- Average HH income \$52,906
- 8.9% of HH's earning more than \$100,000 annually
- Largest HH income group at 23.4% earns between \$50,000-\$74,999 in Ossian
- Smallest HH income group at 0.2% earns \$200,000 or above in Ossian
- 43% of HH's classified as low income

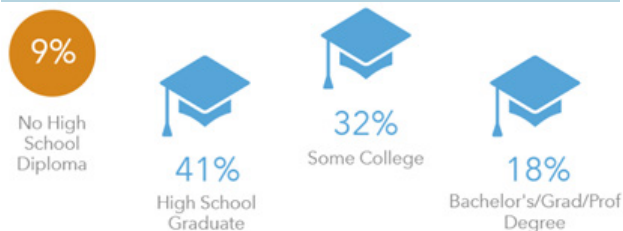
Median and average household income within the urbanized places lag behind that of the County. There is also greater wealth concentrated outside these urbanized places as evidenced by the distribution of HH's earning \$100,000 and above. Conversely, Wells County's urbanized places are home to higher rates of low income households and greater concentrations of households living below the poverty line, especially in Bluffton. Wells County possesses a substantial and stable middle class when compared to the Metro Area and the State. While Wells County trails both the State and the Metro Area in the upper income households earning \$100,000 or more, it exceeds the State and Metro Area household income rates of \$35,000-\$99,000, and possesses lower levels of poverty as well.

For the purpose of administering housing programs, the Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a geographic area's household relative to the Area Median Income (AMI) and categorizes all households earning less than 80% of AMI (\$39,821 for Wells County) as a low income household. Based on this measure, there are nearly 4,535 low income households, equivalent to 41% of all households. As of 2014, Wells County recorded 1,145 households, equal to 10.5% of all households, living in poverty, increasing to 11.3% (3,065 people) in 2016. Bluffton possesses the highest rates of poverty in the County. Approximately 716 households in Bluffton are living below the poverty level as of 2016, equal to 17.5% of all households in Bluffton, 63% of all households living below poverty in Wells County are located in Bluffton.

EDUCATION

Wells County has relatively low levels of educational attainment compared to the Metro Area and the State. 41% of all residents hold a diploma but have no education beyond high school, and 9% have no high school diploma. Approximately 32% of the population in Wells County have some level of college experience, participated in a trade school or hold an Associate's Degree, while the remaining 18% of residents hold a Bachelor's Degree or higher. Wells County has a higher rate of some college or trade school participation than the State (30%) but falls short of the State's (25%) and Metro Area's (27%) rates of receiving a Bachelor's Degree or higher.

Wells County 2016



BLUFFTON

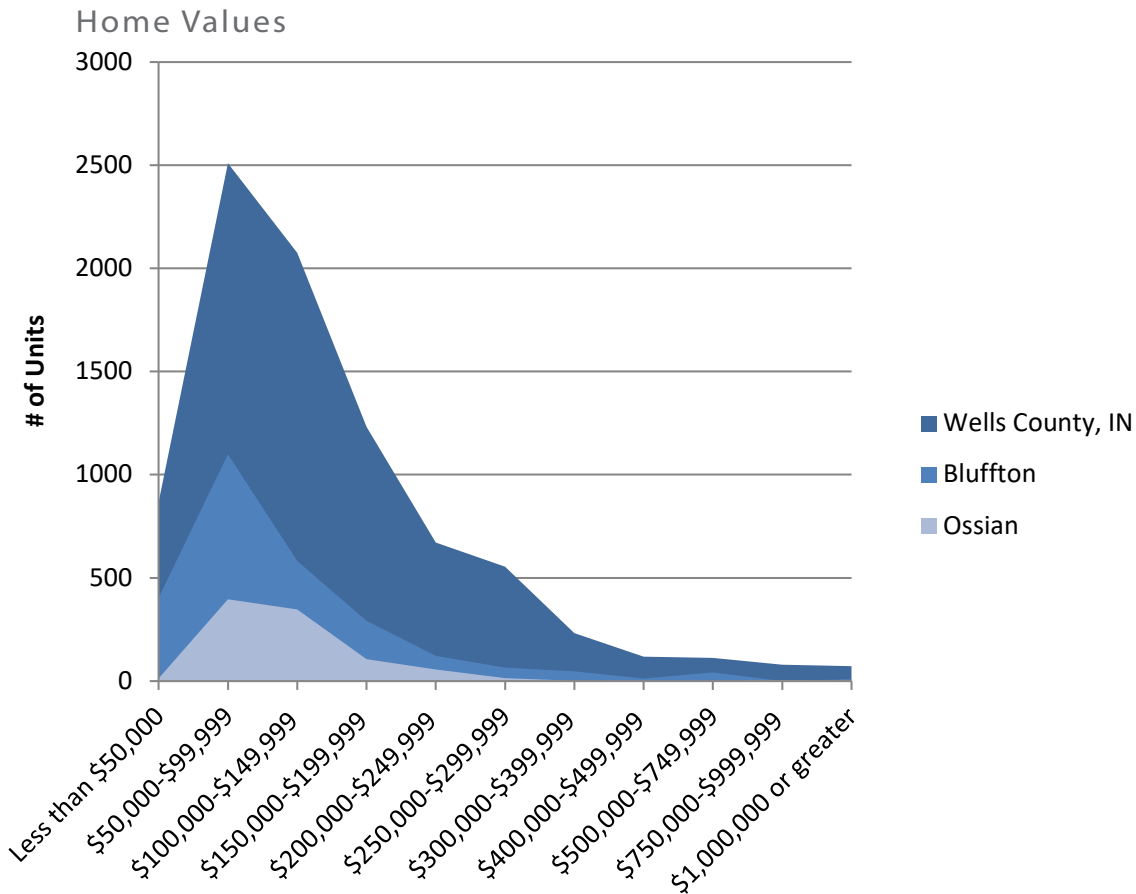
- 11% of the population does not hold a high school diploma
- 41% graduated high school without further education
- 30% received some college education, trade school training, or attained an Associate's Degree
- 17% received a Bachelor's Degree or higher

OSSIAN

- 8% of the population does not hold a high school diploma
- 41% graduated high school with no further education
- 34% received some college education, trade school training, or attained an Associate's Degree
- 18% received a Bachelor's Degree or higher

LOCAL HOUSING SUPPLY

The housing supply in Wells County is dominated by single family homes 40 years in age or older (built 1977 or earlier.) The majority of these homes are owner-occupied (71%) with a median home value of \$121,301 compared to the Metro Area at \$124,479 and the State at \$136,216. In Bluffton, where there is the highest concentration of older homes, there is a significant drop in the value of single family homes with a median value of \$92,448. The availability of alternative housing options is limited and the more affordable options are often older and of lesser quality than many contemporary households would desire.


















In Wells County a substantial portion (46%) of households fall within the middle to lower middle range with household income between \$35,000 and \$75,000 per year. These households should be able to comfortably afford homes ranging in price from \$135,000 to \$250,000 using HUD guidelines. Given 53.7% of the owner occupied housing units are valued between \$100,000 to \$200,000 it would appear that there is an adequate supply to meet this market. The mix of choice, quality and availability in encouraging prospective homebuyers to consider Wells County is likely an issue given the current County housing inventory.
















In Wells County there are approximately 12,010 housing units in total. Of these 71% are owner occupied while 21.2% are renter occupied and nearly 8% remain vacant. The vacancy rate in Wells County compares favorably to the Metro Area (9.2%) and the State (11%).

Since 2000 the County, Metro Area and the State have shared a trend that represents a decline in home ownership and an increase in renters and vacancy. In the State of Indiana there was a decrease of 5.6% home ownership from 2000 to 2016 and an increase of 2.4% in renters. Vacancy rates increased by 2.3% over this same time as well. The Metro Area saw a similar trend with a decrease of 5.1% in home ownership and an increase of 3% in renters, and a 2.1% increase in vacancies since 2000. Wells County's configuration of homeowners and renters has trended similarly to the State and Metro Area.

Within the County homeowner rates have fallen 5.8% since 2000 as the number of renters increased by 3.1% and the number of vacant units increased by 2.7%. However, within the County's urbanized places these trends are much more prominent. From 2000 to 2016 the home ownership rate in Bluffton decreased by 8.1% while the number of renters increased by 4.6% and vacant units increased by

2000	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant
Wells County	76.80%	18.10%	5.20%
Bluffton	66.50%	27.20%	6.30%
Ossian	75.00%	21.70%	3.30%
Ft. Wayne Metro	67.50%	25.40%	7.10%
Indiana	65.90%	26.30%	7.70%

2010	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant
Wells County	 72.90%	 19.60%	 7.60%
Bluffton	 61.50%	 29.20%	 9.30%
Ossian	 68.20%	 24.70%	 7.10%
Ft. Wayne Metro	 64.60%	 26.20%	 9.30%
Indiana	 62.50%	 27.00%	 10.50%

2010-2016	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant
Wells County	 71.00%	 21.20%	 7.90%
Bluffton	 58.40%	 31.80%	 9.70%
Ossian	 66.70%	 27.00%	 6.40%
Ft. Wayne Metro	 62.40%	 28.40%	 9.20%
Indiana	 60.30%	 28.70%	 11.00%

3.4%. Ossian experienced a similar decline in home ownership with a decrease of 8.3% while increasing the number of renters and vacant units by 5.3% and 3.1% respectively since 2000.

Wells County experiences substantially lower rental rates, despite their growing number of renters, than the Metro Area and the State. As of 2016 the median rent for Wells County was \$491, compared to \$586 for the State and \$537 for the Metro Area. In Ossian, where the majority of new development has taken place, the median rent of \$534 compares similarly to the Metro Area. Bluffton has an aging housing stock with little new construction over the past 15 years. A recent trend, consistent with a national trend, is to convert single family homes into rental properties. This trend grew significantly as a result of the recent recession (2008-10). Bluffton's rental rates are the lowest in the region with a median rent of \$465 with an average rent of \$451. The current

rental inventory is inadequate in quality, choice and affordability within Bluffton and the majority of the County as well.

AGING HOUSING STOCK

As Wells County's housing stock ages and needs more reinvestment it becomes less attractive to new residents and young families. The age of the housing stock is a factor in both the occupancy levels and home values.

Ossian has experienced the most recent housing development where the median age of housing built is almost a decade younger (1979) than the rest of the County. Nearly 20% of Ossian's housing stock was built between 2000 and 2009 compared to 11.3% in Wells County and 7.9% in Bluffton during that same time. Bluffton currently possesses the oldest and in many cases most blighted housing stock. 66.7% of the housing stock in Bluffton was built prior to 1970 and nearly 30% was built before 1939.

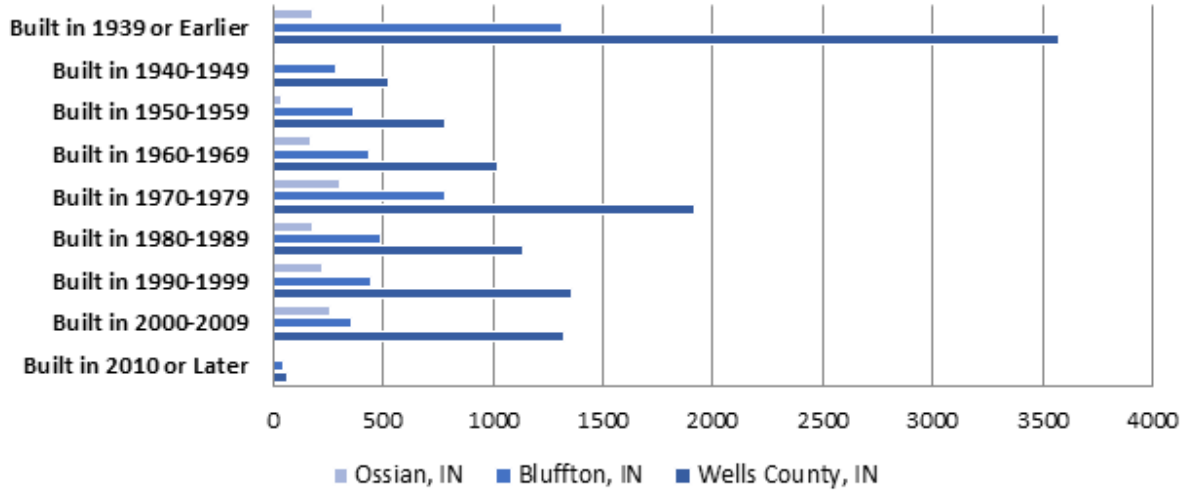
KEY HOUSING STATS: WELLS COUNTY

- Approximately 75% of housing stock is 40 years of age or older
- Nearly a third (30%) of the housing units were built before 1939
- Median age of County's housing stock 1970

RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

Residential construction has seen an increase in activity over the past 2-3 years. 36 building permits for single-family houses or two-household duplexes have been taken out during the first six months of 2017. That compares to 43 for all of last year. If this current trend continues through the year Wells County could see as many as 72 residential permits issued for 2017. This is markedly better growth than in the immediate years following the recession

Year Structure Built



in 2008 in which approximately 30 permits were being taken out annually but it does not match the growth seen in the early 1990's in which 100 or more permits were issued per year. Most of Wells County housing development and mobility is among current transitioning Wells County residents.

EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

Unemployment and Employment

Traditionally, Wells County has experienced relatively low unemployment levels, with the exception of time immediately following the recession in which unemployment ascended to 10.7%. By 2016 unemployment had leveled to just 3.3% and as of 2017 the unemployment rate of Wells County reached 2.8%, virtual full employment in the county. The unemployment rate of Wells County is below that of the Metro Area (4.7%) and State (4.6%) by nearly two percent.

While the County remains at or near full employment, it has yet to sustain the employment levels it saw a decade ago. As of 2006 employment of Wells County residents had reached 10,907. Resident employment levels began to tail off after the recession in 2008, bottoming out at 10,124 employees in 2010. Employment began to bounce back after 2010 reaching 10,910 employees in 2014, slightly higher than 2006 levels. Resident employment has since dropped by approximately 89 employees, reaching 10,821 as of 2016. Wells County has experienced

a net decline of resident employees with an annual rate of decrease of 0.08% since 2006.

Wages

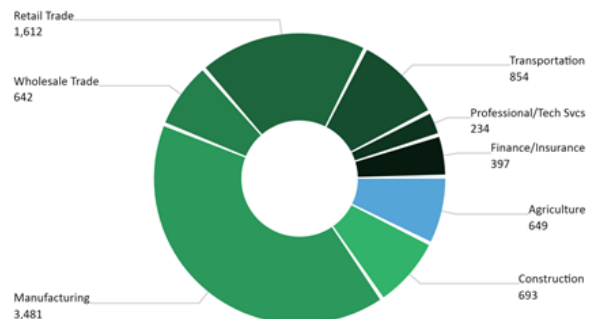
Wages and their growth in the county have remained consistent over the last decade. The annual average weekly wage of a Wells County employee has increased by 1.7% annually since 2006, peaking in 2014 at \$761.00 per week.

Employed Population by Industry

As of 2016, the majority of Wells County residents are employed in the services industry, accounting for 36% of the population, followed by the manufacturing industry comprising 24.5% of the population. These industries are followed by retail trade (12%), transportation/utilities (6.1%) and wholesale trade (4.5%).

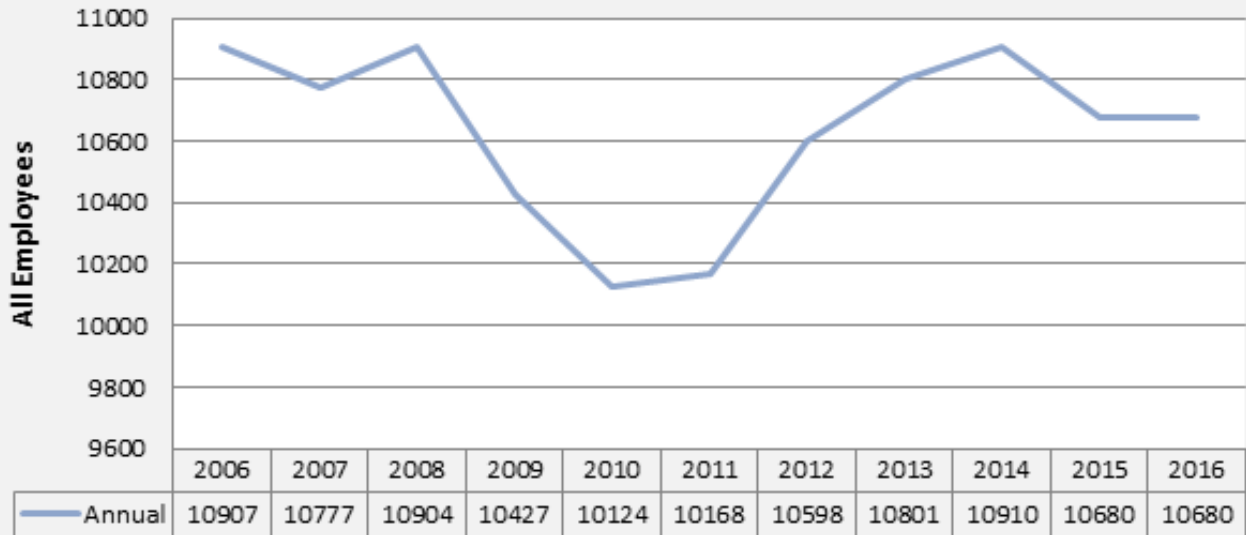
2017 Employed Population by Industry

Wells County Residents

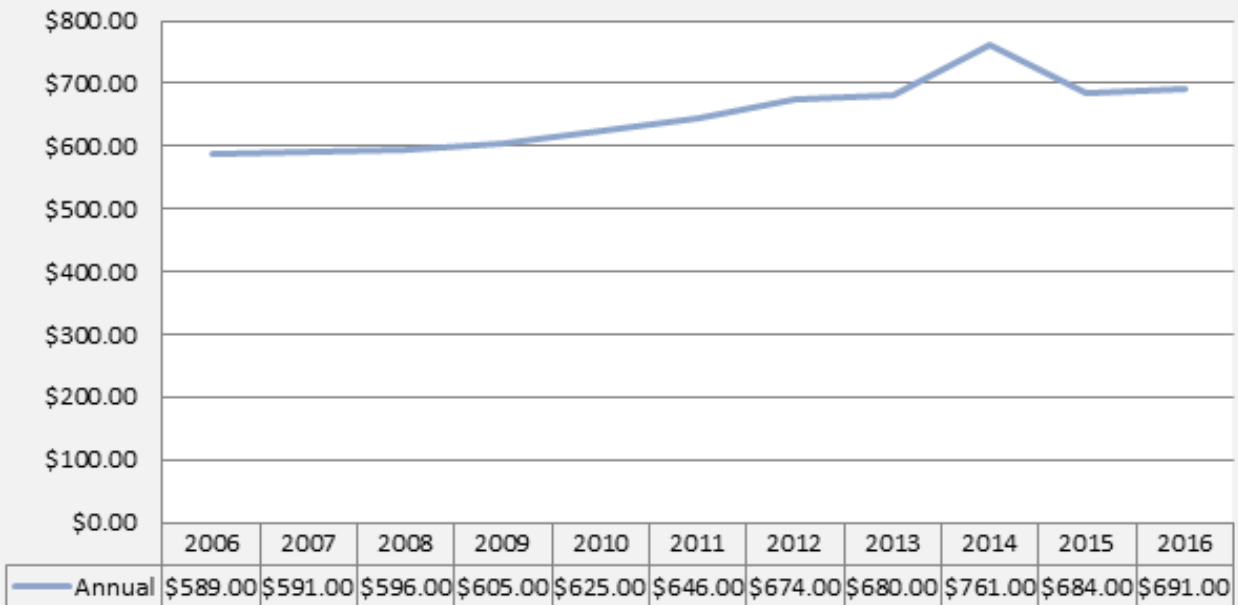


Source: ESRI

Annual Resident Employment in Wells County



Annual Avg. Weekly Wage



SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
 * 2014 was an anomaly

3

FINDINGS & ASSUMPTIONS

STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

The Wells County Housing Assessment & Growth Strategy involved over eight months of data collection, interviews and working meetings with community stakeholders. During this period it became clear that the emphasis of the Study, while still focused on housing needs and opportunities also should address the lack of growth that Wells County has now experienced over a 15+ year period which was made apparent by the Study process. The lack of meaningful growth, now impacting the majority of the County has long term implications not only for housing but also local businesses and the quality of life for its residents. A set of findings was developed from the data and information collected during the Analysis Phase which shifted the Study's primary focus from housing to growth – still allowing for housing to be incorporated as an important element of the growth discussion. A set of “findings” were presented to the working group that introduced the growth (lack of) performance and housing data. These findings were discussed in two working meetings and refined through discussion and input by the group of local leaders.

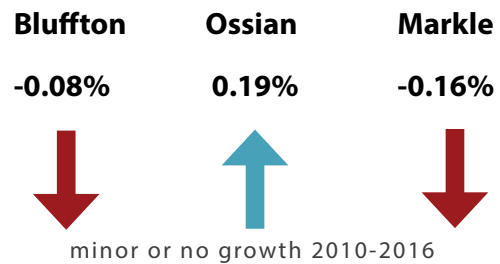
The findings as presented are intended to help influence potential strategies designed to address issues and opportunities that are evident from the findings.

FINDING 1



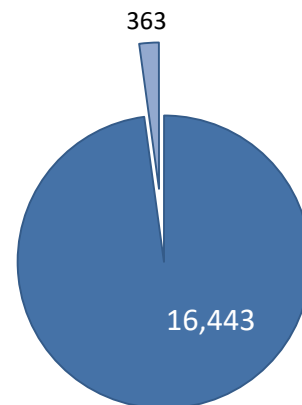
POPULATION

Population growth sub-par with several areas in population decline.



Population Increase 2010-2016

■ Ft. Wayne Metro ■ Wells County



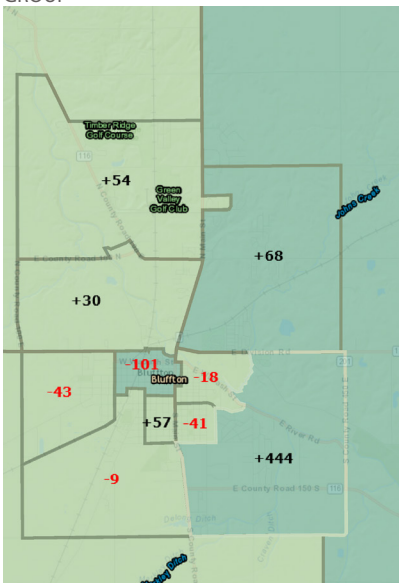
FINDING 2

Population growth and housing development is occurring unevenly within the County. There are pockets of modest growth spread throughout the County's mostly rural areas. The growth percentage is higher in these areas given the smaller population base in the rural block groups – meaning that 1% growth rate may translate into 1-2 new residents in a block group of 100-200 people.

FINDING 3

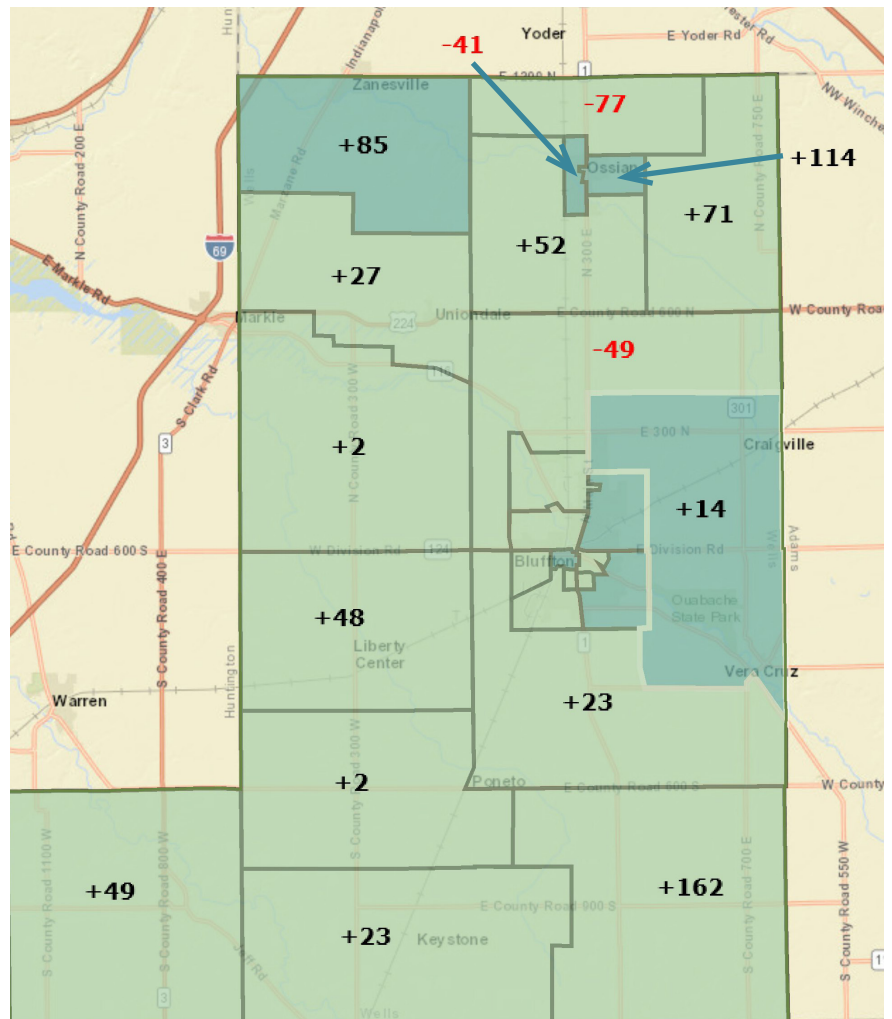
Several block groups adjacent to Ossian and Bluffton show modest growth. The majority of the block groups to the south and east of Bluffton show little to negative growth. Block groups demonstrating growth are likely importing households from other parts of the County.

BLUFFTON AREA
2010 -2017 POPULATION CHANGE BY BLOCK GROUP



1,233 to 1,747 632 to 1,232
COLOR CODE = 2017 POPULATION RANGE

WELLS COUNTY - 2010 -2017 POPULATION CHANGE BY BLOCK GROUP



1,239 to 1,747 602 to 1,238
COLOR CODE = 2017 POPULATION RANGE

FINDING 4 HOUSING



Wells County housing stock is older – median age 47 years. 30% of the housing stock is 77 years of age or older.



= 500 homes

FINDING 5



Wells County housing production has fallen sharply from the 1990's. Most new housing built for existing population – either up or down sizing. Household size decreasing meaning fewer people living in more homes – responsible for part of local demand.

Year	# Units Produced
1990	97
2000	123
2010	71
2016	62

Source: Stats Indiana

FINDING 6

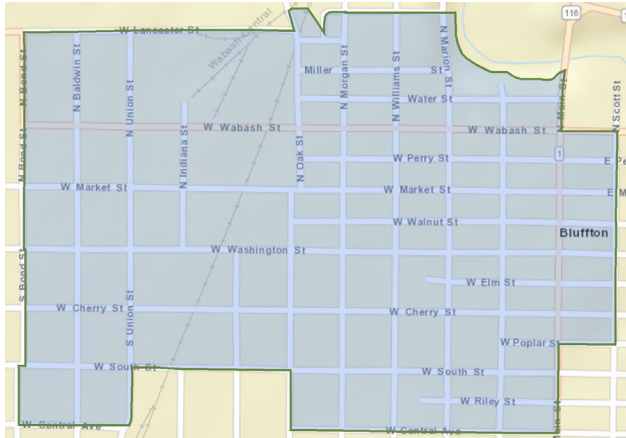


There has been a decrease in home ownership over the last 16 years. Single family homes are being converted to rentals. Lower rental rates negatively impacts ability of landlords to properly maintain rental housing stock and impedes production of new multi-family housing.

Bluffton has the highest percentage of rental households -- mostly in single family structures

Ossian has experienced most significant drop in percentage of home ownership. This stat is skewed due to the addition of a larger multi-family project in a smaller community

**2017 Renter Occupied Housing Units
Block Group 181790404.003:
377 rental units -- 45% of total housing units**



Housing Statistics - Bluffton Block Group



\$81,544

Median Home Value



\$6,399

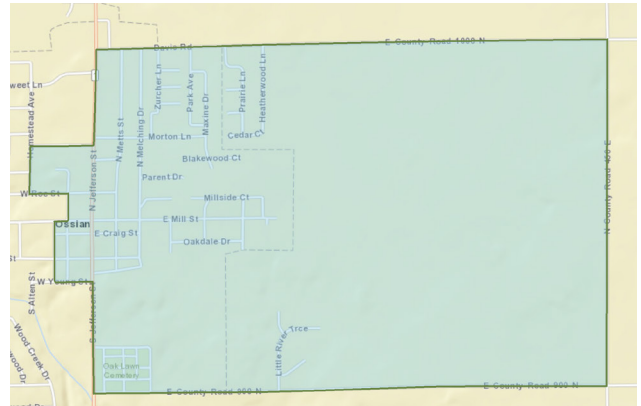
Average Spent on Mortgage & Basics



\$462

Median Contract Rent

**2017 Renter Occupied Housing Units
Block Group 181790401.004:
191 rental units -- 29% of total housing units**



Housing Statistics - Ossian Block Group



\$93,936

Median Home Value



\$4,843

Average Spent on Mortgage & Basics



\$586

Median Contract Rent

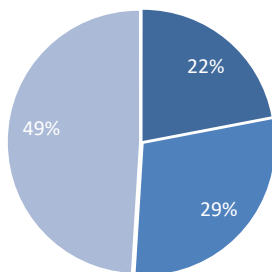
FINDING 7



Housing affordability is exacerbated due to the increased burden of transportation on the Wells County household.

Average Housing + Transportation Cost

■ Housing ■ Transport ■ Remaining Income



Factoring in both housing and transportation costs provides a more comprehensive way of thinking about the cost of housing and affordability in the Wells County market.

Source: H + T Fact Sheet, Center for Neighborhood Technology

Transportation Costs

In dispersed areas, people need to own more vehicles and rely upon driving them farther distances which also drives up the costs of living.



\$14,397

Annual Transportation Costs



1.99

Auto Per Household



26,355

Average Household Vehicle Miles Travelled



FINDING 8

DEMOGRAPHICS

Wells County has a workforce shortage issue. The availability and location of affordable and quality workforce housing is a likely factor.

2017:

Approximately 100 “for-sale” listings in Wells County with median sales price of \$109,000 (source: Zillow). While much of the housing stock is affordable to most potential buyers -- location + condition + current underwriting terms = reduced buyer pool.

Affordable and available rental units are scarce throughout Wells County. Limited new multi-family product has been introduced into the market over past 5 years. Single familyhome conversion to rental, primary new rentalinventory. Strong demand for 2-4 bedroom rental product.



FINDING 9

Geographic size of County is also a contributing factor to workforce shortage. The location of essential service jobs etc. often times requires a personal mode of transportation.

- 86.1% workers drive alone to employment
- Average commute time 24 minutes
- 3.9 job access (scale 1 - 10)
- 0% location efficient neighborhood (close to jobs & services, multiple transportation options)



FINDING 10

The workforce shortage is also likely impacted by worker perception of family opportunities and quality of life issues.

“Nearly 140,000 more rural residents travel to mid-sized,urban, or out-of-state workplaces than travel in from those communities. To deliver on its potential, rural Indiana needs to provide the infrastructure and amenities desired –and, in many cases, expected – by people and businesses in the modern world.”

(Source: *Thriving CommunitiesThriving State, IU Public Policy Institute*)



FINDING 11

There does not appear to be a “market driver” locally that has or will generate growth in the Wells County market.

Population trends matter because population is a proxy for the size of the market or customer base in a location. As the number of local customers’ entrepreneurs can reach declines, connectivity to larger markets becomes all the more important to sustain their business. Nearly three-quarters of the small counties that lost population from 2010 to 2014 also lost business establishments, according to EIG’s research. Furthermore, population growth, immigration, and 5 business dynamism are closely linked.....

(Source: “The Challenges and Opportunities of Running a Small Business in Rural America ” Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, John Lettieri, Co-Founder & Senior Director for Policy and Strategy Economic Innovation Group (EIG))



FINDING 12

The community’s strengths and assets do not appear to be obvious to the prospective new resident and/or worker. Quality of life factors also not obvious to many local residents.

“Work on creating public awareness toward the County’s Assets”

(Wells County Comprehensive Plan - 2014)

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4 STRATEGIES for Wells County Growth

STRATEGY 1 - ORGANIZE define the issue

This section of the Housing Assessment & Growth Strategy identifies several strategies for Wells County leadership to consider in organizing around the goal of promoting long term growth. The strategies are summarized in this section. In Section 5 – Implementation, additional detail is provided regarding the steps necessary to activate these strategies. Sections 4 and 5 begin to provide a road map for community leadership to utilize in determining the final route to take in assuring a growth outcome.

Much of Wells County is not growing. From 2010 to 2016 Wells County added an average of 45 new residents annually. Allen County by comparison was averaging over 2,400 residents yearly during the same period. During 2015-16 Wells County added 12 people. Clearly the County’s rural setting offers numerous opportunities for many of its long term residents – but it is in peril in maintaining a net positive annual growth rate. Any discussion of creating a viable housing strategy must first address how Wells County encourages growth.

This section identifies several steps that should be considered in order to create County growth opportunities. The first step, is to define the problem and to make sure that the community and its leadership are willing to prioritize an appropriate response. In doing so, two critical questions should be asked:

1. Where does the County currently experience growth, and is it in the right places? and,
2. Where does the County need to encourage growth and what must be done to generate it?

If key Wells County leadership and active residents do not ask these questions and get on the same page regarding the appropriate answers there is little hope of changing the current no-growth paradigm. During 2015-16, 51 out of 95 Indiana counties had experienced negligible or negative growth. It is clear that current market trends (i.e. business investment, housing growth, household formations) are moving away from Wells County as it appears to be the case in the majority of Indiana’s counties. The community must determine what can be done to influence the market to return and benefit from what it has to offer. There are communities across the country that have successfully partaken in this very exercise.

An easy response to Wells County’s lack of growth does not exist. An effective growth strategy must be carefully thought-out and refined over a period of time and with experience. Current market and real estate factors combined with existing community assets suggests that a growth strategy should initially focus on several key elements.

Illustration 1 introduces elements that should be considered when constructing a Wells County Growth Strategy. The elements fall into one of two

categories – Contemporary Land Use or Community Programming. There are critical assumptions that underpin the focus on these elements and their importance in promoting growth in Wells County.

CASE STUDY 1 - DOUGLAS, GEORGIA



Douglas Georgia is a small town of 10,640 people (2000) located in Coffee County, Georgia – 45 miles from the nearest interstate. It started to experience a downturn in its agricultural based economy in the 1950's. This downturn resulted in local leaders making a concerted effort to diversify the County economy by attracting new industry. In 1958 the County voted to dedicate \$1 million in annual tax revenues to economic development – primarily for planning and developing industrial and business parks. The program has supported significant new industrial activity which now generates \$400,000 annually in program revenues for new economic development investment.

In the early 2000's Coffee County lost over 1,000 manufacturing jobs. At that time its leadership decided to refocus their economic development efforts on small business development and entrepreneurship. The County's economic development strategy is now 3 pronged;

1. support and nurture small businesses and entrepreneurs,
2. recruit a diverse range of industrial employers, and
3. develop a new generation of leaders that understand economic development.

Activities have included the establishment of retail and small business incubators as well as the retooling of an industrial park into a technology and innovation center. Finally, the New Century Leadership Program is all about “building bench strength” as the assistant City Manager Charlie Davis has stated. Twenty future leaders pay a fee of \$650 to participate in the annual leadership program. Leadership graduates become the primary candidates for board and commission appointments as well as leading civic engagements.

The results from the revisions to the Coffee County economic development strategy in the early 2000's were impressive. They included;

From 2003 to 2006, more than 500 jobs created through small business startups.

From 1996 to 2006, more than 345,000 square feet of previously vacant space has been occupied by small business expansions and entrepreneurial start-ups.

Douglas was the first rural community in Georgia to be designated “entrepreneur friendly” by the Governor.

Between 2003 - 2006, several companies completed major expansions: Diamond Builders (50 jobs), Elixir Industries (50 jobs) and Spectrum Distribution (20 jobs).

In 2006, Douglas recruited American Insulated Wire (250 jobs and \$26 million investment) and Premium Waters (80 jobs and \$30 million investment).

Illustration 1

PROPOSED WELLS COUNTY GROWTH STRATEGY

STRATEGIES



OUTCOMES



KEY GROWTH VARIABLE 1 - CONTEMPORARY LAND USE

The Contemporary Land Use recommendation, is presented understanding that for much of the County's history agriculture has been the most important and dominant land use (200,334 acres, 2012). While agriculture comprises 85% of the County's land use it only makes up 3.5% of the County's workforce while manufacturing and education/health care make up 22% and 19% respectively. The changing local economy, job mix and household types no longer fit well with the decentralized rural land use patterns that has served Wells County since its' establishment over 180 years ago. Wells County's ability to attract and sustain growth will be influenced by how it programs available land and improvements. Currently, the County supports a variety of land uses throughout its 370 square miles. The development community receives some guidance via planning and zoning regulations regarding where it is appropriate to place residential, industrial, and commercial uses. For the most part however, the abundance of open land has provided developers and land owners the ability to place development in a scattered fashion. The tendency for an ad hoc approach to development has resulted in a higher level of disconnect among land uses (i.e. agriculture, industrial, residential, service) than is found in less rural settings. In an age of convenience and access much of Wells County's current land use patterns serve as the antithesis of these trends. Households and businesses in search of land and that desire some level of isolation find Wells County to be a desirable host. The rural nature of the County is an important strength. It also can be a liability in attracting those that do desire convenience and access to go along with a more rural lifestyle. It is believed that if growth is to be a realistic part of Wells County's future that protection of its rural lifestyle while introducing contrasting land uses which serve a broader range of households and business needs must be strategically incorporated into its long range comprehensive plan.

Recommendation 1

Wells County and its cities and towns should investigate the establishment of a more Contemporary Land Use policy created to preserve its rural open spaces and encourage growth and investment in 2-3 targeted areas. Three key elements should be considered when looking at Contemporary Land Use as a major variable influencing the County's growth potential.

The three elements identified in Illustration 1 are briefly described below.

Growth Districts - It bears repeating most of Wells County is experiencing a decline in population. Ossian has been the one exception over the past 15 years although recently its' growth rate has been nominal (.19% 2010-2016 vs .84% 2000-10). It is unrealistic and not desirable to expect the rural and agricultural parts of the County to contribute to future growth. These areas can influence economic and quality of life opportunities but will and should not support significant business or residential growth. If growth is to occur it will be attracted to areas with services, job opportunities, established neighborhoods, developable land and amenities. In other words either established (Bluffton) or emerging (Ossian) communities. The presence of these elements in a relatively compact area addresses the desire of much of the today's market place to have convenient access to services, jobs, and other opportunities.

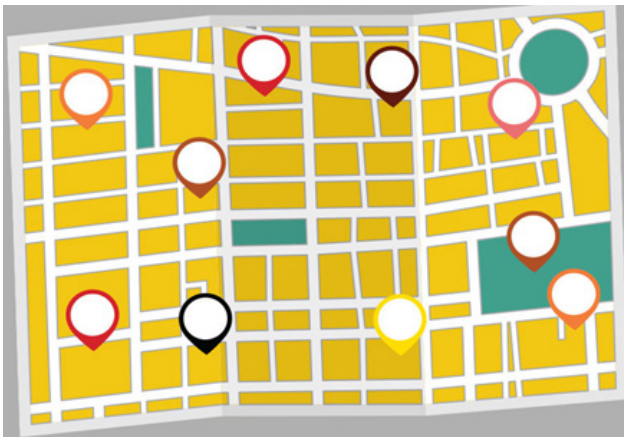
It is believed that if growth is to be a realistic part of Wells County's future that protection of its rural lifestyle while introducing contrasting land uses which serve a broader range of household and business needs must be strategically incorporated into its long range comprehensive plan.

Bluffton and Markle are examples of established communities that could be considered as potential growth districts. Ossian is an emerging community with newer facilities and an expanding list of services. Identifying one or more of these geographies as potential growth districts merits consideration. Unfortunately, none of them can be viewed today as growth communities of any real significance. In order for this to change specific steps must be considered and eventually executed to convert from no growth to active growth. The other elements in this strategy represents several of the steps that should be a part of a growth discussion.

Recommendation 2

Establish a Growth District policy. The policy should identify a specific set of standards that will improve the local quality of life and serve to attract new residents and businesses to established Growth Districts. It is recommended that 2-3 growth districts be established and standards implemented over the next 10 years.

Illustration 2



Connecting Community Assets (Physical)
Illustration 2 above provides an example of how assets are often positioned in a typical community. Community assets such as retail stores, restaurants and entertainment, health and social services, education are clustered and easily accessed in many

communities. In Wells County, given its rural nature many of its community assets are scattered within a large geographic area. Bluffton is the one exception. It does have in a relatively compact area many of the assets mentioned previously. Clearly there are some service and asset voids. Nonetheless, a core group of assets does exist from which to build. Currently Bluffton's and to a greater extent Wells County's assets appear to operate independent of each other with little benefit apparent from their relative proximity. Connecting Community Assets both physically and in the minds of potential consumers begins to elevate the geography's relevance as to potential users (residents and visitors). The ability to; enjoy a park and a library visit in an afternoon for example, or to visit the doctor and have a cup of coffee with a friend, or work in a near-by business park and stop for groceries on the way home all provide convenience and opportunity for the consumer. These are opportunities that are not obvious or marketed actively for a variety of reasons. However, their existence provides multiple reasons for a visit to Bluffton and potentially elsewhere in Wells County.

The connection of Town and County assets helps to demonstrate all that the Wells County community has to offer and psychologically can make the County's size more manageable to the uninitiated. The more compact and apparent the connections the easier it becomes for consumers to take advantage of what is available. Elevating the profile of the existing assets, expanding on the inventory in a strategic manner, and then creating connections that encourage access will help to promote a dynamic multi-use community with much to offer its residents and visitors.

Recommendation 3

If Wells County is to grow it must put its quality of life assets on display for potential new households. It is recommended that a community led "asset mapping" exercise be undertaken. All assets that serve and engage local residents should be identified and

mapped. In addition efforts should be made to connect local assets in a manner that creates synergies providing opportunities and activities for existing and future residents as well as visitors.

Rural Transition Zones – Historically, Wells County has benefited from its agricultural and rural heritage. As time has passed, much of Wells County’s land has been divided into either individually planned large lot development or traditional residential sub-divisions. This is a common national practice as referenced in the book, *Conservation Communities, Creating Value with Nature, Open Space and Agriculture* (Edward T. McMahon 2010), “Large lot subdivisions are one of the major factors contributing to the accelerating consumption of and fragmentation of land (pg2).” Also referenced in the book is the fact that between 1982 and 2003, 6 million acres of prime farm land has been lost to development. Wells County has experienced a similar, if not as dramatic, conversion from rural and agricultural land to large lot single family homes. Single family development in a rural setting is an acceptable land use. The question becomes can this type of development also be accomplished in a manner that helps to preserve the rural and agricultural heritage while meeting a demand for rural housing?



Over the past couple of decades land planning experts have begun to demonstrate how rural open space and farm land can be preserved while

harmoniously expanding rural housing opportunities. Seminal thinking on this type of concept is provided in the book *Rural by Design* (1994) written by Randall Arendt. The book has served as the guidepost for quality rural and small land use design. Many of today’s more successful rural and small design developments have utilized the concepts promoted in this publication. As is stated in *Rural by Design*, “Consider the standards typically employed by small town boards...the present system treats new development as essentially isolated structures connected by roads, pipes, and wires. Noticeably absent from codes—or even the orientation—of most planning boards are any standards for pedestrian-scaled design, significant open space set-asides, linkages, critical minimum densities, public amenity provision (or site dedication), and even a modest mixture of housing types and related land uses.”



Recommendation 4

It is recommended that Wells County establish land use policies that encourage new housing development in its rural areas in a manner that preserves open space and encourages land and resource conservation techniques. Conservation communities “that incorporate sustainable practices—such as the use of alternative energy, natural stormwater management, and walkability—with the reintegration of food production directly with the living environment”

(Conservation Communities, pg 21) in Wells County could;

- help to preserve its rural and agricultural aesthetic and,
- introduce a housing and community type not currently available in the regional marketplace.

KEY GROWTH VARIABLE 2 – POLICY & PROGRAMMING

While it is important to introduce the Contemporary Land Use variable in a manner that supports a long term growth strategy it is essential that local growth oriented policies and programs also be in place to help stimulate and nurture the desired growth trends. Locally based policies and programming also serves to guide local leadership and the community on the priority steps and activities that are critical to achieving growth related outcomes. In Wells County, as mentioned earlier, there are no obvious “drivers” of growth currently. New growth will likely be home grown, or created through specific programming and policies generated by the community. Listed below are several “first- step” program and policy initiatives that if undertaken will assist to stimulate new growth opportunity.

“Growth Oriented” Leadership - Communities that have engaged in successful development programming most often have organized their key leadership around clearly stated development objectives and goals. A growth strategy requires a similar organizational response. The Douglas Georgia Case Study mentioned earlier is a good example of a rural non-growth County instituting specific economic development goals one of which was to train and expand leadership resulting in a strong cadre of “doers” working on issues ranging from economic development policy, to securing support for a new four lane highway, to building state of the art industrial/business parks.

CASE STUDY 2 - DES MOINES, IOWA

Zachary Mannheimer – Small Town “Place Maker” (excerpted from Citizens’ Institute on Rural Design, Creative Placemaking Needs to Happen Now in Small Towns, March 24,2017)

“Rural areas have to adapt now and create amenities that people are looking for or they are going to struggle to remain a vibrant and rural community”

Hailing from Brooklyn, Zachary started his small town place making career in Des Moines Iowa in 2007. His goal was to start a “social club”. His idea “was to create a venue where all political ideologies, all demographics, all walks of life can actively participate on a regular basis. The goal was to create a community through the arts”.

Initially Mannheimer wanted to host two events every night drawing contrasting audiences from the community. He signed a one year lease in a vacant “crappy building” in downtown. The Des Moines Social Club generates \$8 million annually with the economic activity that it stimulates. It started in a run-down part of town that is now seen significant reinvestment due to the social club’s success. The Social Club works with over 1,000 artists a year. The club has helped to make Des Moines a cultural destination attracting young people to the community.

Mannheimer is now working in smaller communities – Earlham and Fort Dodge Iowa. In Fort Dodge he has facilitated the renovation of a 26,000 sq.ft. structure that had been vacant for 25 years into a multi-purpose recreation and cultural center along with several upper story apartments. In Earlham an empty downtown building is being converted into a farm-to-table restaurant combined with a culinary school on the second floor.

It is not clear that local growth and a strategy for accomplishing this objective is on anyone's agenda in Wells County. If the growth issue is to advance it must be incorporated into the Wells County leadership structure. Elected officials at all levels of government should be the first to come together on both the problems impacting growth and the potential responses. While this is a good first step, it is important to expand the leadership base. Elected officials are busy addressing basic government functions and too often have little time to focus on long term goals and new program initiatives. An engaged, informed and expanded community leadership base could serve as a vital resource in promoting new growth policies and programming. Growth related issues (i.e. land use programming, workforce development, small business start-ups, infrastructure development) are best addressed with a larger group of invested and focused local stakeholders.

Recommendation 5

It is recommended that a concerted effort to build a pool of informed leaders focused on promoting growth be undertaken. Local County and City leaders might consider approaching the Wells County Leadership Academy to help facilitate such an effort.

Workforce Housing Demonstration Program - During the market analysis and community interviews portion of this Study there was clear evidence that local employers were experiencing chronic workforce shortages. The need for workforce was most persistent in the lower wage (\$10.00 - \$15.00/hr.) unskilled production jobs for local manufacturers. In many cases employees were being recruited from outside Wells County. There was also an indication from employers that recruiting for higher skilled and professionals job openings was difficult. The reasons for the workforce shortages were multi-faceted ranging from the perception of a lack of services to an inability to secure suitable housing. The combination of needing to attract a workforce from

outside Wells County, combined with some level of difficulty in securing housing within proximity of the job opportunity appears to be a persistent issue. It is not an altogether surprising issue given the lack of affordable (low to mid cost) housing production – especially rental housing. For example, in Bluffton which contains the majority of affordable housing for low to mid-wage production workers and the largest number of geographically concentrated production jobs – the median housing age is 50 and there is little to no new affordable housing being built. Housing availability, its location, quality and size appear to be limiting factors in attracting workforce - unskilled, skilled and professional. Workforce shortages are becoming the new norm in smaller urban centers and rural communities. These shortages can impede economic growth and represent in some form lost opportunities for growth and new investment.

Recommendation 6

It is recommended that a demonstration workforce housing program be developed in Wells County. Initially a demonstration program in proximity to the employers (i.e. Peytons, Pretzels, Green Plains) is suggested given the concentration of businesses, workforce opportunity and availability of developable land parcels and housing stock. This location, and the ability to take advantage of nearby community assets (schools, medical, parks, retail, etc.) is consistent with supporting the Growth District strategy mentioned earlier.

Economic Development as a Growth Driver- Wells County and its various jurisdictions have been progressive in supporting an active economic development effort. If Wells County is going to enjoy steady long term growth it must be successful in generating business investment. It may be time for the community to double down on the role of economic development. Retaining and growing existing businesses should be **Job One**. Encouraging local business start-ups combined with attracting



Bluffton Employment Cluster near Southside

new businesses is likely right behind. As with most communities in today's world, successful economic development initiatives involve building a younger talent pool. In order to do so, often quality of life factors must be front and center. Linking a reinforced economic development program to the Growth District concept will start to capture the attention of younger talent both locally and from outside the County. There are several innovative businesses in Wells County that possess talent that could produce tomorrow's entrepreneur.

A well planned and executed economic development strategy is critical to long term growth efforts in Wells County. There is no other obvious growth driver. Building a talent pool, creating diverse job opportunities and expanding the local workforce serve to create a growth driver that will reinforce Wells County's existing strengths while creating a new future.

Recommendation 7

Wells County's leadership should investigate the role that local economic development programs will play in creating growth opportunities. Establishing policies, programs and incentives that expand existing businesses and encourage new business investment should be considered as part of the renewed commitment to business development.

Connecting Community Assets (Programs and Activities) - Another important part of attracting new residents, businesses and visitors is the ability of the community to appeal to a broad set of interests. Art, music, learning, and recreational activities have become necessary elements of a vibrant and healthy community. Reinforcing existing programs and assuring that new programs and activities are added given the input of local residents and businesses should not be overlooked as part of the community's growth strategy. In addition, consistent with the earlier discussion dealing with expanding leadership opportunities, citizens often look for the chance to engage or become involved in a community. The sense that a community is open to newcomers and those that want to contribute in some manner creates both a feeling of belonging and energy as well.

Recommendation 8

Wells County leadership (present and expanded) should utilize the asset mapping (Recommendation 3) to identify asset voids in the community and develop a work program to address them and to encourage connecting assets. A multi-year program of building the asset base and promoting it to current and future residents and visitors should be developed.

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5 IMPLEMENTATION

The strategy recommendations listed in the previous section must be activated if Wells County is once again to attain a “growth community” status. The market findings in this Study demonstrate clearly that market trends are not favorable for achieving such an outcome. It will be important for the community to become “mission driven” if healthy growth is to be accomplished. Growth is likely imperative if existing non-growth trends are to be reversed and investments that appeal to the broader market and that improve the overall quality of life are to be achieved. This section identifies several implementation steps that are seen as critical to achieving reasonable growth outcomes in Wells County.

PROPOSED WELLS COUNTY GROWTH STRATEGY



The Growth Strategy Diagram above identifies the recommended strategies to encourage community growth. The necessary steps designed to activate each of these strategies follows.

GROWING FOCUSED LEADERSHIP

The policies, programs and projects which promote and support growth will not be established without strong, focused leadership. It was documented during the Study that current governmental and civic leadership have yet to place community growth on the Wells County agenda. A strong cadre of leaders that can articulate the threat to the community if healthy annual growth does not occur is important in building the consensus for a call to action. It will be easier to seek community support for the strategies and programs through an active and on-going dialogue.

Implementation Steps

1. Create a **common understanding** of the issues and threats to growth in Wells County – There are a number of internal and external threats impacting Wells County’s ability to grow and prosper. In order to address these threats and challenges there must be a common understanding starting with local leadership and then expanding throughout the broader community.
2. Identify/expand committed leadership that will provide an **active and persistent community voice** regarding Wells County’s challenges and opportunities in implementing a successful growth strategy. Wells County leadership has many competing priorities at any point in time. In order for growth to remain front and

center on the community’s agenda it is important to have designated leadership committed to assuring a persistent focus on this issue by governmental and civic entities.

3. Establish an **accessible community platform** for future growth discussions and responses – An office, storefront or governmental chamber can serve as the common ground for this topic to be discussed as well as the repository for vital information and data which informs the on-going deliberations. Accessing a growth platform should occur electronically (web-based) as well as physically.

GROWING FOCUSED LEADERSHIP

Key Steps	Key Players	Task	Timing
Common Understanding	Wells County Chamber of Commerce / Economic Development Corporation	Present Growth Study to local jurisdictions, hold community forums, quarterly publications regarding growth challenges	1st year - following release of Housing Study
Active and Persistent Community Voice	Wells County Chamber of Commerce / Economic Development Corporation via Leadership Academy	Three organizations work together with governmental jurisdictions to inform and train existing and future leaders to expand growth discussion	Months 1 - 18. Set as priority task and evaluate during months 6, 12 & 18
Accessible Community Platform	Wells County Chamber of Commerce / Economic Development Corporation	Organize events, meetings, forums at least quarterly to discuss growth topics and responses. Prepare web page and materials for dissemination to community	2 year initiative. Evaluate and refine. Assume 5 year commitment

ESTABLISHING WELLS COUNTY GROWTH DISTRICT(S)

Wells County’s rural nature would seem to be in conflict with a growth strategy. On the contrary, the well-being and health of the County’s rural environment depends on a source of growth and economic vitality. Finding a way to create a healthy balance between local growth and the preservation of the area’s rural legacy is exactly the challenge that needs to be confronted by Wells County’s leadership.

Given current market trends, growth needs to be influenced in a matter that is compatible with the expectations and needs of today’s marketplace.

The ability for households to affordably live near work, services and amenities has driven how many communities are now either establishing or reinventing themselves. Wells County’s historically ad hoc development patterns are counter to this more recent practice of deliberate land use programming. Identifying one or two locations to focus “growth” activity that responds to the market’s expectations regarding economic and social connections will help to create a context for investment and community reinforcement. A Growth District Policy is required to influence future investment activity focused on creating the sense of a vibrant community while preserving the near-by rural landscape.

Implementation Steps

1. Establish as part of the previously mentioned Growing Leadership objective the Growth District concept as a key discussion point. The discussions should **identify the key Growth District elements** that would meet the needs and expectations of the greater Wells County community. The Growth District concept should serve as the core discussion point for the Focused Leadership for Growth Group as it becomes more informed and expands.
2. Create a **Wells County Growth District Policy** that is adopted by the appropriate local jurisdictions. It will be important to formalize the community discussions regarding what, where, and how growth is going to be encouraged in Wells County. Creating a specific plan and set of policies that serves to guide Wells County and its leadership for the next 20 years will serve as a strong statement regarding the community's aspirations to existing and future residents and businesses.

ESTABLISHING WELLS COUNTY GROWTH DISTRICT (S)

Key Steps	Key Players	Task	Timing
Identify Key Growth District Elements	Wells County Chamber of Commerce & Local Governmental Jurisdictions. Consider external facilitator and workshop to focus effort	Through Leadership Development Process prioritize discussion and development of Growth District Concept. Develop a set of guiding principles and elements	Months 1 - 6
Create Wells County Growth District Policy	Local Governmental Jurisdictions with input from Chamber and Leadership Group	Draft Growth District Policy that outlines key development and design standards for urbanized "places" within County. Consider establishment of mixed-use overlay zones	Months 6 - 12
Select Growth District(s) Location	Local Governmental Jurisdictions	Select all or part of urbanized places to serve as initial Growth District(s). Consistent with Growth District Policy formally designated location(s)	Months 9 - 15
Establish a set of private-public partnerships	Local Jurisdictions in cooperation with Leadership Group	Request Local Leadership Group to identify and solicit potential private and public entities that may be interested in investing in Growth District initiatives. Select initial Wells County partners to implement district objectives	Months 12 - forward

3. **Select one or two locations for Growth District(s) consideration.** The planning and work involved in creating vibrant growth districts will require a significant investment of time, talent and resources. This especially is true in a setting in which the market is not currently active. It is recommended that Bluffton be prioritized for redevelopment, multi-use investment and growth. Existing assets combined with infrastructure capacity make it essential to focus on this underperforming but critical part of the Wells County community. It may be decided to select more than one growth district given existing opportunities elsewhere in the County. Leadership’s and the market’s ability to focus energy on more than one growth district should be carefully considered.
4. **Establish a set of private-public partnerships** which will have as their priority the attraction of investment and growth in the selected growth district(s). Local businesses, civic and governmental leaders should seek out partnerships that will help to generate business, housing and institutional investments consistent with the growth district policy and objectives. A strategy for recruiting regional and national partners should be crafted and executed. The goal will be to attract external investment opportunities that will serve to increase the velocity of investment and growth within the district(s).

TARGETED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The market analysis performed for this Study concluded that there are no “market drivers” that create investment and/or growth opportunities for Wells County. In other markets in Indiana and nationally there often is some existing condition that serves to stimulate steady growth and/or investment. Elements such as a business clusters (i.e. finance, life sciences), natural elements (i.e.

mountains, water features) or a major institutional presence (i.e. universities, government) serve as growth engines for the communities in which they are situated. Historically agriculture has served this role in Wells County. While it still dominates as a user of land (85% of county land) it employs only 3.5% of the County’s employees. There are several industrial businesses in town but all suffer from their inability to attract and retain workforce. The future for these businesses could be jeopardized given the lack of workforce in the area – it is clear that in most cases expansion and growth is not currently an option.

A firm commitment to a “home-grown” economic development program is believed to be the best answer to stimulating local investment and growth. A two pronged approach that prioritizes the retention and expansion of the existing business base and encourages new business formation (ideally in and around local growth districts) appears to be the best opportunity for long term sustainable growth. The good news is that Wells County has a history, and the skill sets, to build an effective business and economic development program. The Wells County Economic Development Corporation demonstrates the knowledge and willingness to encourage a variety of business investments. A well-run business development program can create important synergies to the growth strategy that is being proposed in this document.

Implementation Steps

1. **Define and respond to the local workforce development issues** confronting Wells County businesses. The workforce shortages in the County are a clear impediment to business and community growth. Local businesses are incurring additional costs in order to place temporary band aids on an issue that is an indicator of other larger community concerns. Quality of life, resident mobility, access to services and affordable housing represent a few of the issues deterring the building of an adequate Wells County workforce. While

there is no one answer to the issue it must be addressed incrementally over time by both the community and local businesses – if not future business growth will be in serious jeopardy.

2. **Identify and commit to up to 3 key initial steps in alleviating the current workforce shortages.** This will be an act of good faith on the community’s part towards its business community – demonstrating a pro-active partnership to aggressively address real workforce concerns. This will impress both existing businesses as well as future prospects.
3. Continue to work with local businesses and **identify and assist likely retention-expansion candidates.** Local businesses that want to stay and demonstrate growth potential must garner the full attention of community, governmental, and economic development leadership. The economic development leaders are already

doing a good job in this arena. These efforts must continue and innovative methods deployed to improve the business climate for those already operating.

4. **Establish** over a multi-year period **a locally based business development program** that encourages entrepreneurs to invest time, talent and resources in creating new businesses in Wells County – especially within its Growth Districts. In today’s business world, many businesses can operate from almost anywhere. A family friendly community with a lower cost of living and accessible points of entry for business start-ups provides a good start to attracting talent and independent minded individuals willing to take advantage of what Wells County has to offer. A focus on increasing the visibility of Wells County’s economic benefits combined with well-designed business support programming will encourage steady business growth.

TARGETED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Key Steps	Key Players	Task	Timing
Define and respond to local workforce development issues	Wells County Economic Development Corporation (WCEDC) and Growth Leadership Group with Local Businesses	Establish 90 day concentrated initiative to define workforce issues and recommend local steps that can be taken to resolve incrementally	Months 6 - 9
Identify and commit to up to 3 key initial steps in alleviating the current workforce shortages	Local Governmental Jurisdictions with input from WCEDC and Leadership Group	Local leaders will identify local resources and programs as well as external partners and resources to support an incremental but high profile approach to resolving workforce issues	Years 1 - 5
Identify and assist likely retention-expansion candidates	WCEDC with strengthened partnership with Local Jurisdictions	Expand capacity of WCEDC and community to partner with local growth businesses for future investment	Years 1 - 5
Establish a locally based business development program	WCEDC with Leadership Group	WCEDC appoints working committee to research and make recommendations regarding Wells County Business Development Program. Establish business-start-up metrics and support systems to achieve them	First 18 months (Program Development)

RURAL TRANSITION ZONES

Wells County's rural landscape is one of its most significant and at the same time, threatened assets. Over 85% of the land in Wells County is categorized as agricultural. What little development is occurring in Wells County is taking place primarily on its rural green fields. Given current growth rates it should be relatively easy to protect the agricultural nature of the County while at the same time finding ways to utilize this plentiful asset as a critical element of the County's growth strategy. The Rural Transition Zone concept is seen as complementary to the Growth District concept. The process for establishing local policies and land use programs that support this concept will be similar to the description in the implementation steps for the Growth District Program. It is possible that the two implementation programs can mirror each other and be used to influence land use decision-making once established.

Implementation Steps

1. **Identify Key Rural Transition Zone Elements** – There are several excellent national examples of community efforts to protect rural lifestyles while supporting certain types of development initiatives. Many of these efforts have been classified as conservation communities in recent literature. It is clear that no two conservation communities are the same. The rural landscape and features, market opportunities, and local values often dictate those elements that comprise how each conservation community is defined. Wells County leadership should study and dialogue on which elements characterize its rural development patterns (i.e. conservation community). It likely makes sense to combine this study with Implementation Step 1 – Growth Districts.
2. Create a **Wells County Rural Transition Zone Policy** that is adopted by the appropriate local jurisdictions. It will be important to formalize the community discussions regarding what(?),

where(?) and how(?) Rural Transition Zones are to be established in Wells County. Creating a specific plan and set of policies that serves to guide Wells County and its leadership in its use of its rural land assets will result in putting in place appropriate protections as well as encourage quality economic and housing investment going forward. The Rural Transition Zone Policy should be formalized in a manner that allows for its inclusion in the Wells County Comprehensive Plan.

3. Consider **identification and encouragement of a Wells County Conservation Community** as a part of the County's growth strategy. A conservation community will be a new development typology in Indiana, let alone Wells County. Where it has been introduced nationally the market has responded well. It is felt that the middle and upper-middle income homebuyers that are currently building in Wells County would find this new offering an attractive option. It is also likely that some part of the regional market would respond to what is a unique community setting. Identifying the appropriate pockets in Wells County to encourage establishment of its first Rural Transition Zone along with including plans for implementing a conservation style community will be consistent with current market trends while addressing many of Wells County's growth and housing objectives.

RURAL TRANSITION ZONES

Key Steps	Key Players	Task	Timing
Identify Key Rural Transition Zone Elements	Wells County Chamber of Commerce & Local Governmental Jurisdictions led by local Planning Officials. Consider external facilitator and workshop to focus effort	Through Leadership Development Process prioritize discussion and development of Growth District Concept. Ask Planning Officials to develop a set of guiding principles and elements.	Months 1 - 12
Wells County Rural Transition Zone Policy	Local Governmental Jurisdictions and Planning Officials with input from Chamber and Leadership Group	Identify natural features and rural landscape to be prioritized as influencing of future zone designations. Provide guidance on likely areas in County for zones. Adopt policy for Wells County - include in Comprehensive Plan	Year 2
Identification and encouragement of a Wells County Conservation Community	Wells County in cooperation with local developers and Local Leadership Group	Identify initial Rural Transition Zone work with property owners and developers to conceptualize Conservation Community Development	Years 2 - 3

BUILDING/CONNECTING COMMUNITY ASSETS

(PHYSICAL/PROGRAMS-ACTIVITIES)

The “connection” concept is felt to be a critical to the County’s success in promoting healthy growth and offering its residents an exceptional quality of life. Wells County’s assets, range from its parks and open spaces to its community services including quality schools in relative proximity to each other. There are voids in services and amenities mostly in the areas of entertainment, restaurants and the arts. A focus on creating an improved awareness of existing Wells County assets, amenities and services and making progress on adding to its inventory over time is essential if a growth strategy is to be successful. Just as importantly, connecting people to local assets helps to elevate a sense of community – for both residents and visitors. If the services and amenities

feel scattered and inaccessible there is little to no opportunity for social interaction. Creating tangible connections from one service, amenity or even program to another helps to create a mental map of what the community has to offer and how it works – a mental map that is not easily constructed at the present time.

Implementation Steps

1. Organize and **Conduct a Community Asset Mapping Initiative** - Most of the interviews conducted as a part of this Study included a question about what the important amenities, services, and places were that contributed to Wells County’s quality of life. This question was difficult to answer for most of those interviewed. In addition, other than a good place to raise a family, the responses seldom were the same from one interviewee to the next. While there

are numerous local assets which serve the Wells County community, they are not easily captured in the memories of the residents and representatives of the business community. It is recommended that a community asset mapping exercise be undertaken. This should be done as a participatory process which encourages residents and businesses to come together to discuss what assets Wells County has to offer. Key questions to ask and for the community to reach consensus on the appropriate answers include:

What Wells County assets measurably contribute to the local quality of life?

What assets demonstrate the ability to serve markets beyond Wells County?

What assets are unique to the region? (i.e. one of a kind)

Which assets are easily accessed, which are not?

Are there existing assets that have growth potential?

Are there existing assets vulnerable to closing?,

Where do we have the ability to link assets for the benefit of the community and the respective assets?

What parts of our community should be prioritized for asset development?

- 2. Identify and prioritize missing assets important to supporting Wells County Growth Strategy** – Most discussions conducted during this Study concluded with a clear sense of the Wells County community as one that is underserved? The comments that were offered in interviews and meetings with close to 50 individuals can be paraphrased as follows:

- There is not enough to do.
- My community is missing restaurants, entertainment, recreational activity, arts and culture, diverse retail options, etc.
- The opportunities, for people of all ages, to meet and engage with each other are limited.

The questions; What is missing?, How do we change this?, and Where does it belong?, are critical questions to deliberate on if Wells County is to improve its quality of life offerings for both existing and future residents.

- 3. Innovative approaches to funding and creating desired assets are necessary if existing voids are to be filled.** In rural communities, the market is often not strong enough to generate the investment required to develop many of the desired community assets. A combination of documenting the demand and then lowering the bar of entry, making it easier to make the investment while reducing the perceived risk, serve to make desired asset investment more likely. If indeed the community is going to assist in this process of creating desired assets, it must be clear on its priorities and the types of resources needed to assure successful outcomes. As a follow-up assignment to the asset mapping initiative, the community should identify its priorities in encouraging new assets to be developed in Wells County. Consistent with the growth strategy philosophy careful consideration should be given on where the assets are placed and how they complement other important assets already in existence.

A first step is to appoint a working group charged with encouraging the development and investment in desired community assets (physical and programming). The working group should consist of local and possibly regional

BUILDING/CONNECTING COMMUNITY ASSETS

Key Steps	Key Players	Task	Timing
Community Asset Mapping Initiative	Local Leadership Group and Wells County Chamber of Commerce	Establish process for engaging community regarding existing and needed assets. Facilitate community asset mapping exercise	Months 8 - 14
Identify Missing Assets	Local Leadership Group and Wells County Chamber of Commerce / Economic Development Corporation	Either as part of Asset Mapping Initiative or as its sequel determine key missing assets and prioritize their importance to fostering growth strategy	Months 8 - 16
Establish Asset Working Group	In collaboration with Local Governments Local Leadership Group recruit local and regional membership	Build working group to facilitate creation of up to 3 priority assets over 3 year period	Establish Year 2
Create Key Asset Connections and Linkages	Asset Working Group in conjunction with local governments and businesses	Focus on placement of assets as well as providing linkages that make it easier for public assess and usage	Years 2 - 5

leadership that is willing and capable of working for a designated period of time (up to 3 years). They should be able to network with government, financial institutions and local businesses in an effort to establish a local context that is capable of developing, investing and growing Wells County's asset base. The working group's mission in its first years of operation should be to create up to 3 of the priority assets that have been identified in the earlier prioritization process and to highlight the importance of connecting local assets whenever possible. The working groups emphasis on asset building will build local capacity over time towards this end as well as complement the growth district and economic development strategies.

- Establish programs and projects which create **Key Connections/Linkages to Wells County Assets** – Once there is a consensus on the existing assets that contribute to the quality of life for Wells County residents and businesses an effort to maximize their use and potential should be undertaken. A look at those assets that are performing well and those that are not should occur. What are the elements that explain success or the lack of from a use and economic well-being perspective? How does location, existing traffic patterns, accessibility, visibility impact each asset? Are there opportunities for connecting assets physically and programmatically? Is there an opportunity for cross marketing? These and other questions and the discussion they generate will begin to uncover the opportunities for creating synergies where the opportunity exists.

WORKFORCE HOUSING DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

As a part of this Study several major employers were interviewed regarding their ability to fill open positions. In each of the interviews that were conducted the inability to fill open production positions, both unskilled and skilled was documented as a chronic problem. One issue that directly impacts the workforce shortage problem is the lack of population growth. Exacerbating the workforce issue is the fact that the key working age cohorts of 20-29 have seen a loss in population in recent years in Wells County.

An obvious but only partial answer to the workforce shortage problem is to grow Wells County's resident workforce. Finding ways to accomplish this is consistent with implementing a growth strategy and encouraging growth districts as recommended strategies. A potential response consistent with these recommendations and directly addressing the workforce shortage issue is to utilize housing as a workforce recruitment resource. Two issues that often confront low to mid wage workers is the cost of housing and transportation in getting to work. Wells County housing costs are reasonable but most of it is either occupied or located a significant distance from work. Finding affordable housing in proximity to existing jobs is a challenge. A concerted effort to produce workforce housing close to "job availability" locations could serve to partially alleviate Wells County's workforce shortage issue.

The implementation steps as outlined provide an overview of a pre-development process. The detail and complexity of such a process is not reflected in these steps and should be understood. A draft budget is also provided as an example of how this type of project could be organized. This budget will change subject to the final project parameters.

Implementation Steps

1. **Establish a short-term study group** (6 months to 1 year) consisting of local employers, real estate professionals and local leaders to study and refine the workforce housing recommendation made as a part of this Study. This group should educate itself on the workforce housing opportunity and if and how it thinks the community should proceed in implementing this recommendation. In deciding to proceed the roles that the employers, local governmental leaders and potential development partners (financial institutions, real estate professionals) play should be conditionally defined.
2. Assuming a decision to proceed is made, the study group should **identify several potential locations for a demonstration workforce housing program**. Locations should be evaluated in part using the following factors; 1) proximity to work, 2) proximity to schools and essential services, 3) ability to create or be a part of an attractive neighborhood, 4) potential to accommodate future expansion of the program and 5) price and ability to negotiate acquisition terms for the desired property. It is possible that the demonstration program will include both the construction of new units and the renovation of existing housing. Locations that include both vacant land parcels and existing residential areas should be considered if they accommodate the factors listed above.
3. **Refine the draft workforce demonstration housing budget** (next page). Given the locations that have been selected for consideration, the types of housing to be developed and or renovated will impact the assumptions made in the draft budget. The assumptions should be updated and the budget modified accordingly.

4. The draft demonstration program budget assumes that up to 20% of the funding will be in the form of soft loans and grants. Once locations have been selected and the budget refined public and private **commitments should be secured for the soft loans and grants** necessary to implement the workforce housing program. Ideally up to a half-dozen participants both local and non-local will commit to funding given the strength and need for this community development initiative.

5. **Secure an interest in the preferred real estate location(s)** utilizing an option or conditional purchase agreement. Utilizing local real estate expertise, enter into a conditional agreement to purchase the property. This agreement will allow the study group and its advisors to conduct the necessary due diligence and initiate a pre-development phase knowing they have a home for the proposed development.

6. **Identify the potential for a developer or development partners** to be interested in financing and implementing the workforce housing demonstration program. It is likely that the study group will be engaging with developers throughout the workforce housing program development period. Once the study group is ready to formally engage a developer a request for qualifications (RFQ) should be prepared and sent to regional developers. The RFQ should provide a set of guidelines and development objectives that the community wishes the selected developer to follow. It also should ask the responding developers to provide insights on how they would improve upon the workforce housing demonstration project as defined. Finally, a set of requirements and qualifications should be provided in the RFQ that interested developers should provide evidence that they are willing and able to satisfy.

7. A **developer selection and negotiated project agreement process** will be one of the final steps to take prior to moving forward with the demonstration program. At this point the study group should utilize the legal and real estate professionals to assure that the right development partner is chosen and that there is a clear enforceable agreement in place to accomplish the desired outcomes.

WORKFORCE HOUSING DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Primarily new construction with potential of up to 10 neighborhood reinforcement home renovations all within proposed Growth District

RESIDENTIAL UNITS		AVERAGE SQ. FT.	AFFORDABLE	MARKET RATE
Singe Family Ownership	15	1150	5	10
Single Family Rental	35	1150	25	10
Hard Construction Costs	\$90	Sq.Ft.		
Other Costs	\$45	Sq.Ft.		
SOURCES AND USES				
SOURCES		Project Costs	\$\$/Unit	
Land w/Improvements	5 acres	\$ 500,000	\$ 10,000	
Construction		\$5,175,000	\$ 103,500	
Soft Costs		\$1,552,500	\$ 31,050	
Financing and Reserves		<u>\$ 1,035,000</u>	<u>\$ 20,700</u>	
		\$8,262,500	\$ 165,250	
USES		Project Sources	\$\$/Unit	
Debt	50%	\$4,131,250	\$ 82,625	
Equity	30%	\$2,478,750	\$ 49,575	
Soft Loans	12%	\$ 991,500	\$ 19,830	
Grants	8%	<u>\$ 661,000</u>	<u>\$ 13,220</u>	
		\$8,262,500	\$165,250	

FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

