



LaGrange
County
Trails

LaGrange County
MASTER TRAILS
plan >>>>

2024

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INSERT
Adoption Resolutions

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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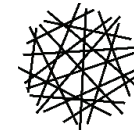
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COVER IMAGE SOURCE: INDIANA PLACES AND HISTORY

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CHAPTER 01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The LaGrange County Community Foundation partnered with LaGrange County Trails to create this countywide trails master plan. Through a cohesive and comprehensive approach to trails planning, this document will guide LaGrange County Trails and community leaders as they develop, expand, and improve trail infrastructure and programs. This plan was made possible by Lilly Endowment's GIFT VIII program, which provided the funding to support planning activities, and was developed with insight from community stakeholders.

WHY DOES LAGRANGE NEED A TRAILS MASTER PLAN?

LaGrange County's rural beauty and regional attractions, coupled with approximately half the population living without vehicles, is ideal for an expanded trail network. Walking and biking are common in LaGrange County despite being predominantly rural. The Census Bureau estimates 4.5% of workers walk to work, and 7.8% bike – both substantially higher than the national average of 2.5% and 0.5% respectively. This is largely due to LaGrange County's sizable Amish population, which makes up nearly 45% of the county's total population. Despite this, LaGrange County has less than 10-miles of trails.

Until this plan, LaGrange County had no community-driven guide for trail expansion and desired to identify potential corridors for trail development. LaGrange County's 2022 comprehensive plan, LaGrange County Together, identified trail expansion as a top priority. This plan is an opportunity to update, unify, and define non-motorized transportation in LaGrange County. This plan's goal is to unite the county, as well as towns, in the potential for new trails.

LAGRANGE COUNTY TOGETHER

The vision for LaGrange County's comprehensive plan, *LaGrange County Together*, is as follows:

“LaGrange County is a collective of desirable communities in which to live and work, recognized for celebrating its distinct heritage and identity, growing its local businesses and industries, preserving its natural features, improving its public spaces and roadways, and enhancing its quality of life. ”

A comprehensive plan is a long-term guide that expresses the values and aspirations of a community. It is the broadest public policy document for a community, and covers a range of relevant topics, from land use to transportation. Comprehensive plans are built on a foundation of community input from residents, workers, and other stakeholders. From this input, the plan outlines a shared vision that will be achieved over the next 15-20 years. Through the comprehensive planning process, action items and an implementation plan were formed. Many of these action items directly support the formation of a county-wide trails master plan.

HISTORY OF TRAILS IN LAGRANGE COUNTY

Pumpkinvine Nature Trail

The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail connects the towns of Shipshewana, Middlebury, and Goshen, forming part of a broader trail system that includes the MapleHeart Trail and Wilden Avenue Trail. This scenic route winds through picturesque countryside filled with farms, fields, ponds, and livestock. The trail's origins date back to 1989 when a group of Elkhart County cyclists envisioned a greenway along the abandoned Pumpkin Vine railroad corridor. In 1993, the 'Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail' successfully purchased 17-miles of the corridor, which was later donated to the Elkhart County Park Department in 2008. The trail officially opened a 5.5-mile stretch between Middlebury and Shipshewana in October 2011, marking LaGrange County's, specifically the Town of Shipshewana's, contribution to the trail.

The former railroad corridor has been transformed into a vibrant 25-mile multi-use trail and linear park. Today, the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail is a beloved destination for walkers, runners, rollerbladers, and cyclists alike.

LaGrange County Trails

In 2019, the non-profit LaGrange County Trails was formed with the mission "to encourage safe, active, outdoor experiences." They have been focused on developing the proposed Hawpatch Trail, which will connect the towns of Millersburg, Topeka, and Wolcottville. The narrow and unimproved county roads in the area do not allow for a safe route for pedestrians to travel, especially considering the large Amish community that travel on foot and bicycle. Today, LaGrange County Trails is negotiating with Norfolk Southern Railway to obtain ownership of the railroad corridor.

County Parks

Outside of the two previously mentioned trails, there are also a few trails in county parks. Delt Church Park is a bike/pedestrian trail. Mountain bike trails include Duff Memorial Park, Pine Knob County Park. The rest of the trails are unpaved nature trails.



A sign for the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail.
Image Source: Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail

PLAN METHODOLOGY

The LaGrange County Trails Master Plan was developed through a planning process involving an inventory of current conditions, data collection, research into best practices, and engagement with local stakeholders, including residents from the county’s towns, unincorporated areas, and Amish communities. Public engagement sessions were held to gather feedback, ensuring that the trail network reflects the community’s needs and values.

The intent of this plan is to guide the expansion of future trails through community engagement and to unite the county and its towns in their desire for new trails. Rather than establishing a rigid plan for future trail development, this master plan is intended to be a flexible guide that community leaders can rely on as trail development progresses. The insights gained from this process have shaped this plan’s recommendations, which will help inform future decisions by officials. By incorporating input from locals—including both residents and visitors—this plan ensures that the trail system will be an inclusive, community-driven initiative. Ongoing collaboration between local government, community members, and various interest groups will be essential to successfully implement this vision for LaGrange County.

Phase 1:

Inventory &
Data Collection



Phase 2:

Research &
Analysis



Phase 3:

Results &
Recommendations



LAGRANGE COUNTY TRAILS

LaGrange County Trails is a 501c3 nonprofit committed to developing trails in LaGrange County with a goal of improving connectivity with neighboring counties. They are actively working on the Hawpatch Trail connecting Millersburg to Wolcottville through Topeka. For the purposes of this plan, the Hawpatch Trail is considered an existing trail.

The LaGrange County Trails mission statement is “to encourage safe, active, outdoor experiences.” Organizational efforts are driven by the following four priorities:

1. COMMUNITY

Communities find improved connectivity through trail systems. A trail is a place that community members share, where they can meet and strengthen friendships and relationships. A trail can also serve as a focal point for a community for special events and as a gathering place. Activities can lead to greater interaction between residents and improve the community relationship. Communities that create inter-community trails find that they become one of their main attractions. Trail projects can help revive the local economy and establish a positive reputation for a community.

2. HEALTH

People today live stressful lives, and staying active can relieve that stress. The serenity and nature on a trail can be just the medicine needed to improve a person’s physical and mental health. Trails often encourage inactive people to become active, and modestly increase the activity levels of already-active residents. Trails are especially important in areas with limited opportunities for physical activity, which can contribute to higher levels of depression and obesity.

3. FAMILY

The access to nature provided by trails creates an opportunity for families to recreate together. This benefit extends to families of all types, but can be especially beneficial for children. Children spend a good amount of their time indoors during the school week, so walking or biking on trail is a perfect way to get them outside. Trails promote the beauty of nature to a child and help to protect it by controlled interaction. Preserving wilderness for future generations teaches youth to appreciate and enjoy the nature within their own community. Kids love the sense of adventure and doing something new. Take the children in your life to the trail!

4. SAFETY

Walking and biking are inherently safe activities, but safety concerns greatly influence whether people choose to do them. Most serious injuries and fatalities for those walking and biking result from conflicts with motor vehicles, especially on narrow county roads with no bike lanes. Off-road trails provide a controlled environment keeping bicyclists and walkers physically separated from automobiles on the road.

TRAIL MASTER PLAN VISION

Through the public engagement process, it became clear that there are two types of trail users in LaGrange County – one for recreation the other for transportation. There was also a strong desire to keep all trail users safe. The following is the vision for the future of the trail network in LaGrange County based on these key findings:

“LaGrange County Trails Master Plan is dedicated to creating a safe, community-oriented trail system that enhances both transportation options and recreational opportunities across LaGrange County.”

Priorities for the trail network are as follows:



Safety: Develop a network of secure and accessible routes that meet the diverse needs of all users, fostering a more inclusive and active community.



Recreation: Design a variety of trails that cater to different interests and skill levels, providing an engaging experience that promotes a vibrant outdoor culture and encourages everyone to explore and enjoy the natural landscape.



Transportation: Establish a comprehensive network of safe trails that serve as essential transportation corridors. By strategically connecting key areas, we will enhance accessibility for residents who rely on trails as their primary mode of transportation.

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CHAPTER 02

EXISTING CONDITIONS

BACKGROUND

As of 2020, the population was 40,446 in LaGrange County. The county seat is LaGrange, Indiana. The area is well known for its large Amish population. For that reason, the county teams up with neighboring Elkhart County to promote tourism by referring to the area as Northern Indiana Amish Country. About half of LaGrange County is Amish, and it is home to the third-largest Amish community in the United States.

According to the 2010 census, the county has a total area of 386.70 square miles, of which 379.62 square miles (approximately 98%) is land and 7.08 square miles is water. The county is mostly made up of rural farmland but also some rolling hills and several lakes.



Population

40,446 LaGrange County
2020 Population

2,715 LaGrange, IN - 2020 Population

1,206 Topeka, IN - 2020 Population

839 Shipshewana, IN - 2020 Population

Fewer than **14%** of county residents
live in a town



Population Projections

41,953 LaGrange County
2029 Population

0.41% Annual Growth

Very Slight Growth Across the County

2,685 LaGrange, IN - 2029 Population

1,210 Topeka, IN - 2029 Population

861 Shipshewana, IN - 2029 Population



Age

30.8

LaGrange County
2020 Median Age

37.8

Indiana - 2020 Median Age

31.7

LaGrange County
2029 Median Age



Education

2020 High School Graduate or Higher

61.1%

LaGrange
County

89.3%
Indiana

2020 Bachelor's Degree or Higher

11.5%

LaGrange
County

27.2%
Indiana

Data Source: 2020 U.S. Census, ESRI Projections



Employment

Top Industries by Employment

% of Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over

- 45% Manufacturing
- 12.3% Education, Healthcare, Social Services
- 9.7% Retail Trade

 **\$69,331**

LaGrange County
2020 Median Household Income
Compared to \$58,235 for Indiana



3.4%

LaGrange County
2020 Unemployment Rate
Compared to 4.7% for Indiana



Housing

14,923

LaGrange County
2020 Total Housing Units

| | | | |
|--------------|----------|--------------|-----------------|
| 84.1% | Occupied | 84.5% | Owner-Occupied |
| 15.9% | Vacant | 15.5% | Renter-Occupied |

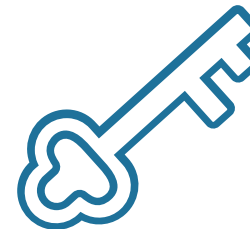
\$194,600

LaGrange County
2020 Median Home Value
Compared to \$148,900 for Indiana



50.7%

LaGrange County
Homes Built Before 1980
Compared to 58.2% for Indiana



Data Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

TRANSPORTATION

LaGrange County's transportation network provides connections to neighboring counties, and nearby communities. The transportation network consists of high and low-capacity roadways, from interstate highways to local roads. The county also has a couple existing trails which support bicycle and pedestrian mobility, and serve as a recreation amenity.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The Federal Functional Classification System, created by the Federal Highway Administration, categorizes roadways into classes based on the mobility and access functions they provide. Under this system, roadways are grouped into three broad categories: arterials, collectors, and local roads. Arterials, the highest order of roadway, primarily serve mobility purposes while local roads, the lowest order of roadway, serve land access purposes. The Federal Functional Classification System is useful for determining roadway design (including speed, capacity, and access) and eligibility for federal funding. At the state level, this system is managed by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT); consequently, it is often referred to as the INDOT Functional Classification System.

Every public road in LaGrange County is assigned one of the following seven functional classifications, in accordance with this system:

- ▶ Arterials
 - Principal Arterial – Interstate
 - Principal Arterial – Other Freeways & Expressways
 - Principal Arterial – Other
 - Minor Arterial
- ▶ Collector
 - Major Collector
 - Minor Collector
- ▶ Local Roads

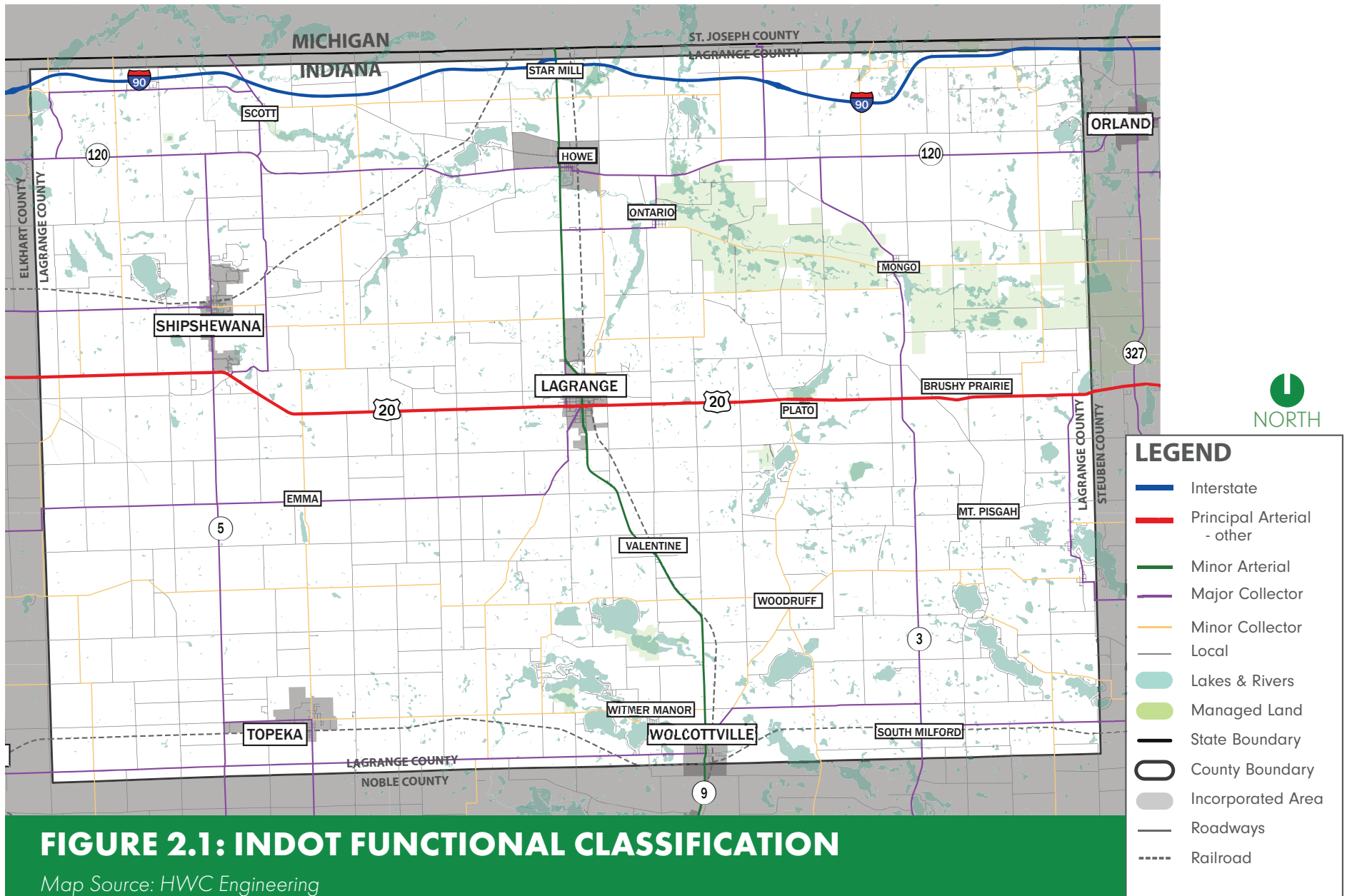
LaGrange County has two principal arterials that provide east-west connections through the county. These arterials are I-90 in the northern part of the county, and US-20 in the central part of the county. SR-9 is the county's only minor arterial. This roadway provides a valuable north-south connection and passes through the Town of LaGrange. Major collectors in LaGrange County include SR-120, SR-5, and SR-3, among others. All other roadways fall under the minor collector or local designation.

The map on the following page captures the INDOT Functional Classification System in LaGrange County.

BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

LaGrange County's trail system is in the early stages of development. Existing trails in the county include the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail and small loop trails within parks. The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail is a 17-mile paved trail connecting Goshen to Shipshewana via Middlebury. The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail joins with the Maple City Greenway and the MapleHeart Trail to form a regional trail network, although most of the trail mileage is in Elkhart County.

Plans are underway for a new addition to LaGrange County's trail system. As of early fall 2024, LaGrange County Trails is taking steps to acquire land for the Hawpach Trail. Once complete, this trail will connect Millersburg, Topeka, and Wolcottville, enhancing quality of life for LaGrange County residents.



SAFETY

Referencing LaGrange County Together, Technical Analysis Memo, Volume 4: Foundations; INDOT crash data reports that a number of intersections around LaGrange County have a high frequency of crashes. INDOT crash data from the years 2016 through 2020 (five years) was evaluated to identify high-frequency crash locations. This data was requested from Indiana Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) and, as part of this request, LTAP staff coded crash data to indicate whether vulnerable road users (VRUs) were involved, including buggies, bicyclists, and pedestrians. During the five-year period, there were 7,570 reported crashes. Of these, 205 crashes involved buggies (2.7%), 33 involved bicyclists (0.4%), and nine involved pedestrians (0.1%).

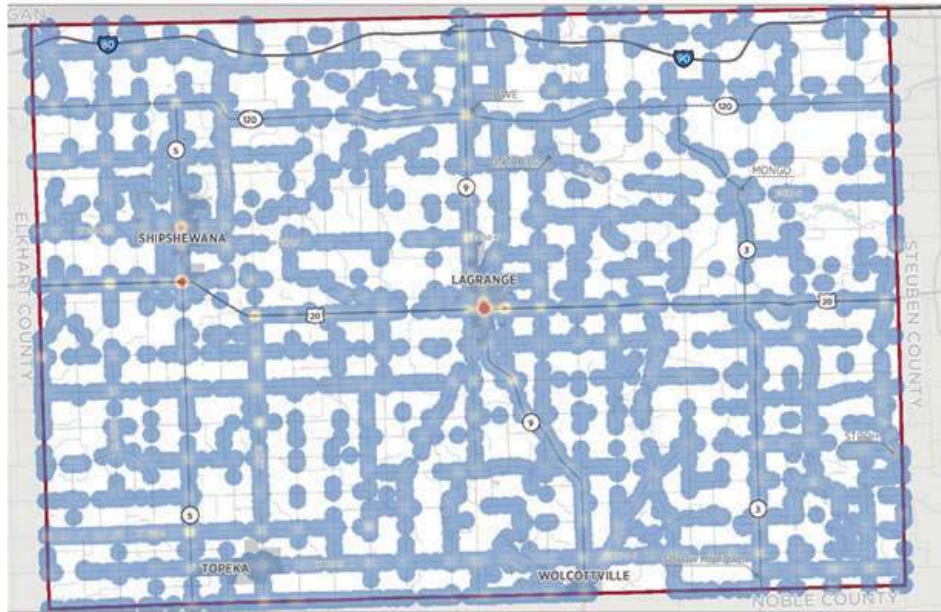


FIGURE 2.2: ALL CRASHES IN LAGRANGE COUNTY

Map Source: LaGrange County Together Comprehensive Plan

Pedestrian/Bicyclist Involved Crashes

Continuing in Volume 4; over the five-year period, just 42 crashes involved either a pedestrian or bicyclist. The intersection with the most incidents was Middlebury St. and SR-5 in Shipshewana with 12 crashes, followed by US-20/SR-5 in Shipshewana, CR S 500 W / CR E 800 S (county line) southeast of Topeka, and CR 200 S/S Towlne Rd.

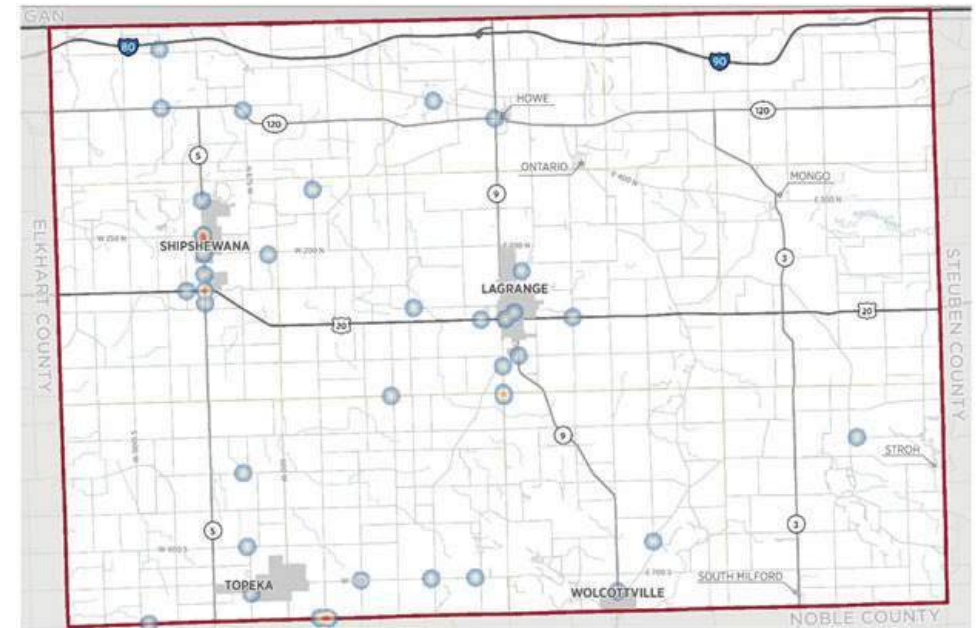
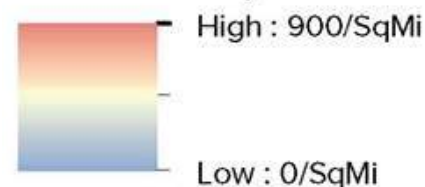


FIGURE 2.3: BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CRASHES IN LAGRANGE COUNTY

Map Source: LaGrange County Together Comprehensive Plan

Crash Density



LAND

TOPOGRAPHY

LaGrange County is relatively flat with few elevation changes. The highest point in the county is the Knob Hill at 1,051 feet or 320 meters. Elevation is generally highest in the southeast corner of the county and lowest in the northwest corner, although the difference is within a few hundred feet. Where the elevation is lowest, lakes and ponds have filled the depressed land.

NATURAL RESOURCES

LaGrange County is rich with lakes and ponds. There are 14 main lakes in the county that provide residents and visitors with year-round recreation, such as swimming, fishing, skiing, boating, kayaking, and canoing. The largest lakes include Oliver Lake (500 acres), Big Long Lake (365 acres), Adams Lake (303 acres), Dallas Lake (283 acres), Witmer Lake (204 acres), and Shipshewana Lake (202 acres).

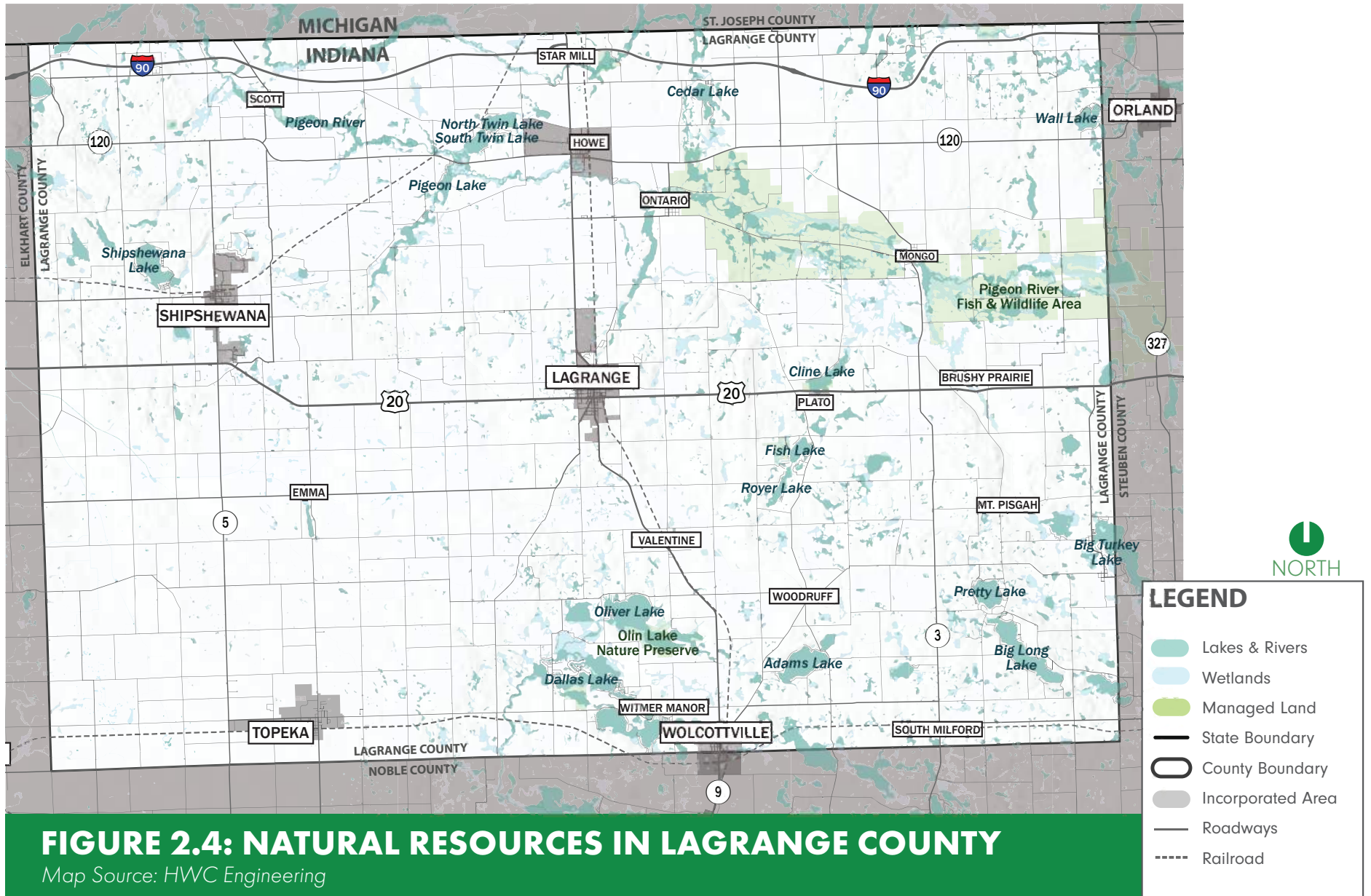
LaGrange County is home to the Pigeon River and a small portion of the Fawn River. The Pigeon River originates around Mongo and flows west-northwest to the St. Joseph River. Located along the Pigeon River, the Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Area is a 12,000-acre protected area dedicated to providing hunting and fishing opportunities. The fish and wildlife area contains Tamarack Bog Nature Preserve, a 150-acre wetland designated as a National Natural Landmark.

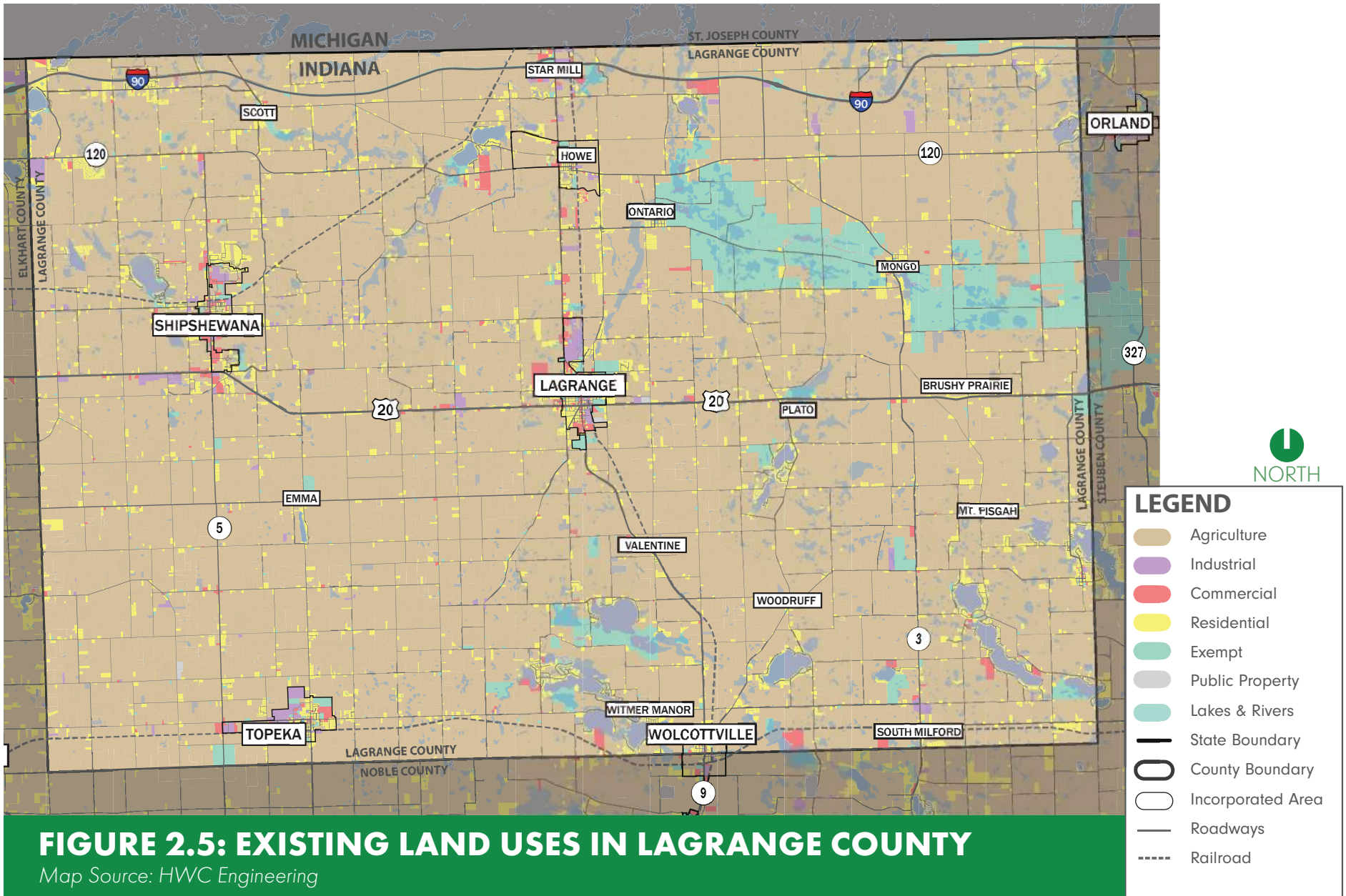
Figure 2.4 shows the distribution of natural resources in LaGrange County.

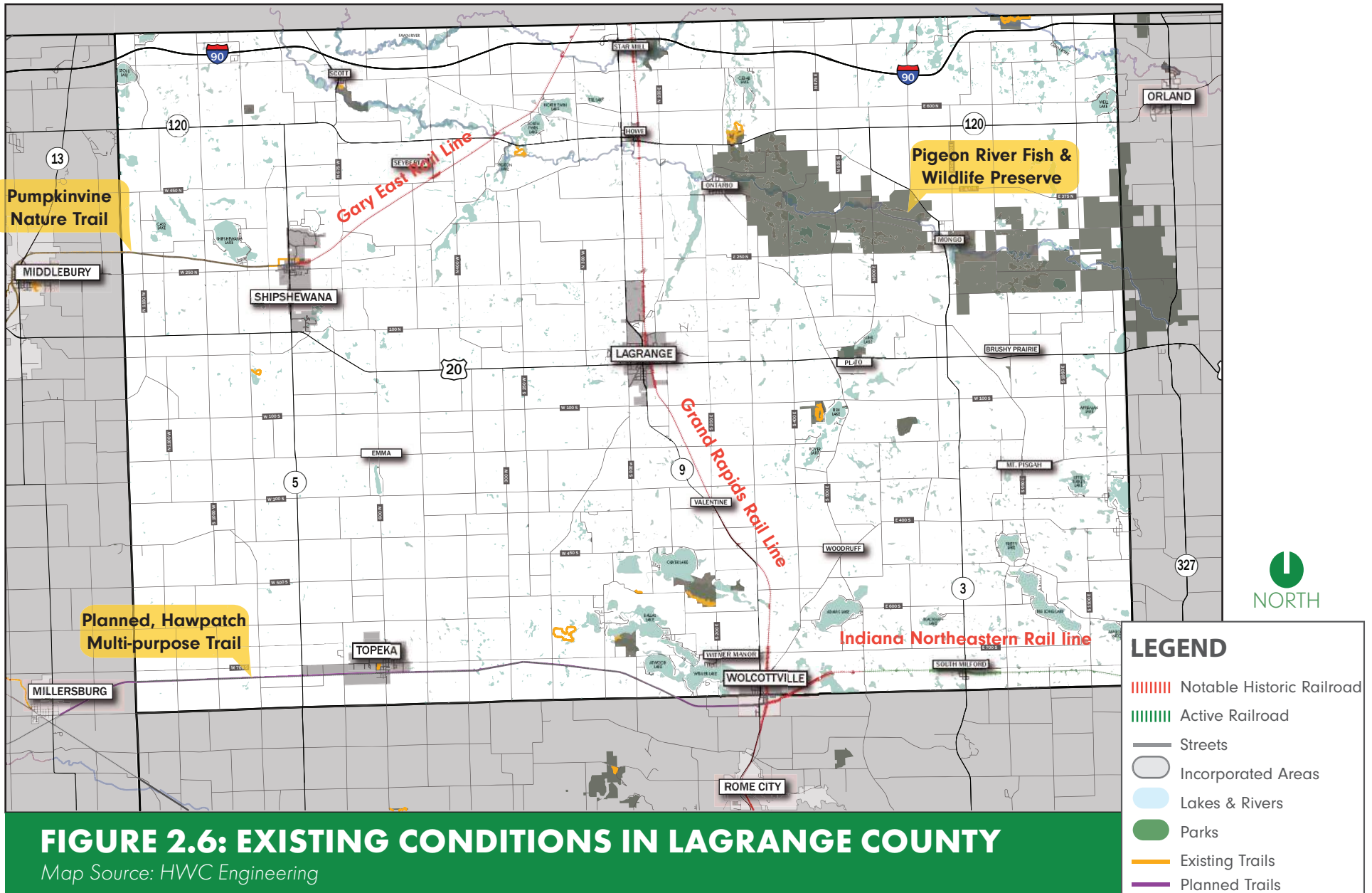
LAND USE PATTERNS

Agriculture is the dominant land use in LaGrange County, especially outside of incorporated areas. Given the county's rural character and large Amish population, this is to be expected. After agriculture, the most common land use is 'exempt,' which refers to tax-exempt property owned by the government, schools, churches, and non-profit organizations. Northeast LaGrange County along the Pigeon River is largely classified as exempt since the land is owned and managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Other land uses in the county include residential, commercial, and industrial. These uses are primarily concentrated around incorporated areas and Census-designated places, although there is also a fair amount of residential development along county roads around lakes. The least common land use is 'public property,' which includes electrical, gas, water, and wastewater utilities. This land use often occupies small parcels near populated areas.

Figure 2.5 shows the distribution of existing land uses in LaGrange County.









COUNTY CONTEXT

KEY DESTINATIONS AND SCHOOLS

- 1 Shpshewana Trading Place Flea Market
- 2 Shpshewana Trading Place Auction
- 3 Farmstead Inn and Conference Center
- 4 Blue Gate Performing Arts Center
- 5 Michiana Event Center
- 6 Shpshewana Visitors Center
- 7 Heron Creek Golf Course
- 8 Duff Nature Preserve
- 9 Cedar Lake Golf Course
- 10 David Rogers Memorial Park
- 11 Delt Church Park
- 12 Topeka Livestock Auction
- 13 Trading Post Outfitters
-  Amish School Houses
-  Public Schools



Topeka Live Stock Auction
Image Source: HWC Engineering



Trading Post outfitters, Mongo Indiana
Image Source: Tripadvisor.com

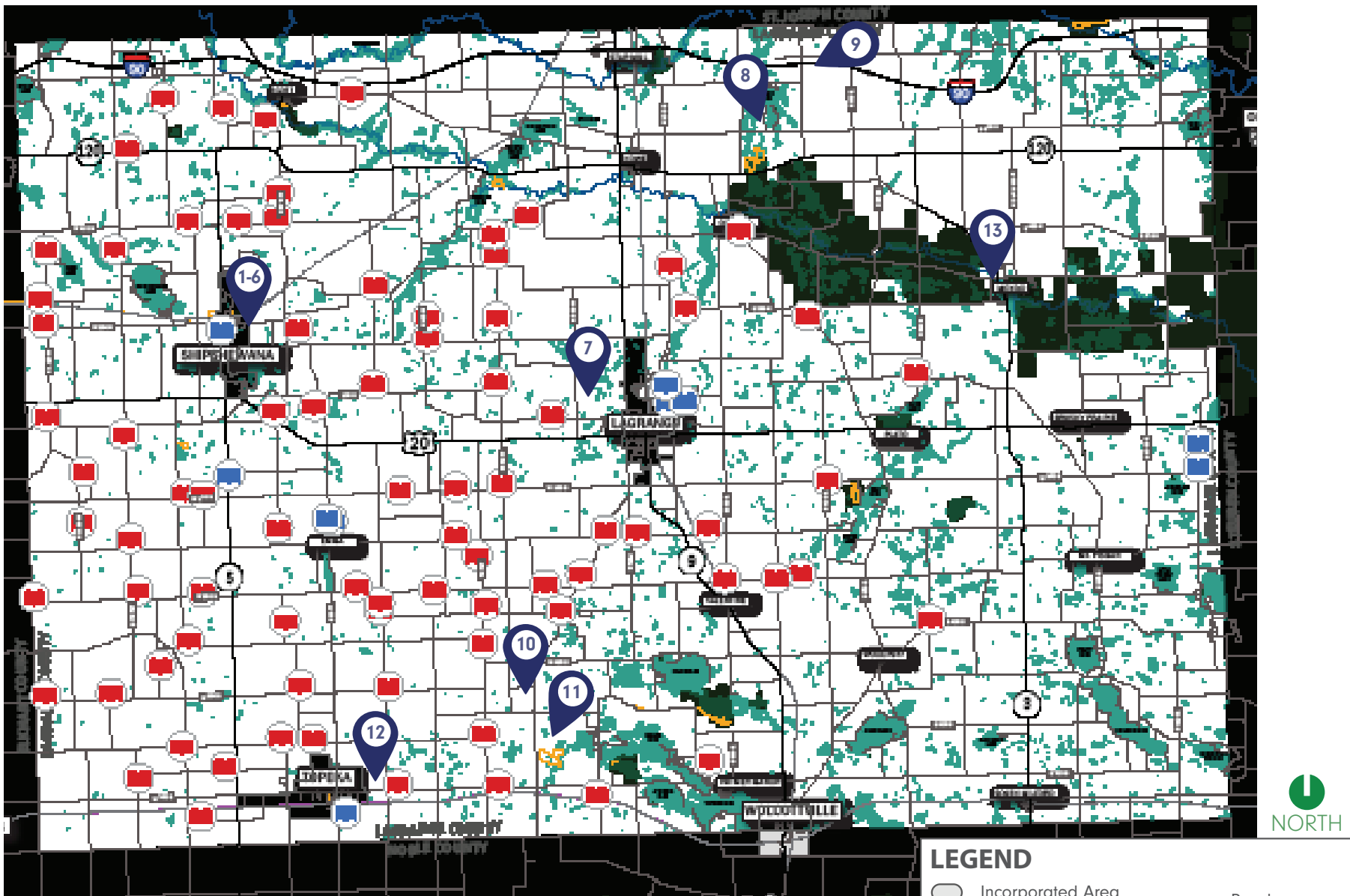


FIGURE 2.7: KEY DESTINATIONS AND SCHOOLS

Map Source: HWC Engineering

COUNTY CONTEXT

PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

- 1 Scott Mill Pond Public Fishing Area
- 2 Shishewana Town Park
- 3 Emma Lake Public Access Site
- 4 Oliver Lake Public Access Site
- 5 Olin Lake Nature Preserve
- 6 Dallas Lake Park
- 7 Grass Lake Closed Nature Preserve
- 8 Maple Wood Nature Center and Lagrange County Nature Preserve
- 9 Fish Lake Public Access Site
- 10 Cline Lake Fen
- 11 Turkey Creek Wetland Conservation Area
- 12 Appleman Lake Public Access Site
- 13 Little Turkey Lake Public Access Site
- 14 Big Turkey Lake Public Access Site
- 15 Pretty Lake Public Access Site
- 16 Big Long Lake Public Access Site
- 17 Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Area
- 18 Pine Knob Park

19 Fawn River Fen Nature Preserve

20 Fawn River Nature Preserve

 Private Campgrounds

 Kayak Launch



David Rogers Memorial Park
Image Source: HWC Engineering

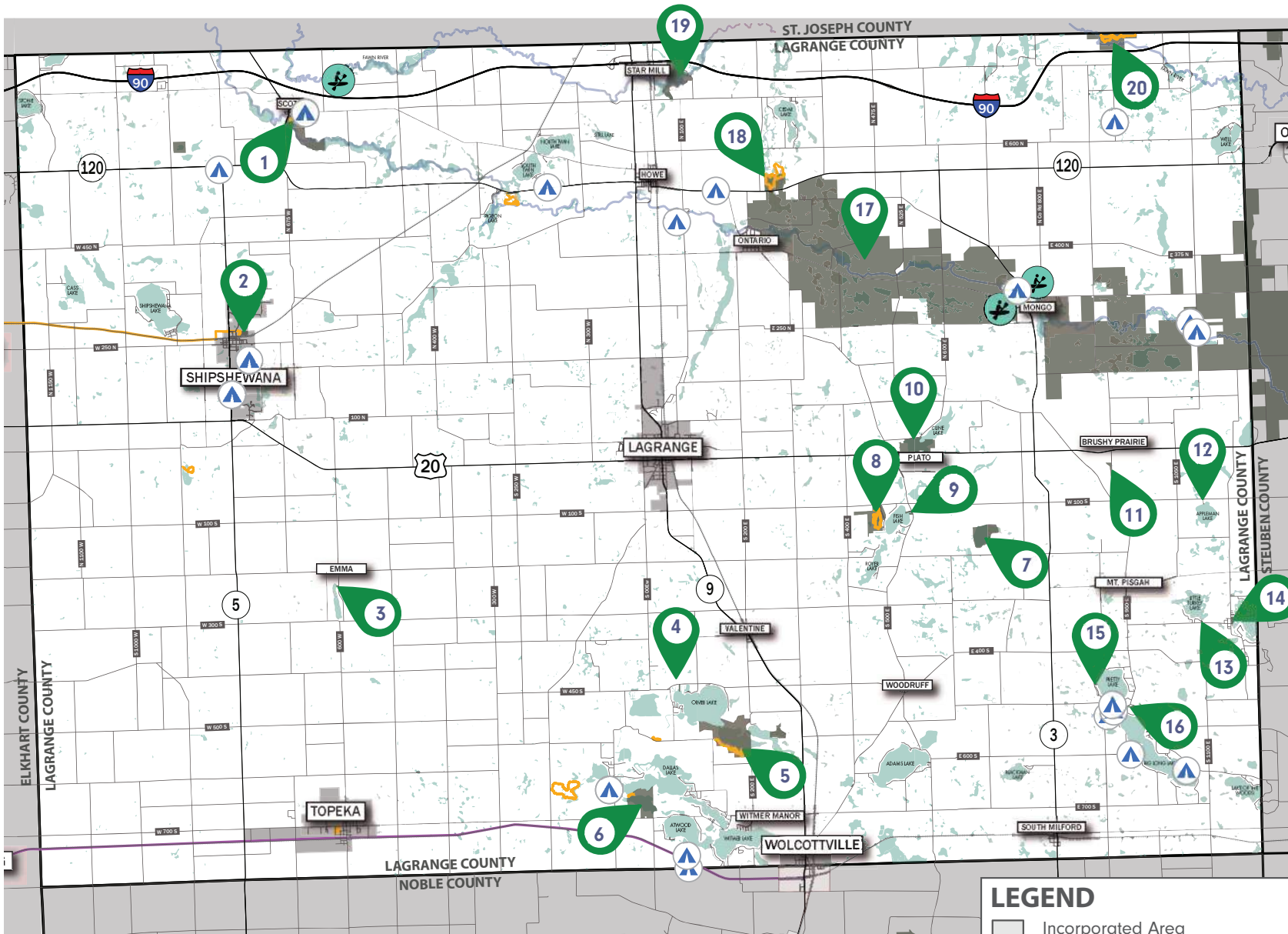


FIGURE 2.8: PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Map Source: HWC Engineering

LEGEND

- Incorporated Area
- County Limits
- DNR Managed Lands
- Lakes & Rivers
- Roads
- Railroads
- Existing Trails
- Planned Trails



Proposed Hawpatch Trail

Image Source: LaGrange County Economic Development Corporation

NORTHEAST INDIANA UNITED TRAILS PLAN

The Northeast Indiana United Trails Plan (NIUTP) was developed in 2002, guided by the efforts of Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC), an organization that conducts bicycle and pedestrian planning throughout the northeastern corner of the state. The NIUTP envisioned trail routes throughout several counties including Steuben, LaGrange, DeKalb and Noble counties. The council identified two trails planned to run through LaGrange County, which are as follows:

REGIONAL PRIORITY TRAILS

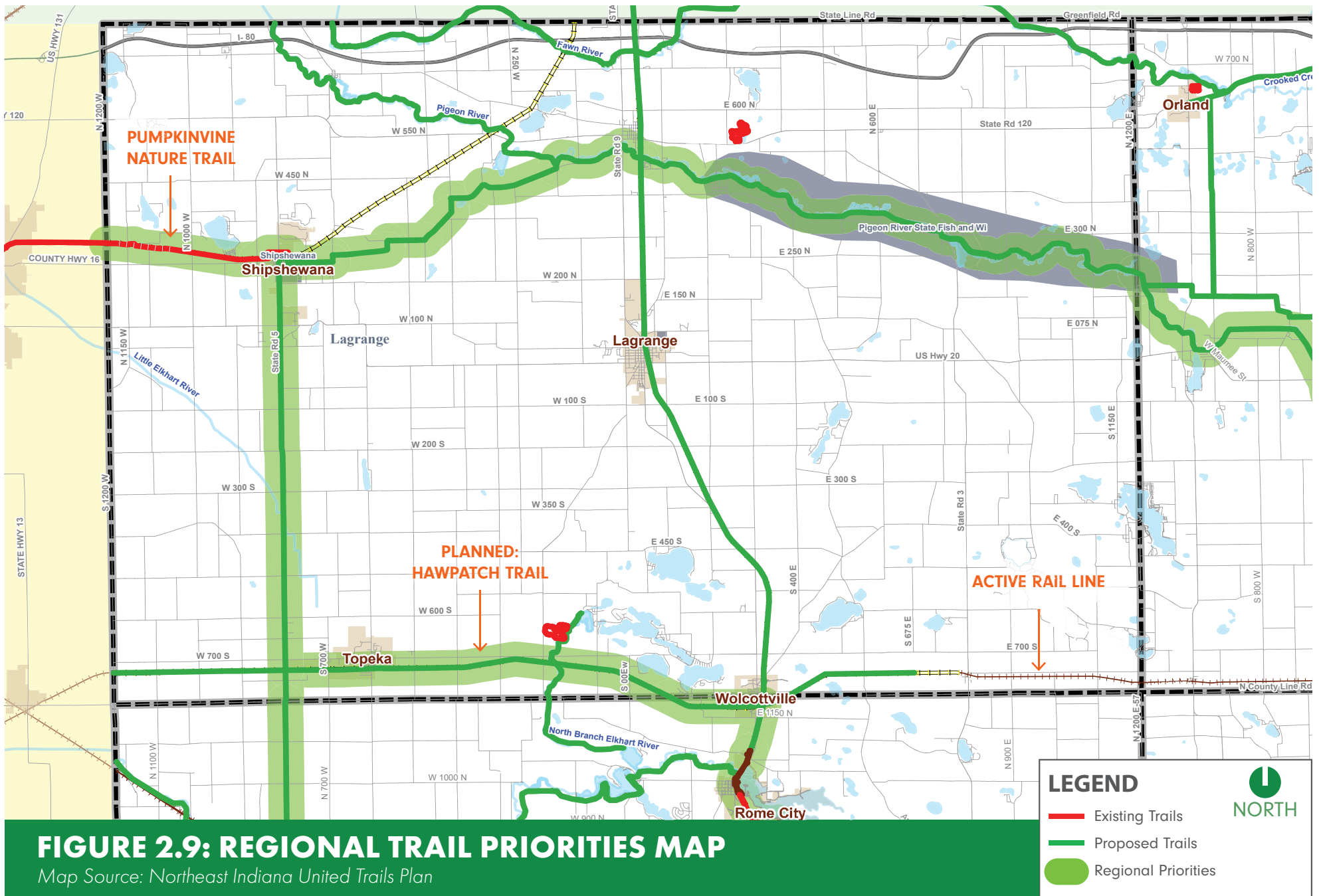
- ▶ Pumpkinvine Trail: NIUTP highlights this existing trail as a regional priority and proposes that it continues northeast to Howe then southeast through Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Preserve into Steuben County.
- ▶ Hawpatch Trail: This is a planned trailway in progress. NIUTP proposed a route coming from Elkhart east along an abandoned rail easement into Topeka and dropping southward into Wolcottville.

This plan was used as a starting point for this effort. Throughout the planning process the public highlighted many alterations to this plan along with additional routes to consider.



Pumpkinvine Nature Trail

Image Source: HWC Engineering



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CHAPTER 03

PLANNING PROCESS

LaGrange County's long-standing tourism industry attracts visitors from across the country. Tourists often begin with the traditional attractions in Shippshewana, but are eager to explore the entire county, including places like Mongo and the Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Area. Furthermore, the population of LaGrange County is nearly 50% Amish. These residents rely on non-vehicular modes of transportation, primarily buggies and bicycles, to get from place to place. Consequently, through community engagement and outreach, it became clear that there are two fundamental needs for trail improvements in the county:

- ▶ **Trails for recreation**
- ▶ **Trails for primary transportation**

Community engagement and outreach are crucial for development, maintenance, and expansion of the local trails system. It is important to involve the public to understand the needs of residents and businesses, and to gain support for implementing the plan's recommendations. The initial round of community engagement efforts included in-person open houses and a series of stakeholder meetings, gathering input from a total of 77 participants.



First Stakeholder Meeting
Image Source: HWC Engineering

IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT

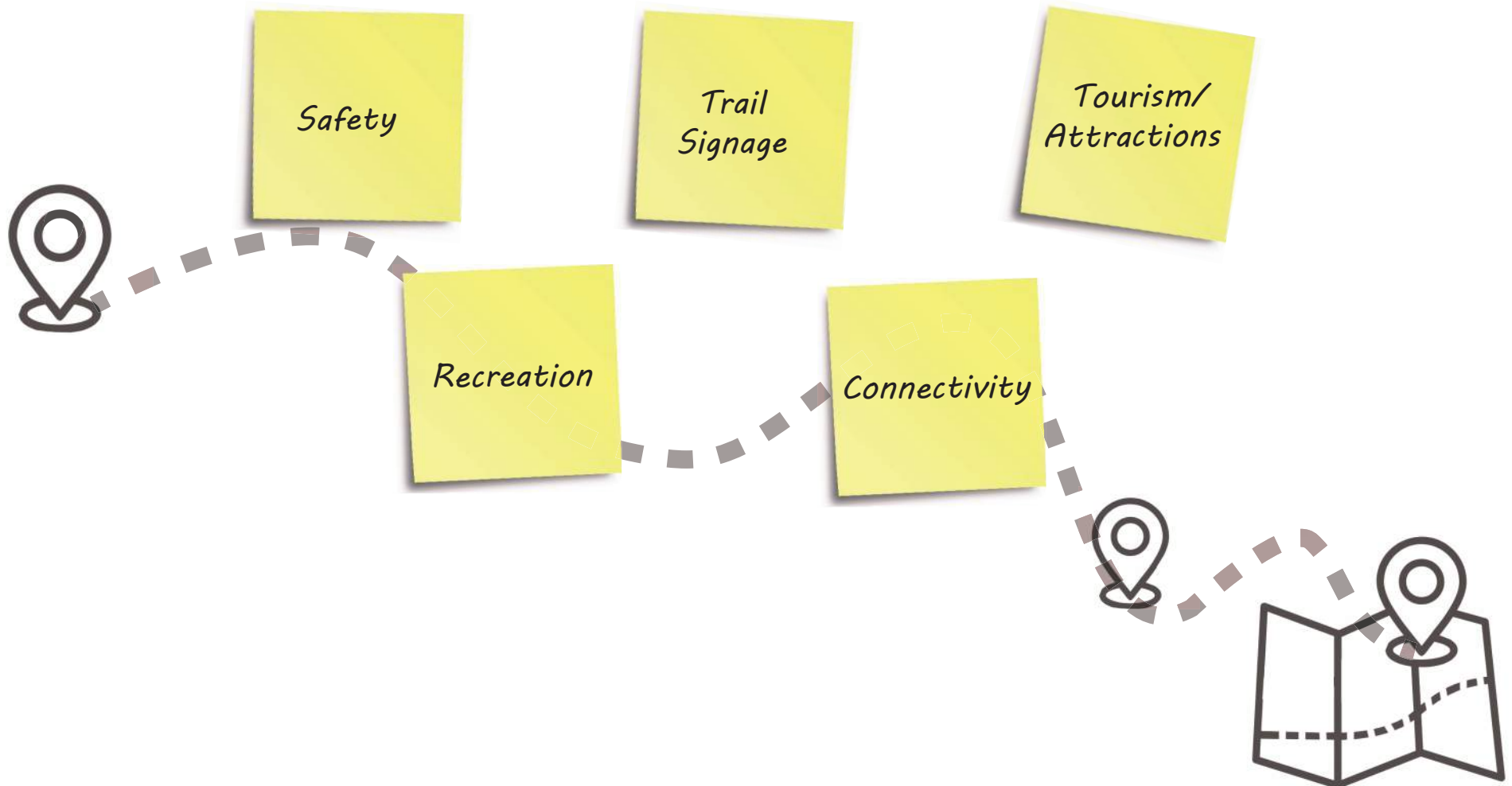
STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee led the public engagement process. The committee is comprised of 15-members representing vital organizations in LaGrange:

- ▶ **Jeff Wingstrom**, LaGrange County Trails President
- ▶ **Marilyn Wingstrom**, LaGrange County Trails Board Member
- ▶ **Leanna Martin**, LaGrange County Community Foundation, Program Director
- ▶ **Octavia Yoder**, LaGrange County Community Foundation, Executive Director
- ▶ **Terry Martin**, LaGrange County Commissioner & Shippshewana Town Manager
- ▶ **Sherri Johnston**, LaGrange County Economic Development Corporation President/CEO
- ▶ **Sara Patrick**, LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director
- ▶ **Sonya Nash**, LaGrange County Convention & Visitors Bureau Executive Director
- ▶ **Mary Franke**, LaGrange County Department of Parks & Recreation Director
- ▶ **Jeff Brill**, LaGrange County Council
- ▶ **Mark Eagleson**, LaGrange Town Manager
- ▶ **Stewart Bender**, Topeka Town Manager
- ▶ **Steve Cords**, Wolcottville Council Member
- ▶ **Dan Fry**, Amish Safety Committee Member



The committee's role is to guide/steer the planning process, publicize public engagement, provide feedback on materials, be an advocate for the plan, and identify key stakeholders. During the first Steering Committee meeting on June 04, 2024, the Steering Committee identified their desire for the plan to address the following topics:



STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

A series of stakeholder meetings were hosted by the LaGrange County Community Foundation on July 25th and August 6th, 2024. Eighteen stakeholders participated from a cross section of county residents. Meetings focused on reviewing existing conditions (i.e., what is working and should be replicated and what continues to pose a challenge for LaGrange County). Following this discussion, groups completed a mapping exercise to identify opportunities, barriers, and preferences for trail locations and points of interest. Stakeholders were also asked to answer the following questions:

- ▶ **What destinations would you want to connect with a trail?**
- ▶ **What roadways are too busy for bicycle traffic?**
- ▶ **What routes are currently used the most and why?**
- ▶ **Which intersections are of concern for pedestrian traffic?**



First Stakeholder Meeting
Image Source: HWC Engineering

Stakeholder meetings made it clear that public safety is the community's biggest concern. A single trail through the county will not address the needs of residents who regularly bike to work and school. Implementing multiple trail types and improving bicycle awareness will be key in establishing a safe biking community.

The following chart provides an overview of the key topics that emerged from stakeholder meetings. Each topic is summarized in the chart, and special considerations are included to help inform the plan's recommendations.



First Stakeholder Meeting
Image Source: HWC Engineering

| KEY TOPICS | SUMMARY/CONSIDERATIONS |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| PUBLIC SAFETY | <p>LaGrange County has unique traffic patterns with cars, farm equipment, horse-drawn buggies, and both adult and adolescent bicyclists sharing narrow and busy roadways. These conditions create safety hazards, leading to an increase in traffic incidents and fatalities in the region. During public engagement workshops across the county, it was evident that safety is top of mind and a high priority. Two vulnerable groups identified during public engagement included Amish school children biking to school and Amish factory workers biking to work during early morning hours.</p> <p>Considerations: Create separate routes for bicyclists and educate motorists about bike routes and safety precautions in this heavily biked community.</p> |
| CONNECTING LOCAL DESTINATIONS | <p>LaGrange County is rich with attractions, from shopping and restaurants in Shipshewana to recreation destinations in Mongo. Residents expressed great desire to establish connections across the county to these destinations and many more.</p> <p>Considerations: Establishing cross-county routes that enable connections and allow for routes to be programmed.</p> |
| Regional Connections | <p>Steuben County’s recent trails plan proposes connections on the east side of the county, along with the existing Pumpkinvine Trail, which extends west into Elkhart County. Additionally, the Fishing Line Trail runs south into Noble County. This plan has gained momentum in the region and highlighted the importance of these regional connections through LaGrange County.</p> <p>Considerations: Recognize where proposed regional connections exist and plan for future connections.</p> |
| RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES | <p>The diverse population of LaGrange County uses the roadways not only for primary transportation but also for recreation. LaGrange County is rich in natural amenities such as lakes, cultural sites, and scenic routes that attract recreational bicyclists to traverse the county. This increased use justifies establishing safe, designated routes for recreational users with the goal of reducing bicycle traffic on non-designated roadways, ultimately creating safer roadways for bicyclists and motorists.</p> <p>Considerations: Establish designated recreational bike routes and provide motorists with educational signage and awareness policies to increase safety.</p> |
| TOURISM | <p>Establishing regional and local connections will boost tourism in the county. To maximize the appeal of these connections, trails and routes should include key amenities, such as signage, furnishings, and public restrooms.</p> <p>Considerations: Develop a furnishing package and wayfinding signage that gives each trail a unique identity and appropriate level of finish based on the trail’s character.</p> |

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Three public workshops were hosted countywide in LaGrange (21 residents attended), Shipshewana (17 residents attended), and Mongo (29 residents attended). Upon arriving to the workshop, residents were guided through a series of interactive boards. Each board provided an opportunity to leave comments and select preferences on trail typologies, amenities, and routes, and to provide any additional comments. HWC staff interacted with the public to answer questions and provide guidance on the purpose and process of the meeting.

Public Workshop Preference Exercise

Overall, there is a desire for more trails in LaGrange County. Two types of trail users were identified: one group uses the trails for recreation, while the other relies on it as their primary mode of transportation. The southwest portion of the county was identified as needing trails for transportation to local schools and employment, while the east portion of the county was identified as needing trails for recreation. User safety was identified as a top priority, as evidenced in participant's preference for a separated bicycle trail from vehicular traffic. The cost to install and maintain the trails was identified as a top concern, but elements such as directional signage and restrooms, were highly preferred.

The following pages show the tabulated results from all three workshops.

We need your input!

A county wide trails plan is underway...

Join us for an open house

Join us at any of these **3 OPEN HOUSES** around **LaGrange County!**

- 1 When: July 25th 6:00–8:00 pm**
Where: The Garage Community Center, 111 W Lafayette St. Lagrange, IN 46761
- 2 When: August 6th 3:00–5:00 pm**
Where: Wolfe Community Building, 345 Morton St. Shipshewana, IN 46565
- 3 When: August 6th 6:00–8:00 pm**
Where: Mongo United Methodist Church, 325 N State Rd. 3 Mongo, IN 46771

HWC ENGINEERING
FOR OFFICIAL CONTACT:
JENNIFER BARCLAY
PROJECT MANAGER
260-474-5582

LaGrange County Trails

See you there!!

Feel free to come and go as you please during these open house style meetings!

Public Advertisement to LaGrange County Trails Master Plan Workshops
Image Source: HWC Engineering

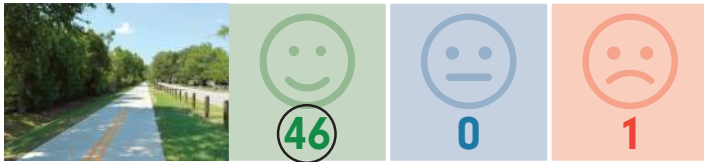


Public Workshops
Image Source: HWC Engineering

What facilities are desired as LaGrange County's trail network grows?



SIDEWALK



GREENWAY MULTI-USE OR SIDE PATH



WIDE SHOULDER



SHARROW



BIKE LANE

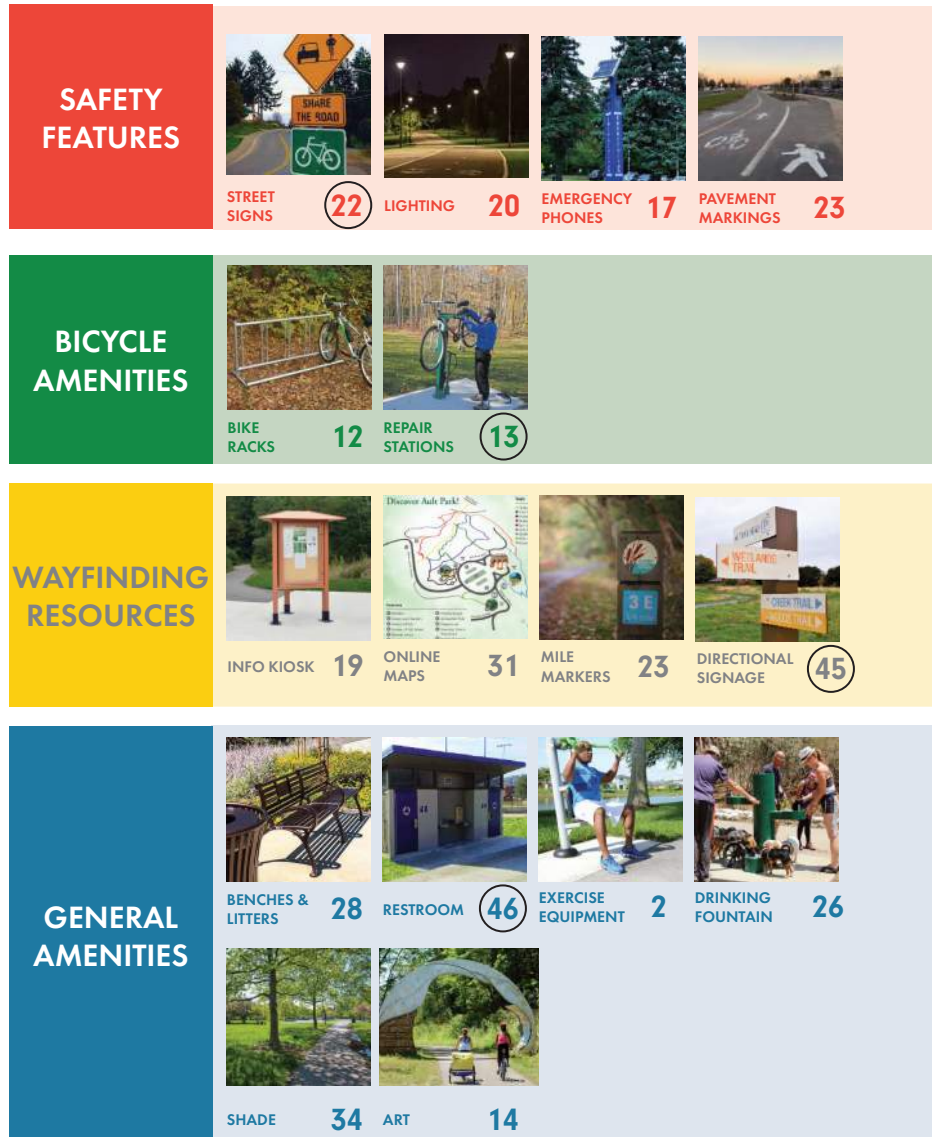


SIGNED BICYCLE ROUTE

What type of user are you?



What trail elements are desired as LaGrange County trail network grows?



What type of programming is desired as LaGrange County trail network grows?



| ADDITIONAL COMMENTS & THOUGHTS | |
|--|---|
| CONNECTIONS | Establish a north/south connector from Pumpkinvine Nature Trail to planned Hawpatch Trail |
| | Connect Pumpkinvine Nature Trail to the Town of Howe |
| | Connect to existing Pumpkinvine & Fishing Line Trails |
| | Connections to north/south Twin Lakes |
| | Connect campgrounds & attractions |
| | Ice cream tour/bike route |
| | Connect to surrounding counties |
| | Connect town of LaGrange to Delt Church, Dallas Lake, David Rogers Park |
| | Trails around lakes |
| | Connect the trails to county parks |
| | Connect Town of Howe to Pine Knob County Park |
| | Add sidewalks/ bike paths for safe access to schools |
| | ELEMENTS |
| Include Pigeon River Fish & Wildlife Preserve paved trails | |
| Include safety elements | |
| Establish roadside berms to ride safely along county roads | |
| KEY ROUTES | S 500 East |
| | S 1000 West |
| | W 600 South (could use a side trail for school bikes) |
| OTHER | Endowment for trail maintenance |
| | Consider bike routes with more elevation change for recreational users |
| | Remove tree roots before paving |
| | Establish a LaGrange county park and trails passport |
| | Establish shade along trails |



BIG IDEAS OPEN HOUSE

On September 26th, 2024, a Big Ideas Open House was hosted for the public to attend. Preliminary vision and goals were presented for feedback. The preliminary vision and goals were a compilation of feedback received from the previous public workshops and stakeholder meetings. The community provided feedback gathered was in general agreement with the preliminary vision, priorities, routes, and trail typologies.



Big Ideas Open House
Image Source: HWC Engineering

WE HAVE A BIG IDEA!

THANKS TO YOUR INPUT!



Join us for an open house

We listened to your input and would like to invite YOU to our BIG IDEA open house! We will present preliminary concepts for LaGrange County Master Trails Plan. We look forward to receiving a second round of feedback to refine the future of Lagrange County Trails!

When: September 26th 6:00–8:00 pm
Where: LaGrange County 4-H Fair
 Community Building
 1030 E 075 N Lagrange, IN 46761



See you there!
Feel free to come and go as you please during these open house style meetings!

FOR QUESTIONS CONTACT
 JENNIFER BARCLAY, PROJECT MANAGER
 260-475-5092



Public Advertisement for Big Ideas Open House
Image Source: HWC Engineering

TOP PRIORITIES

SAFETY



Develop a network of secure and accessible routes that meet the diverse needs of all users, fostering a more inclusive and active community.



RECREATION



Design a variety of trails that cater to different interests and skill levels, providing an engaging experience that promotes a vibrant outdoor culture and encourages everyone to explore and enjoy the natural landscape.



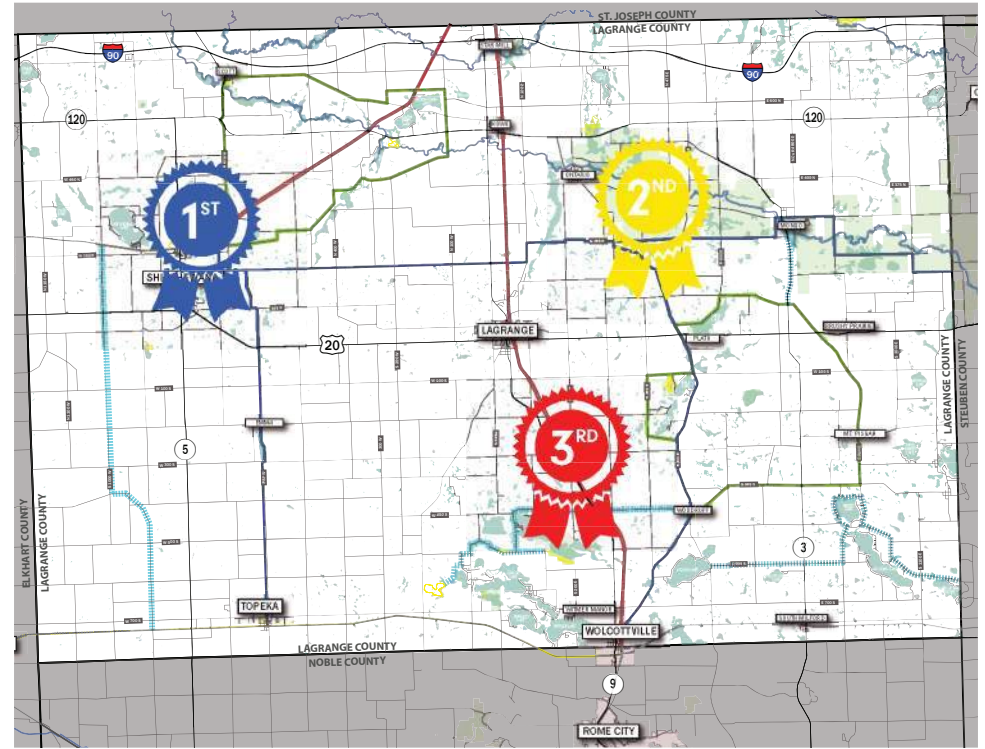
TRANSPORTATION



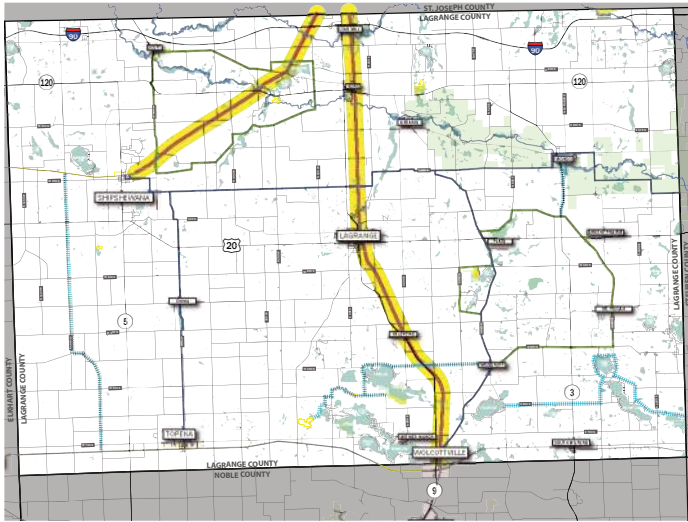
Establish a comprehensive network of safe trails that serve as essential transportation corridors. By strategically connecting key areas, we will enhance accessibility for residents who rely on trails as their primary mode of transportation.



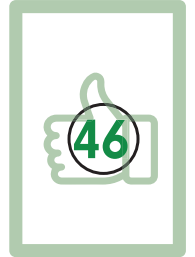
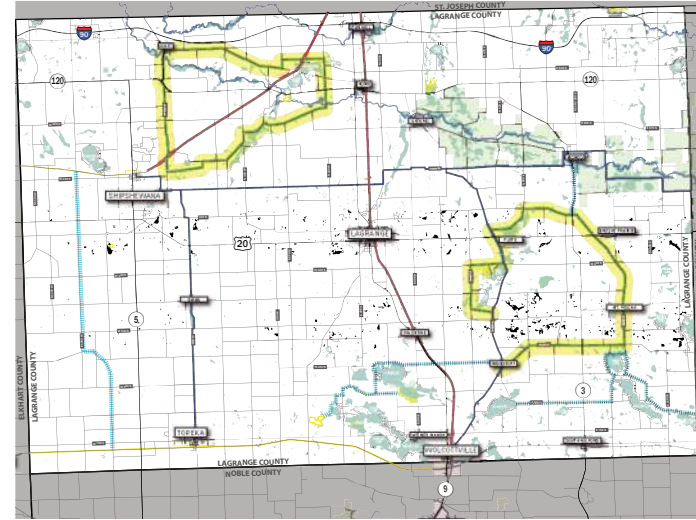
Which trails are top priority?



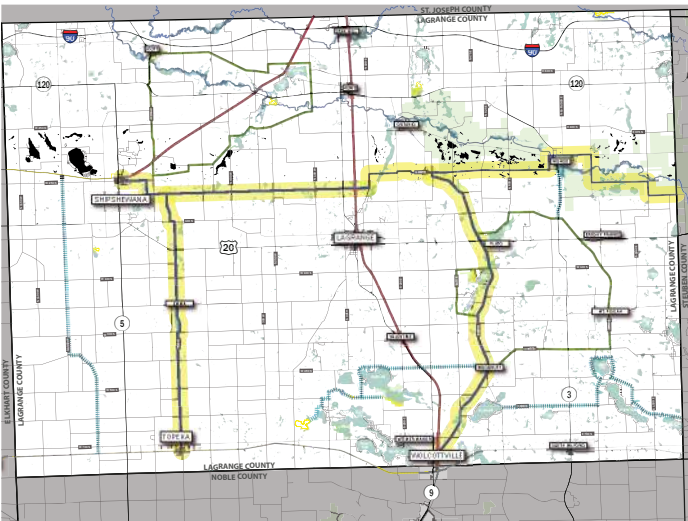
Do you agree with this route & trail type?



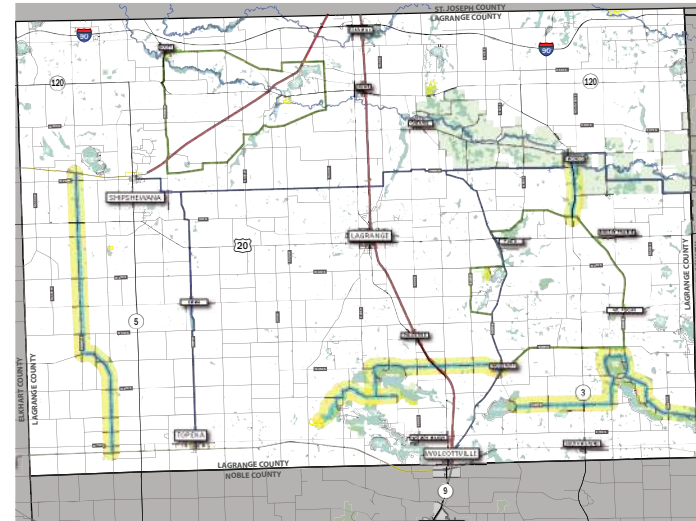
DO YOU **AGREE** OR **DISAGREE** WITH THIS ROUTE?
PICK UP A MARKER & DRAW YOUR CORRECTIONS!



DO YOU **AGREE** OR **DISAGREE** WITH THIS ROUTE?
PICK UP A MARKER & DRAW YOUR CORRECTIONS!



DO YOU **AGREE** OR **DISAGREE** WITH THIS ROUTE?
PICK UP A MARKER & DRAW YOUR CORRECTIONS!



DO YOU **AGREE** OR **DISAGREE** WITH THIS ROUTE?
PICK UP A MARKER & DRAW YOUR CORRECTIONS!

Which program would you be interested in?

40
PLACE STICKER HERE

60
PLACE STICKER HERE

17
PLACE STICKER HERE

38
PLACE STICKER HERE

FARM-STAND TOUR

ICE CREAM TOUR

CAMPGROUND TOUR

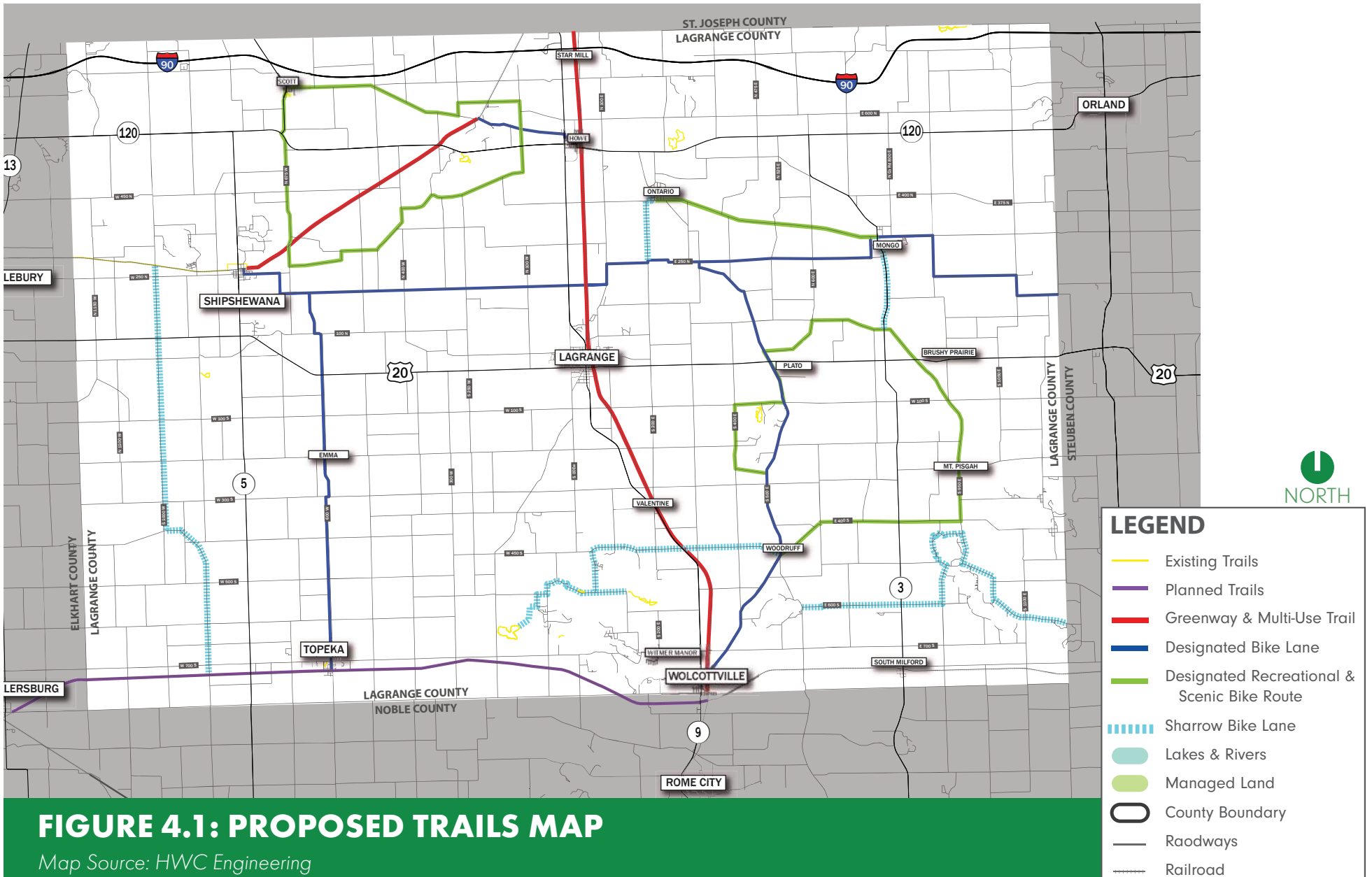
BARN QUILT TOUR

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CHAPTER 04

TRAIL MASTER PLAN MAP

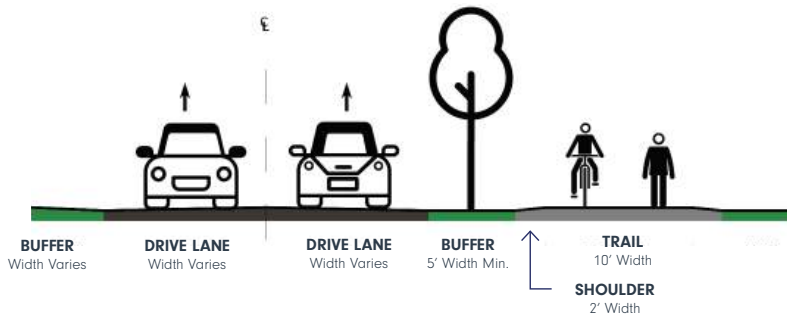


TRAIL LOCATIONS AND CONNECTIONS

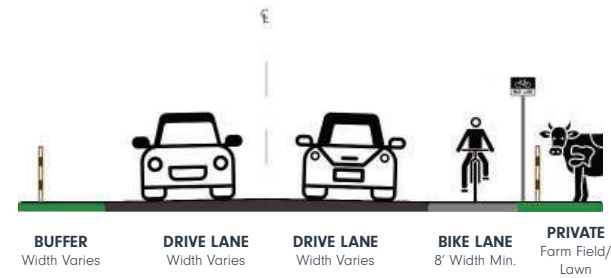
Public engagement has shown that a single trail through LaGrange County will not adequately address the safety concerns of residents who bike to work and school. To create a safe biking community, it is essential to implement multiple types of trails and enhance bicycle awareness. **In-depth descriptions and guidelines for trail typologies can be found in Chapter 7.** The proposed trail typologies for LaGrange County include:

Trail Sections

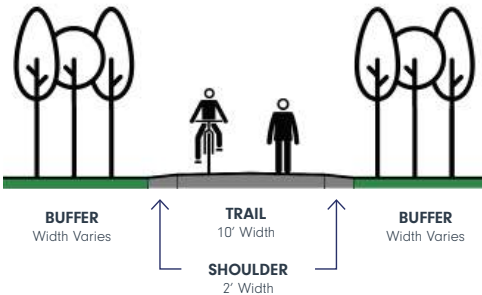
MULTI-USE TRAIL



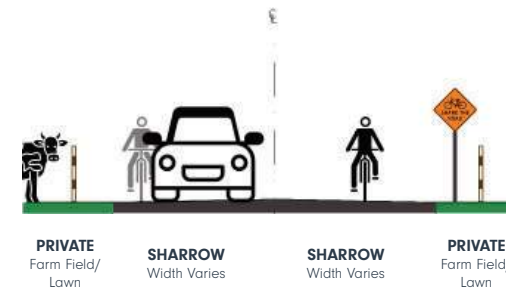
DESIGNATED BIKE LANE (2-WAY ONE SIDE OF ROADWAY)



GREENWAY



SHARROW



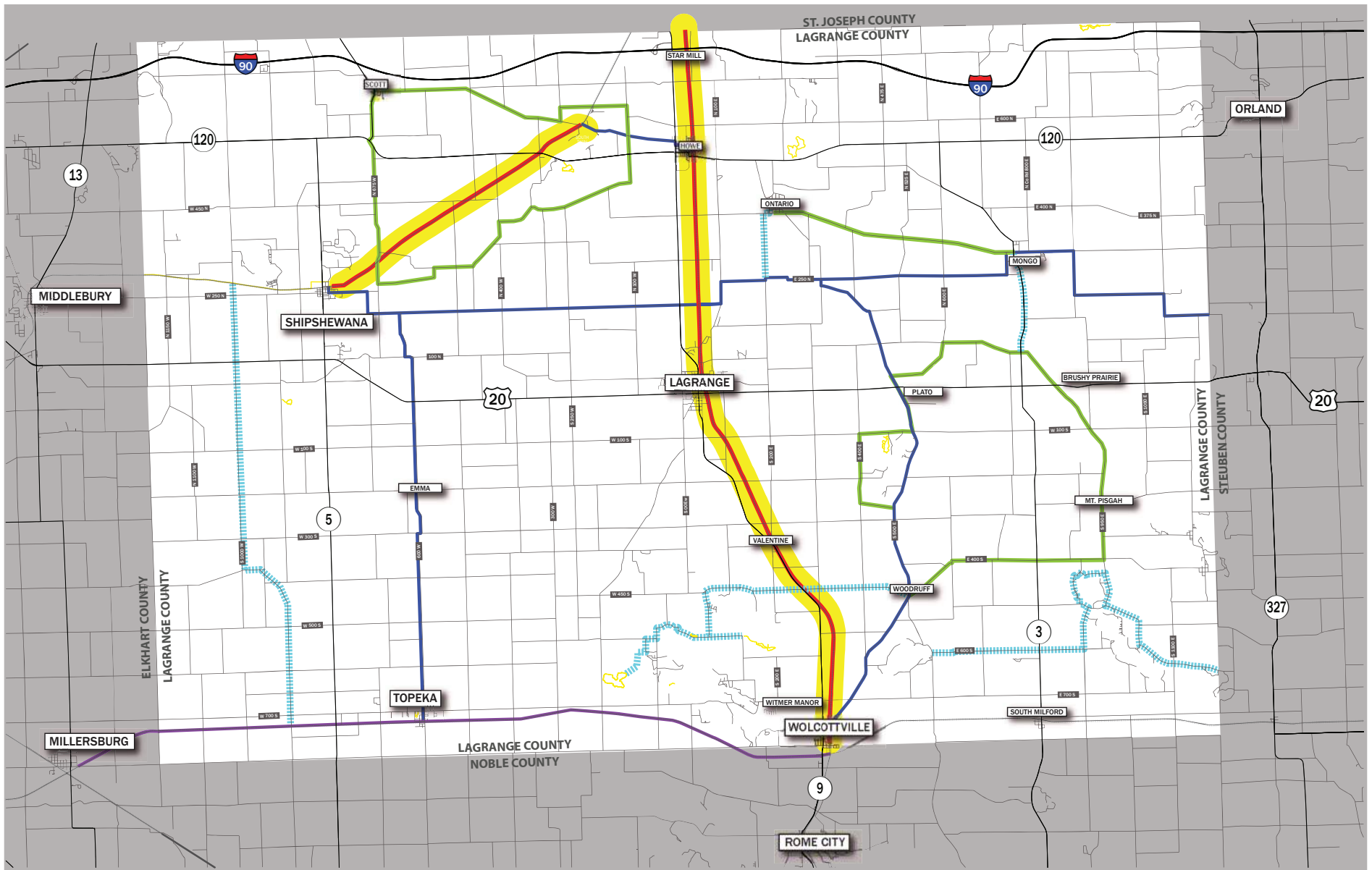


FIGURE 4.2: PROPOSED PRIMARY ROUTES MAP

Map Source: HWC Engineering

PRIMARY ROUTES:

GREENWAYS

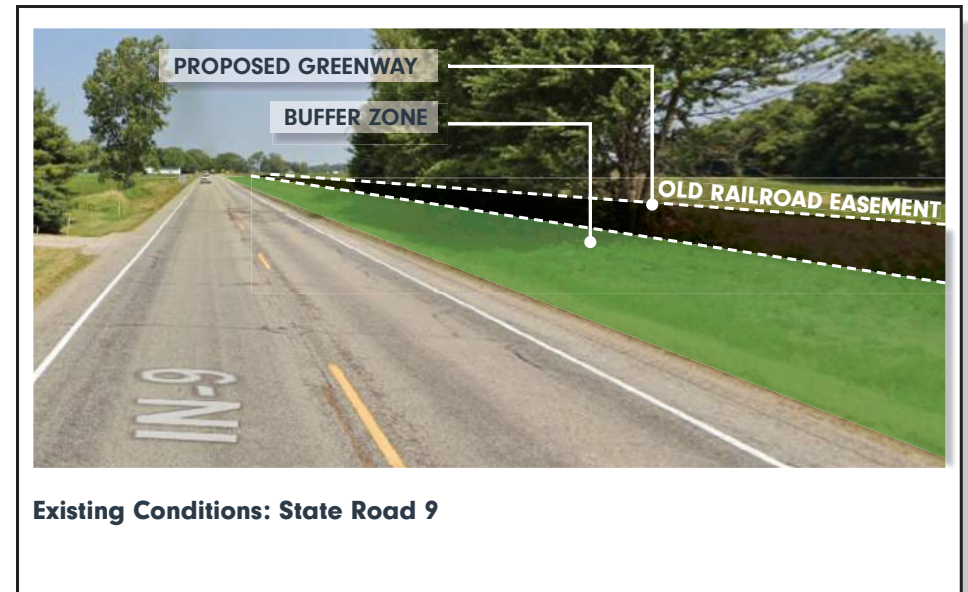
Greenways emerged as the most desired trail type during public engagement due to their safe, vehicle-free pathways. However, their development requires significant land acquisition, which can be complex. In LaGrange County, proposed greenways will utilize former railway rights-of-way, some of which have been sold to adjacent property owners, necessitating careful planning.

Fortunately, the county has two abandoned rail lines—the Gary East Rail Line (PGRV) and the Grand Rapids Rail Line (NS)—that will aid in this development. The PGRV line will be crucial in creating a primary north-south greenway connecting the Fishing Line Trail in Wolcottville to LaGrange, ultimately linking to Sturgis, Michigan.

Key points supporting the proposed greenway development in LaGrange County include:

- ▶ Utilizing Existing Infrastructure: Establishing greenways along former rail lines is a familiar approach in both the state and region.
- ▶ Regional Priority: The Northeast Indiana United Trails Plan identifies a north-south connection as a significant regional priority.
- ▶ Community Connectivity: The proposed north-south trail will link the Fishing Line Trail in Wolcottville to Sturgis, Michigan, enhancing access for residents and visitors.
- ▶ Building on Success: A secondary route from Shipshewana will build on the success of the Pumpkinvine Trail, extending northeast and promoting further connectivity.

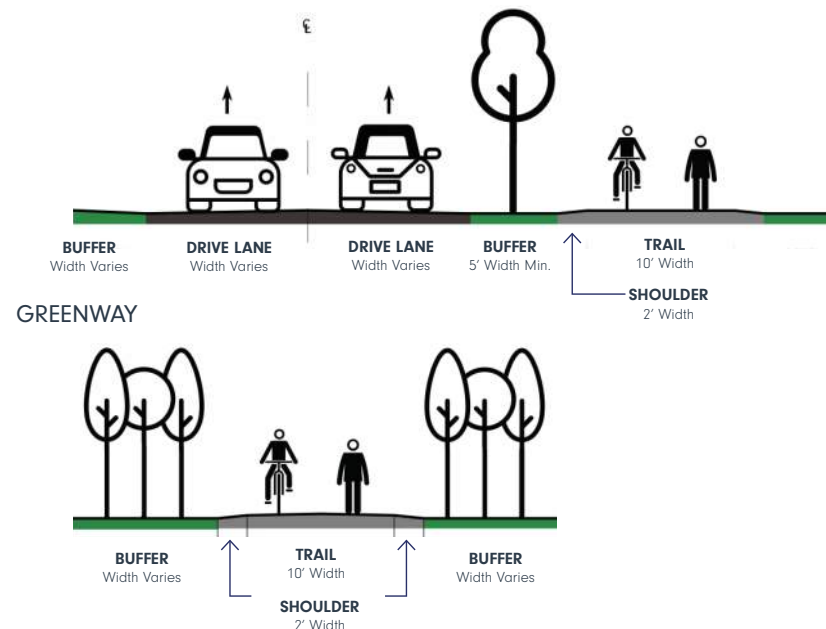
These points emphasize the importance of greenway development in enhancing transportation, recreation, and community connections within LaGrange County.



Existing Conditions: State Road 9

Trail Character

MULTI-USE TRAIL



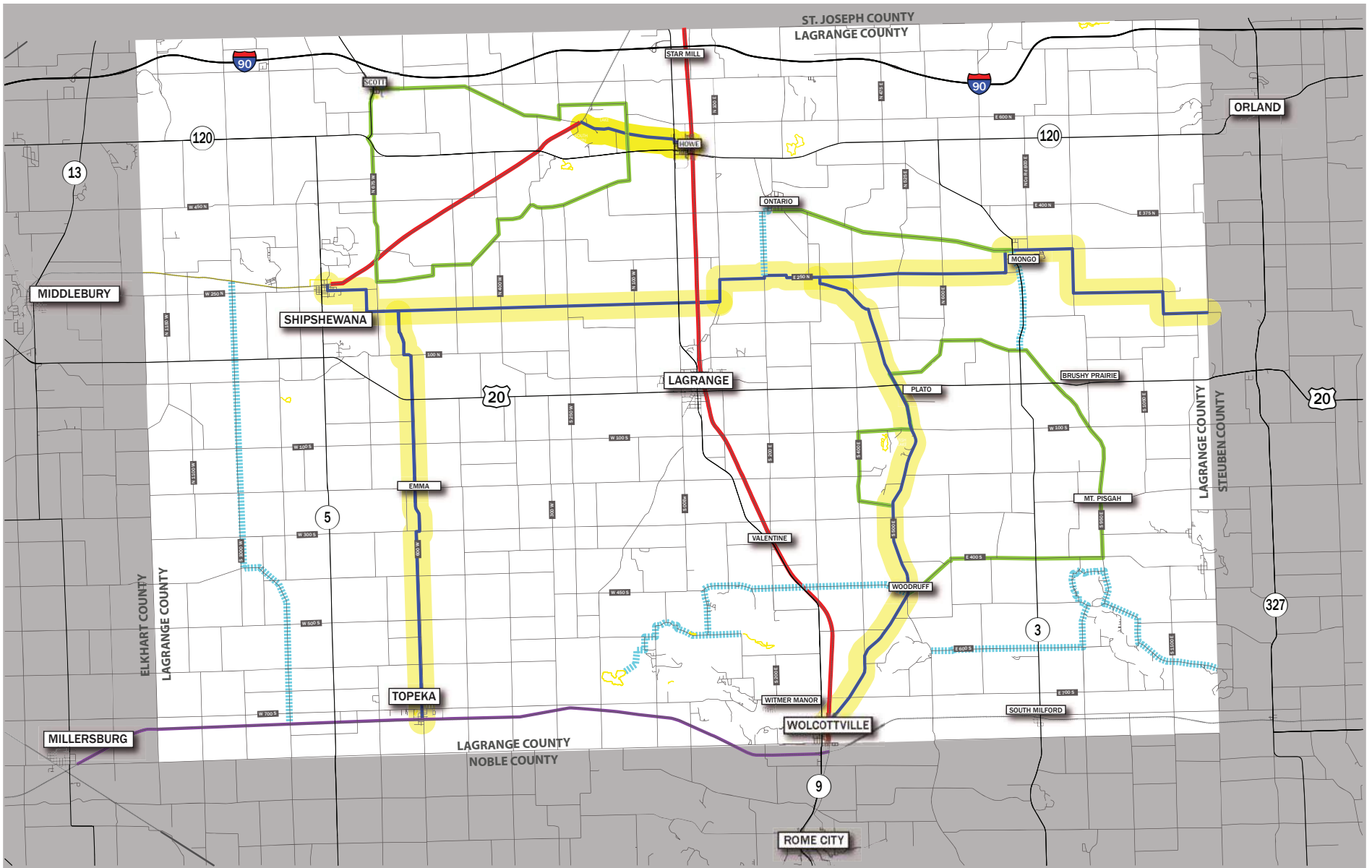


FIGURE 4.3: PROPOSED SECONDARY ROUTES MAP

Map Source: HWC Engineering

SECONDARY ROUTES: DESIGNATED BIKE LANES

Designated bike lanes received the second-highest ranking from the public as a preferred trail type. While there is a clear desire for a curb or a striped buffer zone between vehicular lanes and bike lanes, the narrow roads and oversized machinery in LaGrange County make this challenging. To enhance safety and awareness, establishing clearly marked bike lanes with pavement markings, signage, and effective policy enforcement is essential.

Key points supporting the development of designated bike lanes in LaGrange County include:

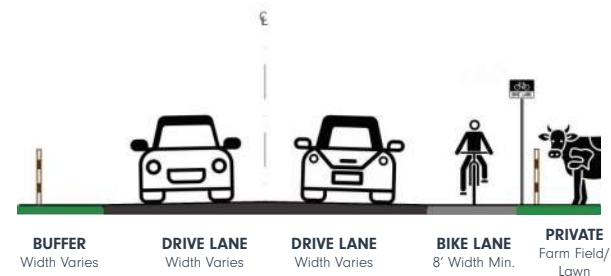
- ▶ **Cost-Effective Solution:** Designated bike lanes provide a more affordable alternative to greenways.
- ▶ **East-West Connectivity:** They will facilitate travel across the county from east to west.
- ▶ **Critical Routes:** These lanes were identified by the public as essential for factory workers and schoolchildren who bike daily.
- ▶ **Tourism Potential:** The east-west route will also serve as a key access point for driving tourism to the Pigeon River Fish & Wildlife Area and surrounding communities.



Existing Conditions: CR 200 North

Trail Character

DESIGNATED BICYCLE LANE (2-WAY ONE SIDE OF ROADWAY)



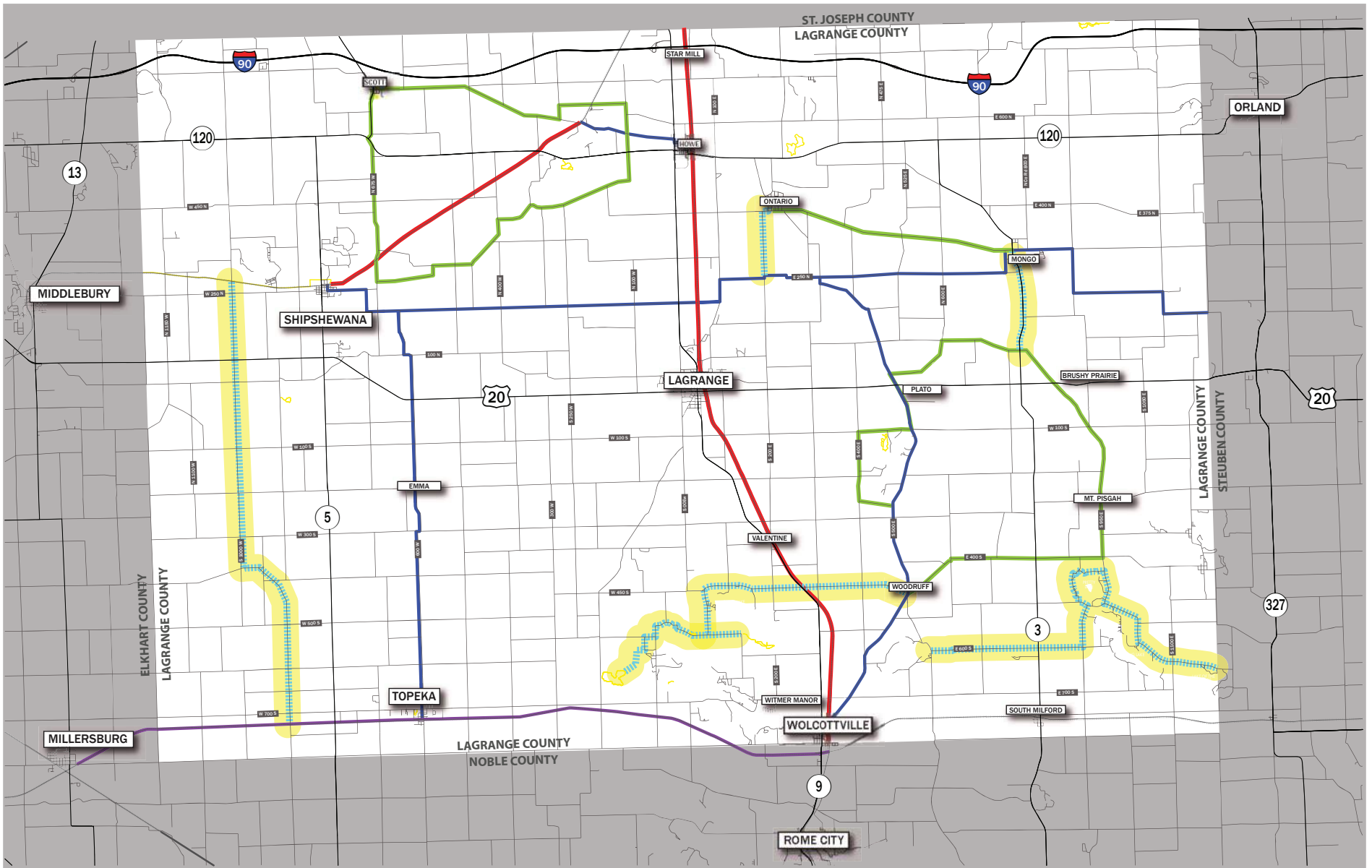


FIGURE 4.4: PROPOSED CONNECTOR ROUTES MAP

Map Source: HWC Engineering

CONNECTOR ROUTES:

SHARROWS

Sharrows were the least favored trail type among the public, particularly among recreational bikers who feel uncomfortable riding alongside vehicular traffic. While this typology may not suit every experience level, establishing designated sharrow routes on lower-traffic roadways can encourage more cyclists to use these paths. This approach will also raise driver awareness that cyclists may be present on these specific routes. To enhance safety and visibility, these routes will require proper signage, pavement markings, and policy enforcement.

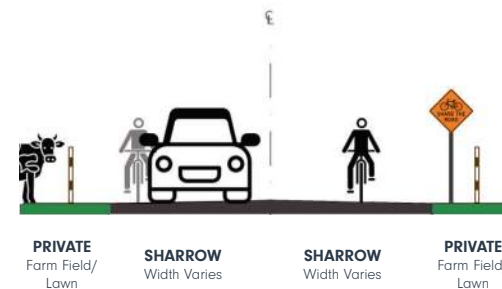
Key points supporting the proposed sharrow development in LaGrange County include:

- ▶ Connectors to Other Trails: Sharrows will serve as important links to other trail types.
- ▶ Scenic Routes: They will provide meandering paths connecting lakes and popular destinations, such as campgrounds.
- ▶ Alternative Routes for Workers: Sharrows can serve as designated routes for factory workers, helping to reduce bicycle traffic on busier roads.
- ▶ Promoting Safety: Establishing “Share the Road” signage will further enhance cyclist safety and awareness among drivers.



Trail Character

SHARROW



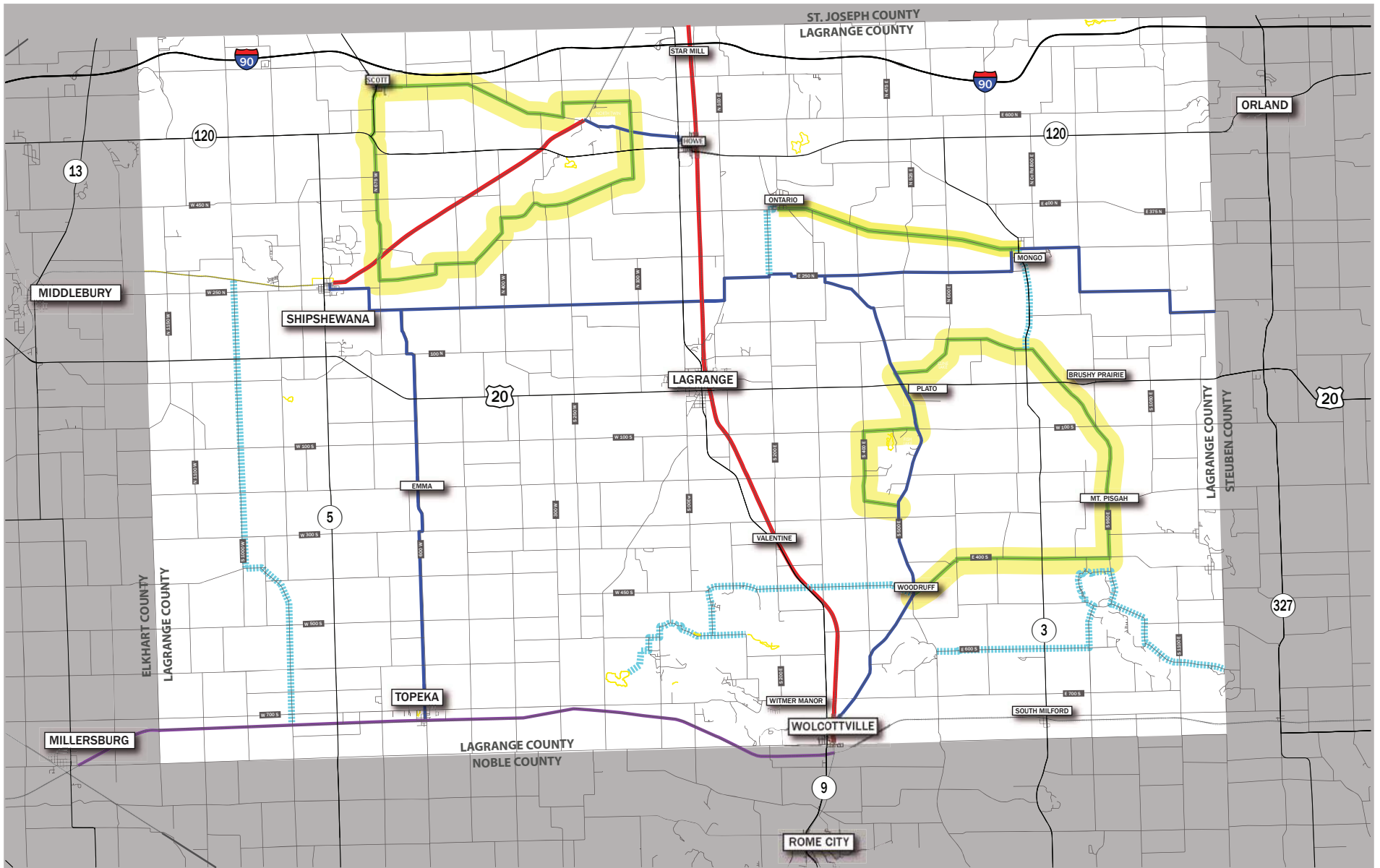


FIGURE 4.4: PROPOSED RECREATION AND SCENIC ROUTES MAP

Map Source: HWC Engineering

RECREATION & SCENIC TRAILS

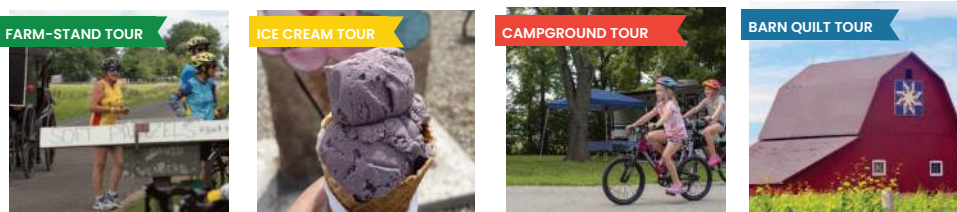
DESIGNATED BIKE LANES & SHARROWS

Recreation and scenic trails are designed to offer exceptional biking experiences, featuring both sharrow and dedicated bike lanes. Selected for their unique topography and picturesque scenery, these trails allow riders to immerse themselves in their surroundings. By catering to diverse skill levels, dedicated bike lanes provide safety, while sharrow markings promote shared road use. Ultimately, these trails enhance the enjoyment of longer rides, encourage a healthy lifestyle, and foster connections with nature and local communities.

Key points supporting the proposed recreation & scenic trail development in LaGrange County include:

- ▶ Variety of Trail Types: Combines sharrow and dedicated bike lanes for different skill levels.
- ▶ Safety and Awareness: Dedicated lanes ensure cyclist safety, while sharrow markings promote awareness among drivers.
- ▶ Scenic Beauty: Trails are chosen for their stunning landscapes and local attractions.
- ▶ Health Promotion: Encourages active lifestyles through enjoyable, longer rides.
- ▶ Community Engagement: Fosters exploration of local communities

Trail Programming



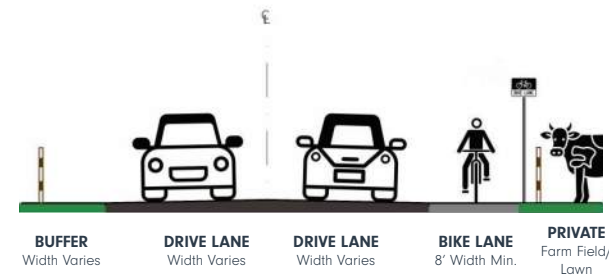
Existing Conditions: CR 400 E



Existing Conditions: CR 675 W

Trail Character

DESIGNATED BIKE LANE (2-WAY ONE SIDE OF ROADWAY)



SHARROW



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CHAPTER 05

COST ESTIMATES

TYPICAL UNIT COSTS

The following are approximate costs for trail topologies. By incorporating these estimated costs during the design phase, stakeholders can make informed, budget-conscious decisions.

In summary, considering approximate costs at the design stage promotes thoughtful decision-making, fosters transparency among stakeholders, and ultimately leads to more successful project outcomes.

Understanding the financial implications early in the planning process enables teams to evaluate various design options against their budget constraints. This proactive approach helps identify potential cost savings, prioritize essential features, and allocate resources more effectively.



Greenway (10-foot wide asphalt)
\$500,000 / MILE



Street Crossing
\$2,000 / EACH



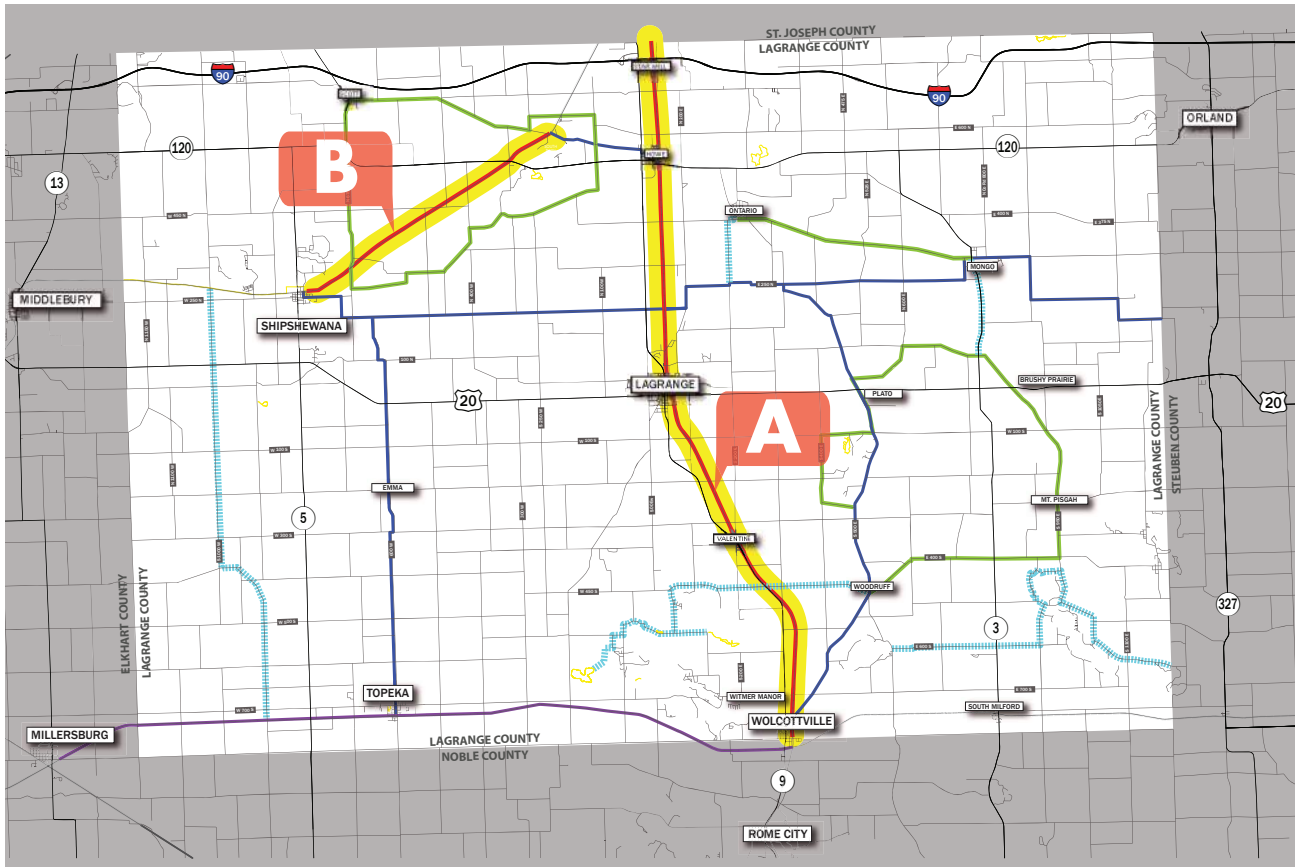
Bike Lane (8-foot wide)
\$560,000 / MILE



Traffic Signage
\$2,000 / EACH



Sharrow
\$50,000 / MILE



- Greenways includes**
- ▶ 10-foot minimum asphalt trail
 - ▶ Street crossings
 - ▶ Creek crossings

FIGURE 5.1: PROPOSED GREENWAY TRAIL MAP
 Map Source: HWC Engineering

A: Wolcottville to Sturgis, MI (County/State Line)

Approximate length: 16.8-miles Approximate Cost: \$8,700,000

B: Shishewana to Howe

Approximate length: 6.4-miles Approximate Cost: \$3,848,000

*This cost estimate does not include furnishings such as, benches, signage, mile markers, trail head amenities, etc.

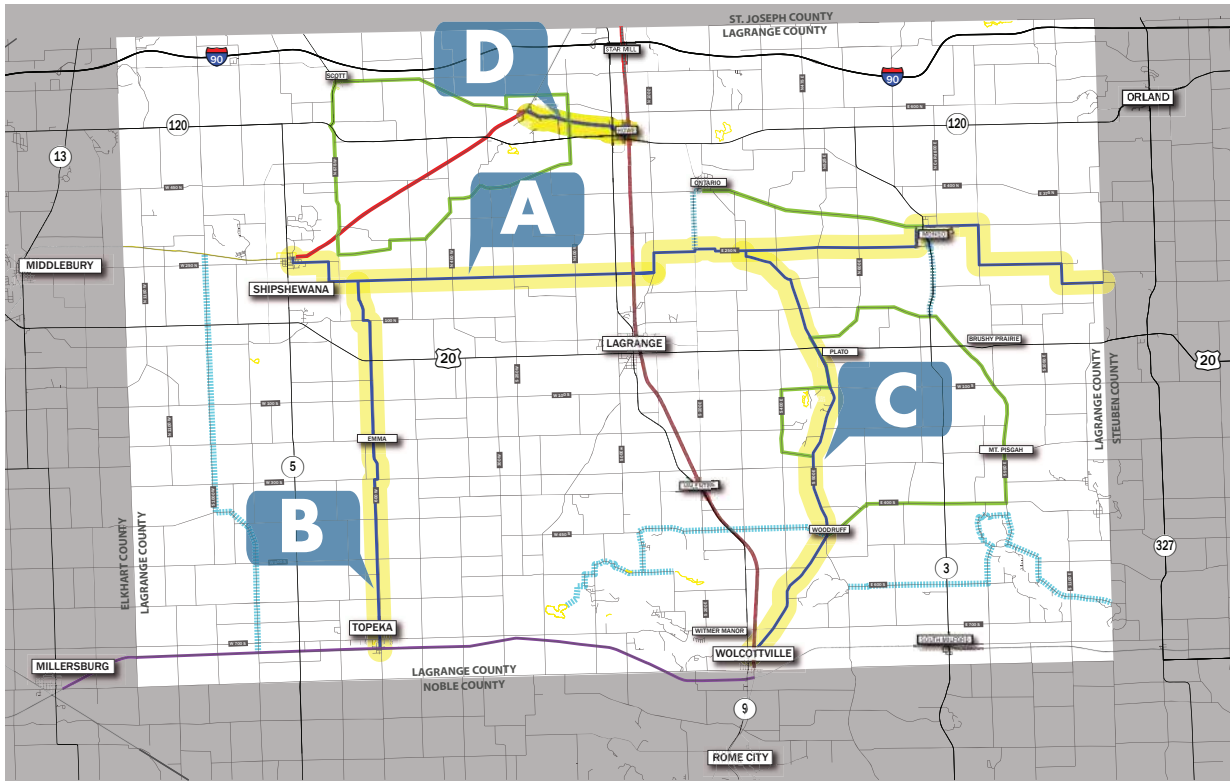


FIGURE 5.2: PROPOSED BIKE LANE TRAIL MAP

Map Source: HWC Engineering

Designated Bike Lanes includes:

- ▶ 8-foot minimum asphalt trail
- ▶ Pavement markings
- ▶ Bike lane indicator signage every 0.5 mile

A: Pigeon River Fish & Wildlife to Shipshewana

Approximate length: 23.5-miles Approximate Cost: \$13,400,000

B: Topeka to Shipshewana

Approximate length: 9.4-miles Approximate Cost: \$5,400,000

C: Wolcottville to Pigeon River Fish & Wildlife

Approximate length: 11.7 Miles Approximate Cost: \$6,700,000

D: Twin Lakes to Howe

Approximate length: 2.6-miles Approximate Cost: \$1,532,000

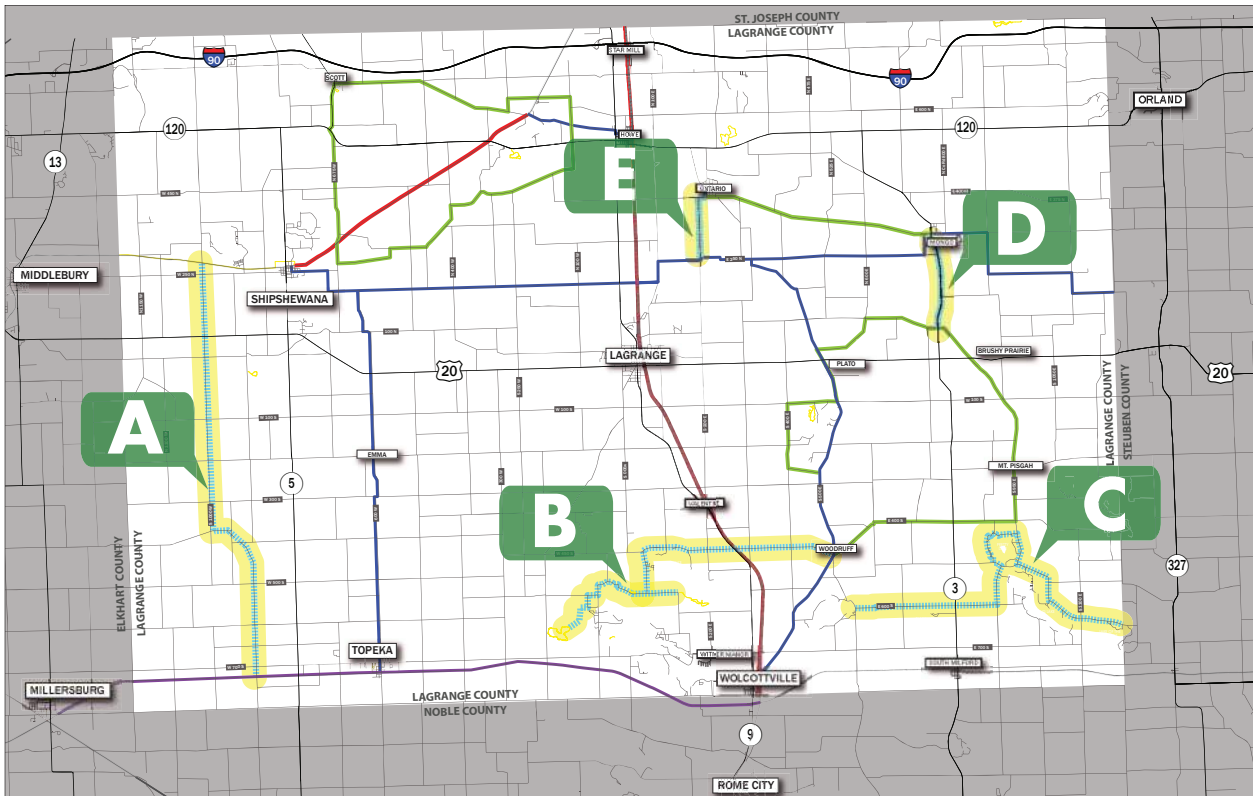


FIGURE 5.3: PROPOSED SHARROW TRAIL MAP

Map Source: HWC Engineering

Sharrows to include:

- ▶ Traffic indicator signs
- ▶ Pavement markings

A: Hawpatch Trail to Pumpkinvine Trail

Approximate length: 10.6-miles Approximate Cost: \$460,000

B: Woodruff to Dallas Lake

Approximate length: 9.33-miles Approximate Cost: \$407,000

C: Lake of the Woods to Adams Lake

Approximate length: 10.1-miles Approximate Cost: \$442,000

D: Pigeon River Fish & Wildlife Preserve Connector

Approximate length: 2.25-miles Approximate Cost: \$101,000

E: Ontario Connector

Approximate length: 1.7-miles Approximate Cost: \$80,000

*Sharrow cost estimates do not include roadway improvements.

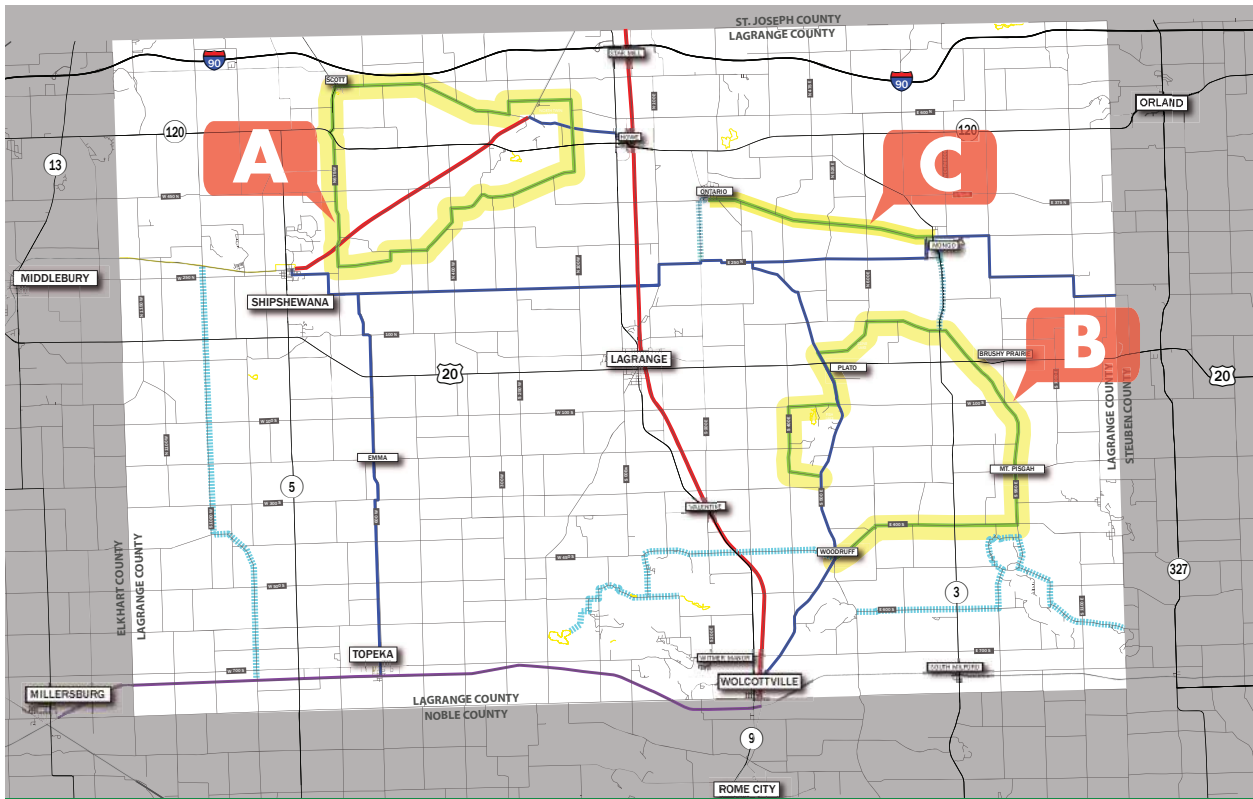


FIGURE 5.4: PROPOSED RECREATIONAL TRAILS MAP

Map Source: HWC Engineering

Recreational trails include:

- ▶ A combinations of bike lanes and sharrows
- ▶ Traffic indicator signs
- ▶ Pavement markings

A: Northwestern Recreational Loop

Approximate length: 18.4-miles Approximate Cost: \$1,000,000 - \$10,000,000

*Cost is dependent on the trail typology.

B: Southeastern Recreational Loop

Approximate length: 19.1-miles Approximate Cost: \$1,000,000 - \$10,000,000

*Cost is dependent on the trail typology.

C: Ontario to Mongo

Approximate length: 5.6-miles Approximate Cost: \$3,136,000- \$280,000

*Cost is dependent on the trail typology.



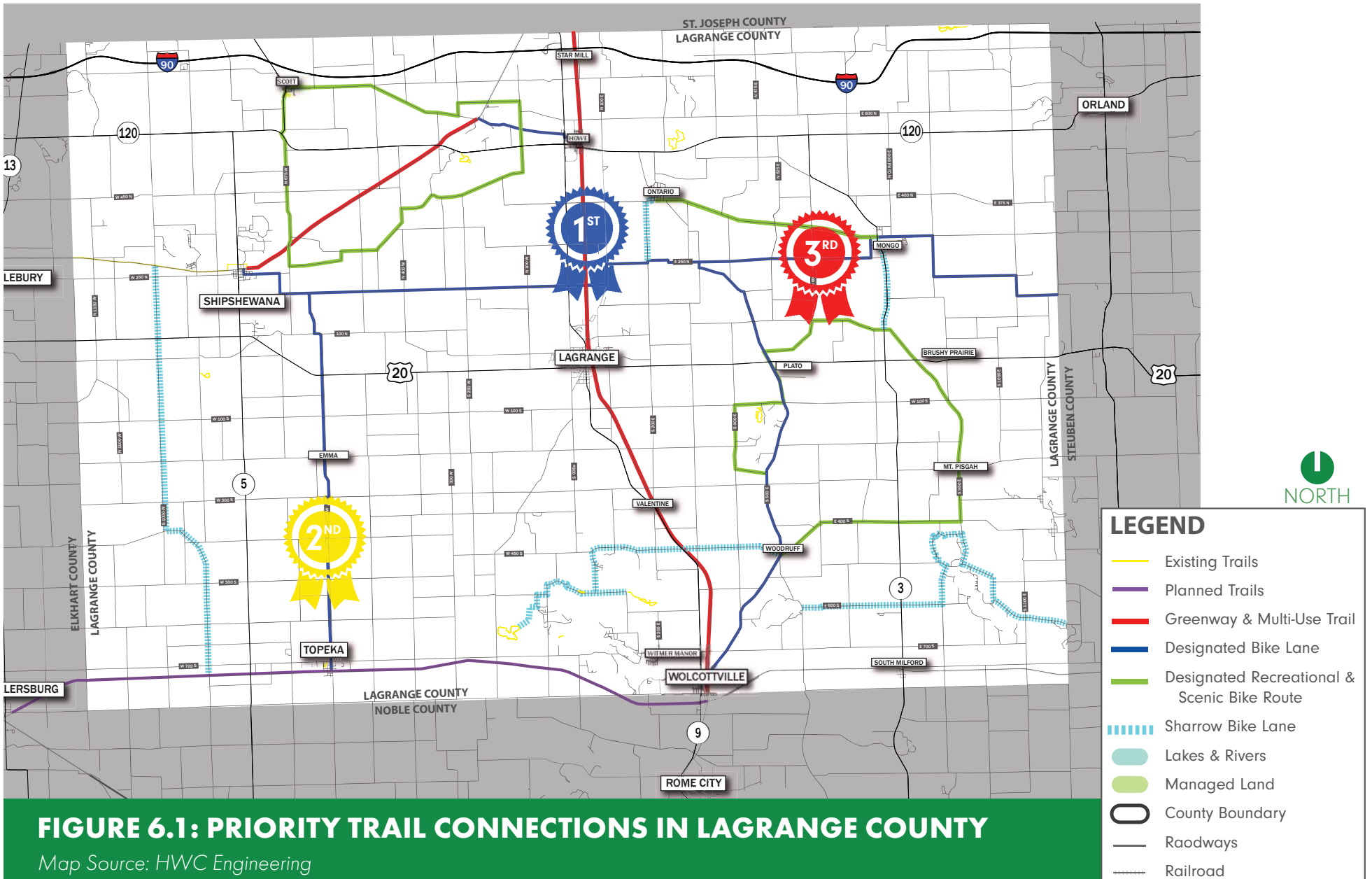
CHAPTER 06

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing a plan can often feel like a daunting challenge, and many plans are left to gather dust on a shelf. With this Trails Master Plan, the goal is to create an accessible, core document that guides trail development in LaGrange County. For maximum utility, the plan is designed with clear, achievable steps in mind. These steps are intended to drive meaningful progress and help community leaders evaluate the plan’s success. By fostering a proactive approach and encouraging collaboration, this plan will serve as a dynamic tool that guides efforts across the community, helping LaGrange County achieve desired objectives. To make implementation more manageable, the plan’s recommendations are broken down into phases based on priority. The following is the preferred priority for trails to be completed in LaGrange County.

| PRIORITY TRAIL CONNECTIONS IN LAGRANGE COUNTY | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| | COST PER MILE GREENWAY | COST PER MILE BIKE LANE | COST PER MILE SHARROW | ESTIMATED TOTAL MILES | ESTIMATED TOTAL COST |
| <p>PRIORITY NO.1 TRAIL</p> <p>North-South Greenway (Wolcottville to Stugis Michigan (County/State Line))</p> | +/- \$500,000 | - | - | 16.8 miles | \$8.7 M |
| <p>PRIORITY NO.2 TRAIL</p> <p>North-South (Topeka to Shipshewana)</p> | - | +/- \$570,000 | - | 9.4 miles | \$5.4 M |
| <p>PRIORITY NO.3 TRAIL</p> <p>East-West (Shipshewana to Steuben County)</p> | - | +/- 570,000 | - | 23.5 miles | \$13.4 M |



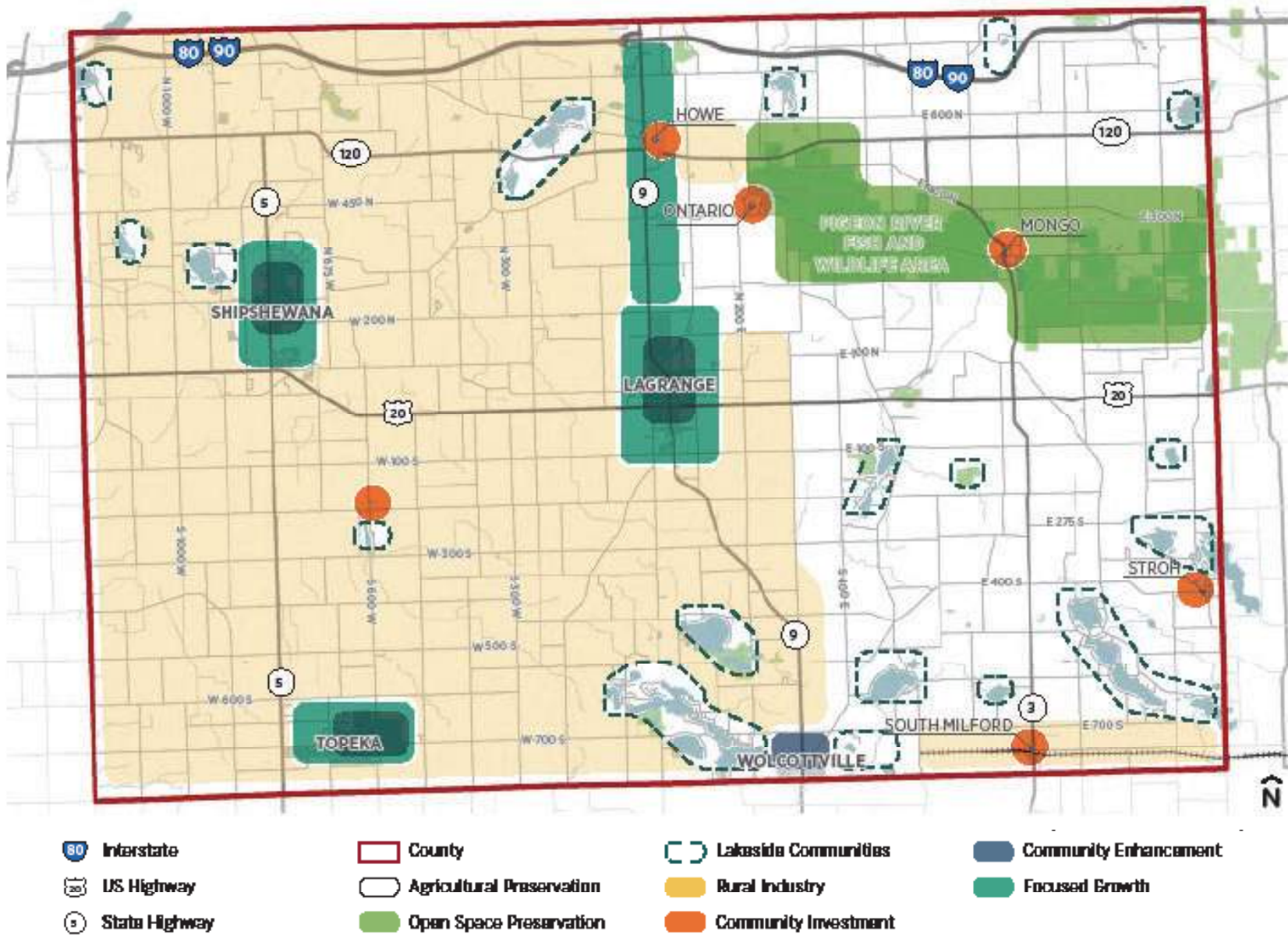


FIGURE 6.2: OPPORTUNITIES MAP

Map Source: LaGrange County Together Comprehensive Plan

INTEGRATION WITH LAGRANGE COUNTY TOGETHER

LaGrange County Together (2022) is the current comprehensive plan for LaGrange County. LaGrange County Together may be reviewed in its entirety at: <https://lagrangecountytogether.org/> Key takeaways from the comprehensive plan, presented on the following pages, helped inform the development of the Trails Master Plan. Furthermore, the Trails Master Plan was carefully crafted to align with the comprehensive plan, forwarding a cohesive vision for LaGrange County.

The following are key takeaways from the comprehensive plan that may be used in advocating for trail development.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The comprehensive plan designated focused growth areas around Shipshewana, Topeka, LaGrange and SR9 north of LaGrange. Additionally, the smaller towns of Emma, Howe, Mongo, South Milford, and Stroh are all included in connecting communities through various trail typologies. The Trails Master Plan selected routes that connect these communities and growth areas.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

It should be advocated that Trails are considered part of the infrastructure system and should be included in the Capital Improvement Plan. On page 40 of LaGrange County Together, the comprehensive plan poses a challenge to county leaders to understand revenue sources and how they might change in the coming years. Additionally, it is recommended that a Capital Improvement Plan is adopted. EC1 states: "Adopt a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) model. A Capital Improvements Plan identifies the maintenance needs and major infrastructure updates the county wants to pursue over the next several years. Developing a CIP assists with managing funding to ensure the appropriate amount of funding is provided for maintaining key infrastructure. Once established, the plan should be monitored and updated annually to ensure priorities receive sufficient funding."

DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEES

Additionally, item EC4 states: “Evaluate the use of impact fees for development. The use of impact fees on development projects is an opportunity to help offset the cost of infrastructure improvements. This fee would be allocated specifically for improvements to county assets such as roadways, bridges, safety improvements, and other similar infrastructure. The impact fee should generate reasonable revenue to balance improvements for projects while not hindering development potential. (Note: This action is related or implemented through LU 1.)” *This is a priority item.

Employers in LaGrange County rely on Amish community for workforce, a trail impact fee should be explored so the workforce may safely travel to and from work.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

In chapter four of LaGrange County Together, the plan explains that trail miles are lacking. As LaGrange County seeks to expand the trail system, there is an opportunity to connect with surrounding counties, creating a regional trail network.

Meanwhile, action items such as EN5 states: “Extend the Pumpkinvine Trail east of Shipshewana. The Pumpkinvine Trail is a regional walking and bicycle trail that connects destinations throughout the region. The trail is currently undergoing an expansion to the eastern

edge of Shipshewana, but there is a growing interest in exploring additional expansions. An evaluation should be completed for potential extensions of the Pumpkinvine Trail east, providing connection to either the Town of LaGrange or Howe. Once identified, funding should be sought to support the construction from the future trailhead in Shipshewana.”

EN 6, a priority action, states: “Support continued trail development across the county. Trail development is a growing topic in the region. The Pumpkinvine Trail and future Hawpatch Trail are two corridors that will connect communities across LaGrange County. Additional support should help identify trail corridors and secure funding to acquire land or construct segments of the trail system. Potential trails, outlined in EN 7, can be explored through an initial study that seeks to connect all the communities through a trail system.”

EN7 states: “Leverage corridors for additional trail development. Building off the existing trail work, several corridors throughout the county offer opportunities for additional trails. From rivers and streams to old railroad right-of-way, there are many potential pathways that can connect communities. Potential trail corridors should be evaluated that strive to connect each rural community and town with the regional system. National organizations can assist with trail identification, advocacy, and funding opportunities to further enhance LaGrange County’s growing trail system.”

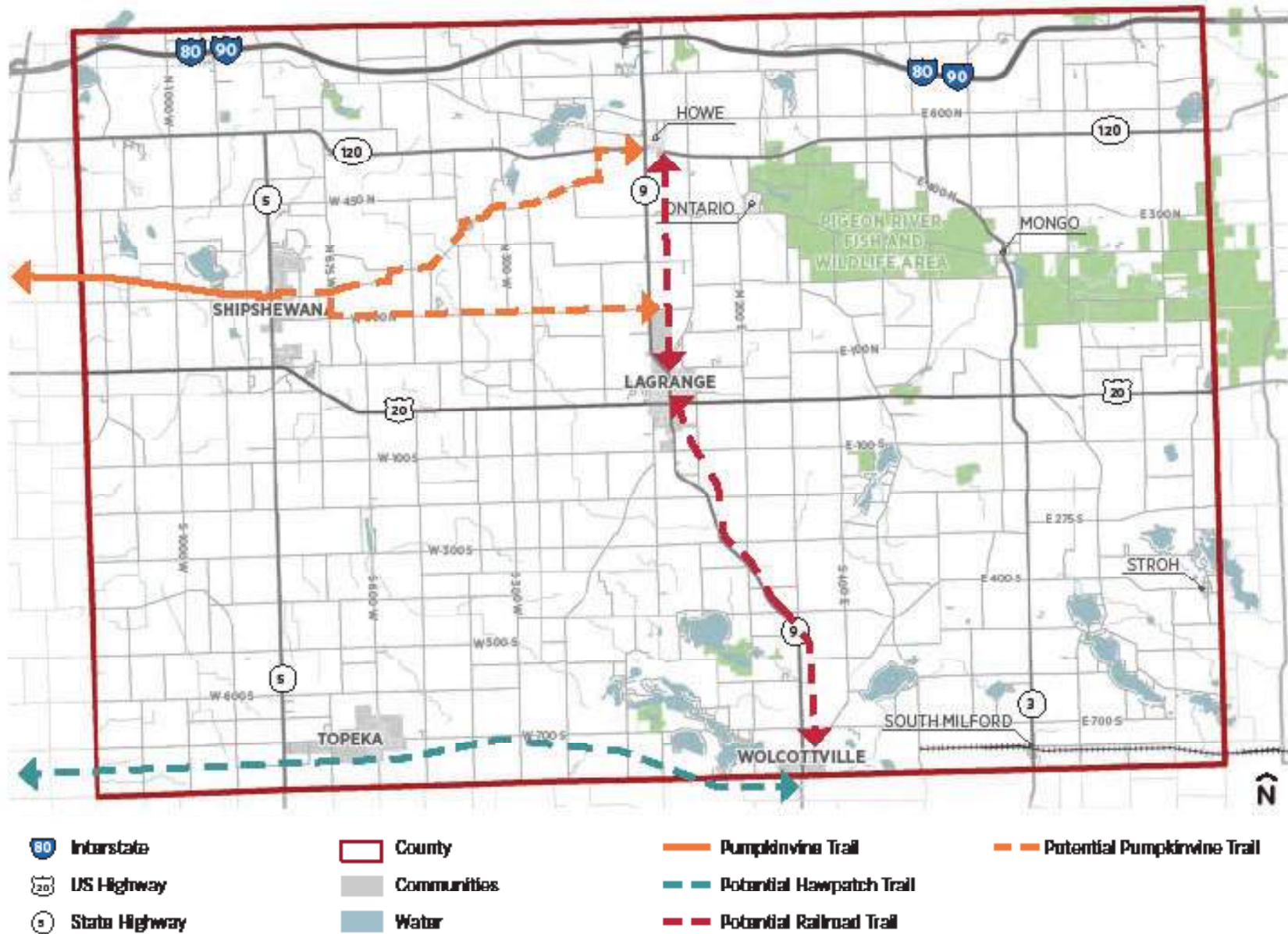


FIGURE 6.3: POTENTIAL TRAIL CORRIDORS

Map Source: LaGrange County Together Comprehensive Plan

ROADWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In Chapter 5 of LaGrange County Together, one of the key findings is that walking and biking are common in LaGrange County, despite being predominantly rural in character. The Census Bureau estimates 4.5% of workers walk to work, and 7.8% bike—both substantially higher than the national average of 2.5 and 0.5% respectively.

Action R13 states, “Improve pedestrian safety and streetscape on Detroit Street (SR-9) in LaGrange. Improving this stretch of Detroit Street will improve the area’s aesthetic character, as well as improve safety for those walking, shopping, and doing business. Potential improvements may include curb extensions, one or more median refuge islands, and marked and signed crosswalks to make the street more pedestrian friendly. Street trees, decorative lighting, bike parking, and on-street parking areas are also recommended to improve the character of the corridor.”

RI 4 continues, “Extend pedestrian improvements on Van Buren Street (SR-5) in Shipshewana. INDOT’s upcoming improvement project will greatly improve conditions along Van Buren Street (SR-5), but those improvements stop near Indiana Street. However, from Indiana Street to North Street, there is a substantial number of pedestrians who must either walk on a patchwork of sidewalks or in buggy lanes. Extending uninterrupted sidewalk between Indiana and North streets would improve the experience of

pedestrians. Such improvements will improve pedestrian safety, accessibility, and the park once strategy to better accommodate visitors, and provide an opportunity to include placemaking elements into the streetscape.”

Furthermore, R17 states the following: “Develop an alternative transportation network plan. The county’s transportation system includes a significant portion of buggy and bike users. While some roadways have been widened to include separate lanes, there is an opportunity to further improve the safety and design features for these alternative users. A plan focused on evaluating essential corridors for buggy and bike travel should be developed to focus investments. This should explore both existing roadways along with growing trail development and how designated bike or buggy trails can better connect the community.”

QUALITY OF LIFE

The comprehensive plan found that trails and hospitality are key areas of opportunity. Increasing trail connections and developing a stronger hospitality network would serve residents and visitors. These amenities also offer the opportunity to highlight characteristics of the county that are unique both in the region and across the state.

Any of these citations may be used to advocate for trails in future plans and funding.

INTEGRATE TRAILS PLANS WITH ENGINEERING AND PLANNING

Trail plans are typically developed over time, incorporating incremental growth and planning. To ensure their successful implementation, collaboration with county and town engineers, planning departments, and relevant ordinances is essential. This approach should include the dedication of appropriate rights-of-way, a practice that has long been established for sidewalks, when development occurs on a property. By applying this same strategy to trail development, we can create a cohesive and accessible network that meets the needs of our community while fostering sustainable growth.



Greenway / Multi-Use Trail
Image Source: travelindiana.com

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Funding for complete development of the LaGrange County Trail Master Plan will require creative use of resources, partnerships, leveraging opportunities, and judicious timing. While potential funding sources may be easy to identify, funds may be limited and competitive and securing them can be difficult. For these reasons, it is essential that the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian projects be accomplished in a way to maximize efficiency and return on investment.

Funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs can come from a variety of sources, including transportation and non-transportation state and federal funds as well as local resources such as tax revenues. The following section lists some potential funding sources.



Pine Knob Park
Image Source: [Patrick Redmond, KPC News](#)

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

| INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (IDNR) | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| GRANT | ELIGIBILITY | PROJECT TYPES | GRANT LIMITS |
| Next Level Trails | Local Government, Non-profit organizations. Must fulfill at least one of the following roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Own (or acquire) the trail corridor ▶ Manage and maintain the trail once developed ▶ Oversee and manage trail construction through completion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ All non-motorized trails ▶ Multi-use trails (consideration) ▶ Trails must be open to the public | \$200,000 - \$5,000,000 (20% match can include land value, and in-kind donations) |
| Indiana Trails Program | Government agencies, non-profit organizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Land acquisition, trail development, and amenities | \$100,000 - \$400,000 (20% match) |
| INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (INDOT) | | | |
| GRANT | ELIGIBILITY | PROJECT TYPES | GRANT LIMITS |
| LPA - Federal Highway Funding (FAST ACT) | Local agencies not in an MPO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Highway Safety Improvement Program ▶ Streetscapes ▶ Trails ▶ Roads on INDOT functional classification maps | \$5,000,000 (20% match) |
| GREENWAYS FOUNDATION | | | |
| GRANT | ELIGIBILITY | PROJECT TYPES | GRANT LIMITS |
| Project Grant | Local Government, Non-profit organizations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Multi-Use Trails made for the walking, biking, and horseback riding. | \$10,000 (Must have 50% of project costs raised) |

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

| INDIANA HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (IHCDA) | | | |
|---|--|--|----------------------------------|
| GRANT | ELIGIBILITY | PROJECT TYPES | GRANT LIMITS |
| CreatiNg Places | Non-profit entities and Local units of government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Streetscape beautification and walkability ▶ Art/Public plaza development activation etc. | \$10,000 - \$100,000 (50% match) |
| INDIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (ISDH) | | | |
| GRANT | ELIGIBILITY | PROJECT TYPES | GRANT LIMITS |
| Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan | Communities and non-profits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Plan preparation in house or via consultant | \$10,000 - \$20,000 |
| Tactical Urbanism Demonstration | Incorporated communities in Indiana | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Temporary bicycle and pedestrian safety demonstration projects ▶ Property purchases ▶ Traffic calming projects | \$10,000 |
| OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AND RURAL AFFAIRS (OCRA) | | | |
| GRANT | ELIGIBILITY | PROJECT TYPES | GRANT LIMITS |
| Main Street Revitalization Program | Indiana Main Street Community and Non-entitlement communities, Communities with at least 51% low-moderate income, or slum and blight designation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Streetscape upgrades ▶ Facade renovations ▶ Downtown infrastructure | \$500,000 (10% match) |

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CHAPTER 07

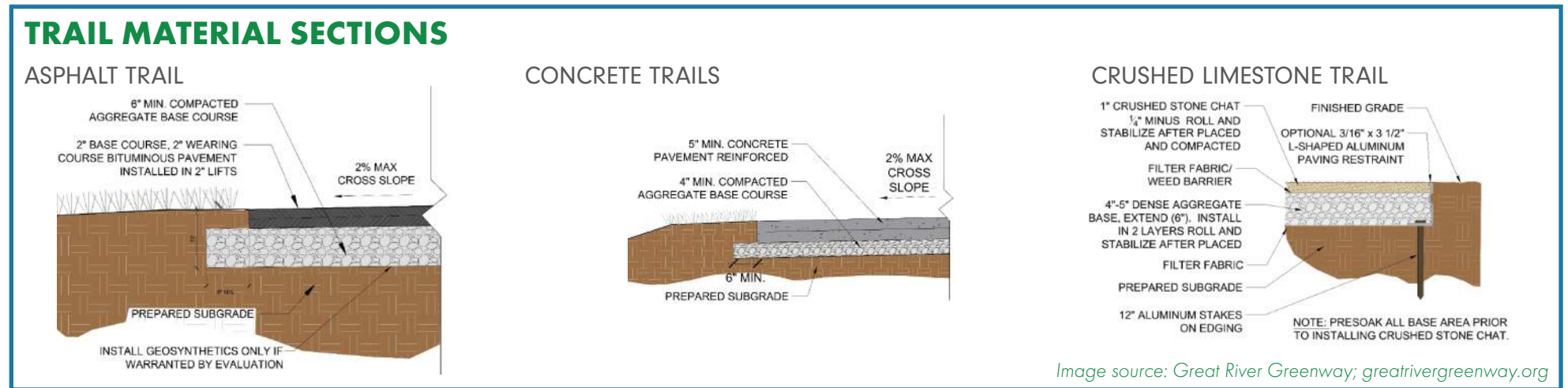
TRAIL DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN GUIDE LINES AND STANDARDS

Trail design standards are intended to establish consistent, high-quality design and application throughout the LaGrange County trail network. These standards guide the expansion of the trail system through a collaborative process involving government agencies, private developers, and neighboring communities. By setting clear construction standards, we ensure that all new trail facilities remain consistent and meet the expectations of LaGrange County.

The purpose of establishing design standards includes:

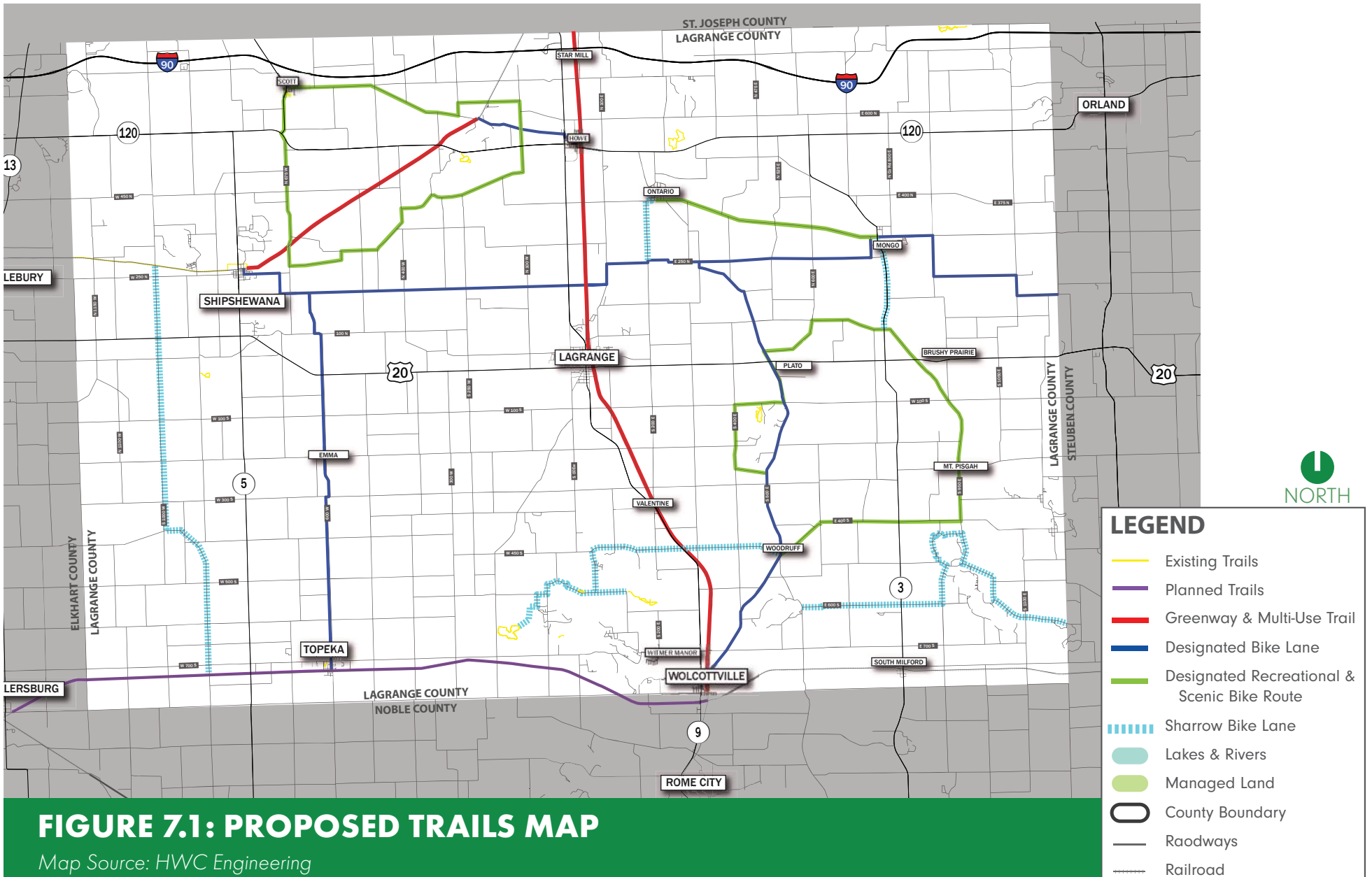
- ▶ **Consistency:** Ensuring consistency across the system—in terms of character, construction, and facility application.
- ▶ **Direction:** Providing design guidelines that support alternative development, including private development, in areas of the county experiencing investment and growth.
- ▶ **Fulfilling Plan Goals:** Ensuring that trails align with the recreation, transportation, and accessibility goals of the plan.
- ▶ **Safety:** Establishing regulatory guidelines to ensure the greenways meet safety requirements for all users.
- ▶ **User Experience:** Implementing a greenway development approach that ensures a high-quality user experience, facility durability, and a practical approach to trail maintenance.



DESIGN STANDARDS

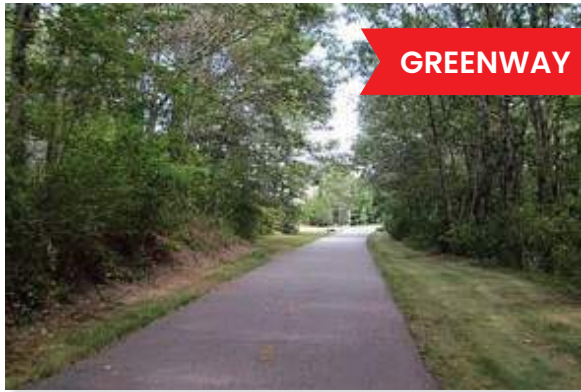
Trail shall be designed to meet both recreational and transportation standards including American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD).

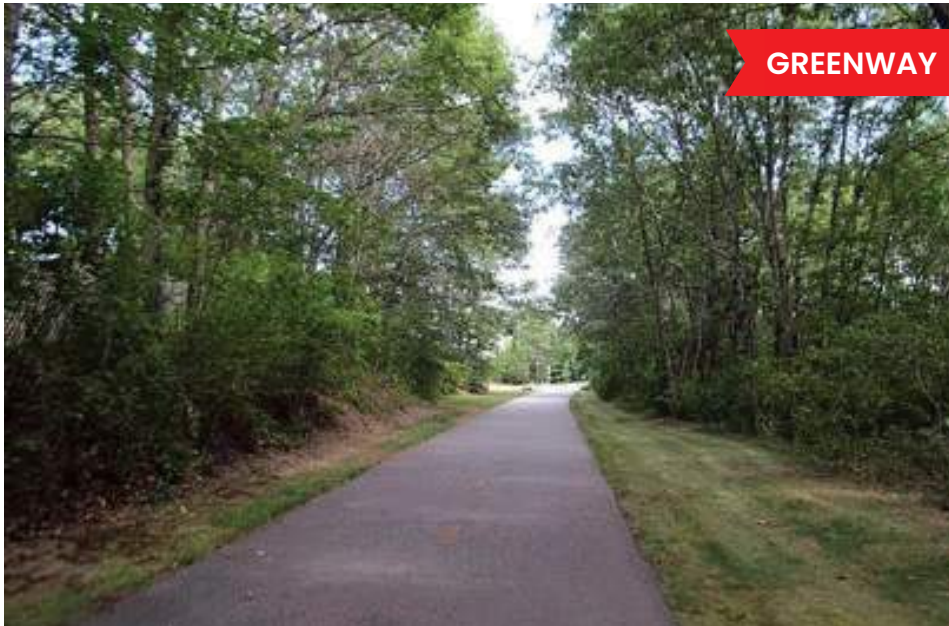
| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| MATERIAL | When selecting paving materials for trails, it's important to consider both functionality and accessibility. Asphalt is a common choice due to its durability and smooth surface, alternatives like concrete or crushed limestone can be more suitable in specifically for rural environments. |
| WIDTH | <p>A typical width of 10-feet for shared-use paths allows for comfortable two-way traffic for both pedestrians and cyclists. Variations can be beneficial depending on the specific context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 8-feet minimum: This may be acceptable in constrained areas, but it can lead to congestion if used by larger groups or during busy times. ▶ 14-feet maximum: This width can help accommodate higher traffic volumes or allow for side activities, such as resting areas or passing zones. |
| PAVEMENT STRIPING | Pavement marking can include centerline striping for multi directional trails, Bicycle symbol indicating bike lane, and green dashed lines or solid green at conflict zones where vehicular traffic must cross a bike lane at intersection and driveways. |
| SINAGE | The (MUTCD) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) has established signing standards that outline when bike lane and sharrow signing should take place at the beginning and end of lane use and what thoes signs should look like. |
| CLEAR ZONE | 2-feet from edge of pavement |
| VERTICAL CLEARANCE | 8-feet minimum, 10-feet typical. |
| TREE PLANTING SETBACK | 15-feet from edge of trail. |
| GRADING | <p>Horizontal Grades: 5% (grades steeper than 5% are permitted, but should be limited to the distances indicated in the AASHTO guidelines)</p> <p>Maximum Gross Grades: 2%</p> |
| OTHER | Shared-use path design shall comply with all AASHTO requirements for design speed, sight distances, stopping distances, and grades. |



TRAIL TYPOLOGIES

The diverse land uses, population densities, and traffic levels across LaGrange County and neighboring communities require context-sensitive trail design. This plan includes trail typologies listed below. While other trail types are not included in this plan, they may be considered as alternative designs or used to complement existing trails as the demand for biking and walking pathways increases beyond the utility of trail types identified in this plan.





TRAIL TYPE 1: GREENWAY

Greenways are corridors designed primarily for recreational use and non-motorized transportation, such as walking, biking, or running. They often connect parks, neighborhoods, and other community spaces while providing a scenic and safe environment for outdoor activities. Greenways can be natural or landscaped paths and frequently run alongside waterways, railways, or other natural corridors.

Best Practices for Greenways:

- ▶ **Safe and Accessible Design:** Ensure that greenways are accessible to all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and people with disabilities, by providing wide, smooth, and well-maintained paths.
- ▶ **Separated Use Zones:** Where feasible, paint a strip on pavement for separation of bicyclists and pedestrians to minimize conflicts between different users.
- ▶ **Natural Landscaping:** Incorporate native plants and natural features to enhance the scenic beauty of the greenway, support local ecosystems, and reduce maintenance costs.
- ▶ **Clear Signage:** Provide clear and consistent signage along the greenway to guide users, communicate rules (e.g., speed limits for bicyclists), and indicate nearby amenities.
- ▶ **Lighting:** Install adequate lighting in high-use areas to increase visibility and promote safety.
- ▶ **Amenities:** Install necessary trail head amenities such as, bike racks, informational signage, drinking fountains, trashcans, restrooms.



Pumkinvine Trail

Image Source: visitshipshewana.org



TRAIL TYPE 2: DESIGNATED BIKE LANE

Designated bike lanes are dedicated lanes that can flow in one or both directions, depending on the width and location of the lane. Designated bike lanes are delineated from car travel lanes by a stripe of paint, a painted buffer, or physical barriers like curbs, planters, or flex posts. These lanes support comfort and safety by separating automobile and bicycle traffic.

Best Practices for Designated Bike Lanes:

- ▶ **Visual and Physical Separation:** Use vertical barriers to draw attention to the separated zones. Vertical separation may include flex posts, planters, curbs, or other approved measures.
- ▶ **Clear Signage and Markings:** Provide clear pavement markings, signage, and signals to guide cyclists and alert motorists to the presence of bike lanes.
- ▶ **Intersection Design:** At intersections protected signal phases or dedicated bike crossings to reduce conflict points between cyclists and vehicles.
- ▶ **Adequate Width:** Ensure lanes are wide enough (recommended minimum 8-feet) to accommodate different cycling speeds and types of bikes.
- ▶ **Maintenance:** Regularly maintain lanes by sweeping debris and ensuring barriers remain intact to preserve safety.
- ▶ **Education and Awareness:** Promote public awareness campaigns to educate drivers and cyclists about safely sharing the road and understanding shared lane markings.



Designated Bike Lane, 2-way
Image Source: rv-time.com



Sharrow

TRAIL TYPE 3: SHARROW

Sharrows, or shared-lane markings, are roadways where cyclists and motor vehicles share the same lane. Instead of a dedicated bike lane, markings are placed on the road to indicate that both cyclists and automobiles must coexist in the same space. Shared bike lanes are typically used on streets with lower traffic speeds and volumes where separate bike lanes are not feasible.

Best Practices for Sharrows:

- ▶ **Clear Markings:** Use prominent sharrow symbols and signage to indicate the shared nature of the lane and remind drivers to expect cyclists.
- ▶ **Lane Positioning:** Place markings in the appropriate lane position to guide cyclists away from hazards and to encourage drivers to give sufficient space.
- ▶ **Speed Limits:** Implement and enforce lower speed limits on streets with shared bike lanes to enhance safety for cyclists.
- ▶ **Street Width:** Use shared lanes on streets wide enough to accommodate both vehicles and cyclists, allowing sufficient room for safe passing
- ▶ **Education and Awareness:** Promote public awareness campaigns to educate drivers and cyclists about safely sharing the road and understanding shared lane markings.



Sharrow

Image Source: thriveallencounty.org

FACILITY STANDARDS

TRAIL HEADS

Trailheads are designated key access points to the multi-use paths and greenway network, acting as primary hubs for users to enter and exit the network. As the first point of contact for many trail users, trailheads need to accommodate a variety of needs and provide essential services. These locations should offer amenities like parking, trail information, restrooms, benches, water fountains, and other features that enhance the user experience.

Trailhead Guidelines Include:

- ▶ Trailheads should be located at critical junctions between trail sections or where significant entry and exit from the trail are expected. They should be accessible foot, bicycle, and automobile while meeting ADA accessibility standards.
- ▶ Parking should be available at each trailhead for bicycles, automobiles and buggy's. Taking into consideration that shade and water for horses should be provided. A minimum of ten parking spaces for automobiles is recommended.
- ▶ The design of trailheads should prevent interference with users moving along the trail. Signage and congregation areas should be placed outside the flow of traffic on the trail itself.
- ▶ Informational signage should be present at each trailhead, offering key details such as maps, trail guidelines, and other relevant information to improve the user's experience.
- ▶ Facilities at trailheads should include restrooms and drinking fountains (for larger trailheads), benches, trash and recycling bins, bike racks, and signs displaying trail information and rules.
- ▶ Trailheads should be designed in a way that maximizes shaded space in which users may rest or congregate.



Trailhead Design

Image Source: HWC Engineering



Trailhead Amenities

Image Source: HWC Engineering

SITE FURNISHINGS

Trail furnishings are items placed along trails to promote comfort, visual appeal, functionality, and safety. To streamline future installation and ensure uniformity throughout the greenways, standard site furnishings should be chosen. These amenities should accommodate the needs of all users. Given the specific considerations of LaGrange County, thought should be given to which amenities will match the needs of users like those riding in buggies and pony carts as well.

Site Furnishing Guidelines Include:

- ▶ **Placement:** Site amenities should typically be positioned at access points, trailheads, and rest areas along the trail network.
- ▶ **Approval:** All amenities must receive approval from LaGrange County Trails before installation.
- ▶ **Durability:** Highly durable amenities should be selected to maximize their lifespan.
- ▶ **Procurement:** Chosen amenities must be widely available from various suppliers to meet competitive bidding standards. Equivalent alternatives of similar quality are acceptable within the greenway system.
- ▶ **Installation:** All amenities should be surface mounted for ease of installation and maintenance.



Trail Furnishings

Image Source: HWC Engineering



Trail Furnishings

Image Source: HWC Engineering

TRAIL SIGNAGE

Standardized trail signage should be established to simplify future installation and ensure consistency throughout the greenway network.

Trail Sign Guidelines Include:

- ▶ **Pedestrian-Scale Trail Identification:** Signs that clearly identify the trail for users on foot or bike.
- ▶ **Vehicular-Scale Trail Identification:** Signs designed for vehicles and those outside the trail to recognize the trail system.
- ▶ **Directional Signs:** Signs providing directions to key points and destinations along the greenway.
- ▶ **Cross-Street Signs:** Signs identifying the name of any road intersecting the trail.
- ▶ **Mile Markers:** Signs marking the trail's distance at quarter-mile intervals. These markers should be integrated with county dispatch/911 services for a GIS-based system that aids in emergency response.
- ▶ **Regulatory Signs:** Signs that inform users of rules and regulations along the trails.
- ▶ **Trailhead Signs:** Displays that include trail maps, usage guidelines, and emergency contact information.
- ▶ **Educational Signs:** Informational signs that offer educational insights at notable locations along the trail.
- ▶ **Emergency Locator Signs:** Points along the trail network that provide location-specific information for emergencies.



Wayfinding Signage

Image Source: HWC Engineering



Trail Monument Signage

Image Source: HWC Engineering

GREENWAYS AND MULTI-USE PATH POLICIES:

Trail policies are essential to ensure that trails are used appropriately and safe for all. Since trail designs are tailored for specific purposes, alternative uses or inappropriate behaviors can reduce the functionality, safety, comfort, and enjoyment of the trails for everyone. To improve the user experience, the following policies are recommended:

- ▶ Trails are open from sunrise to sunset.
- ▶ Unauthorized motor vehicles are prohibited; mobility-assist devices are permitted.
- ▶ Stop and check for cross-traffic at intersections.
- ▶ Leave plants and wildlife undisturbed.
- ▶ No hunting or trapping.
- ▶ Weapons are prohibited, except for firearms, which may not be discharged.
- ▶ Horses and buggy's and pony carts are prohibited.
- ▶ Pets must be on a leash (maximum 6-feet); pet waste must be cleaned up.
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages are not allowed.
- ▶ No littering or disposing of waste except in trash receptacles.
- ▶ Fireworks are not permitted.
- ▶ No fires or camping is permitted.
- ▶ Stay on the trail and respect the rights and privacy of adjacent neighbors.
- ▶ Walk and ride on the right, passing on the left after signaling with a bell or other alert.
- ▶ Walkers and runners have the right of way.
- ▶ Be cautious and stay to the right on curves, underpasses, bridges, and intersections.
- ▶ Do not block the trail.



RECOMMENDED ELECTRIC BIKE POLICY:

Allowed on the trails:

- ▶ Class 1: Electric bicycles with a motor that assists only when pedaling, stopping assistance at 20 mph.
- ▶ Class 2: Electric bicycles with a motor that can exclusively propel the bike, stopping assistance at 20 mph.

Not Allowed on the trails:

- ▶ Class 3: Electric bicycles with a motor that assists only when pedaling, stopping assistance at 25 mph.



Greenway Design
Image Source: HWC Engineering



LAGRANGE COUNTY TRAILS MASTER PLANS



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REPORT

Completed 2024.09.26



INTRODUCTION

LaGrange's long-standing tourism attracts visitors from across the country. Additionally, tourists are desiring to spread out from traditional Shipshewana attractions and exploring the entire county such as Mongo and the Pigeon River Fish & Wildlife Area. The population of LaGrange is nearing 50% Amish which rely on non-vehicular modes of transportation in a rural community. This leave buggies and biking as primary modes of transportation. It became clear through community engagement and outreach that there are two long range planning efforts that need to be addressed: trails for recreation and trails for primary transportation. This Public Participation Report details the community engagement and outreach that are crucial for the success of long-range planning efforts. It is important to involve the public to understand the needs of residents and businesses and to gain support for implementing the plan recommendations. This report provides a summary of the findings from the initial round of community engagement efforts, which included in-person open houses and a series of stakeholder meetings, hearing from a total of 77 voices. The public engagement and the entire process were overseen by the steering committee.

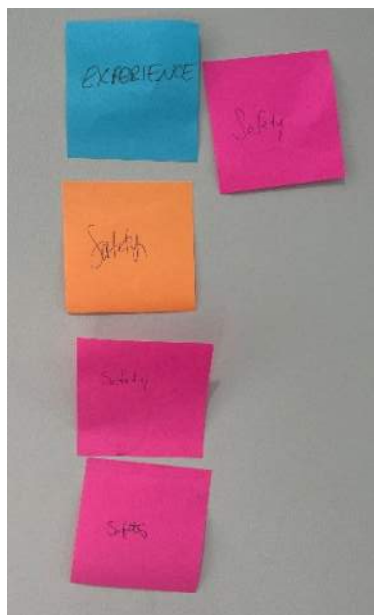
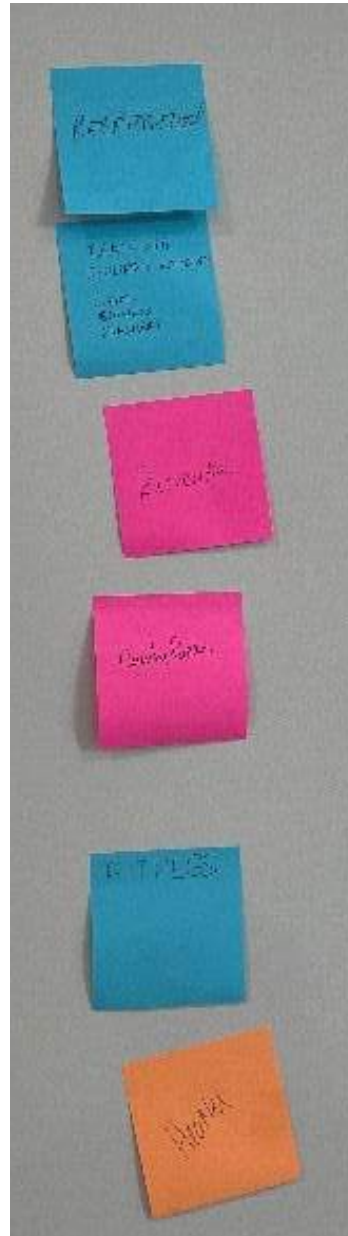
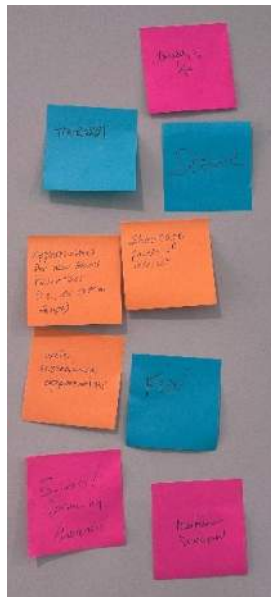
IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee led the Master Trails Public Engagement process. The committee is comprised of 15-members representing vital organizations including LaGrange County Trails Board Members, LaGrange County Community Foundation staff, LaGrange County Commissioner, Shipshewana Town Manager, LaGrange County Together staff, LaGrange County Economic Development Corporation staff, LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce staff, LaGrange County Convention & Visitors Bureau staff, LaGrange County Parks & Recreation Department staff, LaGrange County Council member, Town of LaGrange Town Manager, Topeka Town Manager, Wolcottville Council member, and Amish Safety Committee member.

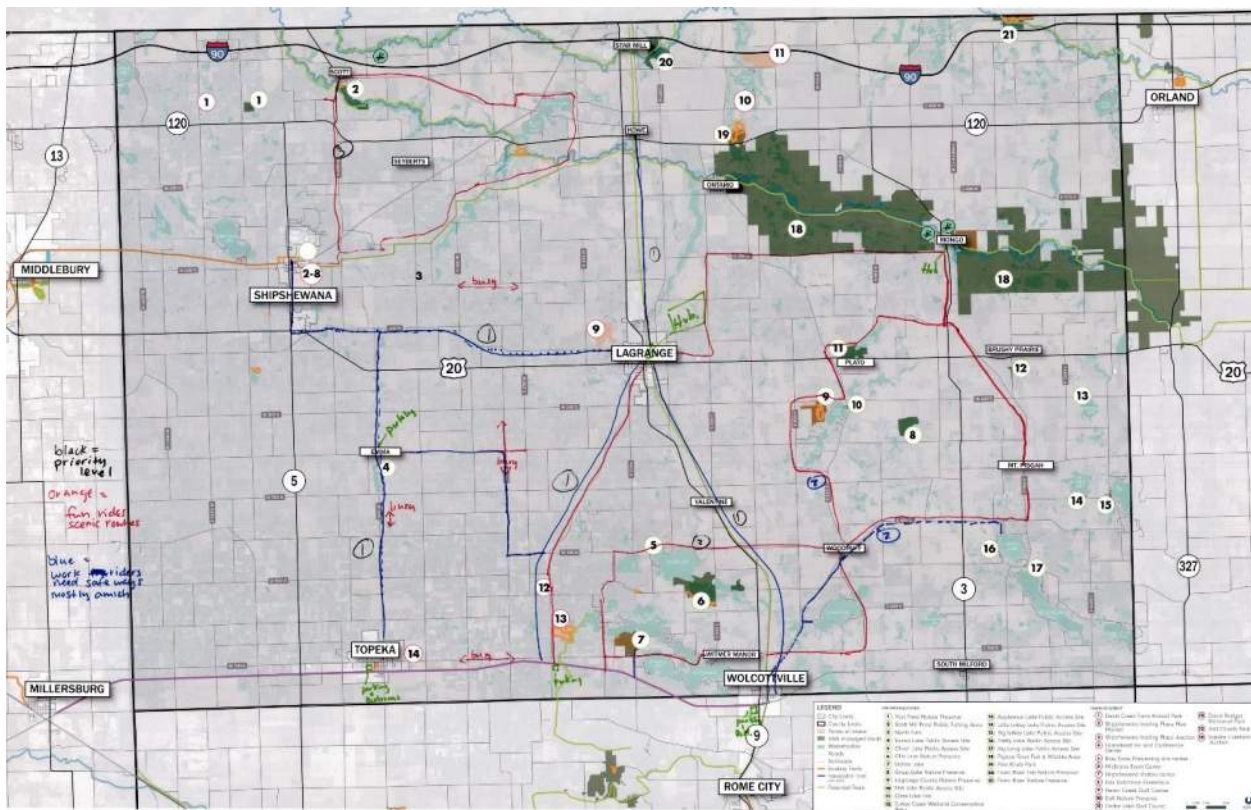
The committee's role is to guide/steer the master plan process, publicize public engagement, provide feedback on materials, be an advocate for the master plan, and identify key stakeholders. During the first steering committee meeting on June 04, 2024, the Steering Committee identified their desire for the plan to accomplish the following:

- Connectivity
- Tourism/ Attractions
- Recreation
- Trail Signage
- Safety



Stakeholder Meetings

A series of Stakeholder Meetings were hosted by the Community Foundation on July 25 and August 06, 2024. 18-stakeholders participated from a cross section of county residents. The meetings consisted of reviewing existing conditions, what is working and should be replicated, establishing what this plan must include in order to be successful. Then the groups completed a mapping exercise to identify opportunities, barriers, preferences for trail locations, points of interests, etc.



Stakeholder Meeting Mapping Exercise – Example from one of the groups.

Through these meetings it became very clear that public safety was the biggest concern and that one trail way through the county will not relieve these concerns for LaGrange County residents that bike regularly to work and school. Implementing multiple trail types and traffic awareness will be key in establishing a safe biking community.

Key Topics

- Public safety
 - School kids
 - Factory workers
- Connecting Local Destinations
 - Centralized North & South connection through Lagrange
- Connection Regionally
- Recreational Opportunities
- Tourism

Common Themes for Visioning

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signage - Mile markers - Emergency lights - Trash cans - Rest stops - Restrooms - Hydration stops - Benches - Parking spots • Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove bicycles from roadway | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove pedestrians of roadways - Recommend routes of safe & good quality roads - Emergency lights - Emergency access • Long Term/ Future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintenance plan including funding - Open year around - Possible future routes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals of Trail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide recreation - Promote tourism - Connects communities - Extend in all parts of the county - Connect points of interest (Ice cream shops, parks, etc.) - Connect Lagrange County to the regional trail network |
|--|--|--|

Public Workshop

Three public workshops were hosted countywide in LaGrange (21-residents attended), Shipshewana (17-residents attended), and Mongo (29-residents attended). Upon arriving at the open house, residents were guided through a series of interactive boards. Each board provided an opportunity to leave comments and select preferences on trail typologies, trail amenities, trail routes, and provide any additional comments. HWC staff interacted with the public to answer questions and provide guidance on the purpose and process of the meeting.



Open House Preference Exercise

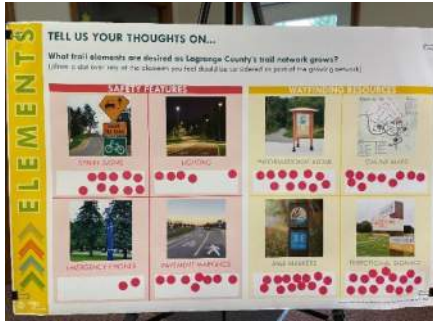
Overall, there is a desire for more trails in LaGrange County. Two trail users were identified one as recreation and another as their primary mode of transportation. The southwest portion of the county was identified as needing trails for transportation to local schools and employment while the east portion of the county was identified as heavily recreation. The theme continued from the steering committee identifying user safety as a top priority married with the practicality of the cost to install and maintain trails. This was reflected in the preference for a ‘Greenway Multi-use’ trail type which is separated from vehicular traffic. Additionally, elements such as directional signage and restroom facilities were highly preferable.



The following are the tabulated results from all three public open houses:



| What type of bicyclist are you? | |
|---|-----------|
| Strong & Fearless | 14 |
| Enthusiastic & Confident | 20 |
| Interested but concerned | 21 |
| No way, No How! | 1 |
| What type of pedestrian are you? | |
| Strong & Fearless | 18 |
| Enthusiastic & Confident | 26 |
| Interested but concerned | 4 |
| No way, No How! | 1 |



| Trail Elements | |
|---------------------|----|
| Directional Signage | 45 |
| Online Maps | 31 |
| Pavement Markings | 26 |
| Mile Markers | 23 |
| Street Signs | 22 |
| Lighting | 20 |
| Informational Kiosk | 19 |
| Emergency Phones | 17 |



| Trail Elements | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Restrooms | 46 |
| Shade | 34 |
| Benches & Litter Bins | 28 |
| Drinking Fountain | 26 |
| Bike racks | 19 |
| Art | 14 |
| Bike Repair Stations | 6 |
| Exercise Equipment | 2 |



| Trail Facilities | YES | OK | NO |
|----------------------|-----|----|----|
| Greenway Multi-Use | 46 | 0 | 1 |
| Sidewalks | 30 | 3 | 2 |
| Wide Shoulder | 21 | 10 | 5 |
| Bicycle Lane | 18 | 9 | 0 |
| Cycle Track | 16 | 9 | 2 |
| Sharrow | 9 | 8 | 6 |
| Signed Bicycle Route | 9 | 8 | 6 |



| Trail Programs | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Walk/ Bike to School | 23 |
| Special Events/ Activities | 17 |
| Kids Activities | 14 |
| Bicycle Club | 13 |
| User Safety Training | 13 |
| Walk/ Run Club | 12 |
| Story Book Trail | 11 |
| Bike Share | 10 |

Economic Development

Additionally at the Public Open Houses participants were asked to provide input on where they believe it was appropriate to include development types. The following are tabulated results from all three sessions.

| | |
|---|--|
| Residential Development | Focused near towns especially Lagrange & Ontario |
| Commercial Development | Focused near towns especially Lagrange & Mongo |
| Parks & Open Space | Clustered around the eastern portion of the county |
| Restaurants & Entertainment Development | Focused near towns especially Mongo & Shipshewana |

Additional Comments & Thoughts

Finally at the Public Open House participants were asked to provide any further feedback. The following is a summary:

- Speed limits for Mopeds and E-bikes needs to be enforced (2)
- Connections:
 - North/ South connector from Pumpkinvine to the planned Hawpatch trail
 - Connect Pumpkinvine to Town of Howe
 - Connect to existing Pumpkinvine & Fishing Line Trails
 - Connection to other neighborhood trails
 - Connect to North/ South Twin Lakes
 - Connect campgrounds & attractions (2)
 - Connect Topeka to Emma to Shipshewana off main roads
 - Ice Cream tour/ bike route
 - Connect to surrounding Counties (3)
 - Connect Town of Lagrange to Delt Church, Dallas Lake, David Rogers Park
 - Trails around lakes (2)
 - Connect the trails to County Parks (2)
 - Connect Town of Howe to Pine Knob County Park
 - Add sidewalks/ bike paths for safe access to county schools (Lakeland, Westview, and Prairie Heights)
- Desire for unpaved Mountain Bike recreational trails
- Pigeon River Wildlife Preserve
 - Paved trails
 - Utilize state ground if available (unpaved or paved)
 - Use Pigeon River Fish & Wildlife area for Trails
- Safety Elements
 - Roadside berms to ride safely along county roads
 - Combination of dedicated paths and much wider & berms for safety

- Crosswalk signs with lights
- Reduced speed limits where trails share roadways
- Key Routes Identified:
 - S 500 East
 - S 1000 W
 - W 600 S could use a side trail for school bikes
- Endowment for trail maintenance
- Desire for bike route with more elevation change for recreational users
- Remove tree roots before paving
- Shade is important along trails
- Create a Lagrange County Park and Trails passport

Big Idea Open House

The Big Idea Open House is scheduled for September 26. HWC will present preliminary vision and goals. The public will provide their feedback for the final public engagement before the master plan is drafted.