

CLINTON COUNTY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Conversations
WITH OUR COMMUNITY



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
of Clinton County

September 2019



Executive Summary

As the Clinton County Community Foundation looks toward a process of developing more intentional and focused investment strategies for the future goals of Clinton County, it embarked on a process of engaging in Community Conversations through the services of Project Matters, LLC. These conversations were based upon the *Harwood Public Innovation and Turning Outward Model*. This endeavor allowed the Foundation to conduct community conversations representing 16 different demographic segments of Clinton County. The information gathered into this report will allow the Foundation to continue its mission of connecting people, resources and causes to produce a positive and sustainable change in the communities it serves.

These community conversations focused on ascertaining the aspirations, concerns, and actions the citizens of Clinton County feel are important to the future well-being and growth of their community. This report shares the results of those conversations revealing the top three emergent aspirations, key quotes and statements relative to residents' concerns, suggested actions the community could engage in to address those concerns, and the people and organizations the participants would trust to ensure those actions were taken.

A secondary endeavor in this process was the compilation of major community assessments throughout Clinton County, as well as strategic and community plans that were conducted within the last three years. The objective was to ascertain what these community partners have determined are important issues to address, and where these may intersect with residents' top concerns and aspirations. This intersecting data, or in some cases, the lack of any such related data, is noted in the report relative to its corresponding aspiration.

This report contains the list of participating demographic groups and specifies that these groups were comprised of a representative sample of that particular demographic sector. Detailed demographic information gathered from the post-conversation participant surveys was also included; however, not every participant responded to every question. **It is also important to note that all comments within the participant aspiration pages are in their words and any needed clarity of context was provided within parenthetical reference.**

The results of the community conversations reveal that of the three emergent aspirations (participants wanted a drug-free/mentally healthy, growing/vibrant, and connected/supportive community), that the substance-abuse issue is a factor that impacts all themes. For a community to be vibrant and supportive, its population must be healthy enough to be productive and contributing to a constructive income growth. When people have their basic needs met, their choices are more productive resulting in positive community impact. The community also recognized that with new leadership at the city level, they are now moving forward in creating attractive spaces and addressing community vibrancy.

It is our sincere hope that all Clinton County residents and leaders will consider this report their go-to tool in becoming engaged with intentional positive actions and the development of leaders and resources to achieve the identified collective goals for the good of Clinton County.

We Listened

The community conversations were comprised of a representative sample of individuals from each of the demographic groups listed below:

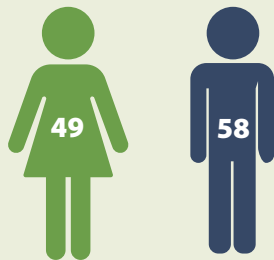
1. Clinton County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
2. Clinton County Community Foundation Board of Directors
3. Clinton County Economic Development
4. Educators
5. Elected Officials
6. Faith-based Organization Leaders
7. Healthcare Professionals
8. High School Youth
9. Ivy Tech Students
10. Latino Community
11. Law Enforcement/Fire/Emergency Personnel
12. Non-Profit Organizations
13. Partners In Progress Organization
(A group of local business and community leaders.)
14. Probation Clients
15. Senior Citizens
16. Veterans



Conversation Demographics

There were **107** respondents to the participant post-conversation survey.

GENDER



ETHNICITY

87%

WHITE, CAUCASIAN
OR OF EUROPEAN
DESCENT

1%

BLACK, AFRICAN
AMERICAN OR OF
AFRICAN DESCENT

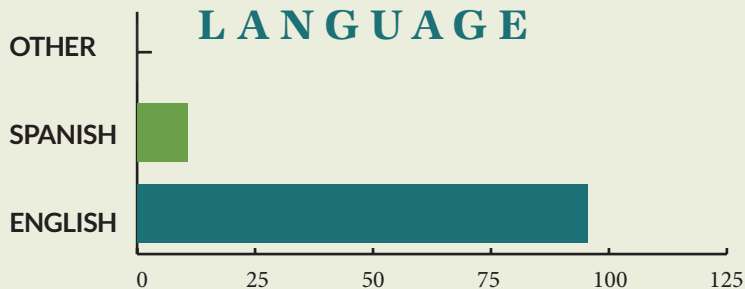
11%

LATINO OR
HISPANIC

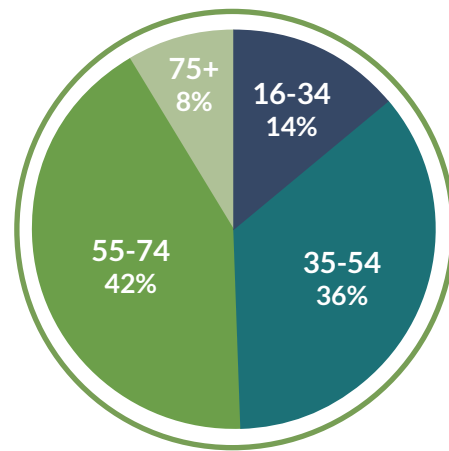
1%

ASIAN, NATIVE
HAWAIIAN OR
PACIFIC ISLANDER

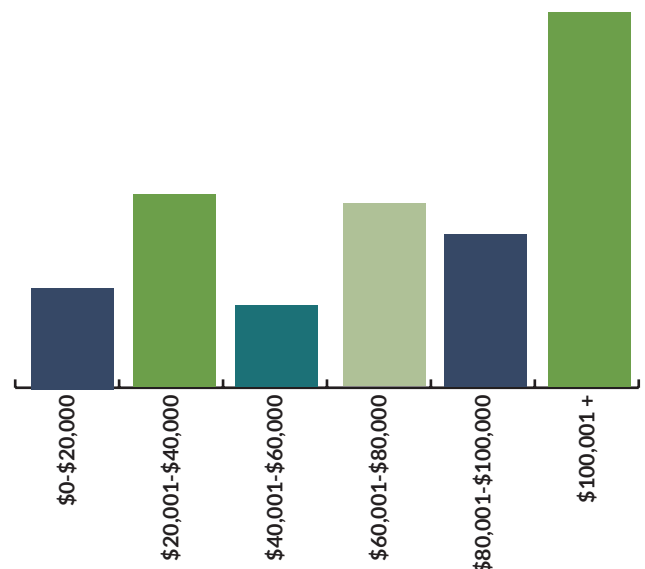
PRIMARY LANGUAGE



AGE RANGE



INCOME



Leading Aspirations

The following are the leading community aspirations which emerged for Clinton County.



*Drug-Free
& Mentally
Healthy*

*Growing &
Vibrant*

*Connected &
Supportive*

PLEASE NOTE that in keeping with the Harwood Model, all concerns, actions and other comments are listed in the words of the participants. Where clarity of context was needed, comments were placed in parenthesis.

ASPIRATION 1

“We want a drug-free and mentally healthy community.”

While people want a DRUG-FREE and MENTALLY HEALTHY community, they are CONCERNED that:

- We have a bigger drug problem than we used to
- Mental Health plays a part in the drug problem

As people talk about those CONCERNS, they talk more specifically about:

- The changing nature of overdoses (in variety of drugs, age of users and use of Narcan by dealers/buyers)
- There is a mental health stigma
- We over-medicate our veterans
- Youth are more comfortable with drugs
- Low paying jobs attract poverty
- We do not have enough substance abuse and mental health resources to deal with the issues, but there are new programs in the works

They say we need to focus on the following ACTIONS:

- We need more long-term care facilities
- Conduct crises intervention training across organizations to support collaborative efforts for more effective interactions among law enforcement, mental health care providers, individuals with mental illnesses, their families, and communities and to reduce the stigma of mental illness
- We need early education for children and parents about substance abuse and mental health

And they TRUST the following people or organizations to play a part in those ACTIONS:

- Our police officers
- Emergency medical technicians and emergency personnel
- COACH Kids of Clinton County
- Mayor Chris McBarnes
- Paul Phillippe Resource Center
- The Department of Child Services
- The Department of Family and Social Services Administration

“Younger and younger kids are doing alcohol and drugs. We’ve watched this change over the last 7-8 years. The result of this is that the escalation to stronger drug choices occurs younger, as well. We just had a 6th or 7th grader arrive at school intoxicated from downing a bunch of vodka shots.”

“A lot of students or kids are going through something and they get into drugs. The environment that we have created has allowed for this to happen.”

“Drugs/mental health issues are known as a problem to us all. But we don’t have a positive direction yet, as we are just in the first steps of figuring this all out. No facilities for placement yet. We need to help and care for those people in this situation and their families. (All agreed).”

“Mental Health/psych patients are our #1 calls. Placement is difficult. If you do find a place, it’s usually far away.”

Existing Comprehensive or Strategic Plans specifically addressing a DRUG-FREE and MENTALLY HEALTHY community:

Community Needs Health Assessment 2018 – IU Health Frankfort Hospital

In their assessment, they identified the following concern, but at that time, no goals/actions had been decided: Drug and Substance Abuse (including Opioids): The opioid crisis and other forms of drug and substance abuse were identified by community members as particularly significant.

United Way for Clinton County 2019 United Against Opioid Abuse Report

1. *Landscape Scan*: comprising of six months of community conversations and assessments that will be held with organizations and leaders who are currently doing something to combat the opioid epidemic in Clinton Co. and identify what resources are available for those affected by substance use disorder pertaining to opioids.
2. *Asset Map*: The following six months will be dedicated to placing what was found during the landscape scan on paper. It will be reviewed, presented, and shared with those who most need to know the information in the community.

September 2017 Regional Economic Development Plan - North Central Indiana Regional Planning Council

Drug Abuse was a concern, but it was not followed through as part of their identified goals and action process for economic development.

2016 Strategic Plan for Area IV Agency – identified goals and actions to increase awareness of their resources and delivery of services.

Goals:

1. Expand services to outlying counties.
2. Increase public awareness.
3. Partner with care coordination organizations.

Actions:

1. Focus on energy assistance, Medicaid waiver, public transportation, information and referral.
2. Raise awareness through REMC meetings, local organizations, coffee shops, food pantries, share our success stories and educate on our services.
3. Build relationships with insurance companies, present to providers, send info to potential partners.

ASPIRATION 2

“We want a growing and vibrant community.”

While people want a GROWING and VIBRANT community, they are CONCERNED that:

- We are still playing catch-up from previous setbacks, but there are encouraging signs we are progressing

As people talk about those CONCERNS, they talk more specifically about:

- Demographic changes
(an increase in poverty level population)

- Lack of a shared vision for the community across organizations
- A need to invest for the future
(as pertains to roads, infrastructure, etc.)
- Housing and transportation
- The need for more activities and things to attract young people
(like a movie theater, bowling alley, etc.)
- Employment and workforce challenges
(work ethic and matching skillsets to jobs, qualified workforce for the 21st century)

They say we need to focus on the following ACTIONS:

- Being more intentional in community growth areas such as:
- Vocational and educational opportunities (across all socio-economic demographics)
- Workforce development (preparing for 21st century workforce skills and attracting a skilled workforce)
- Infrastructure, especially 21st Century technology including reliable broadband access across the county
- Higher-wage jobs (to attract stronger skilled workforce)

- Quality of life and place initiatives (things for all people to engage in and enjoy, as well as be aesthetically pleasing in attraction efforts)

And they TRUST the following people or organizations to play a part in those ACTIONS:

- Current city leaders; especially Mayor Chris McBarnes
- Don DeWeese, Superintendent, Community Schools of Frankfort
- Clinton County Community Foundation
- The Clinton County Chamber of Commerce
- The local economic development organizations

“When we talk about employee retention, I’d just like to say we could have more employees. We have a strong community corrections program, but a lot of companies won’t allow felons to work or to advance at the work they do. Example: A company had a good employee, they went to him and told him they’d like to move him up to Administration; but when they ran another background check and found out he was a felon, they fired him.”

“If we do nothing or just treat the symptoms, then we only grow a low-income base (negative growth). If we are growing negatively, then those people do not contribute to the general well-being of their community...it takes dollars to invest in a community. When your higher income people like plant managers aren’t living here, then where will the dollars come from?”

“There’s nothing to do here. I don’t really want to live here ... we only have a skating rink for someplace to go. There’s no movie theater or bowling alley and the pool was closed down.”
-Youth view

“We are looking at a vision. At least as far as what we (currently) know, but I’m not sure we are looking at what we don’t know ... like looking ahead at 30-40 years from now ... at what we want to leave for those who follow.”

“If we had more activities and outdoor activity spaces/things to do; then that would direct the community toward safety and positive growth.”

Existing Comprehensive or Strategic Plans specifically addressing a GROWING and VIBRANT community:

2017 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services - Transportation Update - Region 5

Identified Actions:

1. Document and inform legislators for funding advocacy.
2. Identify joint funded vehicle purchase opportunities.
3. Establish transfer points at county borders to access out-of-county destinations, maintain communication links between providers.
4. Evaluate potential for expansion of service to weekends and 2nd/3rd shift worker needs; explore volunteer driver opportunities.
5. Work to inform human service agencies that there are no restrictions on joint use of vehicles and expand marketing to increase public awareness of services.
6. Explore potential to develop services in underserved areas and developing deviated fixed route services; and coordinate with hospitals/VA, volunteers for non-emergency transportation.
7. Update vehicles and replacement plan with mix of appropriate-size vehicles and work cooperatively with INDOT in acquiring vehicles.

Wabash Heartland Innovation Network (WHIN) Placemaking Survey 2018 Clinton County Report

Top concerns from the report:

1. 77% of the residents said they have to “leave the community to take advantage of services, purchase products or patronize businesses they prefer.”
2. 58% of respondents chose workforce and education alignment as their number 1 priority under Clinton Co. education needs.
3. 52% of respondents picked community-wide, high-speed Internet as the number 1 way they would most like to see the county improve.

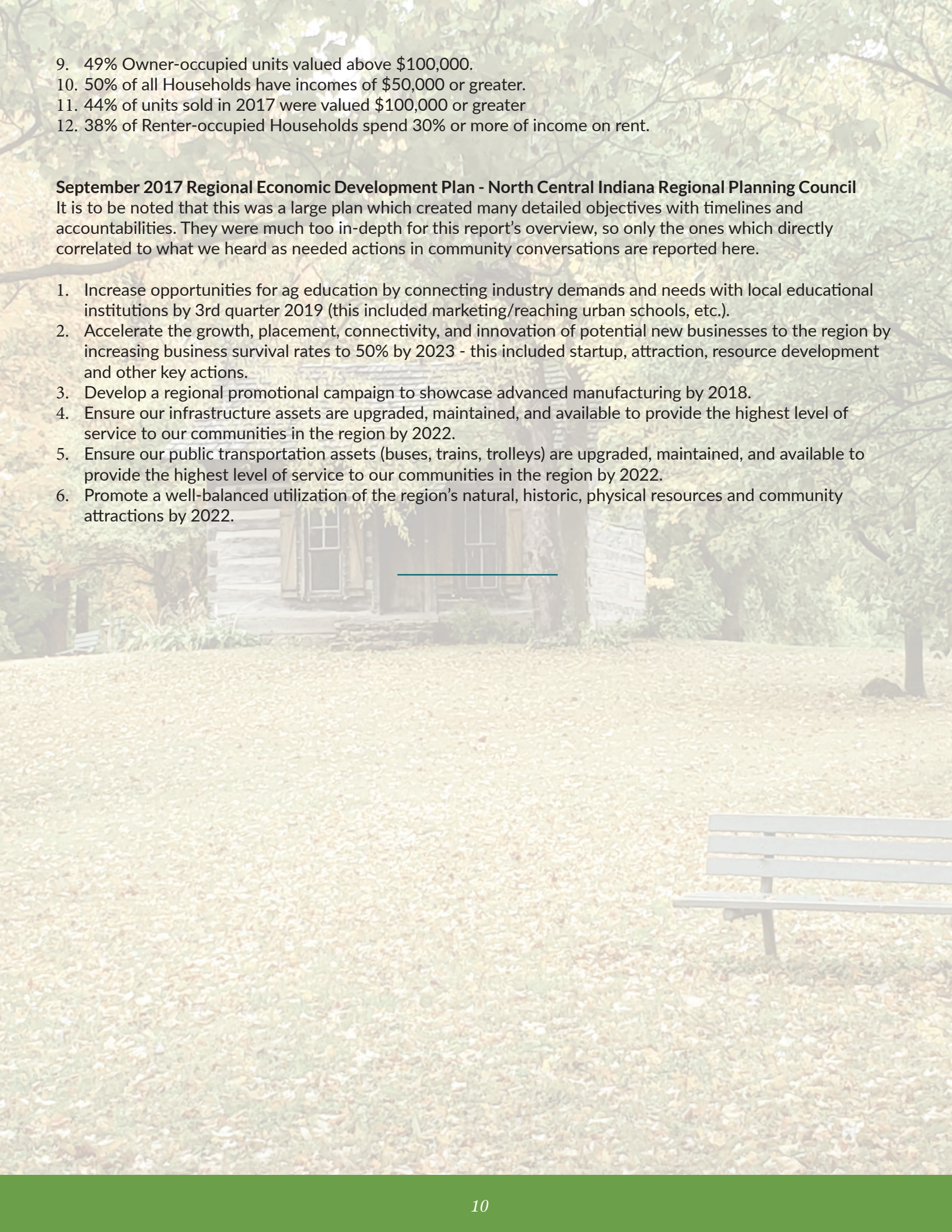
The following GOALS were identified, but no actions were expressed in the report.

1. Community Vitality: Access to Parks and Trails; Quality Affordable Healthcare, shopping, dining, downtown as well as Arts & Cultural activities.
2. Community Education: Align workforce/education, provide work ethic certification and youth workforce opportunities.
3. Community Connectivity: Community-wide, high speed Internet, promoting use of parks, trails, and waterways across communities and improving community interactions.

North Central Indiana Regional Planning Council (NCIRPC) Clinton County Housing Assessment 2018

The assessment showed the following HOUSING findings:

1. Clinton Co. population has declined 3.5% since 2000. Frankfort population decline 1.3% and rural communities Colfax, Kirklin, Michigantown, & Rossville have grown by 5.6%.
2. 22.5% decrease in Adults ages 35-44.
3. Primary and Secondary enrollment has decreased by 3.4% since 2000.
4. City Occupancy Rate 88.3% is below County (88.7%), State (88.8%) and National (87.8%).
5. Vacant Units have increased by 108% since 2000.
6. Average Household size is 2.7.
7. 71% of all occupied units have 2-3 bedrooms.
8. 61% of structures will be 50 years old or older by 2019.

- 
9. 49% Owner-occupied units valued above \$100,000.
 10. 50% of all Households have incomes of \$50,000 or greater.
 11. 44% of units sold in 2017 were valued \$100,000 or greater
 12. 38% of Renter-occupied Households spend 30% or more of income on rent.

September 2017 Regional Economic Development Plan - North Central Indiana Regional Planning Council

It is to be noted that this was a large plan which created many detailed objectives with timelines and accountabilities. They were much too in-depth for this report's overview, so only the ones which directly correlated to what we heard as needed actions in community conversations are reported here.

1. Increase opportunities for ag education by connecting industry demands and needs with local educational institutions by 3rd quarter 2019 (this included marketing/reaching urban schools, etc.).
 2. Accelerate the growth, placement, connectivity, and innovation of potential new businesses to the region by increasing business survival rates to 50% by 2023 - this included startup, attraction, resource development and other key actions.
 3. Develop a regional promotional campaign to showcase advanced manufacturing by 2018.
 4. Ensure our infrastructure assets are upgraded, maintained, and available to provide the highest level of service to our communities in the region by 2022.
 5. Ensure our public transportation assets (buses, trains, trolleys) are upgraded, maintained, and available to provide the highest level of service to our communities in the region by 2022.
 6. Promote a well-balanced utilization of the region's natural, historic, physical resources and community attractions by 2022.
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ASPIRATION 3

"We want a connected and supportive community that values diversity."

While people want a **CONNECTED** and **SUPPORTIVE** community, they are **CONCERNED** that:

- Certain groups of people feel forgotten and live in the shadows of the community; such as seniors, Hispanics, veterans and the homeless
- The community has a significant Hispanic population and yet it has never adapted accordingly (as in issues of engagement, more diverse job opportunities, reducing language barriers, welcoming, etc.)

As people talk about those **CONCERNS**, they talk more specifically about:

- Discrimination and racism
- Language barriers
- Lack of public transportation
- The large gap between classes of people

They say we need to focus on the following **ACTIONS**:

- Community forums to understand issues faced by specific groups such as Hispanic, LGBTQ, veterans and seniors
- Have more gatherings within the community to connect people
- Opportunities for ALL people to volunteer together
- More outreach to the diverse populations
- Improve accessibility to services and resources; such as moving to a single community resource center for housing, transportation, medical needs, educational opportunities and classes.

And they **TRUST** the following people or organizations to play a part in those **ACTIONS**:

- Clinton County Community Foundation
- Purdue Extension (Esmeralda Figueroa)
- Mayor Chris McBarnes
- United Way for Clinton County
- Pastors
- St. Mary's Catholic Church
- The Frankfort Community Public Library
- COACH Kids of Clinton County
- Paul Phillippe Resource Center
- The American Legion
- The Veterans of Foreign Wars

"We need to learn from the more cultural cities about embracing different cultures."

"There are no local resources for veterans who are homeless and struggling with PTSD. Homeless people are all over."

"We have a very large Hispanic community that we have to start to engage."

"As seniors, we feel like the forgotten community...American culture doesn't take care of their elders."

"County schools are mostly white. They send the Hispanics to us because they are 'full'. There's a lack of diversity in the community and distrust in the Hispanic population."

"My dad was at the fair... and he experienced racism because he was speaking Spanish to a buddy and he was told from another guy that he needed to speak English because he lives in America. My dad is a very hard worker and he is a supervisor at his job, and it makes me sad that he is treated like that."

Existing Comprehensive or Strategic Plans specifically addressing being CONNECTED and SUPPORTIVE:

2017 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services - Transportation Update - Region 5

Identified Actions:

1. Document and inform legislators for funding advocacy.
2. Identify joint funded vehicle purchase opportunities.
3. Establish transfer points at county borders to access out-of-county destinations, maintain communication links between providers.
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-



Conversation Insights

We hope the community will be able to use the findings in this report to respond to the public's desire for more collaborative actions in reaching their aspirations. Their insights let those in roles of leadership create opportunities and actions for positive impact.

People across all conversations shared their hopeful confidence in Mayor Chris McBarnes and his efforts at moving the City of Frankfort in a more positive direction. Having said that, they recognized there is much still to be done and that it will take the engagement of all. The community has a desire to engage all of its citizens in that process and invite those of diverse cultures, ages and lifestyles to participate as leaders and volunteers to help make a difference.

It was also notable that several members of key economic development groups thought Clinton County could progress if several organizations collaborated or merged for the good of all, and if county leaders displayed unity and a shared vision in their efforts. It was noted that there are also several groups of informal "think tanks," but if all of those people came together to share resources and talent; then the county could perhaps move toward intentional, unified action.

It was evident that residents recognized the cultural diversity of the community and want to address those issues as noted in the action sections. Bringing people of all ages, sectors and cultures together and including them as part of all community efforts has the potential to broaden leadership, volunteer and community impact efforts.

Finally, people were gratified to have been given a chance to express their aspirations for Clinton County and the individual communities in which they live. From their post-conversation surveys, we know that as a result of these community conversations, 61% of the respondents were "more likely" to get involved in other conversations and activities about important community issues.

We at Project Matters, LLC were honored to be entrusted with this important endeavor for the Clinton County Community Foundation. May you and the community reap many benefits from this process.

Project
Matters_{LLC}

Created September 2019 by
Project Matters, LLC
www.projectmattersllc.com

CLINTON COUNTY COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS NOTES PAGE

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215 W. SYCAMORE ST., KOKOMO, IN 46901 • (800) 964-0508 • cfclinton.org