

Prepared for:

Naturally Lincoln



Lincoln Economic Development
Authority

LINCOLN COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2017



Draft: May 08, 2017

Prepared by:



E.L. ROBINSON
ENGINEERING





2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

STEERING COMMITTEE

Larry Stutler
Tabitha Black
Evelyn Cartwright
Jason Cook
Jerry Cremeans
Rick Helton
Austin Lucas
Zachary Maynard
Gary McCallister
Paula Nelson
Rick Ryan
Josh Stowers
Ralph Triplett
Charles Vance



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
What is a Comprehensive Plan	1
Summary of Planning Process/Public Input	2
Demographics	3
Population	3
Educational Attainment & Income	7
Households	8
Housing	8
Employment	11
Goals (10 to 20 Year Projection)	12
Population	13
Trends in Population	13
Future Outlook & Needs	15
Housing	16
Trends in Housing	16
Future Outlook & Needs	16
Infrastructure	18
Trends in Infrastructure	18
Future Outlook & Needs	20
Economic Growth & Land Use	24
Trends in Economic Growth & Land Use	29
Future Outlook & Needs	32
Transportation	33
Trends in Transportation	33
Future Outlook & Needs	36
Community Development	37
Trends in Public Facilities, Education, & Health/Social Services	40
Future Outlook & Needs	42
Implementation Strategies	44
Appendix A: Public Input Summary	A
Appendix B: County Survey Summary	B

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

INTRODUCTION



Lincoln County Courthouse

Lincoln County, West Virginia was formed 150 years ago on February 23, 1867 from parts of Boone, Cabell, Kanawha, and Putnam Counties. The county was named in memory of President Abraham Lincoln two years after his death. By 1869, sections of northern Logan and Wayne Counties were added to Lincoln County's boundary while other portions were reabsorbed into Putnam County. It is one of five WV counties formed after statehood in 1863. It is 439 square miles in size and has a population estimated at 20,415 in 2015. It ranks 28th out of the 55 counties in population density at 49.2 people per square mile.

Today it is primarily a rural southwestern county surrounded by seven other adjoining West Virginia counties with a population of approximately 466,000 or about one quarter of the state's population. Lincoln County's population has stayed about the same since 1910 with some minor fluctuations. All of the adjoining counties have grown in population during the same time frame. Over the past 100+ years, Lincoln County has had an agricultural history primarily concentrated on tobacco. That focus has dropped off sharply to now mostly hay production, smaller tract vegetable and fruit producers with some livestock. In 2015, a regional plan cited the county's agricultural land use was about 10% of its land while timberland was the predominant land use.

It has a history with natural resources extraction primarily with oil and natural gas since the early to mid-20th Century. There are both deep and surface mined areas primarily found on the border areas with Mingo, Wayne, and Boone Counties. In 2010, Lincoln had three coal mines in the county that employed 300 people and mined over 2 million tons of coal primarily from surface mined coal. Today that has dropped off considerably with the decline in the coal market.

Lincoln County's most famous son, Brigadier General Charles E. "Chuck" Yeager was born in Myra on February 13, 1923. Mr. Yeager enlisted into the Army Air Corps at 18, just months prior to the United States entering WWII. He would later be selected for pilot training and complete primary flight school beginning his life-long aviation career. On October 14, 1947 over the Mojave Desert, Mr. Yeager became the first man to break the sound barrier. It is this great accomplishment which has made him a hero not only to Lincoln County, but to the state of West Virginia, as well as the United States of America.

Lincoln Economic Development Authority (LEDA) undertook developing this new comprehensive plan in order to update past documents and bring together other previous planning efforts into a new planning document. A community development and housing needs assessment was completed for the Lincoln County Commission in 1994. Additional planning studies by LEDA were



Charles E. "Chuck" Yeager monument in Hamlin

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

completed in 1998. A ten-year strategic plan was prepared in 2014 by the LEDA. The Region 2 Planning & Development Council completed an Economic Development Strategy in 2015 for their six-county region of which Lincoln County is included. These documents were used as sources for this comprehensive plan.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

It is a planning tool to help shape policies and guide decision making about the physical, economic, environmental, and social aspects of the county. The comprehensive plan is general in nature and is a long term forecast of the current perceived issues and a guide to address them. Some of the visions will not be achieved immediately and require a longer term forecast. This plan has a ten to twenty year projection of goals. Some goals can and should be implemented immediately.

The plan and the information within can be used in the future by county decision makers, property and business owners and regional and state agencies to make decisions based on the county's direction. The adoption of this plan does not change any laws or regulations as they apply to the county. It does provide guidance for future changes that the county may pursue.

This plan complies with the requirements of the state code. Many of the required plan components have overlapping issues they address and have been grouped together in an effort to streamline this document and make it as easy as possible to read and understand the recommendations of this plan. For example, in looking at the required components above, there are a lot of shared data and related recommendations for the land use, renewal and/or redevelopment, economic development, and preferred development areas components. Because of this overlap, all of these components are addressed as a group under the Economic Growth and Land Use section of this plan. Figure 1 illustrates how each of the elements required by the West Virginia Code are addressed in the Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan.

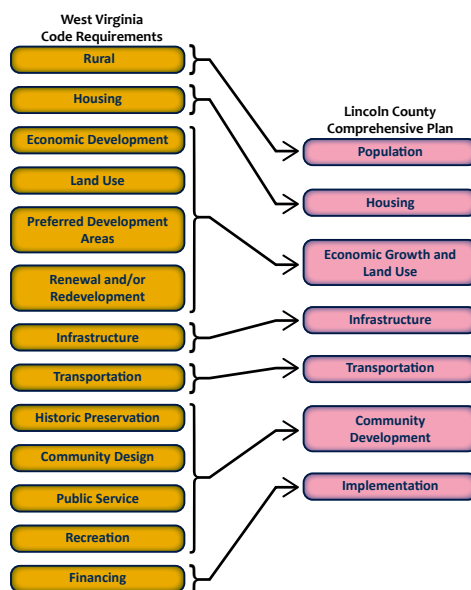


Figure 1: WV State Code Relationship Diagram

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Summary of Planning Process / Public Input

In 2016, LEDA engaged the services of E.L. Robinson Engineering (ELR) and Compass Point Planning (CPP) to help guide the planning effort beginning with a steering committee meeting in September, followed by a stakeholder's meeting of government, business, nonprofit organizations, education, healthcare representatives, and concerned citizens in October. ELR had follow-up telephone interviews and email exchanges with several stakeholders for additional information in early December, 2016. These included:

- Mr. Brian Vance, Manger for Armstrong Cable from the Hamlin, WV office
- Dr. Jeff Midkiff, Superintendent of Lincoln County Board of Education
- Dr. Loren Smith, Retired Physician, Farmer and Concerned Citizen
- Mr. Rick Helton, Floodplain and Building Permits Manager for Lincoln County
- Neal Vance, WVDOT

ELR also attended three public meetings in January and February of 2017 in West Hamlin, Midway Elementary and Harts Community Building. Additionally, ELR attended a workshop held by the WV Community Development Hub on February 6th and 7th at Hamlin with the technical assistance team of the International Economic Development Council. This workshop focused on building the county's economy. Discussion with representatives from Lincoln County's agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, and arts communities were beneficial for this plan's development. A summary of issues identified in all referenced meetings are listed in Appendix A.

Lastly, ELR with the assistance of Compass Point Planning, prepared a community survey for the plan. It was posted on LEDA's website for nearly 6 weeks, ending February 28th, 2017 and garnered 207 entries. The results of the survey are listed in Appendix B. After all of these meetings and citizen feedback, ELR prepared a draft of the comprehensive plan for LEDA review.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

DEMOGRAPHICS

A key component of any comprehensive planning strategy is an understanding of the demographics of a community and a review of the general trends affecting its future. This type of analysis is useful in answering the following questions, which in turn provides the basis for making decisions during the development of the comprehensive plan.

- How has the County grown in the past?
- What are some of the changing trends, both in the County and across the nation that might affect our future?
- How might we grow in the future if these trends continue unchanged?

The following sections provide a summary analysis of the demographic profile of Lincoln County and the general analysis of trends. These analyses are important to the plan because current trends may bring more or less growth than what the community wants in its future. The purpose of these analyses is to provide a foundation of knowledge of how much growth the County may anticipate in the future if current trends and development policies continue and is not reflective of any recommendations proposed as part of this plan. These analyses also allow the County to tailor planning tools that will guide any new growth toward the community's vision of Lincoln County for the next 10 to 20 years.

Population

Lincoln County has maintained a relatively stable population since 1910 with some minor increases and decreases seen across various decades. Several nearby counties have experienced growth in the same time period, in large part due to growth around the major cities and towns. In some instances, those counties have also experienced population loss in recent decades, a trend that has impacted much of West Virginia. Table 1 provides a summary of population numbers in Lincoln County since 1900. Table 2 on the following page identifies the general population trends during the last four decades in Lincoln County and several adjacent counties. Table 2 shows how the various counties in the region have seen changes in population ranging from a slow decline to some growth in Putnam County.

Given that the population has remained relatively stable in the County for the last 100 years, there are no significant changes in population anticipated over the next 10 to 20 years however there may continue to be some slight increases or decreases similar to the last few decades. Furthermore, there may be

Table 1: Historic Population in Lincoln County

1900	15,434
1910	20,491
1920	19,378
1930	19,156
1940	22,886
1950	22,466
1960	20,267
1970	18,912
1980	23,675
1990	21,382
2000	22,108
2010	21,720
2015 Estimate	21,415

Notes:

- Source: U.S. Census

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Table 2: Historic Population Growth in Lincoln County and Surrounding Region

	Lincoln County	Cabell County	Putnam County	Kanawha County	Boone County	Mingo County
1970	18,912	106,918	27,625	229,515	25,118	32,780
1980	23,675	106,835	38,181	231,414	30,447	37,336
% Annual Growth	2.3%	0.0%	3.3%	0.1%	1.9%	1.3%
1990	21,382	96,827	42,835	207,619	25,870	33,739
% Annual Growth	-1.0%	-1.0%	1.2%	-1.1%	-1.6%	-1.0%
2000	22,108	96,784	51,589	200,073	25,535	28,253
% Annual Growth	0.3%	0.0%	1.9%	-0.4%	-0.1%	-1.8%
2010	21,720	96,319	55,486	193,063	24,629	26,839
% Annual Growth	-0.2%	0.0%	0.7%	-0.4%	-0.4%	-0.5%
2015 (Estimate)	21,415	96,844	56,848	188,332	23,372	25,292
% Annual Growth	-0.3%	0.0%	0.5%	-0.5%	-1.0%	-1.2%

Notes:

- Source: U.S. Census and Compass Point Planning (calculations)
- The annual growth rate is the compound average annual growth rate between each census date or census estimate.

changes in the makeup of the population, especially the age of the population as discussed below. These internal changes can impact the needs of residents over the course of this comprehensive plan.

One aspect of the population that was considered during this planning process is the aging of the community and the differing requirements for services and housing tied to each age group. Almost 30% of Lincoln County's residents are in the 45-64 year old age bracket, a time where people have families and most often employed and out of school. This is the largest percentage of the population. If you include residents between the ages of 35 and 64 years old, that percentage grows to well over a half of the community. A more interesting trend shown in Figure 2 is Lincoln County is close to having the same ratio of children under the age of 18 as the entire nation but that ratio differs significantly in the next age group of 18 to 24 years old. This likely

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

illustrates that as children graduate from high school, they are moving out of the County to either work or attend college, more so than in Kanawha County or West Virginia. The ratios increase in the older age groups when residents have likely chosen to settle, or possibly move back to Lincoln County in the years where they are starting families and settling into jobs. The variety in the ratio of ages is also reflected in the median age of all residents in the community where Lincoln County has a median age of 41.2, similar to the median age in West Virginia (41.3 years) but much older than the median age of 37.2 when you look at the nation. While the aging of our population is a national trend due to longer life spans and increased ability to live independently, the significantly higher percentage of older residents in Lincoln County reflects a potential for more demands for alternative housing options and services to meet the needs of an older population.

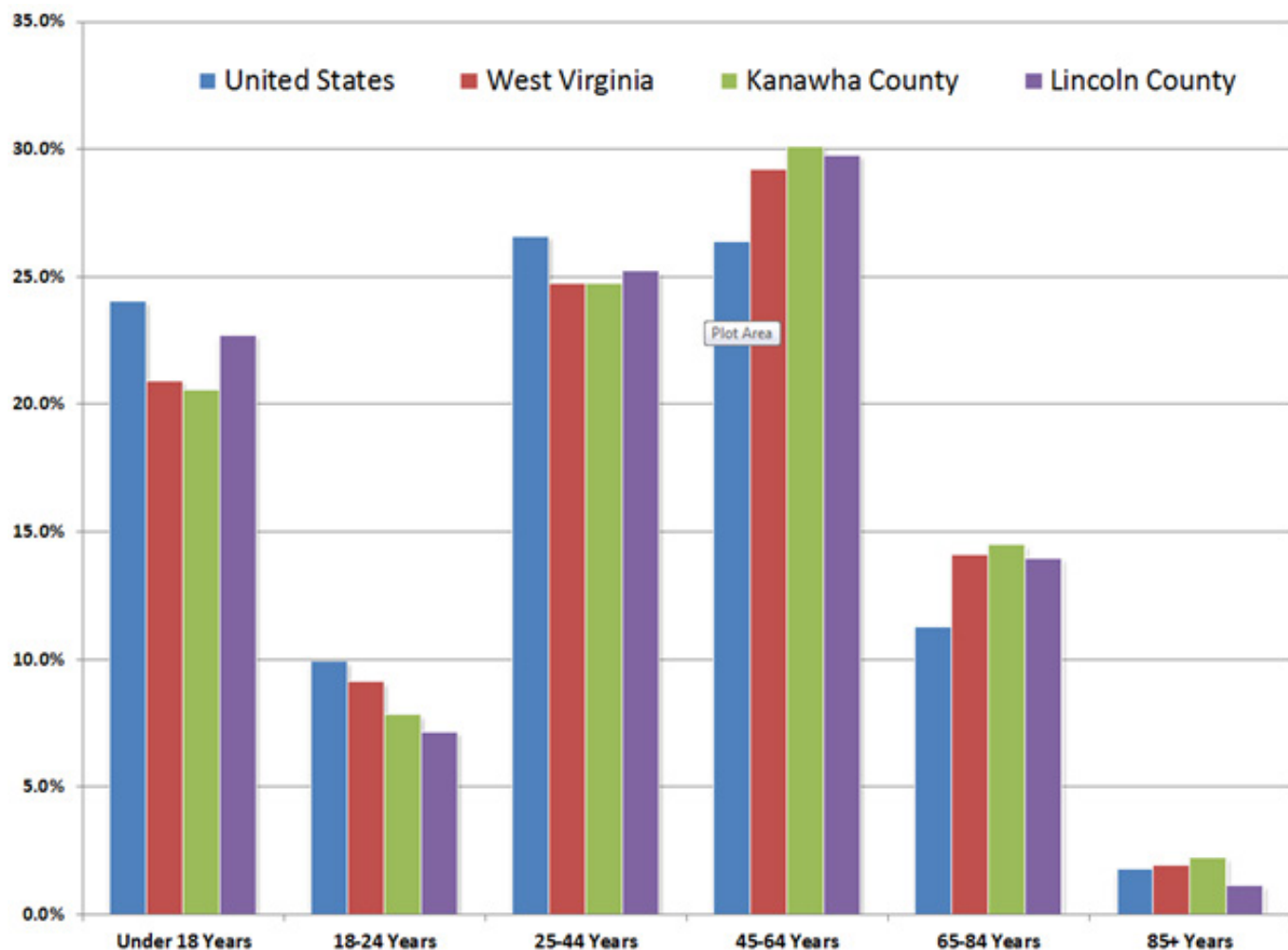


Figure 2: Percentage of Population by Age Bracket. Source: 2010 U.S. Census

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Educational Attainment & Income

Another element of the population evaluated as part of this plan was the overall educational attainment of the population and related data on occupation and income. Figure 3 compares the highest level of education attained by residents who are 25 years or older in the County, State, and across the United States. In Lincoln County, there is a significantly lower percentage of residents who have some type of higher education degree (associate's, bachelor's, or a graduate degree, etc. Only 13.1% of residents have gone on to earn a degree after high school as compared to 25.2% in West Virginia and 37.2% of the United States. These numbers can impact the types of industries that might look to locate in Lincoln County or may mean that any new employers will need to look outside the County for employees if a higher educational degree is necessary. As with most communities, the educational attainment levels are often reflective of the median income levels. The higher the educational attainment, typically the higher the median household income. Lincoln County is no exception where the median household income was \$35,800 (Source: American Community Survey) as compared to West Virginia where the median income was only \$41,751 and Kanawha County where the median income was \$45,882.

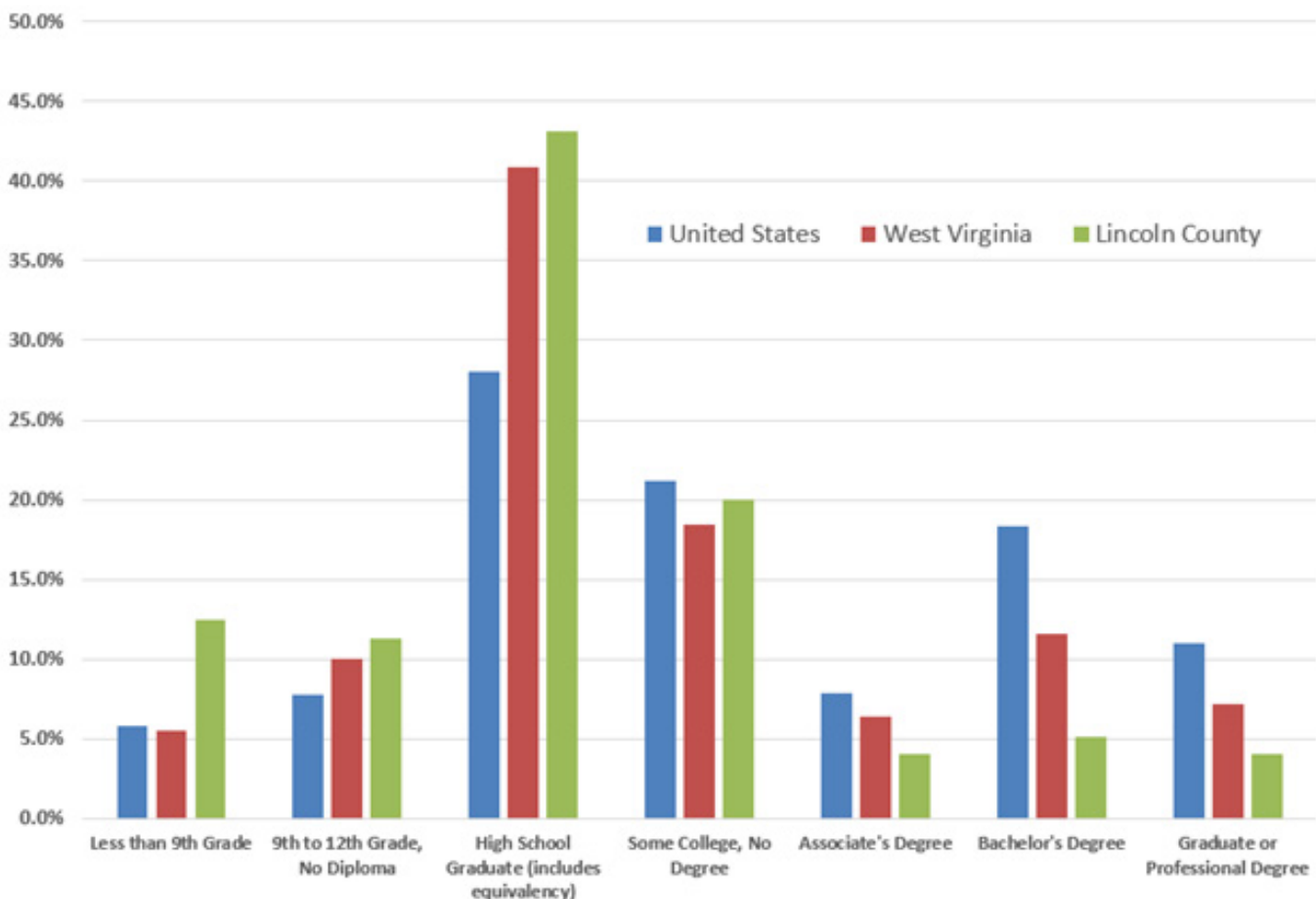


Figure 3: Educational Attainment. Source: American Community Survey Estimates



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Households

In addition to the specific demographics of the population above, other important background on where and how residents are living in Lincoln relate to households including the type of household and size of the household. A household, unlike a housing or dwelling unit, is an evaluation of the relationship of people living together as a group. Lincoln County's household numbers are in-line with the state and national trends. Of the County's 7,994 households, 68.3% are family households, which is just slightly higher than the State's 64.8% and the nation's 66.1%. The average family size is 3.33 people per family in Lincoln County. Additionally, 28.4% (approximately 2,270 households) of the County's households are where the householder is living alone with just over 1,000 households being single-person households with the householder being 65 years or older. This last number is likely to increase as the population ages and health care services allow for a longer life span. If the County experiences continued increases in this number, there will be an increased demand for services targeted towards older adults.

Housing

While the overall population of Lincoln County has remained almost the same since 1910, the number of dwelling units in the County has significantly changed during the same time frame. Table 3 illustrates the number of housing units that exist in the County dating back to 1960. There was a surge in housing development in the 1960s through almost 2000 when the total number of units seems to have stabilized. This information is supported by the age of housing illustrated in Figure 4. While a significant growth in housing at the same time where there is little change in population may seem counterintuitive, this is actually common to many communities because of a trend toward smaller household sizes with fewer children in homes and more empty nesters (older adults living alone or where children have moved out). Given that this plan does not anticipate a major spike in population over the next 20 years, it is also likely that the number of housing units will likely remain relatively stable. Some units may be demolished or rebuilt due to age or a desire for different housing types but this plan does not anticipate this type of trend to create significant housing changes.

Table 3: Historic Number of Housing Units in Lincoln County

1960	5,411
1970	5,984
1980	8,131
1990	8,429
2000	9,846
2010	9,887
2011	9,869
2012	9,843
2013	9,835
2014	9,819
2015	9,799

Notes:

- Source: U.S. Census

In addition to understanding the general trends in the number of dwelling units, it is also important to have a better understanding of the characteristics of the housing stock as it can demonstrate a deficiency in a particular type of housing as well as identify where the county may start to see long-term maintenance issues.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

The American Community Survey (U.S. Census) estimates that almost 70% of all housing units in Lincoln County were detached, single-family dwellings (See Figure 4). If you include mobile homes within this classification, that number is over 96% of all housing in Lincoln County. This is a very high ratio compared to West Virginia with 85.6% (single-family detached and mobile homes) and 79.7% in Kanawha County. The smaller number in Kanawha County is expected given the presence of Charleston where there is naturally a tendency for more attached housing options. While the ratio of single-family detached homes and mobile homes as part of the total housing stock is not expected to change significantly in the future there may be a desire by County residents to encourage at least some additional housing options (small-scale attached patio homes or apartments) to broaden housing choice in value and type, especially for older residents who may not want to live on larger lots or farm acreage.

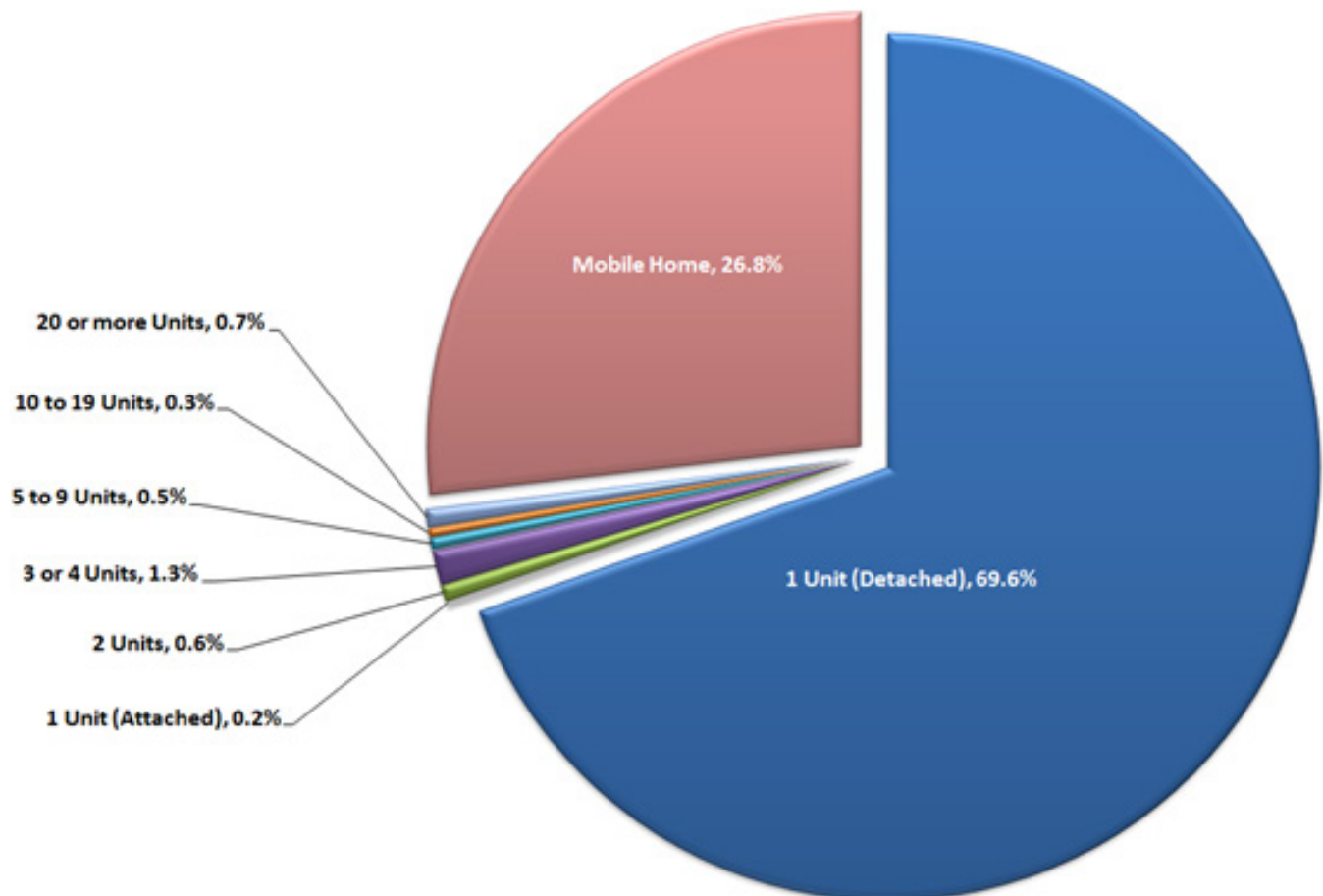


Figure 4 : Number of Units per Structure in Lincoln County. Source: American Community Survey Estimates

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

In addition to the type of structures present in the County, the American Community Survey also provides information on the general age of the housing stock in Lincoln County (See Figure 5). When compared to neighboring Kanawha County, and West Virginia, Lincoln County has a higher percentage of newer homes; however, over a third of the County's housing was built prior to 1970. While most housing and neighborhoods may be fairly stable, an aging housing stock may elevate the need for more housing maintenance efforts to ensure continued stability.

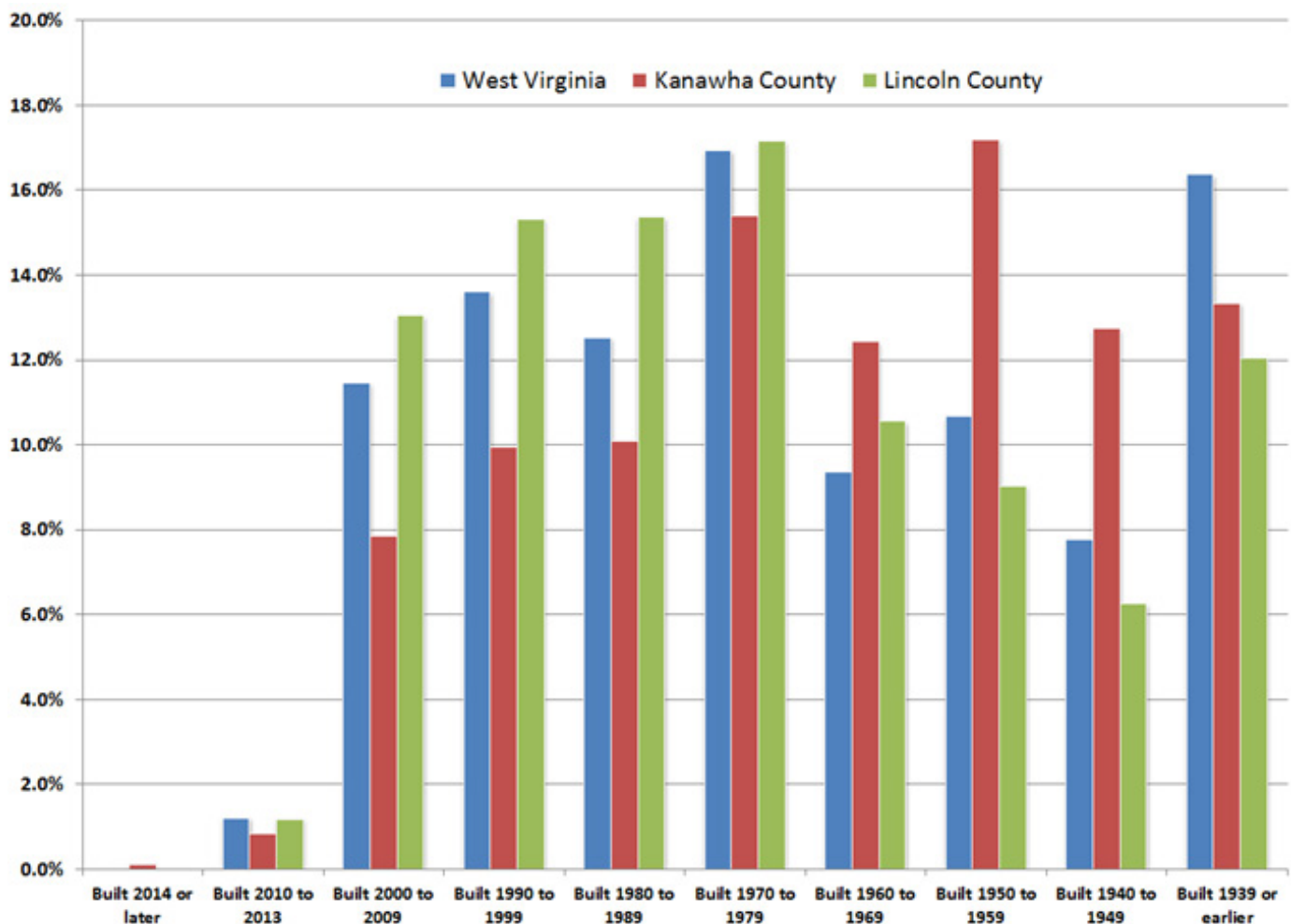


Figure 5: Year Structure Built. Source: American Community Survey Estimates

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Employment

The employment levels for Lincoln County residents have improved over the last few years with a significant improvement in 2016 alone. In January 2016, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the unemployment rate in Lincoln County was 11.2% but that by November 2016, that rate had lowered to 6.7%. This is somewhat higher than West Virginia's unemployment rate of 6.0% in the same time and above the 4.6% unemployment rate of the nation.

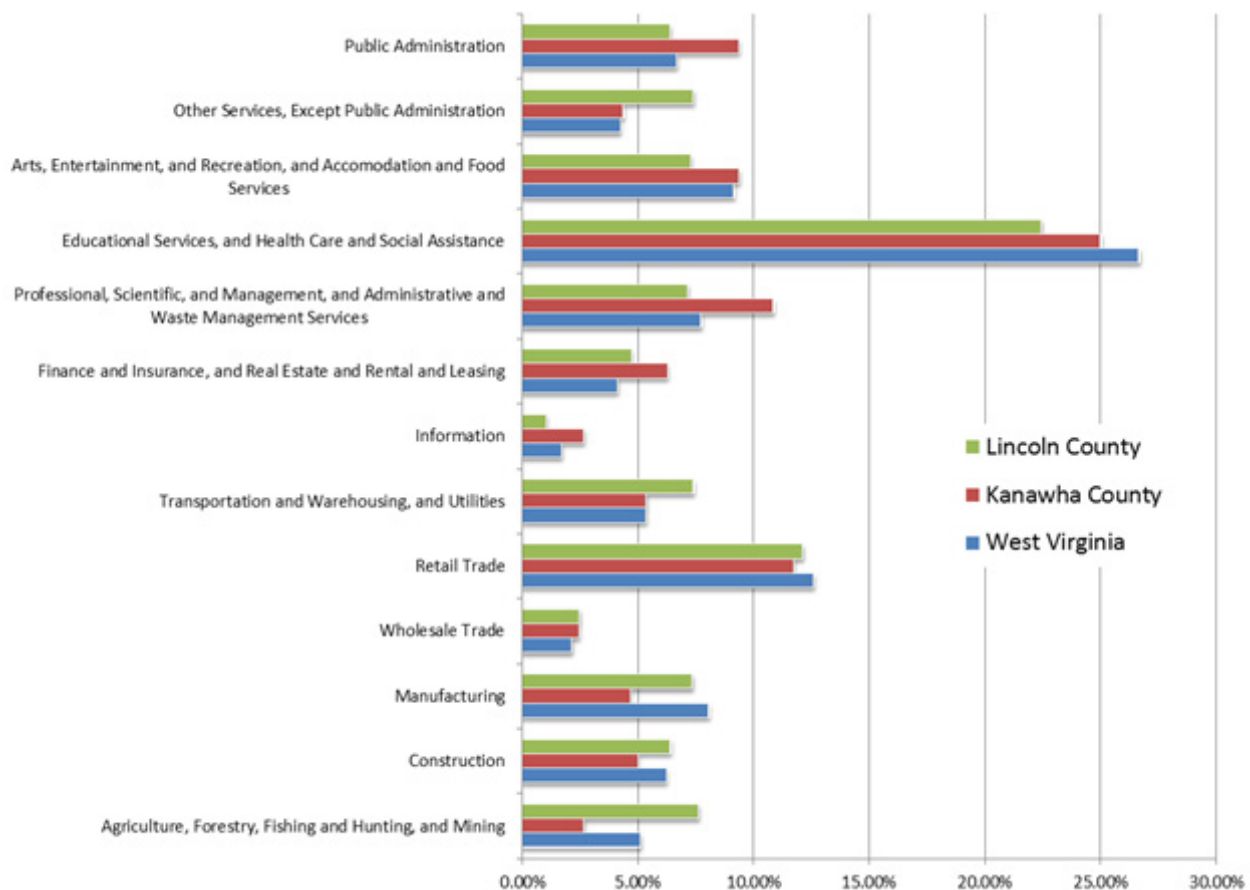


Figure 6 : Occupation of Residents by Industry. Source: American Community Survey Estimates

Figure 6 illustrates the trades where Lincoln County residents were employed based on the 2015 American Community Survey. Some of the numbers shown in Figure 6 make sense when compared against the County's largest employers. For example, some of the largest employers in the County are tied to educational and health services, industries where over 20% of residents are employed. However, there are also a number of construction and mining companies located in the County, industries where the fewest numbers of residents are employed. These types of comparisons further show that there is likely a significant amount of commuting in and out of the County for jobs based on industry and the educational/job backgrounds of residents.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

GOALS (10 TO 20 YEAR PROJECTION)

These goals serve as the basis for the recommendations within the plan. As the county implements this plan and items are presented for action, these goals help identify if the action will help complete the vision of the plan for Lincoln County.

1. The county will continue to expand infrastructure, building on further extensions of water and broadband which have the largest distribution network in the county. Sewer extensions should extend from Hamlin and West Hamlin, evaluating plant upgrades as needed for expanded users. The northeastern section of the county will be served by an initiative from the Lincoln PSD to develop a sewer plant there. The extension of the sewer system in the southern part of the county will start in Harts. A study of a connection to Chapmanville or an independent system beginning in Harts is desired by its residents.
2. Cell tower expansion needs to happen by continuously putting pressure on providers. Locations for new towers have already been identified and offered for use.
3. Economic growth will be based on growing Lincoln County job opportunities through entrepreneurship in small businesses. Examples in agriculture, timbering, tourism, and manufacturing need to be celebrated and showcased as models. They also should have ample assistance in funding for growth and expansion.
4. Opportunities for large economic drivers in Lincoln County are on the horizon but not imminent. However it is critical to prepare for these possible opportunities by continuing to build infrastructure that will allow these to come to fruition.
5. Lincoln County must continue to make gains on community development needs for education, health care, and social services. Education is a key component for the future of the county. The high school built in 2006 has the ability to provide a high quality education in a rural setting. It is a source of pride in the county. Lincoln Primary Care Center is a model for health care in rural West Virginia. The opioid epidemic threatening West Virginia is also prevalent in Lincoln County and must be addressed.
6. Lincoln County has high home ownership at 77%. Many people who live in Lincoln County have lived there their entire lives and have strong family connections to the county. Many others moved to the county for the rural lifestyle in the 1970s and 1980s. There is ample housing in the county; however, much of it needs rehabilitated and dilapidated structures demolished.
7. There is a greater need to address housing needs of the older population with closer access to groceries, healthcare, and public facilities. Areas within the existing towns and communities will strive to rehabilitate or rebuild housing where existing infrastructure and facilities are readily available which strengthens each community.
8. Future land use in the county will strive to maximize its mountainous terrain in the most productive environmentally sound and socially responsive manner to benefit the county residents. The majority of the county is steeply sloping hillsides and river and creek valleys that are within the flood plain. Most of the existing flat useable land is either developed or in agricultural use. The redevelopment and reuse of developed land that is unproductive is the highest and best use for the county.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

POPULATION

As has been stated before, Lincoln County's population has been about the same since 1910 with some fluctuations up and down of a few thousand over 117 years. Projections for the next 10-20 years show no significant change. The surrounding counties of Kanawha, Boone, and Mingo have had higher percentages of population decline over the last 25 years; however, Lincoln County has seen only minor decline, which reflects its over 100 year heritage of a stable population. 71% of Lincoln County residents rated their quality of life in the county wide survey for the plan as fair to excellent; however, over half of these responded with only a fair assessment. The top three reasons for living in Lincoln County were they grew up in the county, to be close to family, and the rural atmosphere. In the public meetings held, many said that they had available land parcels to give to their children so they could build on the family property. This supports the value that the county has strong family connections which keeps some from leaving.

Trends in Population

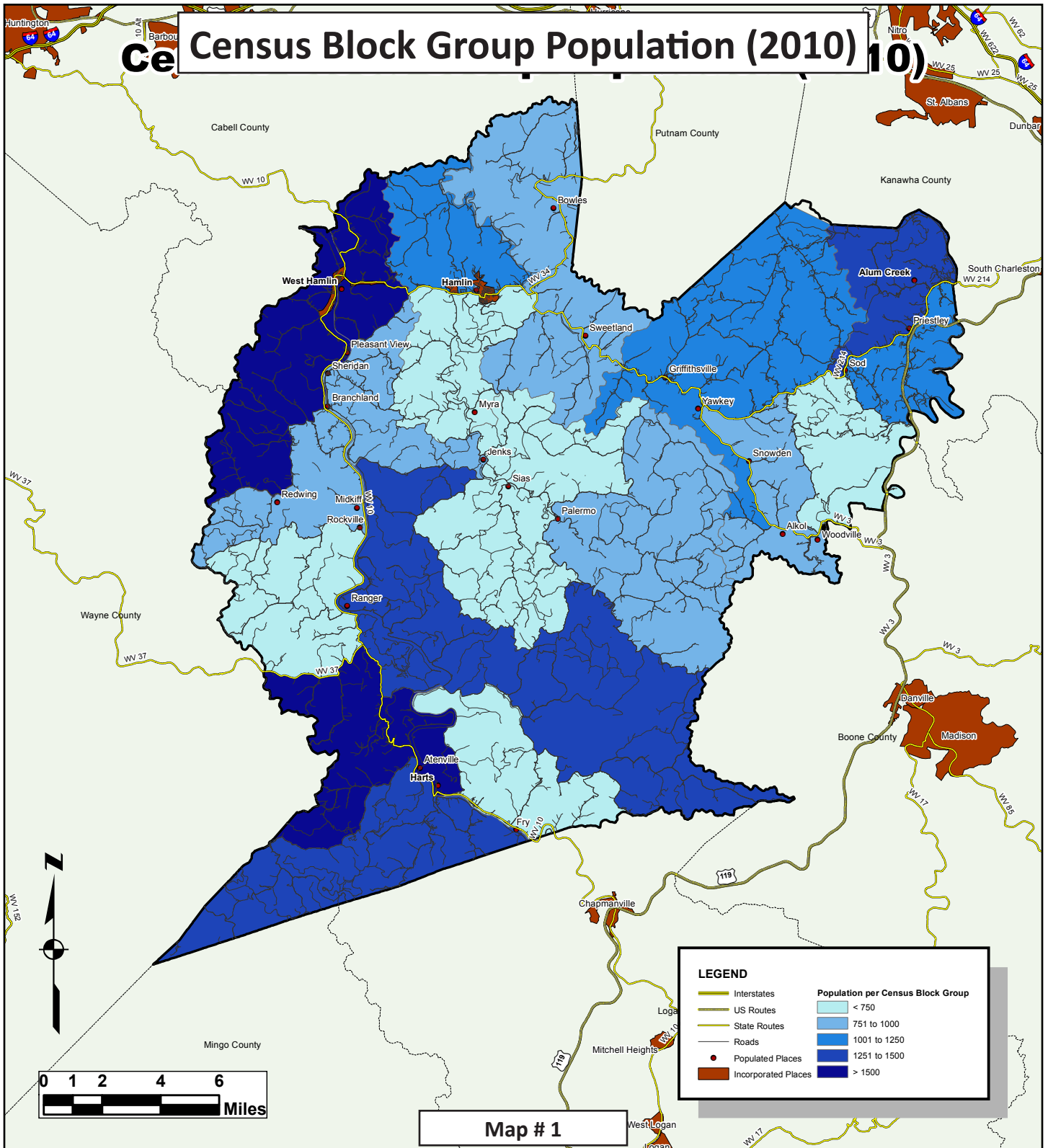
The population is also aging similar to a trend throughout the state and the largest neighboring county, Kanawha. This aging population will require greater healthcare needs and a closer proximity to social services, transit and other necessities. Considerations for keeping seniors nearer these services should be within the towns and communities. Another aspect is the loss of the 18-24 years old segment from the county. While some have left to attend college, many leave for employment opportunities. The future of the county is within this group and strong efforts should be made to support education costs that may stipulate requirements for staying within the county after graduation for a given time. Also, it would be helpful to maintain contact with the past high school and college graduates that left the county by keeping them informed via social media of the county's progress.



West Hamlin welcome sign

Another population trend is its fragmentation. As a rural county there are some locations the population's density is less than 3 people per 100 acres. The county has no large city. Hamlin is the county seat with a population of 1,142 (2010). Hamlin, alongside with West Hamlin with a population of 774 (2010), are commercial, residential, educational and institutional centers of the county. Other smaller unincorporated areas along the major connector routes and the Coal, Mud, and Guyandotte River valleys make up the other denser residential area with limited commercial areas.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Future Outlook & Needs

Population outlook appears to be stable for the next 10-20 years with minor fluctuations. The strong familiar ties and connection to the land is a tenet for living in Lincoln County. Lower housing costs and high home ownership are great attributes for the County for attracting new residents.

Identify Growth Areas

To strengthen the population growth, target specific areas for infrastructure extensions; review available developable land or redevelop dilapidated and/or abandoned property; expand community development efforts such as community centers, pedestrian connections, and local recreation enhancements. Infrastructure sewer extensions are a critical need for growth. Hamlin, West Hamlin, Alum Creek, and Harts are best positioned to consider this. Identifying developable and redevelopable lands along stronger community development efforts show greatest opportunity in the Guyandotte and Mud River communities and those closet to US 119.



West Hamlin Town Hall

A larger section of the County's workforce travels out of the county for employment. While this will probably stay the same for 10-20 year future term, there needs to be a stronger emphasis on employment opportunities within Lincoln County.

Employment Opportunities

Education is the key to advancing this need. Lincoln County High School (LCHS) has a strong Career Technical Education (CTE) component and is partnering with higher education institutions for students to earn college credits while in high school. Lincoln Primary Care Center is one of the largest employers in the county and will always be needing skilled personnel and professionals for its workforce. While this is one example, the public education system in conjunction with LEDA has and will continue to target business interests to employ local and capable talent. LEDA may consider developing an incubator space for entrepreneurial efforts to support local needs not being met by current business. For example, we heard numerous times in public meeting the importance of child care facilities.

There are significant needs in the county for child care facilities and elder care also. A majority of childcare is done by family members due to the shortage and high cost. The high school CTE teaches a curriculum for childcare but these students can't find a job in the county for this work.

Entrepreneurial opportunities should be supported with access to facilities and grants to get this need addressed – same for elder care.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

HOUSING

Lincoln County housing units reached a peak in 2010 with 9,887. In 1960, there were 5,411. In 50 years, there was an 83% increase in housing units. Considering the county population increased by approximately 1,500 in the same timeframe, there is a significant imbalance between the two values identified. Families growing and children staying within the county contribute significantly to this variation, but also there were new people coming into Lincoln County seeking the rural lifestyle and cheaper land costs in the same timeframe.

Trends in Housing

Homeownership in Lincoln County has many positives. It has an above average percentage of owner occupied housing units at 77% compared to neighboring Kanawha County at 70% and 73% for the entire state. The median price of an owner occupied housing unit is \$78,300 (2014) for Lincoln County compared to Kanawha County at \$101,300 or the WV average of \$100,200. For first time home buyers this a very positive attribute, but resale value could be less than surrounding counties.

There are very few options for housing type besides single family dwelling at 70% of all housing stock and mobile homes at 26%. All other type of housing units such as multifamily housing units, townhouses, condominiums, apartment buildings, are just at 4%.

Future Outlook & Needs

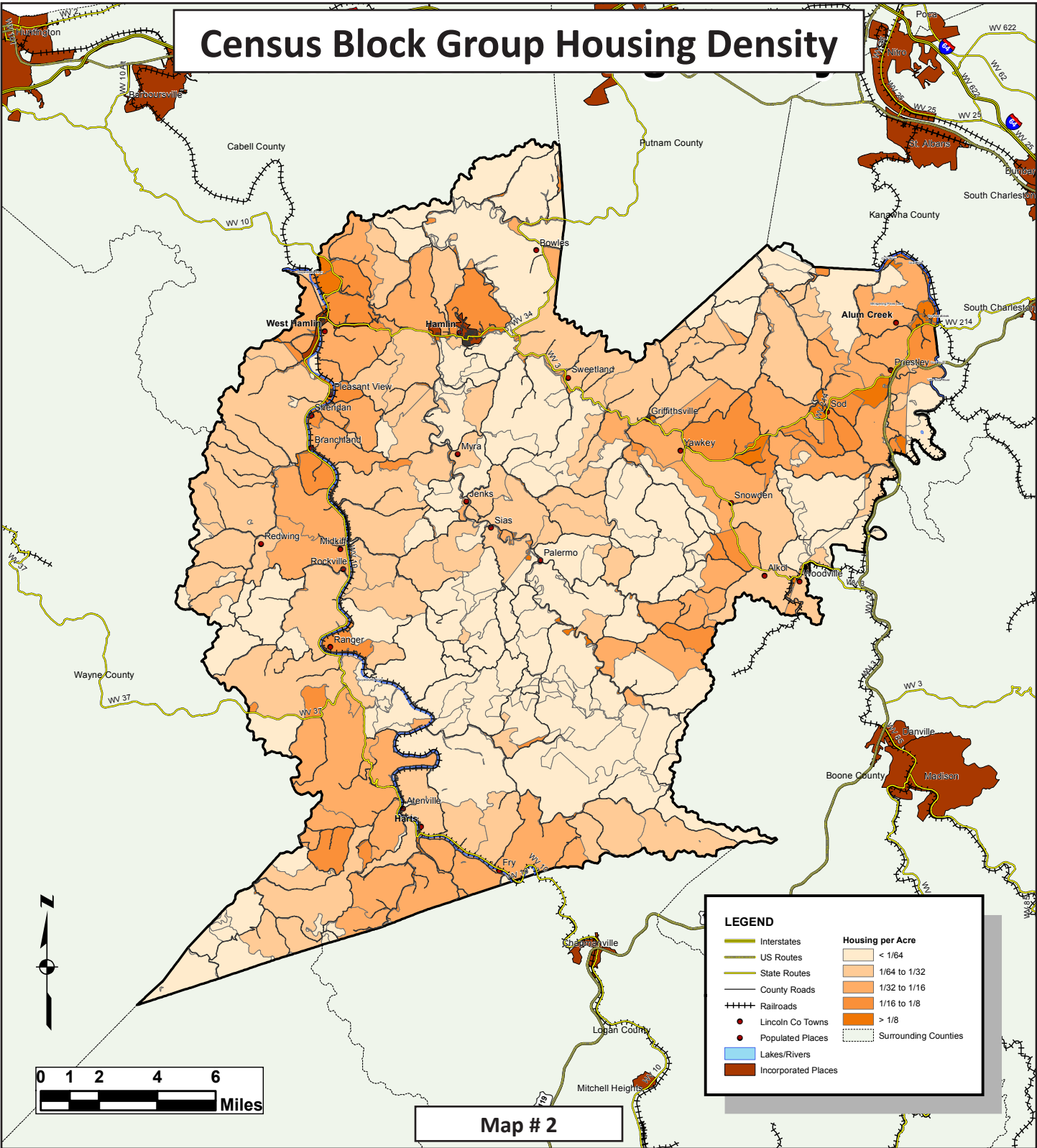
The age of most housing stock is newer than 1970. Over one third (37%) of existing housing built prior to 1970 will be needing maintenance and updates as they approach 50 years and older. The demand for additional single family homes based on the population projection should be limited; however, there will always be a desire to upgrade to a new house by some owners although probably a smaller amount. Only 13 new building permits were issued in 2015. Opportunities also exist for rehabilitation of older housing units and demolition of dilapidated structures for new housing infill especially in towns and communities with sewer and water service and are close to health care, social services and commercial areas.

Different housing types beyond the single family residence should be considered. While Lincoln County has an average household size of 3.33 people per family there are 2,270 households with only one person and 1,000 of them are persons over 65. The need for greater housing choices for the aging population will increase over the next 10-20 years.

LEDA and community leaders should review housing infill opportunities in each community and possible other parcels adjoining existing infrastructure and major transportation routes especially in northeast and northwest portions of the county and the Harts community as priority reinvestment areas.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Census Block Group Housing Density



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure namely the utilities that facilitate development options and improve living conditions for the general population area can be difficult to fund in rural areas. While electricity and telephone land line service can be extended to most locations and has been in Lincoln County, it is the underground services namely water and sewer lines that are lacking in the county with sewer more than water infrastructure. Today's economy and educational needs require broadband/fiber internet access and cell phone service as possibly the most important infrastructure component for rural communities to compete.

Trends in Infrastructure

Over the last 20 years, potable water has been extended along most of Lincoln County's major arterial roadways most notably the Guyandotte River Valley along WV10 in the western portion of the county and the northern portion of the county from West Hamlin to Alum Creek along WV3, 34, and 214 and roads off these main lines. Water service is provided by the following entities within the county, West Virginia America Water Co, Branchland-Midkiff Public Service District (PSD), Lincoln PSD, and the Town of West Hamlin. There are still sections of these services nearby that still need water extensions. A majority of the county's population is served with potable water.



West Hamlin water treatment plant

Cable and internet access also follows the same general areas as water service mainly due to Armstrong Wire with a regional office in Hamlin. It has extended 400 MB services throughout the northwestern portions of the county from Hamlin and West Hamlin area north and south of Route 3 as well as all along WV10 along the Guyandotte River with some extensions beyond the main corridor. Suddenlink Communications serves the eastern portion of the county from Alum Creek to Sumerco. Frontier Telecommunication also provides some internet service but at a much slower speed. (15MB)

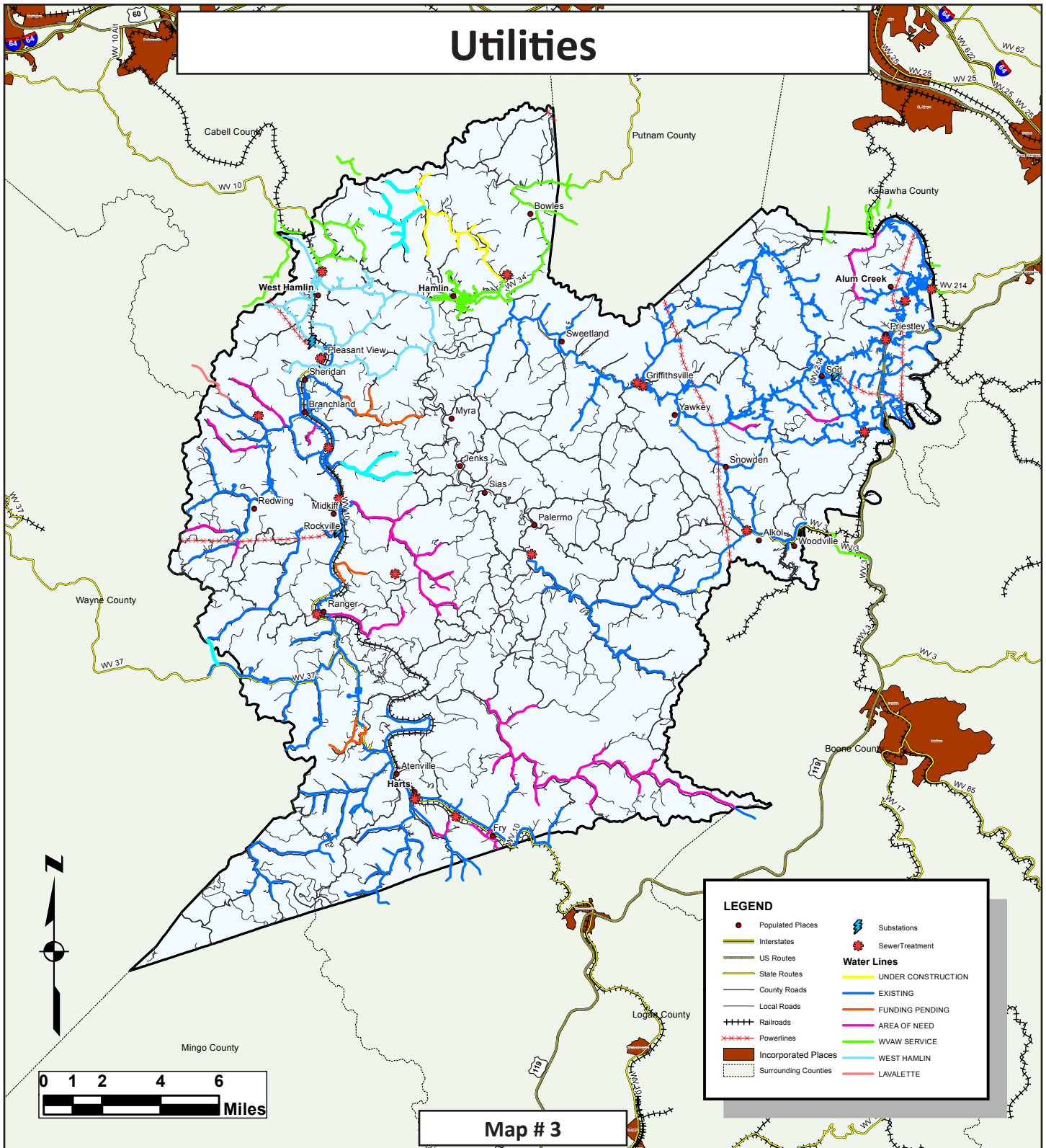
Existing sewer service is found at three locations beside package plants for schools, and other public facilities. The Towns of Hamlin, West Hamlin and the community of Pleasant View are the only communities in the county with sewer lines and treatment plants. Approximately 1,300 customers or about 10% of the population is served with public sewer. Lincoln PSD is in design for sewer service to a portion of their 2,125 water customers in Alum Creek community and north east portions of the county.

Cellular service is severely lacking in the county, much like other rural counties in West Virginia. The only areas served are around the Towns of Hamlin and West Hamlin and the northeastern section of the county along US 119. The county and Armstrong has offered existing tower locations for cellular companies to expand service into more rural sections of Lincoln County, but these free locations still do not make economic sense for the providers.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Naturally Lincoln

WV



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Future Outlook & Needs

Water extensions have been planned and are waiting funding for western extensions primarily in the Guyandotte River drainage and several smaller ones in the Alum Creek and Sod area. When completed they will service the most populated regions of the county. The largest area not adequately served now or shown for future extensions is the Mud River area from its headwaters along the Boone/Lincoln line downstream to Hamlin. This area should be studied for water service from the Upper Mud Lake especially as the Rock Creek Development would move westward and with possible expansion southward from Route 3 along the Mud River Valley as new floodplain maps may show more available land outside of the floodplain for possible development.

It is critical to finish the pending line extensions to the majority of county residents. The past 20 years have seen great advances in available water for county residents. It is possible to see almost all residents having access to water in the next 20 years.

Armstrong Wire has indicated their next expansion of broadband/internet services into the Mud River drainage beginning in Hamlin and heading south. This too is an area that has not been served by this utility and gives more county residents access to internet for education, commerce, and business opportunities.

As stated previously, only about 10% of the county's populations have sewer service. This is a costly utility for extensions in a sparsely populated area. The need for a customer base to support construction and operational cost with fair monthly rates is the biggest challenge.

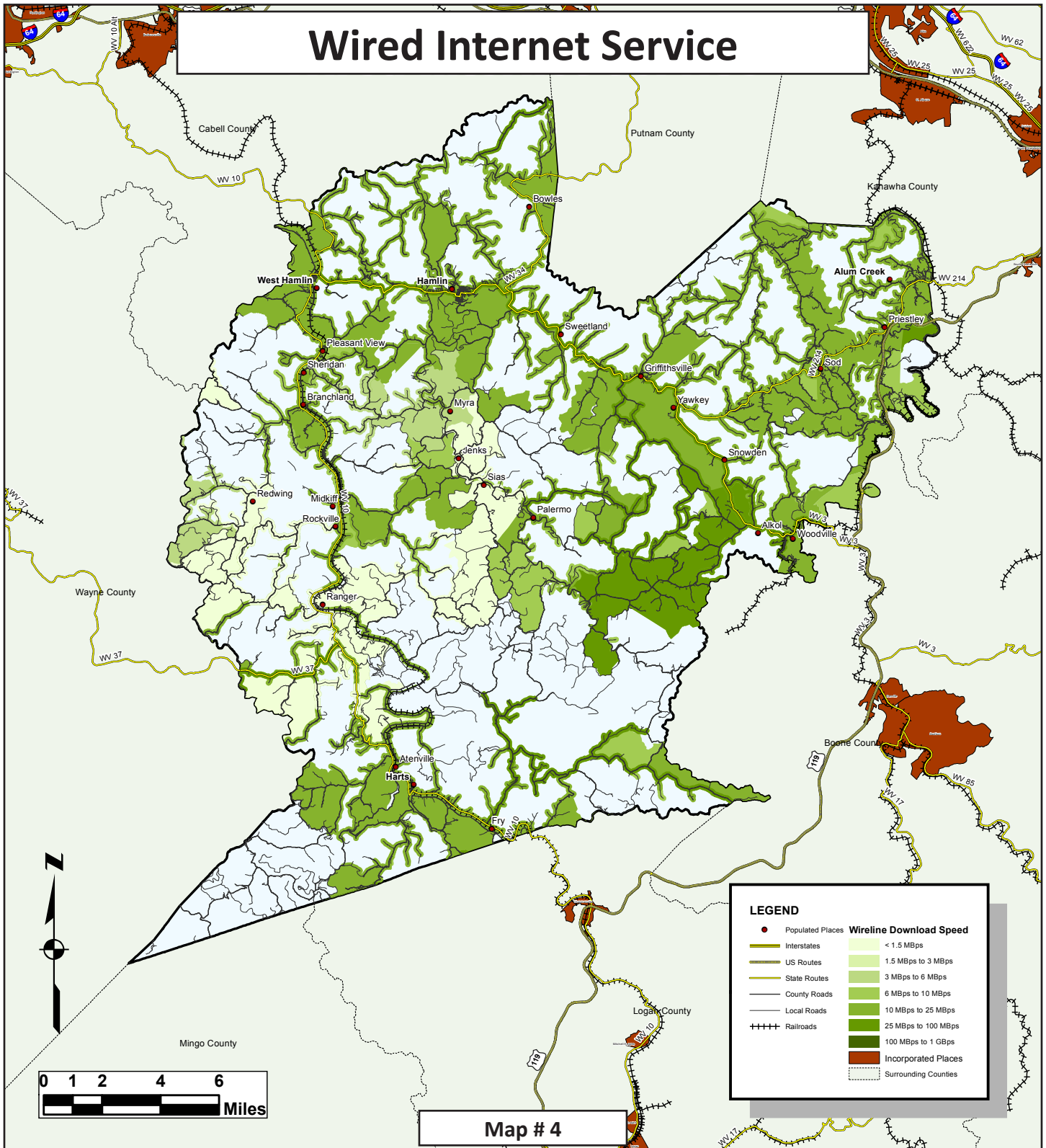
Hamlin, West Hamlin and Pleasant View systems should be evaluated together. This should include review of the existing plants capacities and how to extend lines to connect new customers to the systems and expand treatment plants. Strive to extend sewer from these local hubs so they are nearly connected along WV 3 and 10 in all possible feasible directions leading away from treatment plants. This is a critical need for the northwestern portion of the county.

Lincoln PSD is designing the expansion of sewer within their service range along WV 3, 214, and US 119. Due to its proximity to Charleston and US 119 sewer expansion in the northeastern section of the county gives greater opportunity for growth in the county.

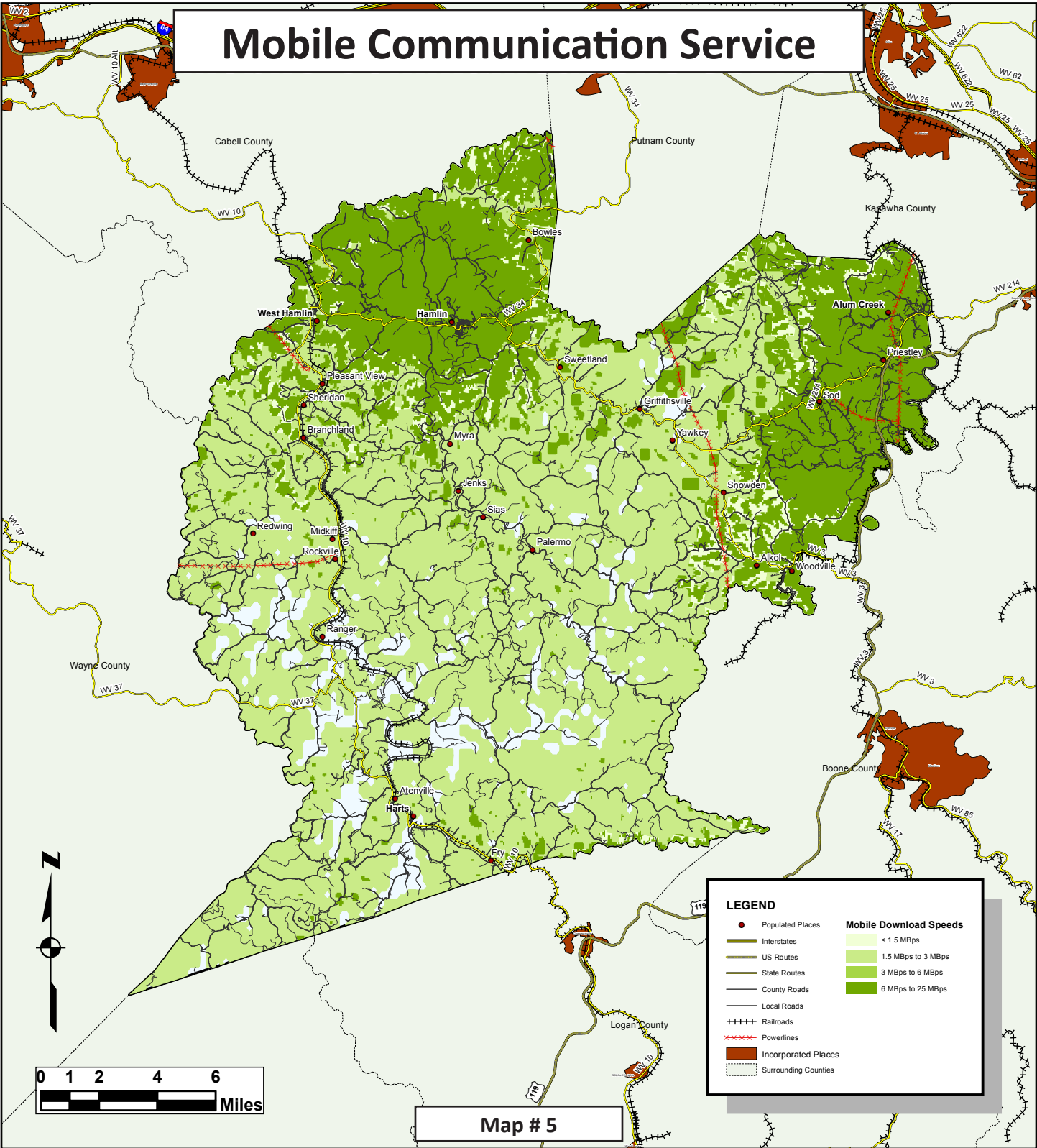
From 2005-2015 a pilot project for an alternative wastewater system was funded by WVDEP and USEPA on the Left Fork of the Mud River Watershed for 117 homes with installation of "green" individual home wastewater treatment systems. The costs for these 117 home treatment systems were over \$4.1 million or an average cost of \$35,000 each. Unfortunately, 19 of these systems were damaged by 2016 flooding at a repair cost of \$450,000. FEMA has not been willing to fund this repair. Although, the costs for these systems are very high, this technology is continuing to evolve. The Lincoln Health Department and county sanitary inspector believe small sand filter systems that require periodic replacement of the filters maybe the right fit for the high cost for traditional rural sewer service.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Wired Internet Service



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan





2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

The Harts community near the Logan County line and Chapmanville should be studied for some type of sewer system; either extensions to Chapmanville, individual plant, or a new demonstration project. With the Guyondotte having more people recreating within it, raw sewer discharges into the river have to cease. Harts on the southern end of the county, with water service already is a logical first step for wastewater treatment in this area of the county.

Cell phone use is as important today as the internet expansion was two decades ago. Without it, communities cannot compete. More so with the younger generation who have adapted to it as their primary communication tool. Aggressive actions to expand cell coverage are needed through grants or other means to offset the economics. This may be a slower realized goal but one that requires constant attention and strategies.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

ECONOMIC GROWTH & LAND USE

The economic drivers of a place are invariably tied to land use. Access to usable developable land for housing, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and infrastructure development is the foundation for a healthy economy. Natural resources within the land can drive the economy, which is more Lincoln County's model. Historically agriculture, coal mining, and oil and gas extraction have been the economic engines and still play an important aspect today and for the future.

Agriculture, namely tobacco, was the main cash crop for the 19th and 20th centuries; however, the decline of the tobacco industry started when significant health issues were associated with using their products. Production is down to one farm in Lincoln County. Other crops such as hay, small specialty fruit and vegetables production along with some livestock are still being raised on small farms within the county. Some farmers have extended their growing season with the use of high tunnels which are unheated greenhouses that allow farmers to improve their production and profitability primarily for food production. This is true for Lincoln County farmers. There are 30 high tunnels in Lincoln County, two of which are being used at Lincoln County High School in the Career Technical Education (CTE) program related to agriculture and farming, giving future farmers an opportunity to understand how a simple structure can boost food production.



Lincoln County Public Fairgrounds

Both underground and surface coal mining have provided contributions to Lincoln County economy over the last 100 years, however, with cyclical employment and tax revenues. Currently, the coal industry is in a down period, both state and nationwide. Most of the county's coal production is near the adjoining counties of Boone, Logan, Wayne, and Mingo. The industry does not have a majority footprint impact on the county's land use like the other southern West Virginia coal producing counties.



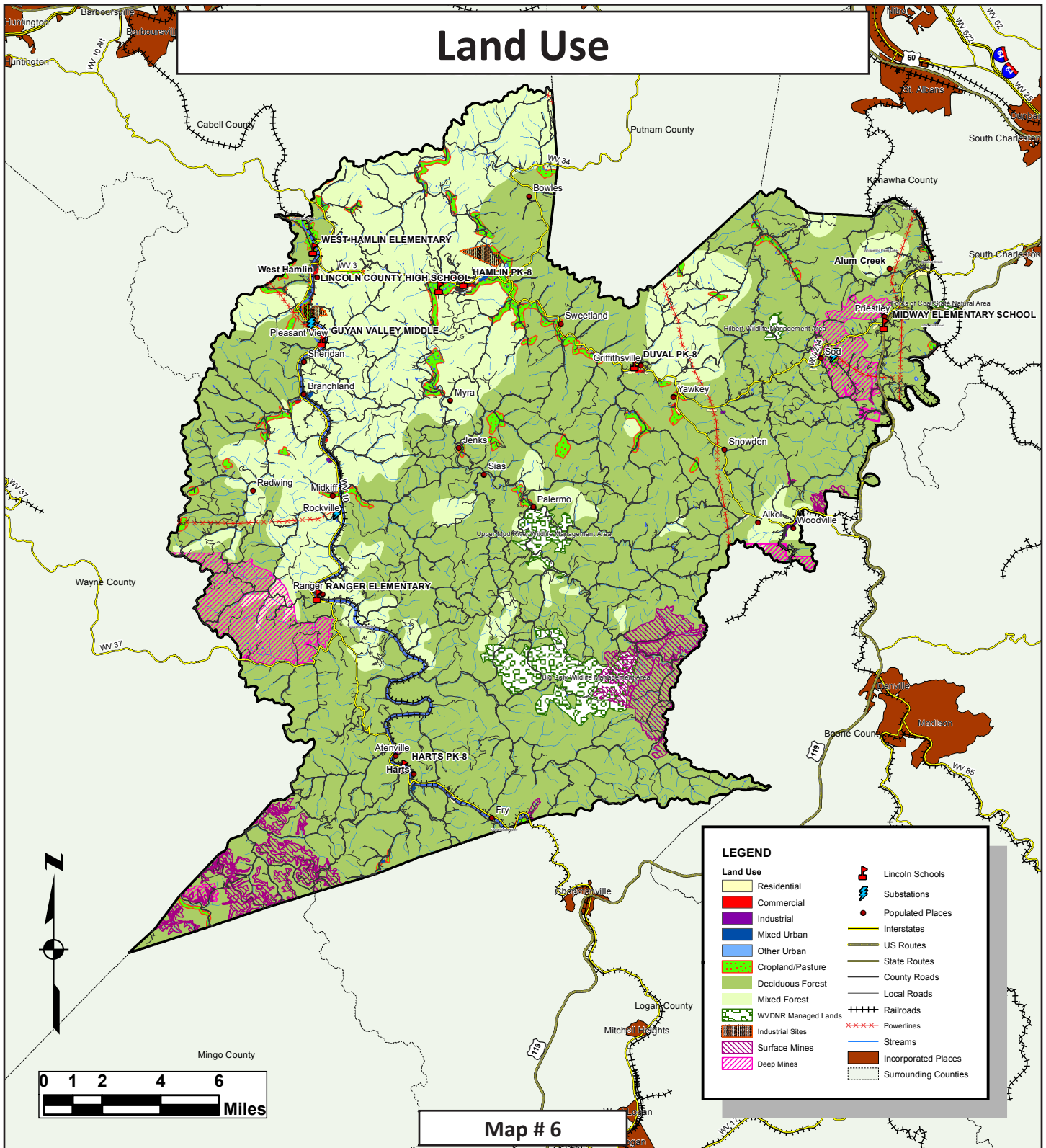
Oil well at WV 3

Oil and gas drilling and production in Lincoln County are the predominant energy resources within the county. The county has oil and gas wells scattered throughout. Oil and natural gas production has dropped off also, however, it is still a stable industry within the county. Currently, there are 980 active gas and 139 oil producing wells within the county according to WVDEP figures.

Timbering is a renewable resource, and although similar to agriculture, it takes much longer to harvest the timberland. Unlike agriculture that has limited land (approximately 60,000 acres) for production, the predominant land use in Lincoln County is

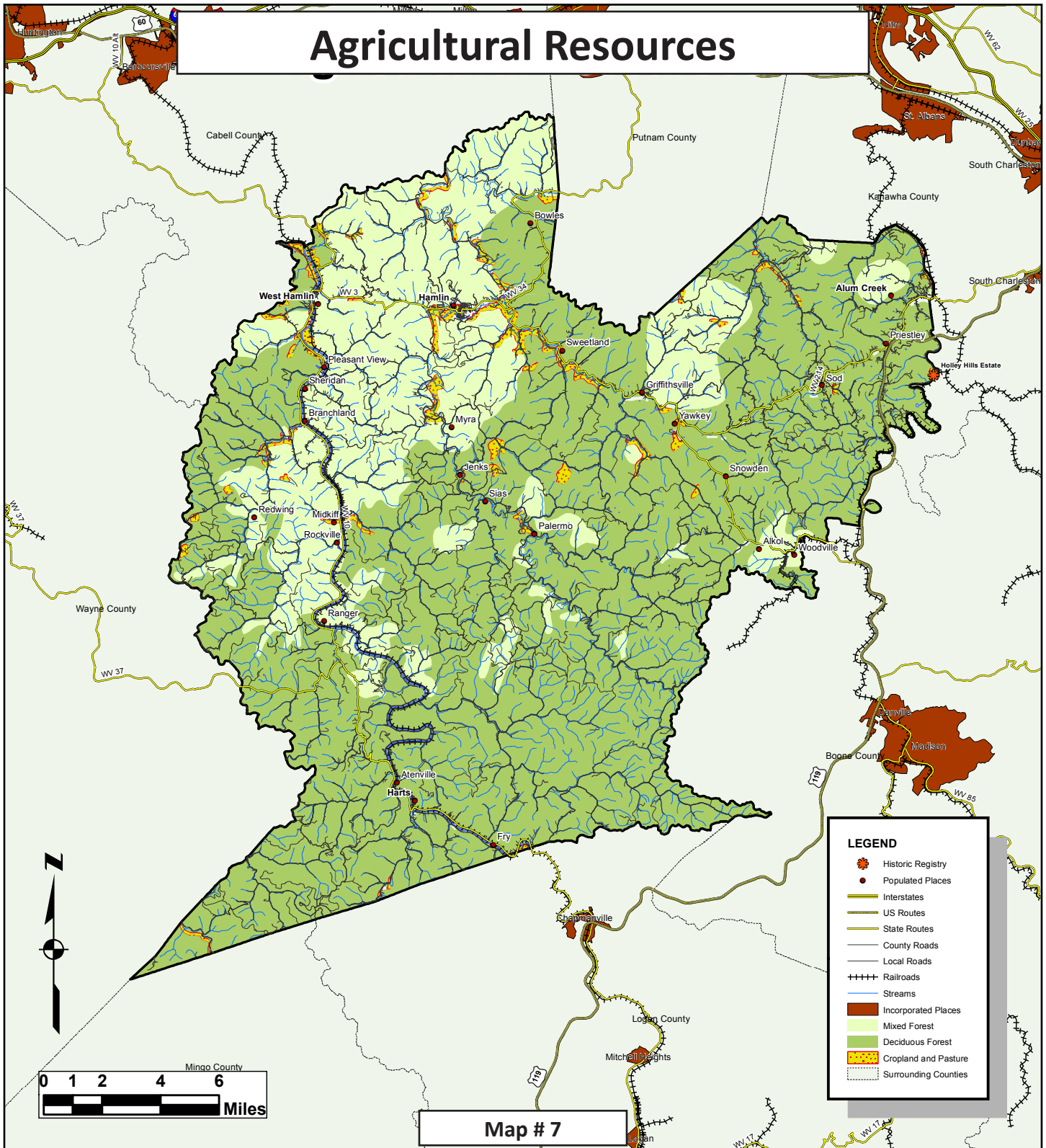
2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Land Use



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Agricultural Resources





2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

TRIRIVER TRANSIT

877-212-0815
TDD 304-824-2944
info@tririver.org

Home Bus Schedules Service Area Bus Fares Riding Rules Accessibility Non-Discrimination Policy About Us Contact Us

Service Area

Tri River Transit's service area includes Lincoln, Logan, Boone and Mingo Counties.

Demographic Information

County	Area (sq. mi.)	Population	Density	County Seat
Boone	503	25,535	50.8	Madison
Lincoln	437	22,108	50.6	Hamlin
Logan	454	37,710	83.1	Logan
Totals	1,394	85,353	61.2	

Route Deviation Service

Tri River Transit operates route deviation bus service. This means that in addition to boarding the bus at the specified stops listed on this bus schedule, passengers can request to be picked up or dropped off up to 3/4 of a mile off the bus route. The pickup and drop off locations will be at the curb. Reservations must be made in advance at least the day before. The bus fare for a trip deviation is \$2.00. Call 304-824-2944 to schedule a ride or for further information.

Tri-River Transit service area map and demographics

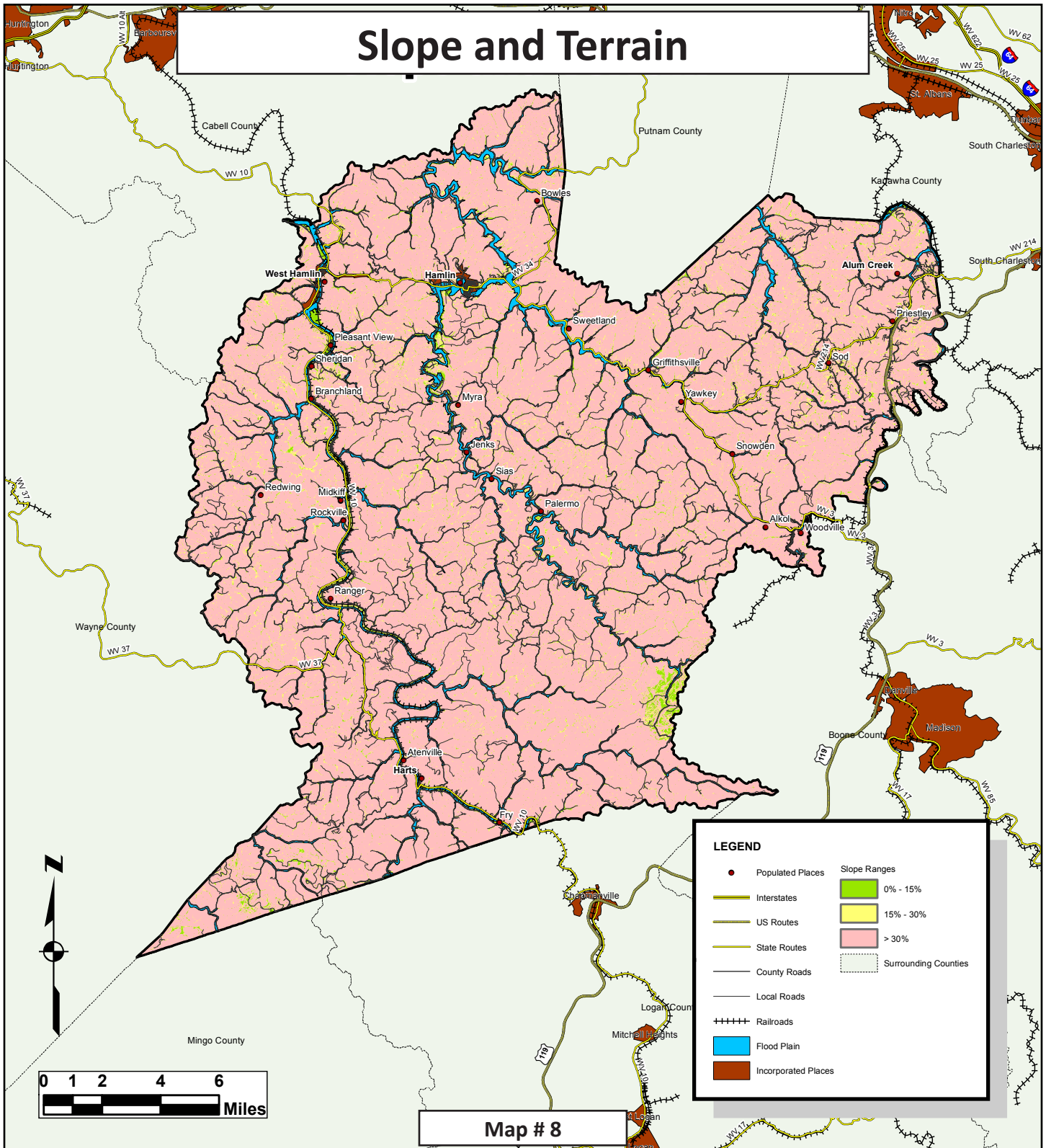
timberland. However from 2006-2009 less than 10,000 acres were timbered employing 70-150 during that time frame. Timbering will be a stable but smaller economic driver in the county yet this could expand with greater demand for the county's available timber resources.

Other notable economic drivers in the county include Southern West Virginia Health Systems which is based in Hamlin and operates Lincoln Primary Care Center there as well as other healthcare facilities in Logan and Mingo Counties. They employ over 160 people in the medical and healthcare industry and are one of the largest employers in Lincoln County. Tri-River Transit is another Lincoln County business that is providing employment and services beyond the county's borders. Performance Fiberglass is a small manufacturer in Hamlin that builds very marketable fiberglass deck structures for industrial applications; another example of local business doing great things in Lincoln County.

The two natural features that have the most significant effects on development in Lincoln County as a whole are the steep slopes and flood plains. These features are illustrated in Map 8: Slope & Terrain. Because much of the region is comprised of steep slopes, the map essentially shows a reverse image of slopes where the green and yellow areas on the map illustrate the "flattest" areas in Lincoln County and anything in red on the map illustrates the steepest slopes (greater than 30%). For the purposes of the plan evaluation, the slopes were categorized based on the percentage of slope, which is the calculation of the vertical rise (in

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Slope and Terrain





2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

feet) divided by the horizontal distance (in feet). A 30% slope is an area where there is a 30 foot increase in vertical elevation over a 100 foot horizontal distance.

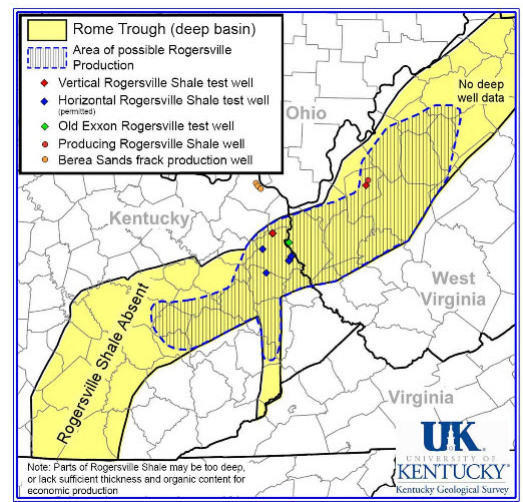
- 0 to 15% slopes – For development in West Virginia, any area with a slope of 0 to 15% is considered developable with minimal limitations.
- 15 to 30% slopes – Land that has a slope that falls within this category can be developed but will require special engineering and precautions to address potential slippage, erosion, and soil stability.
- 30% or greater slopes – For the purposes of this plan, any land with this steep of a slope is considered to have significant constraints to development. While development is possible with special engineering, it is very costly and the land can be difficult to access. Development on these slopes is usually limited unless there is significant cutting and filling of the property.

Trends in Economic Growth & Land Use

Trends in the largest economic drivers noted in the land use categories indicate no significant change in the short term; however, over a longer term, 5-10 years may see an upswing in the oil and gas industry from Rogersville Shales which are 10,000-12,000 feet deep and would employ the same horizontal drilling methods used for the Marcellus and Utica Shales in central West Virginia. The best counties in West Virginia for this shale play will be Lincoln, Wayne, and Putnam for both oil and gas. This could be the next oil and gas boom in the county, but it is not imminent.

The main reasons this will take some time to develop are:

1. The existing Marcellus and Utica oil and gas fields to the north have hundreds of wells drilled but are not extracting much product from them because oil and gas prices have to increase significantly and transmission lines in those areas have to be built to move the product from the wells.
2. Once these triggers are met and this play is producing and there is demand for more gas and oil the Rogersville Play in Lincoln County could develop.



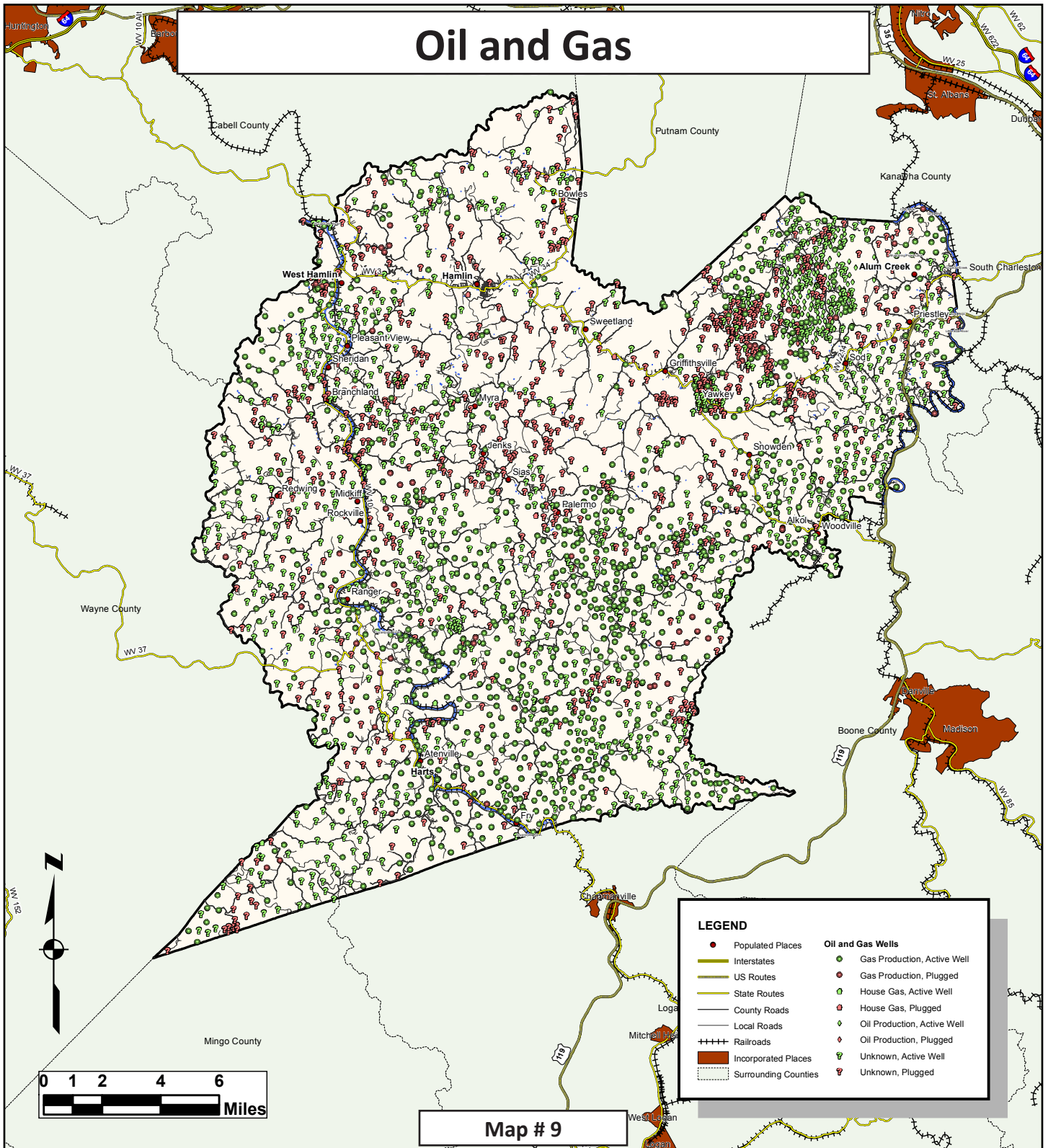
Rogersville Shale Map

Other trends in agriculture have been the farm to table movement where locally grown produce and livestock are sold directly to the users. Lincoln County farmers have started a small niche in this movement especially with using high tunnels to extend growing season. They also need less land with use of the tunnels to grow more products. This is a growing need for this type of food delivery in WV, and Lincoln County farmers are on the cutting edge.



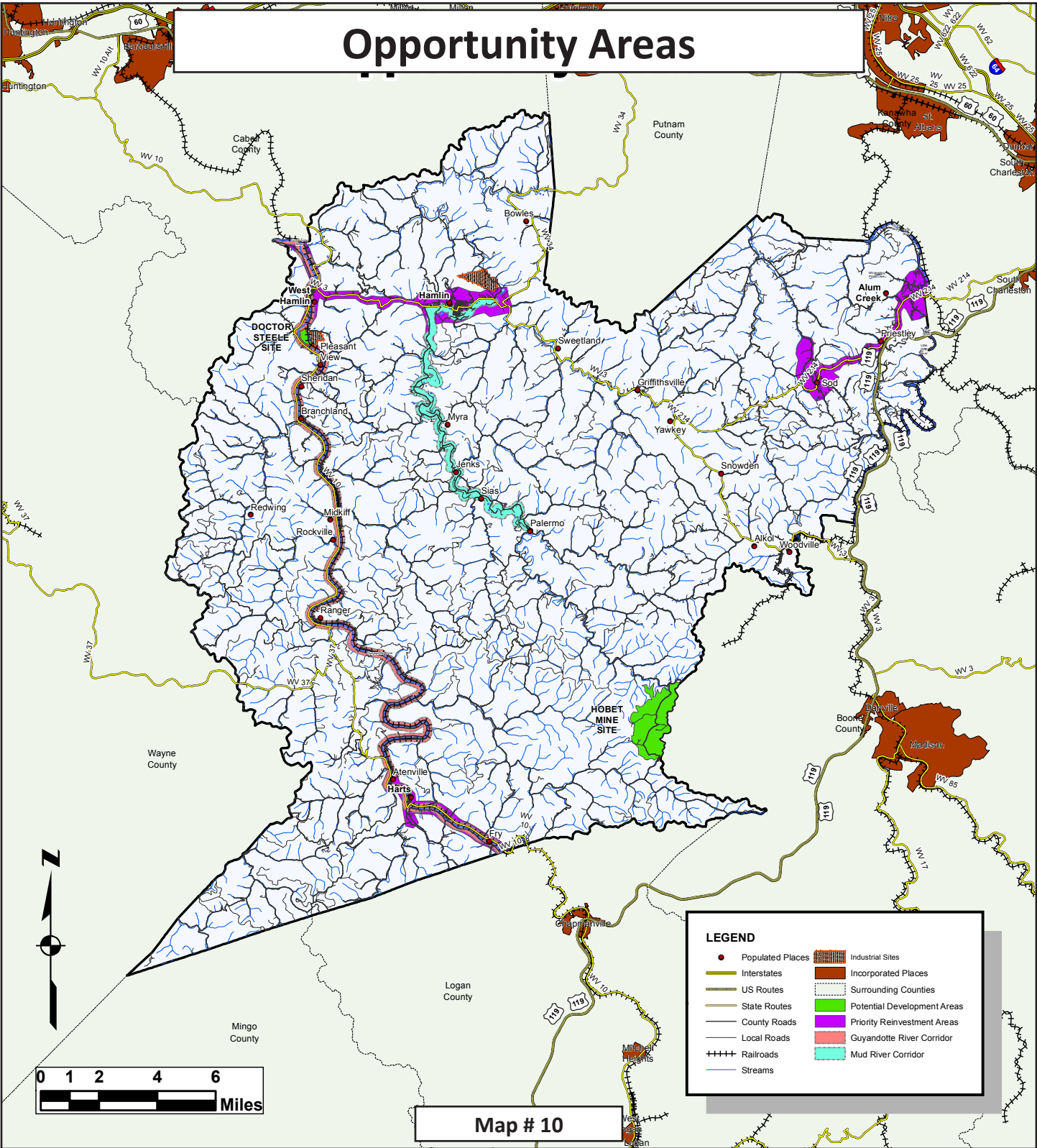
2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Oil and Gas



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Opportunity Areas



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Another significant economic change driver is the Rock Creek Development Park. It is the 12,000 acres in Boone and Lincoln (5,000) that was the previous Hobet mine site. The initial 2.6 mile road contract led by WVDOH from US 119 will access 4,000 acres of land in Boone County first. Construction on the road is to begin in 2017. All utilities will be available at this business and industrial park. As development of the site moves west, it has the opportunity to be a driver in the less populated sections of Lincoln county.

Future Outlook & Needs

The Rock Creek development is a long range outlook which may launch the growth of the Mud River Corridor with this development beginning on the southeastern boundary.

Secondly, the upgrading of the floodplain boundaries in the Mud River watershed downstream from the dam may improve the advisory flood height for more useable land and easing of some floodplain insurance rates in the county. This would open land from Hamlin south.

Armstrong Wire is extending broadband into this region. A study for developing a water plant at the Upper Mud Lake to service the corridor with water is conceivable, but need the Rock Creek Project or expansion from floodplain changes to jump start this area.



Large parcel off of Doctor Steele Road

The largest tract of underdeveloped land in the county outside of the floodplain is a 115 acres parcel off Doctor Steele Road (CR 3/01), just 1.5 miles south of West Hamlin. It is currently privately owned agricultural lands for hay production with railroad access but poor road access. A bridge from WV10 would be needed for any significant development for this parcel. This land should be considered only for a large development that will be a new economic driver for the county for many years to come. Significant infrastructure development will be needed to get this ready for development; land acquisition will be costly too.

Before the Rogersville Shale oil and gas play could work in Lincoln County, the transmission lines need expanded or new ones built. Also, processing plants would be needed. On both accounts, the gas transmission lines are now at capacity and there are no processing plants in Lincoln County.

Focus reinvestment in several priority areas where there is sufficient infrastructure or grass roots efforts for change already. Hamlin - West Hamlin, Alum Creek – Sod and other surrounding areas near US 119, and Harts area have been identified as Priority Reinvestment Areas. The Guyandotte River corridor shows the best opportunity at making small but visible changes along it from the energy started by the Guyan River Trail Group and the supporting communities. The Mud River corridor has similar prospects but not as organized just yet.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

TRANSPORTATION

Throughout the county, two-lane state routes are the major connector routes. Route 10, along the Guyandotte River in the western part of the county, runs north-south and is the major corridor between Huntington and Logan. Route 37 connects from Wayne County to the west with Route 10. Route 3 connects the northern and eastern sections of the county to Hamlin and West Hamlin, which are the only two incorporated towns within the county. Route 34 connects Putnam County to Hamlin, and Route 214 connects Alum Creek and the northeastern section of the county with Kanawha County. A small section of the four lane US 119 (Corridor G) runs through the eastern boundary of the county. The least populated section of the county, the Mud River watershed, is served by County Route 7 and several other county routes. All these major connector and secondary roads are impacted by the mountainous terrain and meandering waterways making driving them a challenge.



Lincoln County Line at US 119 and the Little Coal River

Improving the road systems within the county was a reoccurring theme heard from all the public forums. WV Route 10 has the highest daily traffic on it ranging from 2,214 to 6,229 annual average daily traffic (AADT) counts in 2013. The 54 mile route from Chapmanville to Huntington takes 90 minutes. This is an example of the traveling time involved for education, healthcare, employment, shopping, and other daily needs which impact quality of life issues.

Lincoln County is fortunate to have a bus service based in Hamlin. Tri River Transit provides low-cost transportation to citizens in Lincoln, Boone, Logan, Mingo, and Wayne Counties. Tri River was founded in 2000 with a ridership approaching one million total passengers since its founding. It has 13 buses and provides non-emergency medical transportation for residents of Lincoln, Logan, and Boone Counties.

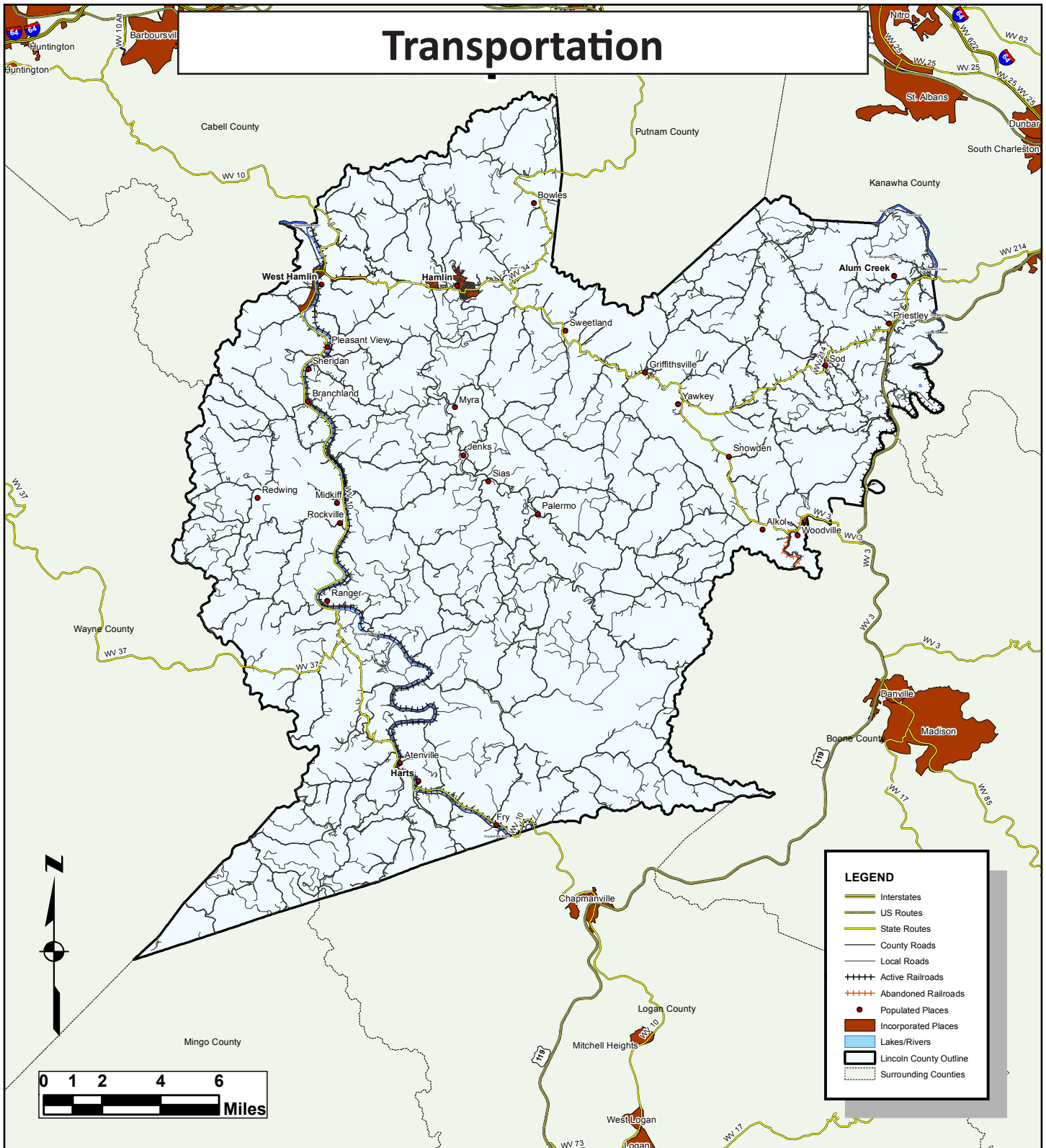
Their routes connect to all the surrounding counties with service to Southern WV Community College campuses, county courthouses, multiple schools, shopping venues and medical facilities in these counties. This is one of Lincoln County's home grown businesses that is a model for other rural transit/bus companies.

Trends in Transportation

The AADT for all the state connector routes in Lincoln County declined from 2010 to 2013. This may be a result in the decline of energy/natural resource industry within and surrounding the county. WVDOH future long range planning for the county is to maintain existing routes. The Heartland Intermodal Gateway (HIG) in Pritchard (Wayne County), which opened in 2016, is a truck to rail transfer facility for the Norfolk Southern Railway's 530-miles Heartland Corridor that runs from Hampton, VA to Chicago. It allows tractor trailers to deliver their trailers to transfer for cheaper rail transportation to destinations along the corridor. It can have

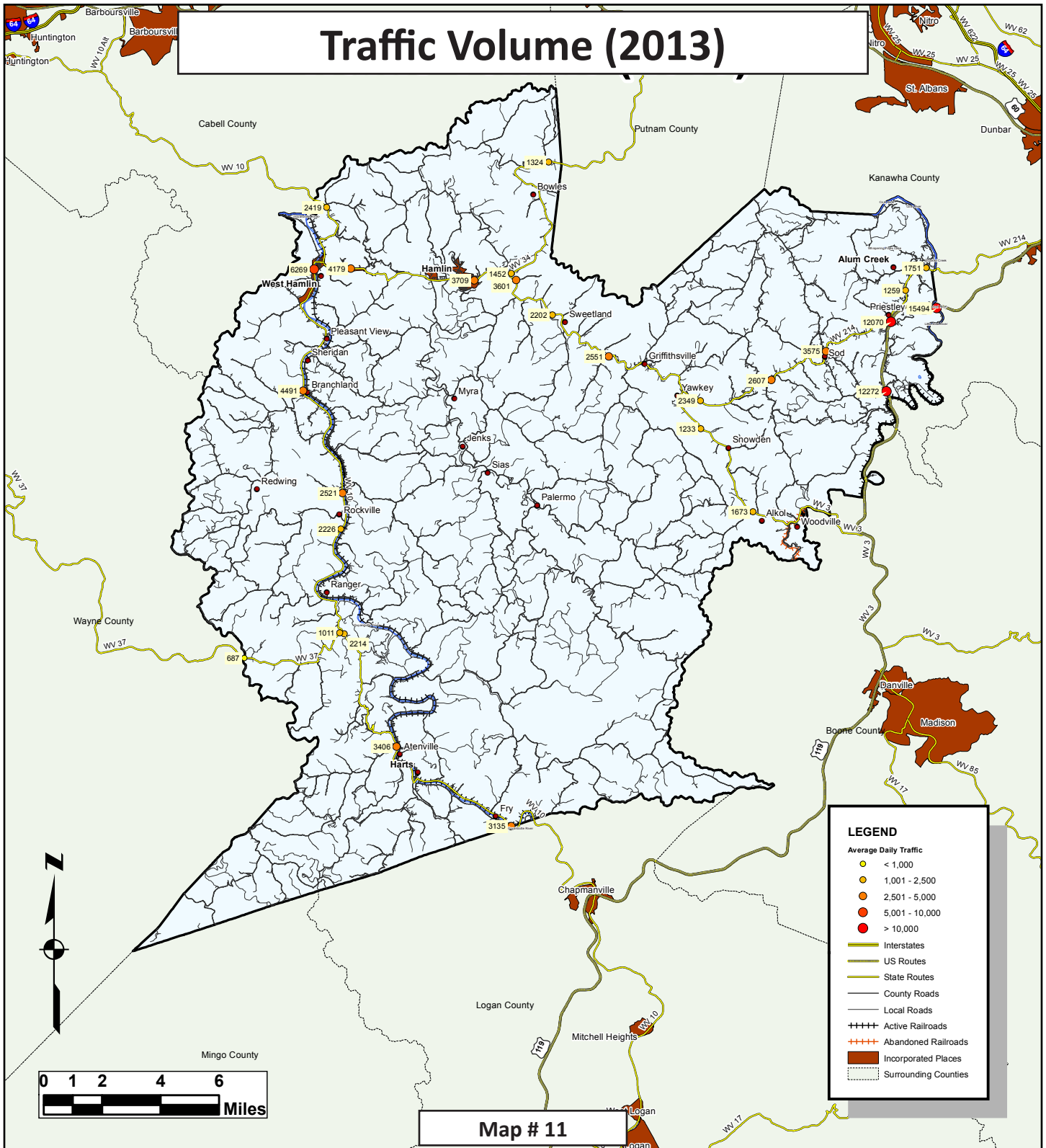
2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Transportation



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Traffic Volume (2013)





2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

an “economic ripple” for the Tri-State area and Lincoln County. There is no other terminal like this within 100 miles of Charleston or Huntington. This development is expected to attract warehousing operations and the forestry industry to move their products.

Future Outlook & Needs

The need for improved roads throughout the county is something the county’s legislative delegation has to make a priority with WV Division of Highways. All this plan’s public forums identified roads as a critical concern. The on-line survey results ranked road improvements as one of the top four (4) important issues of the county. On the most traveled 2 lane road in the county, WV10, WVDOH performed a design study in 2003 to improve the alignment of this route from Chapmanville to Huntington. Identified projects were prioritized with some having been completed as funding has become available. Lincoln County representatives need to review this study each year with WVDOH regarding the Lincoln County section’s identified projects and push for their completion.

The Rock Creek Development’s initial two mile road alignment from US 119 into the Boone County portion of the development may spur continuation of the road into Lincoln County. Several public meeting attendees voiced the possibility of a four lane corridor from Rock Creek following the Mud River, which is the least populated area of the county, into Hamlin and then connect with Interstate 64. Region 2 Planning & Development Council with Rahall Transportation Institute could do this preliminary design study.

Partner with Tri-River Transit to help with survey for their expansion of routes and possibly other locations for expanded operations in other counties to serve more of southern WV.

The need for pedestrian routes/trails within the towns and adjoining communities is both a transportation and recreation concern. WVDOH provides 100% grants for qualified sponsors for these needed resources. The need for a pedestrian route around the Lincoln County High School and connecting to the retail and governmental areas in Hamlin is a very real possibility and has strong support. Evaluate each county school for a trail around the grounds or linkage to nearby residential areas encouraging walking and bicycling to school.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This aspect of Lincoln County includes public facilities, most notably parks and recreation areas, libraries and community centers. Also education, healthcare, and social services are what help define the quality of life value within a community or county.



Mud River Boat Launch

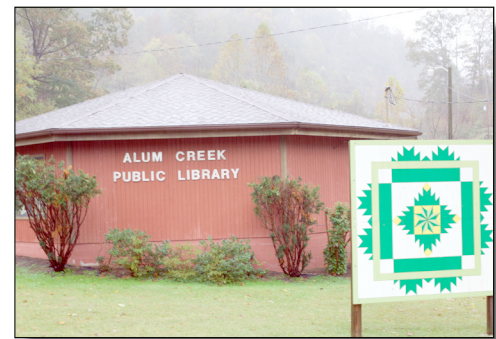


Mud River fishing pier

Lincoln County, possibly because of its rural nature, does not have any state parks, but instead has three areas managed by WV Division of Natural Resources as Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). These three areas are Hilbert, Upper Mud River and Big Ugly. The total state managed public land is 7,034 acres. Both Hilbert and Big Ugly are primarily managed for public hunting. Upper Mud River is a 306 acre lake with two boat ramps for fishing and an accessible fishing platform. Additional elements include recreation fields, picnic areas, a swimming beach, and restrooms. It also has public hunting lands away from the recreation areas and a public shooting range. Upper Mud River serves the county as the most visited public recreation property. Built more than 20 years ago for flood protection, today it serves a dual purpose. While these properties are used for hunting for 4-6 months, there are opportunities for all citizens to enjoy the areas in the non-hunting months.

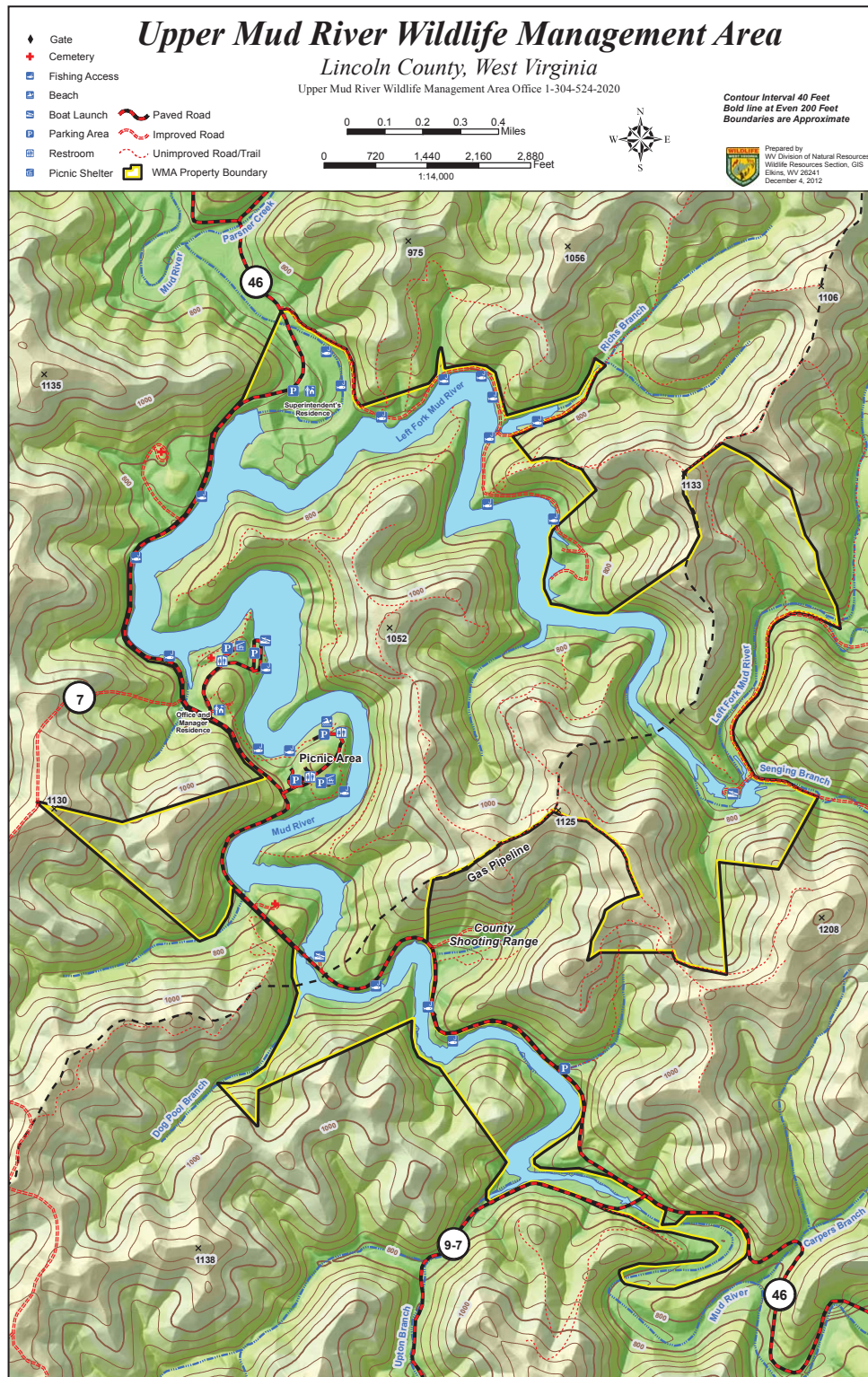
Other public recreation areas include Waterways Park off US 119 near Julian, WV operated by Boone County Parks and Recreation. It is entirely located within Lincoln County, by oddity, in the Little Coal River alignment. Adjoining the Lincoln County line in Alum Creek is the new Forks of Coal State Natural Area owned and operated by WVDNR for wildlife education. WVDNR's District 5 office is to be located here also.

WVDNR provides several boat ramp sites along the Little Coal River off US 119 for small watercraft access. The Big Coal River and the Coal River have become the best known kayak river system of southwestern WV. A resurgence in these rivers began with the Coal River Group, a non-profit organization that began 15 years ago to preserve history and develop tourism and recreation of the Coal River Watershed. Fortunately, this effort has helped spur similar efforts along the Guyandotte River especially in Lincoln County. There are existing boat ramps at Branchland, West Hamlin and Madison Creek near the Cabell County line. Future ramp sites are planned at Midkiff, Ranger, and Harts. Each third



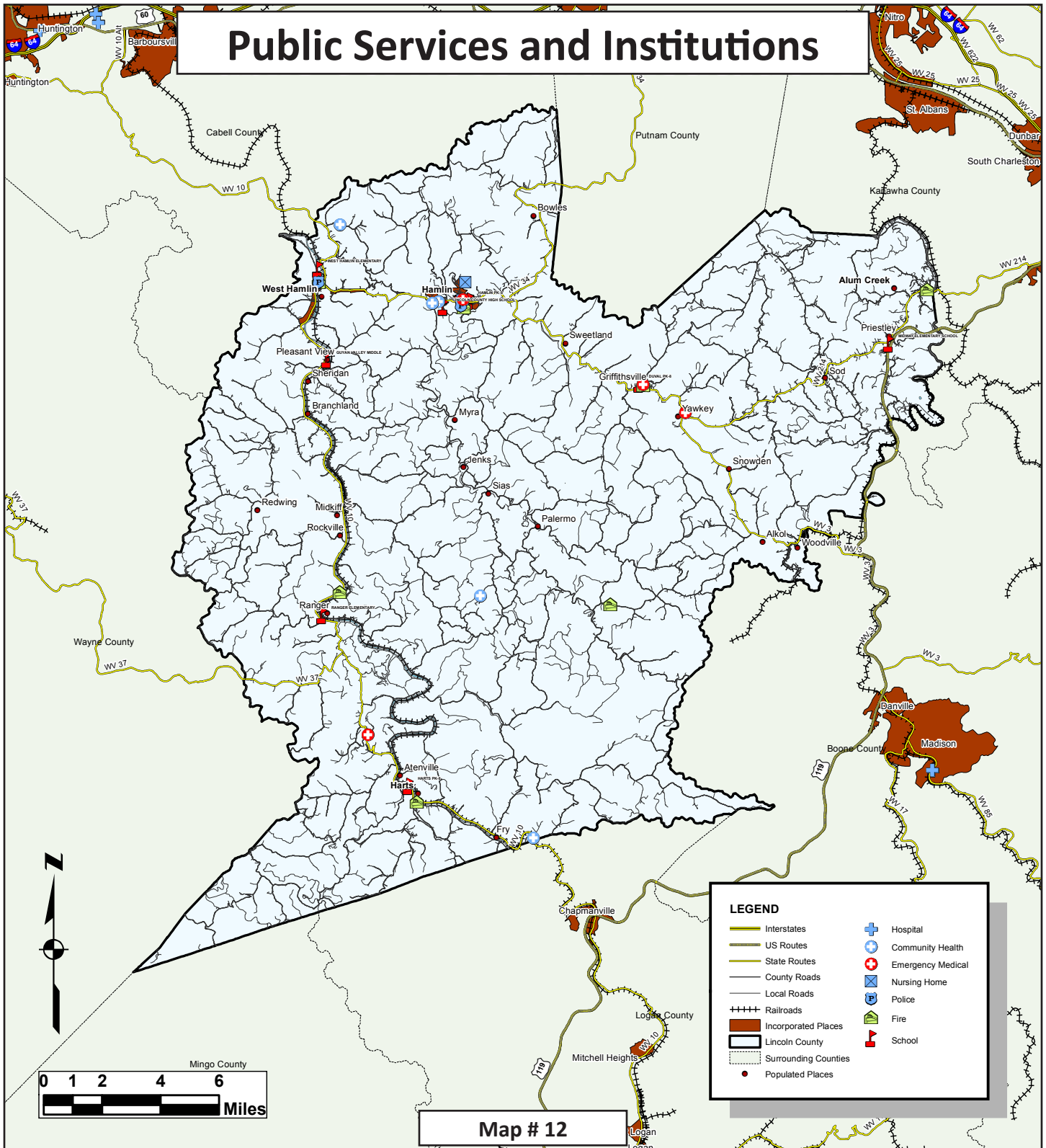
Alum Creek Library

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Public Services and Institutions



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Saturday in June, the Guyan River Trail Group has a boat race and 5K run along WV 10 to celebrate and promote recreational use of the Guyandotte River. Applying the Coal River model to the Guyandotte can provide enhanced recreation benefits for residents, but also enhance tourism potential for the county. Other public facilities used daily are the three public libraries in Hamlin, Alum Creek, and Branchland along with public community centers at Hamlin, Harts, and Big Ugly. These community centers are primarily old schools operated for meetings, events and some rental for business incubator space.

Educational facilities managed by the Lincoln County Board of Education includes the Lincoln County High School built in 2006 near Hamlin and is the only high school for the county. Six other middle, PK-8, and elementary schools serve the population in Branchland, Griffithsville, Hamlin, Harts, West Hamlin, Alum Creek, and Ranger.



Midway School

Healthcare facilities are managed by Southern WV Health Systems as previously discussed. The county is facing health challenges with drug and alcohol addictions, teen pregnancy, and various other health related issues. Over 75% of students attending Lincoln County School qualify for free and reduced meals. Unfortunately, the lower income levels and lack of employment opportunities cited in the demographics contributes to these concerns. Healthcare access has been better with the Affordable Care Act. Also, some Lincoln County schools provide health care service through Southern WV Health Systems to the medically underserved in the county. Lincoln County Primary Care Center supports community building by sponsoring sports teams, recreation, and other events to promote healthy life styles.

Trends in Public Facilities, Education, & Health / Social Services

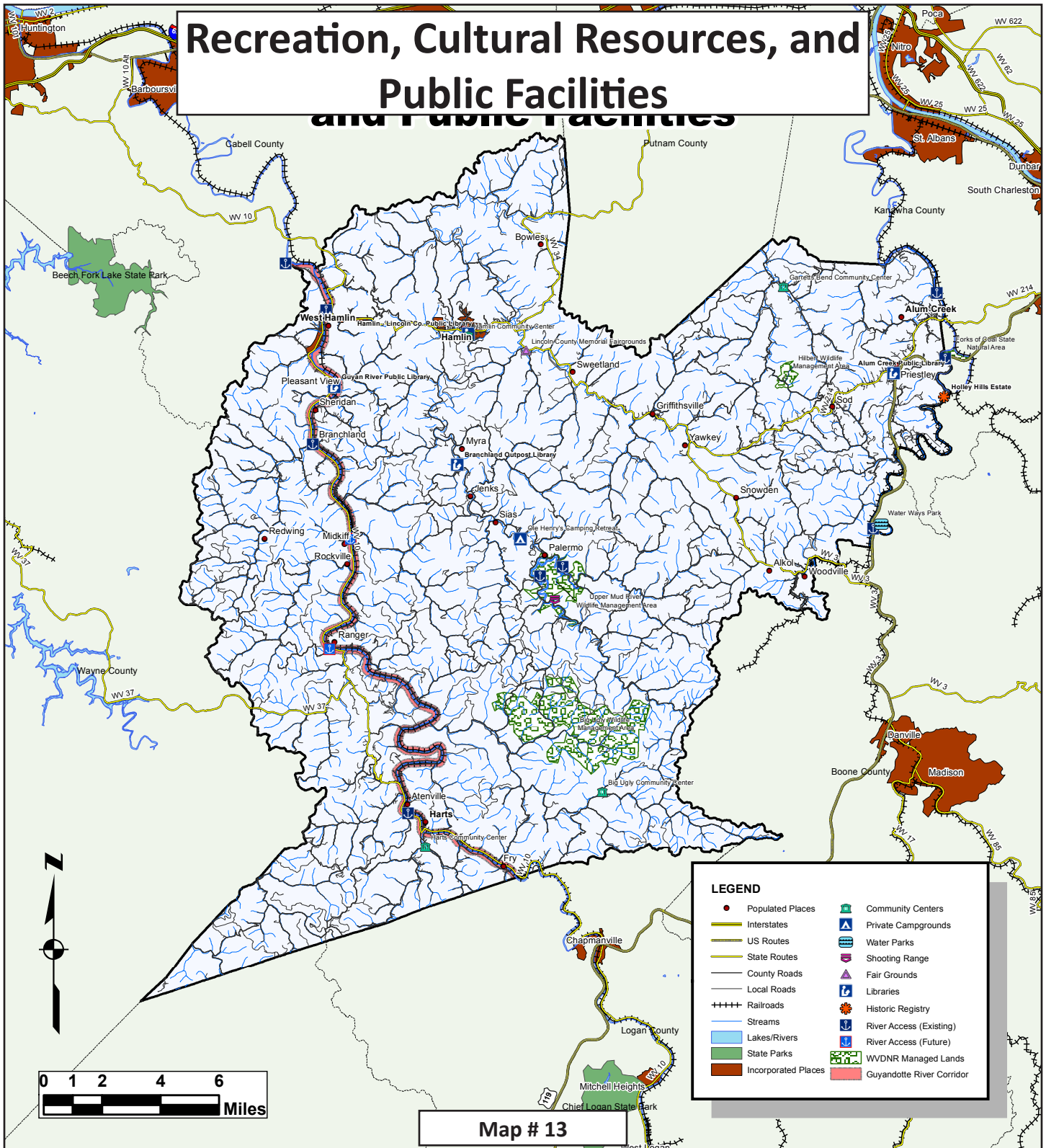
Lincoln County has developed a strong Career Technical Education component for technology related subjects leading to additional post-secondary education and other trades related to education for employment after high school such as welding, automotive technology, carpentry, Army ROTC, and agriculture. Both higher education and those completing their education at this level take the CTE programs. Approximately 20-30% of LCHS graduates attend higher education facilities beyond high school. The high school welding program has partnered with Southern WV Community and Technical College to offer adult welding classes at the school.

There has been a loss of 175 students in the past two years from Lincoln County Schools affecting the amount of state funding the school board receives. That loss equates to a \$1million shortfall over the past two years. Also, in the Harts community, parents have the option of sending children to Chapmanville High School after the 8th grade, which approximates to about 125 more students leaving the school system. Another 138 children are homeschooled in Lincoln County; this is the highest amount since maintaining these records.

Trends in recreation and tourism indicate that opportunities exist for non-profit and private interests to

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Recreation, Cultural Resources, and Public Facilities



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

expand venues for Lincoln County. The Guyan River Trail is a strong example of how to energize communities using the river for recreation and allowing private ventures to consider ways to enhance these opportunities. The Hatfield McCoy Regional Recreation Authority can provide funding and construction resources for these plans along the Guyandotte River and other locations for recreation development for both public and private entities in the county.

O’Henry’s Camping Retreat, a private campground with small cabins downstream of Upper Mud River WMA, has created a viable business on the property they own by providing an additional recreation resource where there was none.



Entrance to Ole Henry's Camping Retreat



Ole Henry's Camping Retreat

There are no overnight lodging accommodations such as a motel in Lincoln County. Hopefully there are several entrepreneurs that have a home, farmhouse, or rustic cabin that would be listed on AirBnB. AirBnB is now globally the biggest hotel company, although they don't own any properties. A statement heard at one of the public meetings attended was that for every hour a tourist drives to their destination, four hours of activities should be available there.

Future Outlook & Needs

Outdoor recreation and tourism has good potential for starting small businesses. With nearly a half million people within a 30-60 minute drive to Lincoln County in West Virginia alone, tourists will be able to rediscover the county's rural lifestyle. Identify and market historical/cultural stops in the county such as a quilt trail, Learning to weave or rug making are just a couple handcrafted skills that could be showcased.

The farm community can recreate the Farm Trail they started 20 years ago allowing people to visit the farms, buy products, and possibly spend a night there. Many farmers in other rural areas have developed private hunting preserves. This model could be applied in Lincoln County. Private recreation opportunities for horseback and ATV trails are also in demand.



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

A significant recreation need which appears to be underserved is after-hour, indoor recreation spaces for basketball and other physical activities. Comments received at the public meetings felt a Lincoln County YMCA is needed. Several schools have limited hours of operation for these functions. Explore scheduling options to see if it is possible to open more school/community center gyms for several nights a week to offer additional activities for the county youth. Try utilizing existing facilities first to gauge the interest and funding for the YMCA concept.

Some education facilities are past due for replacement; while others need repairs to the school or its infrastructure. Engage both the public and the business community in solving these difficult decisions. Education is the pillar that Lincoln County's future will stand upon.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The final element of the plan is how this document will help bring change to Lincoln County over the next 20 years. The previous sections of this plan described concepts and ideas; however, this section helps define actionable items for implementing those ideas. This section tries to identify the responsible parties that can take the leadership role in undertaking these tasks. A timeline for the urgency of implementing these tasks is also indicated.

While this plan was generated for the Lincoln Economic Development Authority and they will have a role in implementation of it, this plan requires everyone in Lincoln County to be engaged. This includes the county commission and the county departments, the board of education, the public service districts, town and community leaders, non-profit organizations, large and small Lincoln County businesses, and engaged citizens.

It will also require state and regional agencies to contribute expertise and funding for these initiatives and also help from state legislative representatives as well as Lincoln County's representatives in Congress.

Table 5 on the following pages identifies specific strategies to implement the county's goals. The table assigns a leadership responsible party, identifies a funding source if possible and a priority or time frame for completion of each task.

The following are the abbreviations used in Table 5.

Abbreviation	Meaning
Lincoln County	This is a broad reference to the elected and appointed officials of Lincoln County that specifically includes the County Commission and Departments
LC Bus.	Lincoln County Business
LEDA	Lincoln Economic Development Authority
LC Town	Town of Hamlin and West Hamlin
PSD	All Lincoln County Public Service Districts
LCBOE	Lincoln County Board of Education
WV/US	WV & US Government Representative
HMRRA	Hatfield McCoy Regional Recreational Authority
LCNP	Lincoln County non-profit organization and engaged citizens
WVDOH	The West Virginia Department of Highways
N/A	Not Applicable – funding is assumed to come from the county general funds and not from outside grants or funding sources.
ST	Short-term priority (1-5 years)
LT	Long-term priority (5-10 years)
CS	Continuous strategy

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Table 5: Specific Implementation Tasks									
Implementation Task	Plan Components/Goals								
	Population	Housing	Infrastructure	Economic Growth & Land Use	Transportation	Community Development	Responsible Agency	Funding Source	Priority
Implementation Task (Not Listed in Any Priority) 1. Identify redevelopable parcels within towns and communities where there is existing infrastructure for housing infill offering various densities or types of housing - Start with one of the towns as a beginning point. 2. Review and rank the best options for sewer expansions from the various entities providing this utility. 3. Develop an entrepreneur incubator model for grant funding located initially in Hamlin or West Hamlin. 4. Support a child care or elder care business initiative within an existing community center rent-free.	X	X	X	X		X	LEDA, LC Town	N/A	ST
			X				PSD, Lincoln County, LC Town	County & State Grant Funding	CS
				X		X	LEDA, LC Town, LCNP	N/A	ST
	X			X		X	Lincoln County, LCBOE, LC Bus.	N/A	ST



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Table 5: Specific Implementation Tasks									
Implementation Task	Plan Components/Goals								
	Population	Housing	Infrastructure	Economic Growth & Land Use	Transportation	Community Development	Responsible Agency	Funding Source	Priority
Implementation Task (Not Listed in Any Priority)									
5. Establish a social media presence for Lincoln County residents who have left the area, specifically targeting the 20 to 40 year-olds with the focus of keeping them informed of Lincoln County’s progress while seeking their involvement.	X					X	LEDA, LCBOE	N/A	CS
6. From the proposed updates to the floodplain mapping, identify parcels where changes have resulted in a gain in usable land beyond the flood/no-build zone.		X		X		X	Lincoln County	N/A	ST
7. Provide educational seminars of the various types of housing beyond single-family and mobile homes that may be suitable in small rural communities and how they benefit residents closer to amenities.	X	X					LEDA, LC Bus, LCNP	N/A	ST



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Table 5: Specific Implementation Tasks									
Implementation Task	Plan Components/Goals								
	Community Development	Transportation	Economic Growth & Land Use	Infrastructure	Housing	Population	Priority	Funding Source	Responsible Agency
Implementation Task (Not Listed in Any Priority)									
8. Several of Lincoln County schools need upgrades to their sewage treatment plants. Work with the County Health Department working with the Board of Education to identify the newest technologies available for innovative new systems for sewage treatment. Possibly apply this to other sewer applications in the county.	X			X			CS	Local & State/ Federal Funding	LCBOE, PSD, Lincoln County
9. Engage Lincoln County's state legislators to commission WVDOH to perform corridor design studies for WV 10 upgrades and realignment and a 4-lane preliminary corridor study from Rock Creek Development to I-64.		X					LT	Federal/ State Funding	WV/US, Lincoln County, WVDOH
10. Assist Tri-River Transit with possible route expansion and other operation locations to grow their rural model for public transit.		X	X				LT	N/A	LC Bus, LEDA, WV/US
11. Pursue grants for sidewalk and trail development for the high school, other Lincoln County schools, and Hamlin areas as a starter for expanding pedestrian and bicycle routes for healthier lifestyles.	X	X					ST	Federal & State Funding	LCBOE, LC Town, WVDOH



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Table 5: Specific Implementation Tasks									
Implementation Task	Plan Components/Goals								Priority
	Population	Housing	Infrastructure	Economic Growth & Land Use	Transportation	Community Development	Responsible Agency	Funding Source	
Implementation Task (Not Listed in Any Priority)									
12. County should adopt regulations for building code and for property that is to be subdivided into 5 or more lots.		X		X		X	Lincoln County	N/A	LT
13. Discuss options with local and regional builders/developers interested in infill housing to meet singles and older residents' needs.		X		X		X	Lincoln County, LC Bus, LCNP	N/A	CS
14. Complete the sewer plant and line extensions for sewer service in Alum Creek and areas served by Lincoln PSD.			X	X			PSD, WV/US, Lincoln County	Local, State, & Federal Funding	CS
15. Create a group of 3 to 5 people for achieving enhanced cell phone coverage in the county. Key individuals should be a legislator if possible, a telecom representative, and committed individuals.			X			X	LEDA, LC Bus, LCNP, WV/US	N/A	CS
16. Enlist the bicycling community in the county to suggest "Share the Road" routes along existing state and county routes.					X	X	Lincoln County, LCNP	N/A	ST



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Table 5: Specific Implementation Tasks									
Implementation Task	Plan Components/Goals							Priority	
	Community Development	Transportation	Economic Growth & Land Use	Infrastructure	Housing	Population	Funding Source	Responsible Agency	
Implementation Task (Not Listed in Any Priority)									
17. Work with Hatfield McCoy Regional Recreation Authority (HMRRA) to help fund and construct boat ramps on the Guyandotte River at Midkiff, Ranger, and Harts.	X		X				State & Local Funding	Lincoln County, LCNP, HMRRA, WVDOH	CS
18. Connect private property owners with HMRRA to explore funding and resource guidance on developing trails (horse and ATV), or other activities such as bird hunting preserve, on private lands for recreation and tourism development.	X		X				Private & State Funding	LEDA, LC Bus, HMRRA	ST
19. Assist at least five properties to be listed for overnight lodging on AirBnB or VRBO websites for small business initiative.	X		X				N/A	LEDA, LC Bus, LCNP	CS
20. Work with local farmers' group to reestablish a Lincoln County Farm Trail and develop a brochure with assistance from HMRRA to develop the brochure. Brochure should highlight farms, products, hours of operation, and other pertinent information.	X		X				Local & State Funding	LC Bus, Lincoln County, HMRRA	ST



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Table 5: Specific Implementation Tasks									
Implementation Task	Plan Components/Goals							Priority	
	Population	Housing	Infrastructure	Economic Growth & Land Use	Transportation	Community Development	Responsible Agency	Funding Source	Notes
Implementation Task (Not Listed in Any Priority)							LCNP, HMRRA, LC Bus.	Local & State Funding	cs
							LEDA, LC Bus.	N/A & Private	cs
							LEDA, WVDOH, WV/US	Unknown	LT
							LC Bus, LEDA, Lincoln County, WVDOH	Private	LT
21. Do the same as the previous Task except work with the arts and historical groups to highlight the artisan craftsmanship available in the county.				X		X			
22. Maximize the potential of existing industrial/business park in Hamlin before developing a new one.				X					
23. Find the economic driver for the parcel off of Doctor Steele Road.	X		X	X	X				
24. Prepare the county for the infrastructure to support the Rogersville Shale Oil & Gas	X	X	X	X	X				

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

As related earlier in the plan the following reflects the common themes we heard from the steering committee, stakeholder's meeting, public meetings, telephone interviews, & February economic summit attendance. This information along with the survey in Appendix B helped identify the major issues in the county that need to be addressed as part of the plan.

Businesses

- Southern WV Health Systems / Lincoln Primary Care Center (LCPCC) is one of largest employers in the county
- LCPCC provides health care services in some of the schools to the medically underserved in the county
- LCPCC supports community building by helping sponsor recreation, sports and other events for healthy lifestyles
- There is a perceived oil and gas resurgence in the county, based on growth from Rogersville Shale Play, although current market conditions are not immediately favorable.
- Tri River Transit – locally based bus transit business providing regional low cost mass transit to all surrounding counties.
- 5 banks operate in the county. There is perceived as a lack of private funding for projects

Agriculture

- Lincoln County has an agricultural heritage from tobacco and livestock.
- Mostly hay, small vegetable and fruit production now. Estimated about 10 operational farms in the county.
- 4-H involvement is increasing and new agricultural instruction at LCHS. Ag education key for growth of agriculture in County. School also has 2 High Tunnels for extended crop production. There are 30 high tunnels estimated within the county.
- A variety of livestock can be raised in Lincoln County
- Establish a livestock sales hub in county
- Huntington has a processing plant for crops operated by WV Department of Agriculture

Recreation

- Guyan River Trail is similar to Coal River Group. Upgrading access along the Guyandotte River for boating & fishing. Have several access point in county (Branchland and West Hamlin) and working on more at WV 10 bridge locations (Midkiff, Harts and Ranger). Have annual boat race and 5 k run on 3rd Saturday in June.
- Ole Henrys Camping Retreat – cabins, camping, ATV, horseback riding, church and family events, restaurant on site. Have had 500 for events. Private business meeting a recreational need
- Need more indoor recreation opportunities for youth – keep open school gyms after hours
- Build a Lincoln County YMCA or indoor recreation center



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Education

- 3500 students enrolled in Lincoln County Schools for 2016
- Career Technical Education (CTE) at Lincoln County High School is a successful approach to preparing students for post-secondary education and employment opportunities in trades and specialty skills needed by county businesses.
- Expansion of their welding program through SWVCTC working for adult education
- Dual college and high school credit is being offered thru SWVCTC @ LCHS & the board is looking to Marshall University to do the same.
- Loss of 175 students in 2 years which included 45 high school students and mostly along Guyandotte River. For each loss of student, state education funding is reduced by \$6000, so county has lost \$1 million over last 2 years in educational funding. 125 students in the Harts area attend high school in Chapmanville.
- Aging buildings require more maintenance which may result in consolidation in the future if decline continues.
- Maintain daily access to the county public libraries

Transportation

- Numerous references to roads throughout the county having a general lack of road maintenance
- Driving time on Route 10 from Chapmanville to Huntington (54 miles) is 90 minutes
- Suggested 4 lane corridor between US 119 & Interstate 64 along Mud River
- Lack of state recreation signage for private recreation or tourism venues

Public Facilities / Infrastructure

- No city or county zoning and building code regulations in the county
- Floodplain maps below the Upper Mud Lake were never changed after dam construction so insurance rates stay higher and reduces viable land that may be developable. New flood study scheduled in 2017
- Water plant discussed at Upper Mud Lake to serve that section of county
- Inadequate sewage service throughout county impedes growth & development
- Sewer requested in Harts community
- Lincoln County incorporated towns Hamlin & West Hamlin are experiencing loss of tax revenue resulting in severe budget cuts
- Broadband expansion by Armstrong Internet Service 1 gig service in West Hamlin @ various other locations in Lincoln Co. Also received funding to extend broadband into the Upper Mud River Watershed.
- All schools have broadband/internet access.
- Broadband absolutely needed for medical records
- Lack of cell phone coverage throughout the county heard at every public forum.
- Existing power grid; is there enough to support growth?



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

Population, Housing, Health

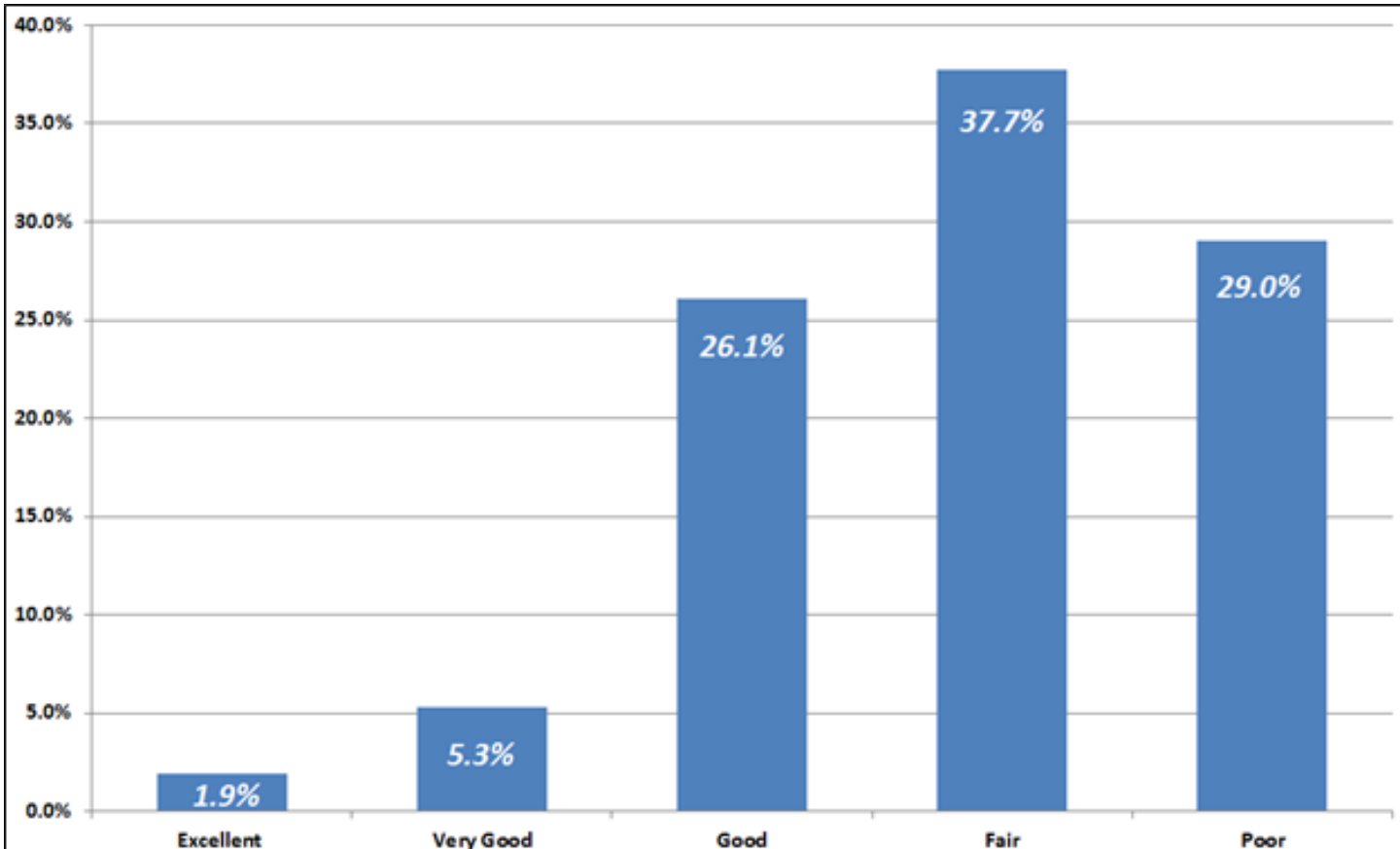
- Drug epidemic in the county is widespread.
- Lots of existing housing for sale - more substandard than decent
- Lack of overnight lodging
- Loss of younger adults leaving the county after high school or college graduation.
- Lack of day care facilities in the county.
- 7000 LC residents on SNAP (food stamps).
- Teen pregnancy is high in the county
- Leadership events for business and engaged citizenry sponsored by the LEDA for improving communications with governing agencies and other businesses.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

APPENDIX B: COUNTY SURVEY SUMMARY

The following pages contain the summary of the responses to a public survey submitted by those that live and/or work in Lincoln County. This survey was completed on-line through Lincoln Economic Development Authority's web site from January 17 - February 28, 2017. A total of 207 surveys were completed. A full copy of the survey results is available at LEDA's office.

QUESTION 1: How would you rate the overall quality of life in Lincoln County? (207 responses)



QUESTION 1: Summary of Comments

Drugs and crime are a significant problem in the county.

There are few things for kids or youth to do after school. Need more recreational opportunities.

Family and friends are a substantial part of the quality of life.

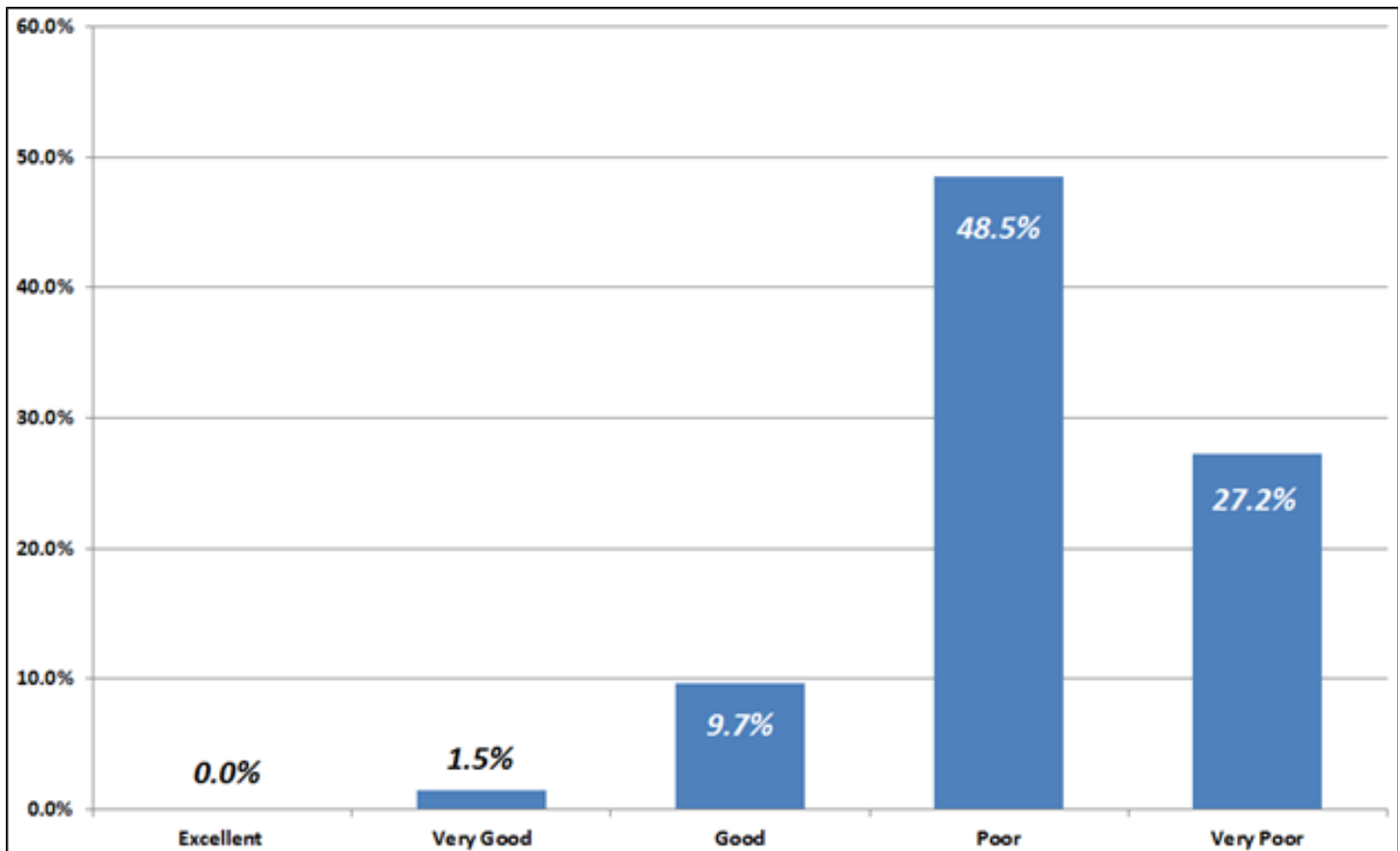
Jobs are scarce and there are few economic opportunities within the County itself.

The roads and infrastructure are not in good shape.

The majority of efforts seems focused around Hamlin when most residents don't live in Hamlin.

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 2: What type of impression do you think Lincoln County makes on people who do not live in the County? (206 responses)



QUESTION 2: Summary of Comments

Drugs and crime

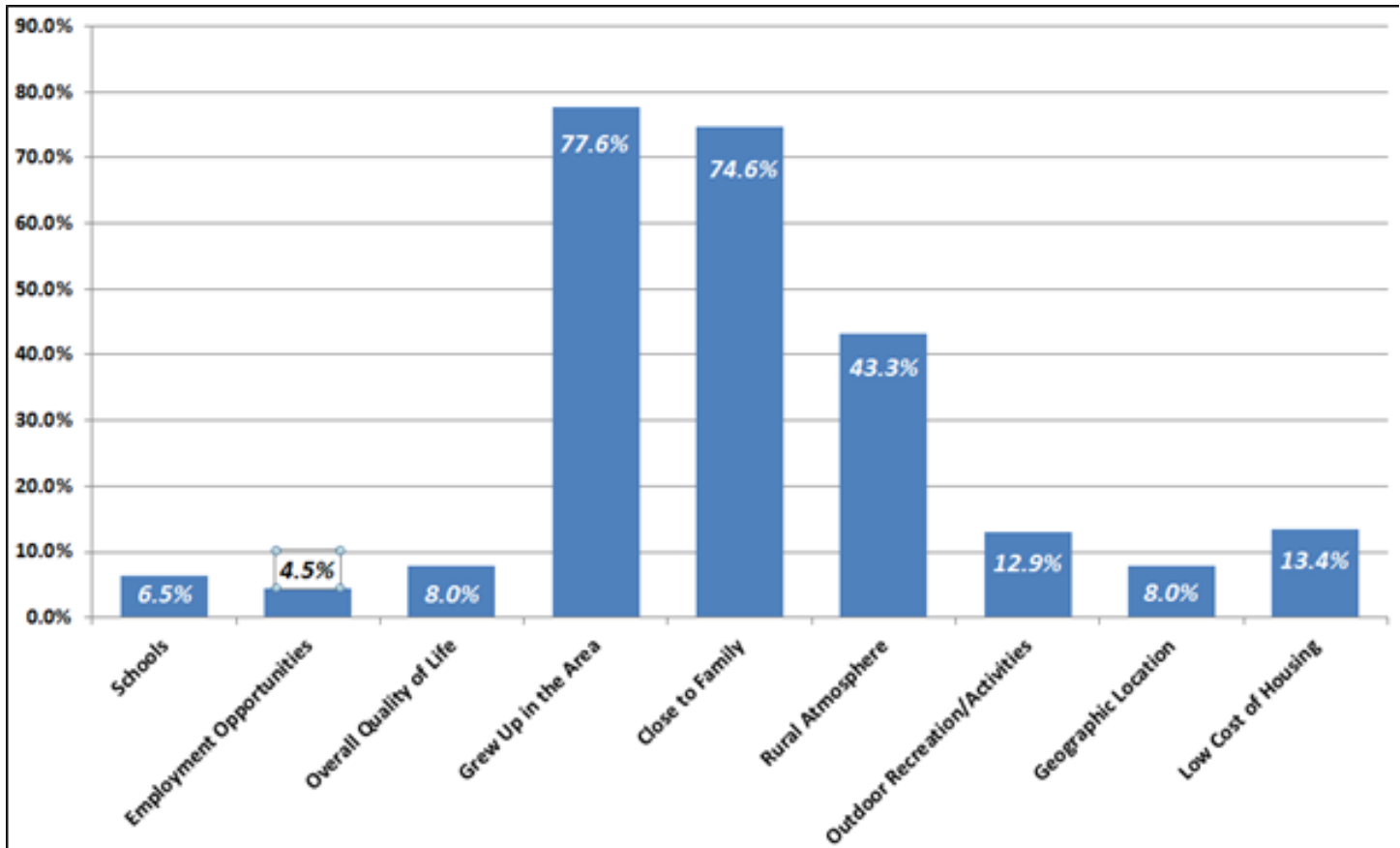
Nothing to do in the county, nothing to attract new people

Deteriorated/or abandoned homes and businesses

People who live in Lincoln County like the County but there is negative perception of the County to outsiders

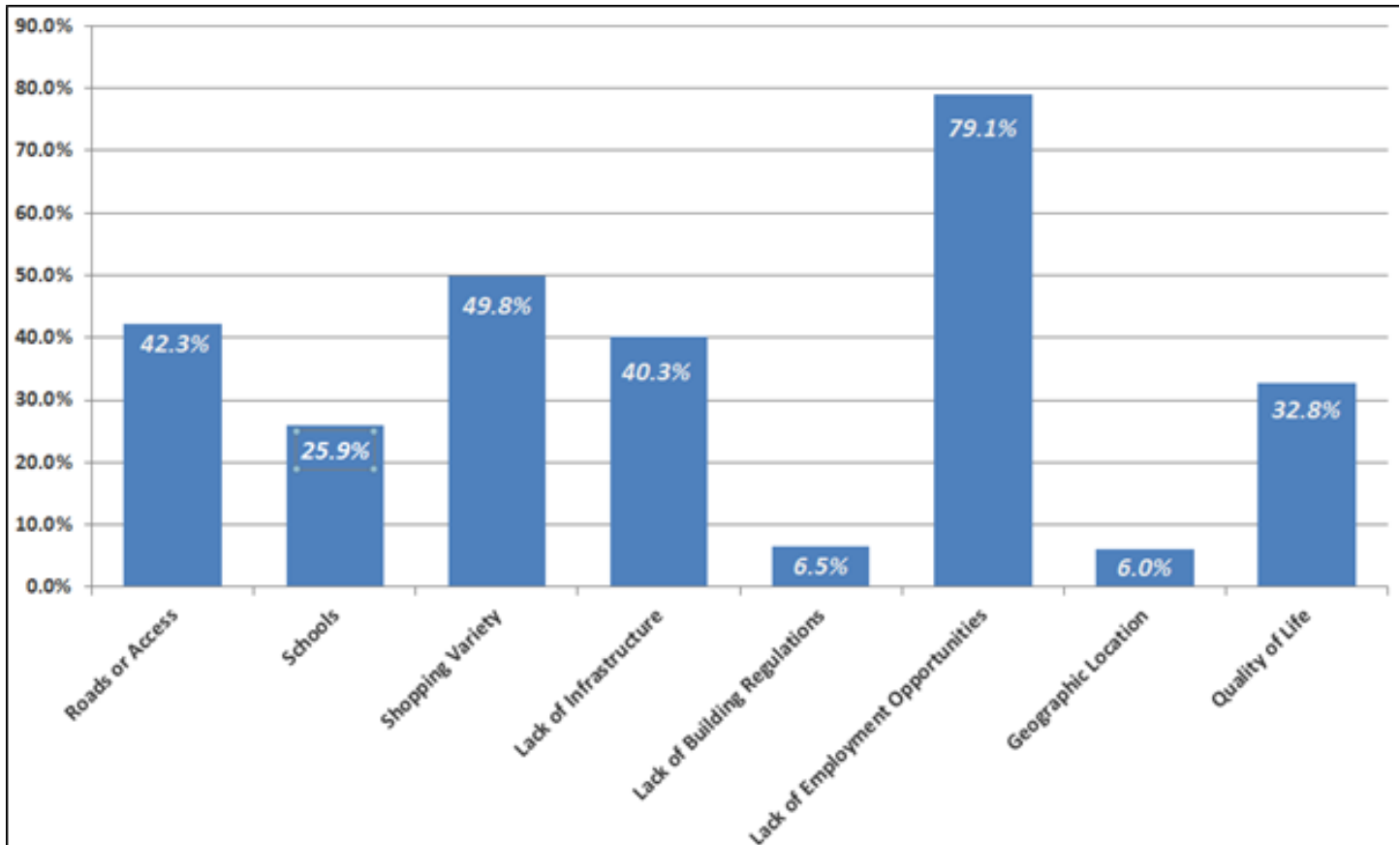
2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 3: What are the top 3 reasons you chose to live or work in Lincoln County? (201 responses – each could choose up to three issues)



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 4: What are the top 3 things you like least about living or working in Lincoln County? (201 responses – each could choose up to three issues)

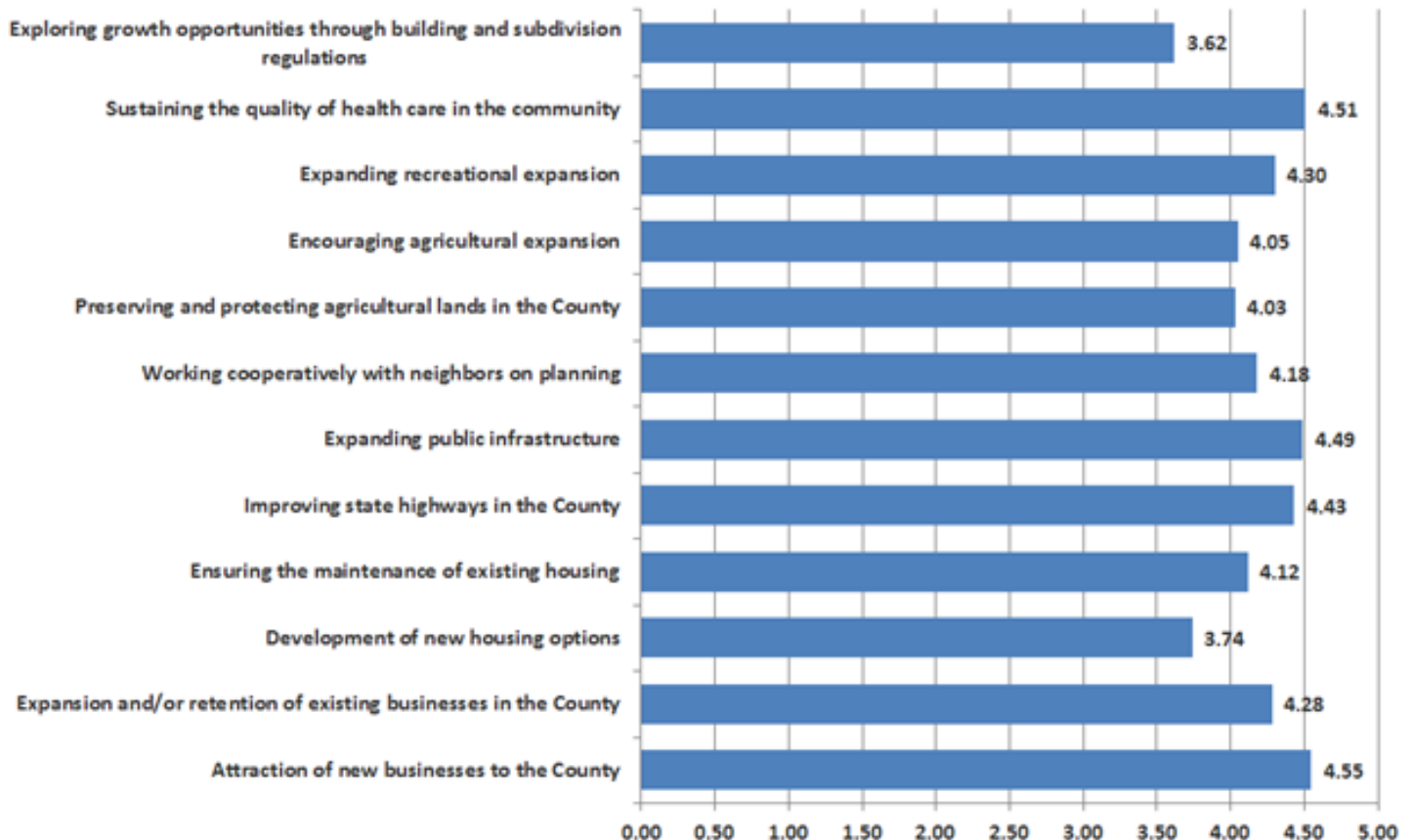


QUESTION 4: Summary of Comments

Drugs and crime
Lack of things to do, recreation
Lack of health care
Lack or poor condition of infrastructure
Not the best quality of life for many reasons

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 5: Rank the following items or statements based on the level of importance to you when considering the long-term plans for Lincoln County. (166 responses – average of weighted response – Extremely Important (5 points), Very Important (4 points), Somewhat Important (3 points), Not Very Important (2 points), Not Important at All (1 point))





2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 6: Where would you take visitors to show them what is unique and special about Lincoln County?
(111 responses)

QUESTION 6: Summary of Comments
Nowhere/Can't think of anything
Around the LPCC
Back roads to show the natural areas of the county
Coal River
Guyandotte River
Mud River (Dam, Recreational Area, Lake)
Hamlin
Jerry's Jamboree
Jim Ryan's barber shop
Lincoln county high school
Mall Rock
Surrounding recreational areas
The Chuck Yeager monument at Hamlin Middle School.



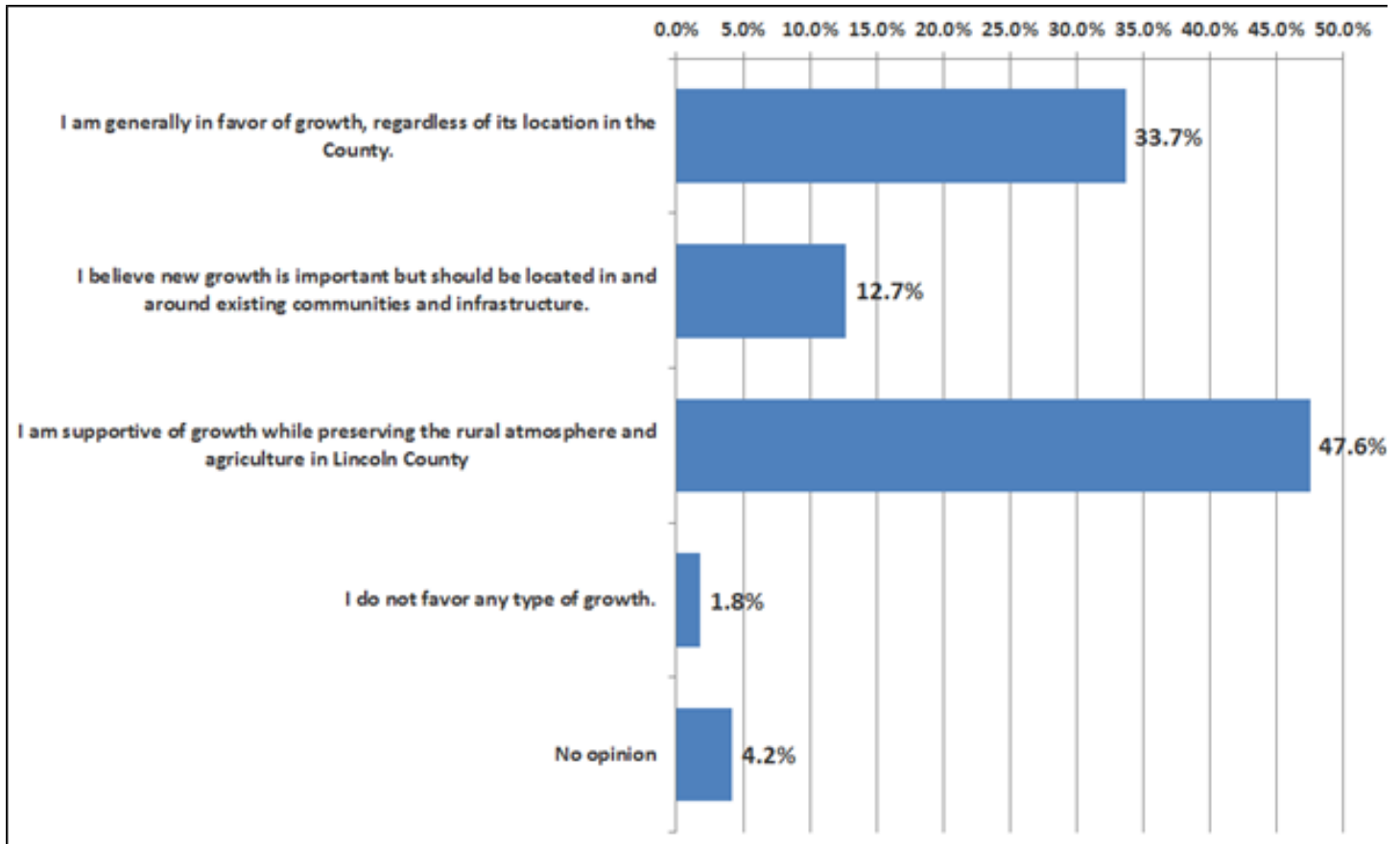
2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 7: What, if anything, do you think should stay the same in Lincoln County? (87 responses)

QUESTION 7: Summary of Comments
Affordable housing
Armstrong
Existing recreational activities/oppor tunities
Friendly people/hospitality
The faith community/churches
Nothing
Small town/rural atmosphere
Historical resources
Natural resources (e.g., rivers and agricultural/natural beauty)

2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 8: In 1910, there were 20,491 people living in Lincoln County. While the population has fluctuated up and down over the decades, the overall population numbers have held relatively stable with a total population of 21,720 in 2010. Given that information and your general impression of growth in the community, which of the following statements best describes your opinion about growth in Lincoln County? (166 responses)





2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 9: What do you think are the most pressing long-range (10-20 years) issues facing Lincoln County? (131 responses)

QUESTION 9: Summary of Comments
Generating revenue
Sufficient and quality schools to improve education
Better infrastructure
Businesses/job growth
Addressing drug abuse and crime
Housing options
Building conditions
Expansion of recreational activities/things to do
Protection of agricultural resources/industries
Nothing
Poverty



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 10: What do you think is the greatest opportunity for Lincoln County in the long run (10-20 years)? (100 responses)

QUESTION 10: Summary of Comments
Capitalizing on agriculture and the natural resources
A recreation center/YMCS
Recreational opportunities
Better shopping
Better schools/education
Business development and job growth
Cleaning up the community
The healthcare system
Maximizing tourism
Don't know/unsure
Services for people who might be struggling/Assistance to get out of poverty



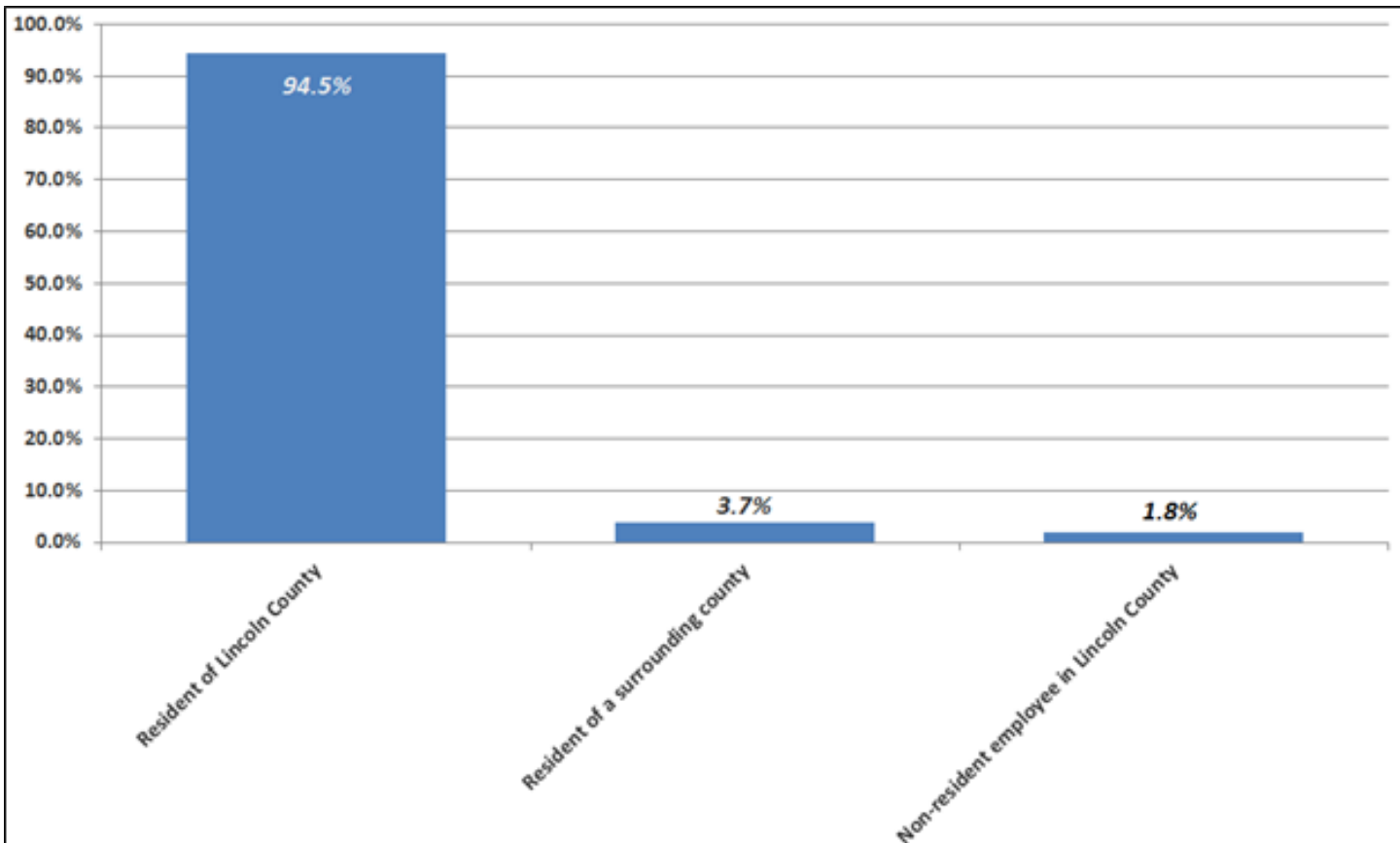
2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 11: If you only have one problem solved by this planning process, what would it be? (110 responses)

QUESTION 11: Summary of Comments
Enhance the education system/opportunities
Cleaning up the county
Creating jobs/economic growth
Addressing the drug issues/activities
Create more recreational opportunities/jobs
Flood control
Helping small businesses get started
Improving the infrastructure
Increase access to retail opportunities
More access to child care

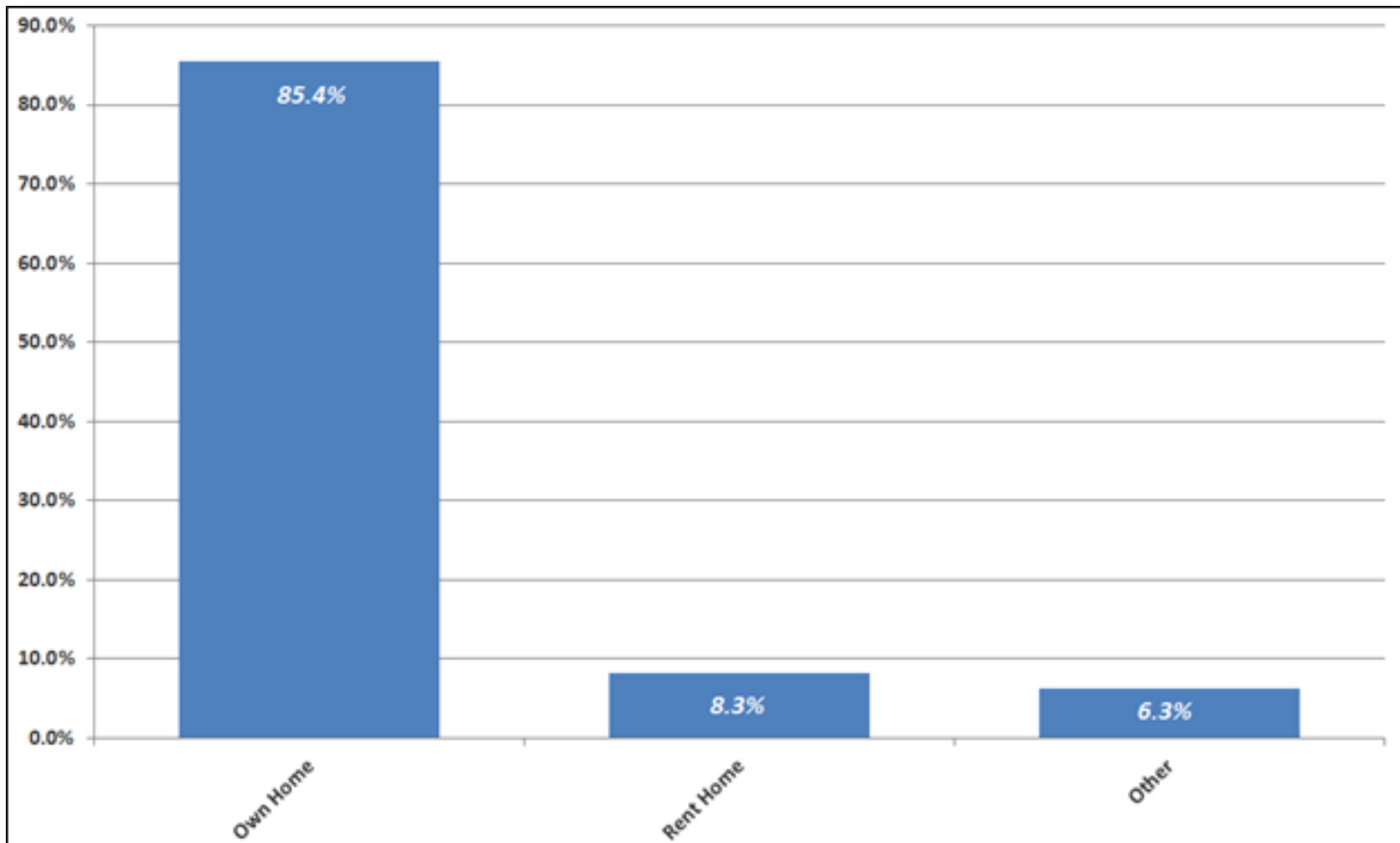
2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 12: Please provide us with a little background on your ties to Lincoln County. (163 responses)



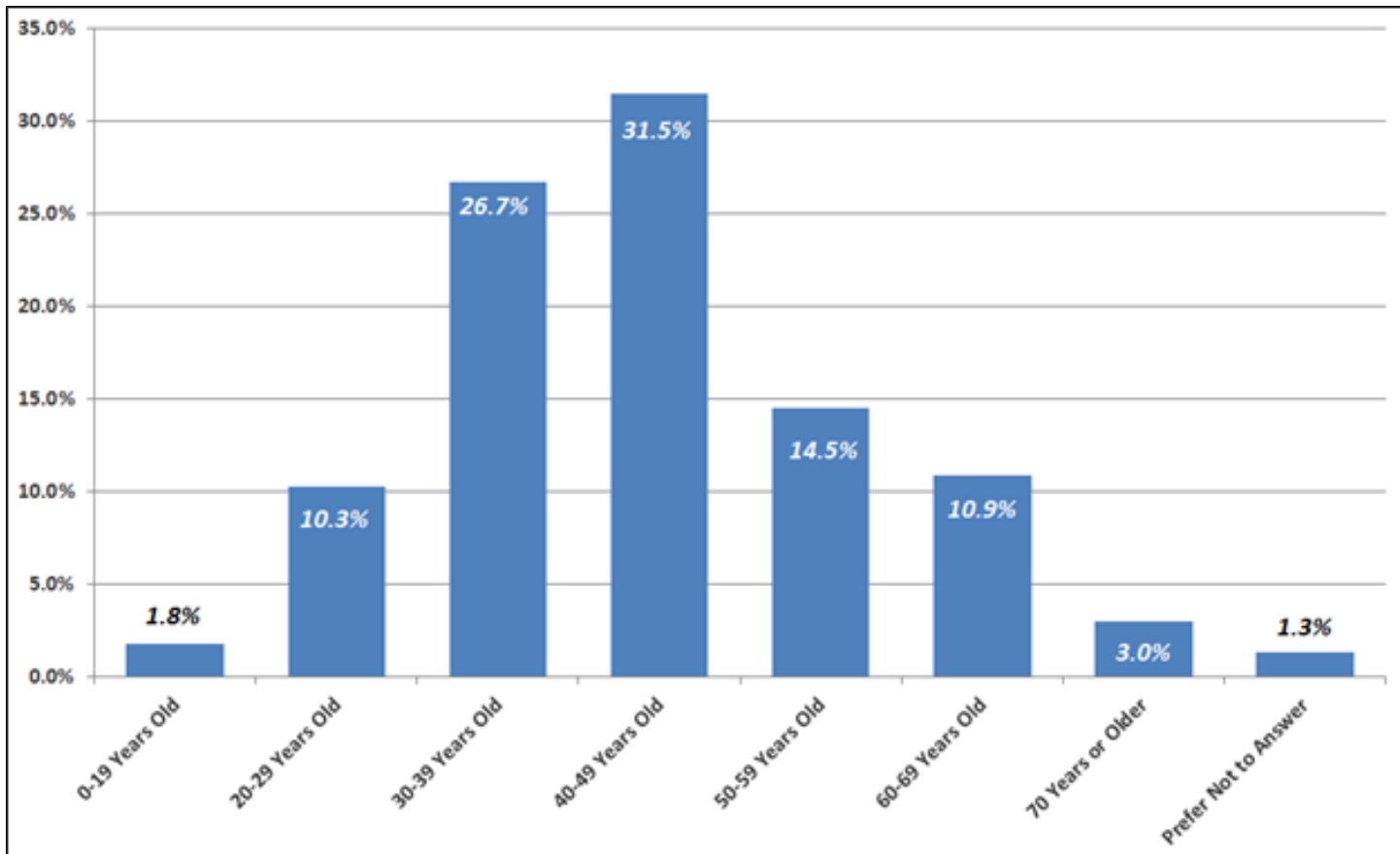
2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 13: If you are a resident, do you own or rent your home? (157 responses)



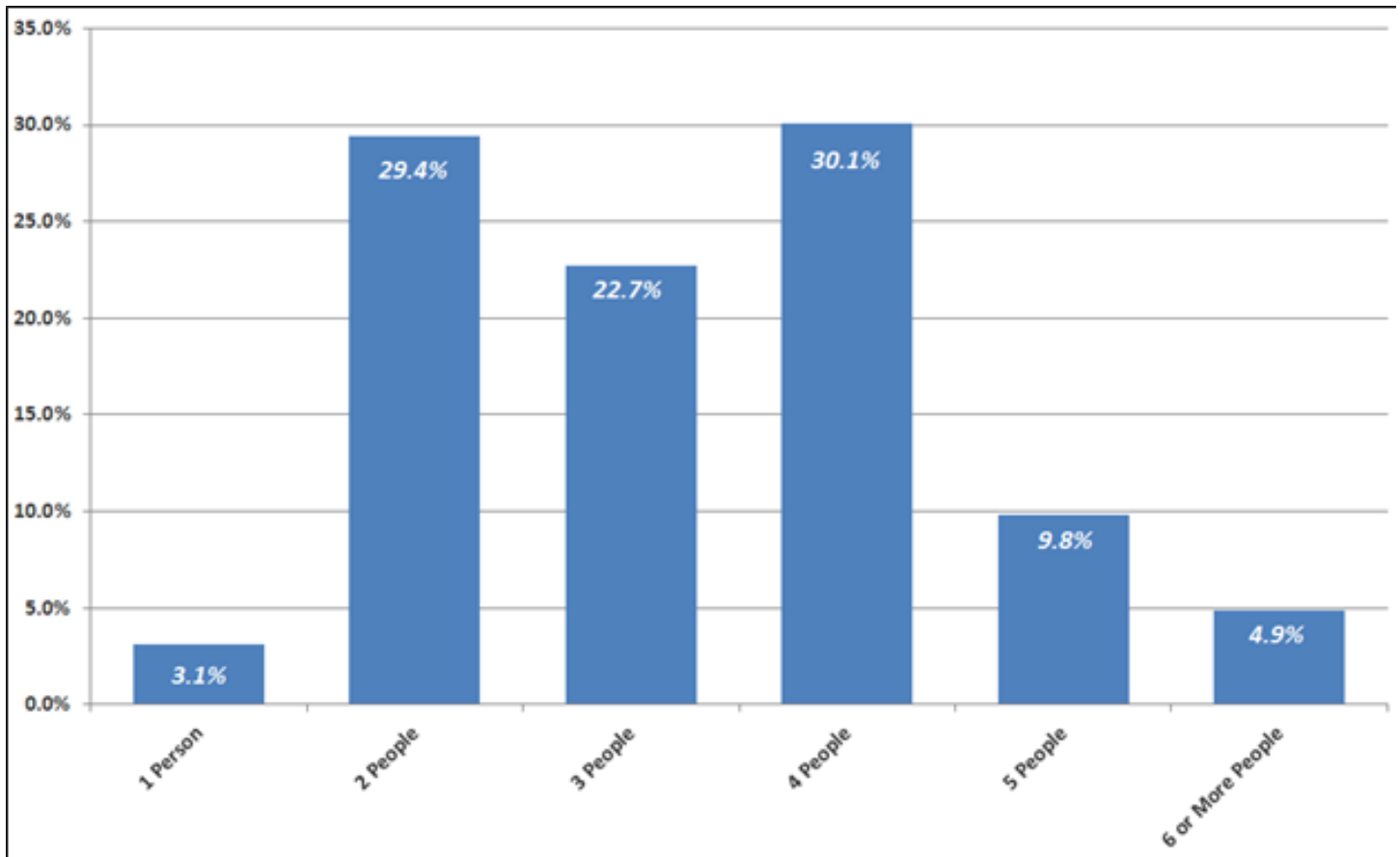
2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 14: What is your age? (165 responses)



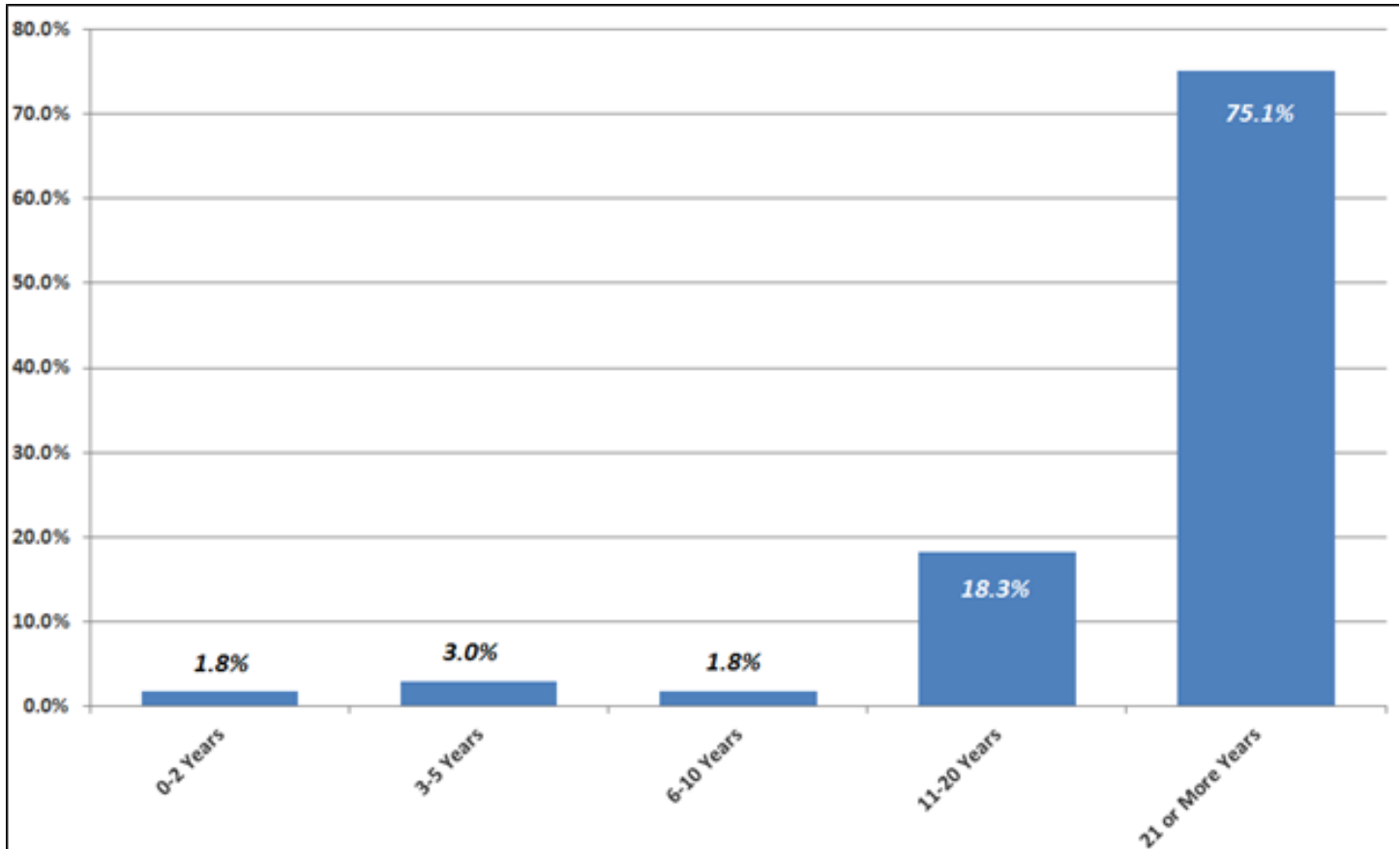
2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 15: How many people live in your household, including yourself? (163 responses)



2017 Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan

QUESTION 16: How many years have you lived and/or worked in Lincoln County? (164 responses)





Lincoln Economic Development Authority

PO Box 100

6888 McClellan St, 2nd Floor,
Ste. 2 (City National Bank Building)

West Hamlin, WV 25571

304-824-3838

www.lincolneda.com

Draft: April 01, 2017