



Boone County Comprehensive Plan: Current Conditions and Opportunities

INTERIM REPORT

Draft as of November 14, 2024

PREPARED BY:



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Center for Governmental Studies

Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development



Overview

This interim report covering current conditions and opportunities summarizes the status of the comprehensive planning process as of November 2024.

A separate report will provide similar information for the update of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

This report is organized as follows:

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PHYSICAL ASSETS

CURRENT CONDITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

Preservation

- Agricultural Land
- Open Space
- Riparian Areas

Agricultural Land

- Conservation easements offer a means to maintain agricultural land, including the use of an Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE), which is a 99-year contract between a landowner and public entity that defines the specific types of development that can occur on the landowner's property
- Agricultural land preservation protects the County's rural character and maintains agricultural production as a key part of the local economy
- Lot of record has historically been critical to land preservation

80%

Approximate amount of land in Boone County that is classified as prime agricultural soil

Comprehensive Plan will define a major policy decision by the County to balance preservation with development, particularly with respect to protecting a sustainable water supply and productive farmland



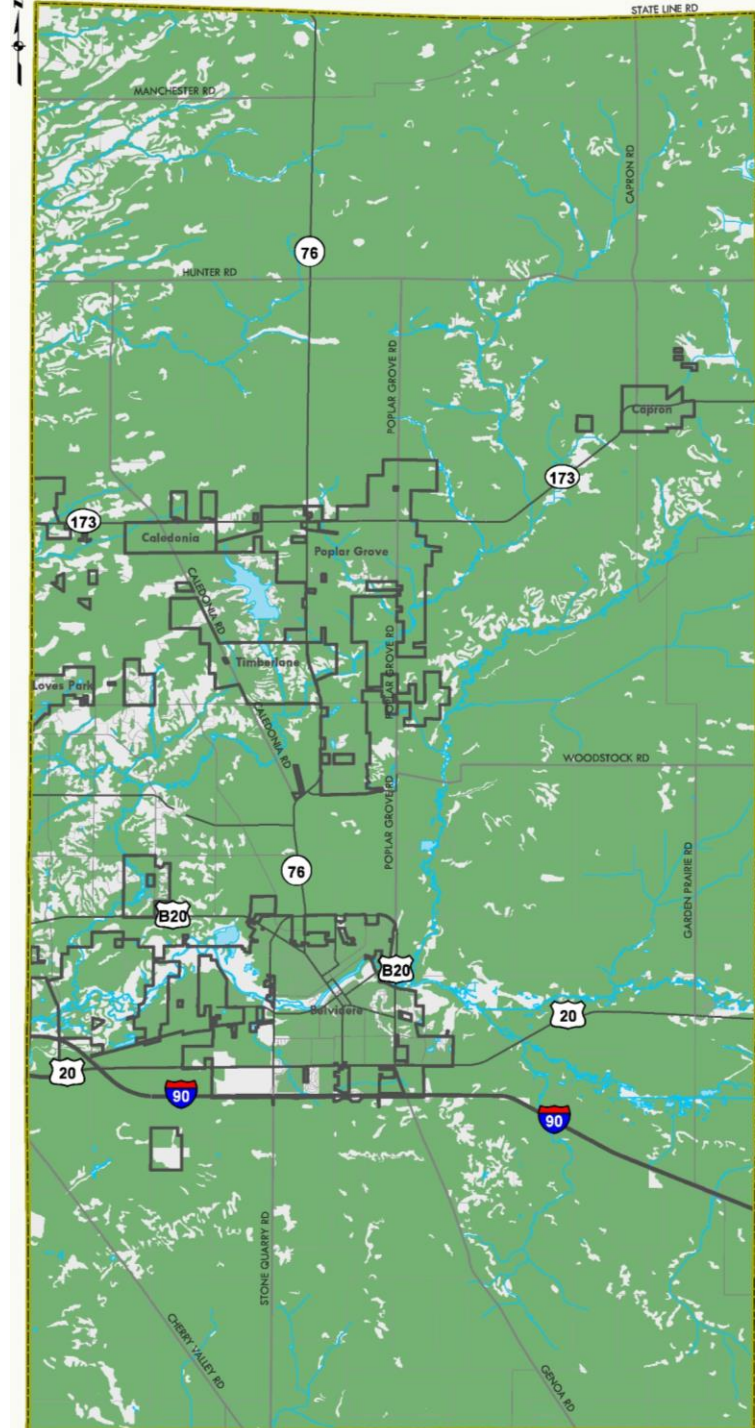
Agricultural Land

Prime Farmland

Source: 2020 Boone County Comprehensive Plan

KEY

-  Prime Farmland
-  Water
-  Municipalities
-  Boone County



Open Space

- Boone County Conservation District plays critical role to preserve open space, acquire land for preservation, and restore native plantings and prairie lands
- Cluster housing and conservation development are two residential development techniques that can help preserve open space and protect environmentally sensitive areas
- Over 33,000 acres of land identified as regional greenway that should be protected to prevent development within flood prone and sensitive areas

21

Conservation areas and parks

4

Nature preserves, prairies, and wetlands

14.2

Miles of trails along Long Prairie Trail



Riparian Areas

- Kishwaukee River is the County's most prominent riparian area with major conservation areas along the riverfront
- County is covered by the Kishwaukee River and Upper Rock River Watersheds
- Protection of riparian and water recharge areas also protect local groundwater
- Open spaces along the Kishwaukee River and creeks offer natural stormwater management capacity, which helps to protect groundwater for a sustainable water supply

OTHER WATERWAYS

Piscasaw Creek
Spring Creek
Coon Creek
Mosquito Creek
Geryune Creek
Beaver Creek
North Kinnikinni Creek
Trimble Run

Riparian Area: Land that borders a body of water, such as a river, creek, stream, lake, or wetland, and is influenced by the water's presence. This includes any floodplain coverage that may be associated with the body of water.



CURRENT CONDITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

Sustainability

- Water Sustainability
- Environmental Protection
- Renewable Energy Infrastructure
- Current Sustainability Practices

Water Sustainability

- Significant need to create a Sustainable Water Supply Plan for Boone County
- Climate resilience will be significantly dependent on groundwater recharge capacity and agricultural production
- County undertaking a two-year 3D geological mapping and ground water modeling study to better understand water issues and develop strategies for a more sustainable water supply
 - Study to be conducted by the Illinois State Geological Survey
 - Assessment will identify source(s) of County's water supply and how it is replenished
 - Last mapping study conducted in 1980s
- Illinois Groundwater Protection Act supports regional groundwater protection through a state/local partnership
- 2012 Regional Stormwater Plan is helpful but requires ordinances at the County and municipal levels to be more effective

60%

Approximate amount of Kishwaukee River flow that emanates from the groundwater system



Water Sustainability

Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas

Source: 2020 Boone County Comprehensive Plan

KEY

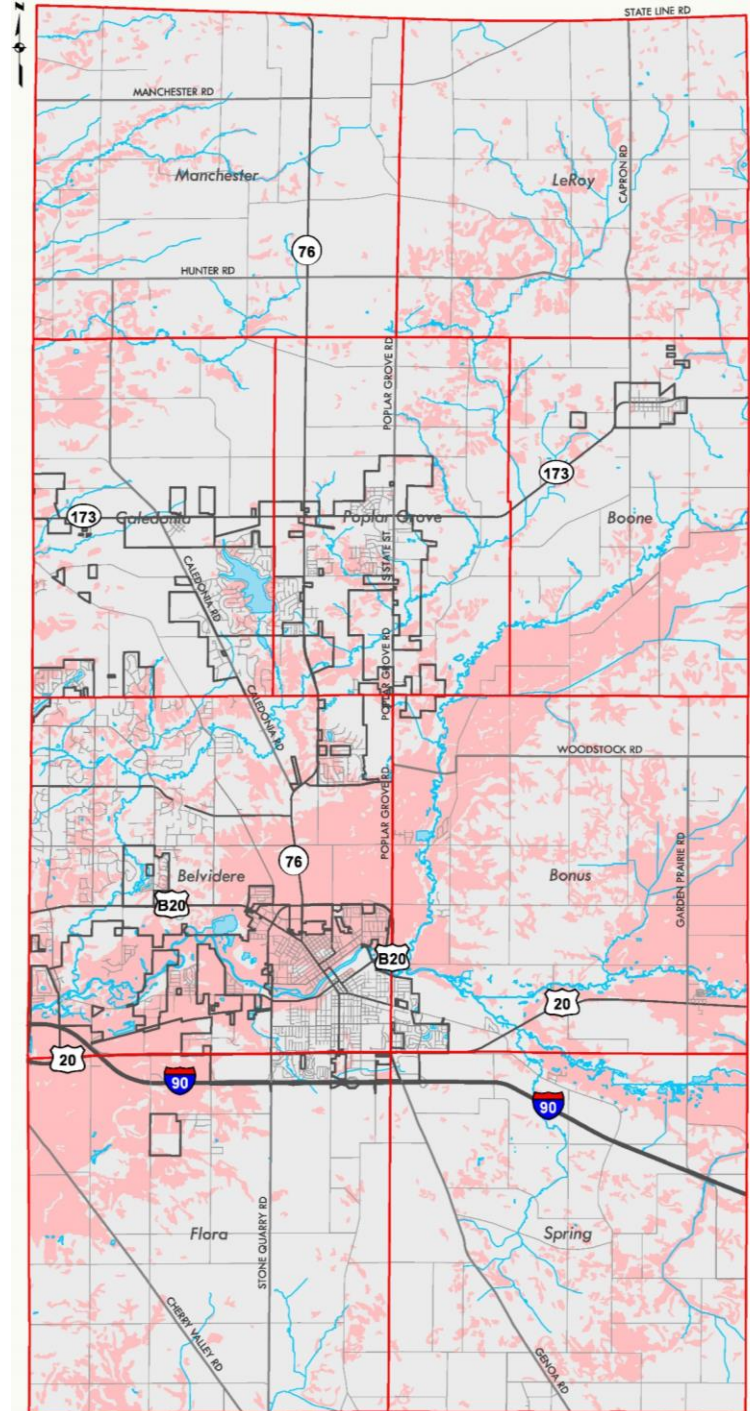
 High Recharge Areas*

 Water

 Municipalities

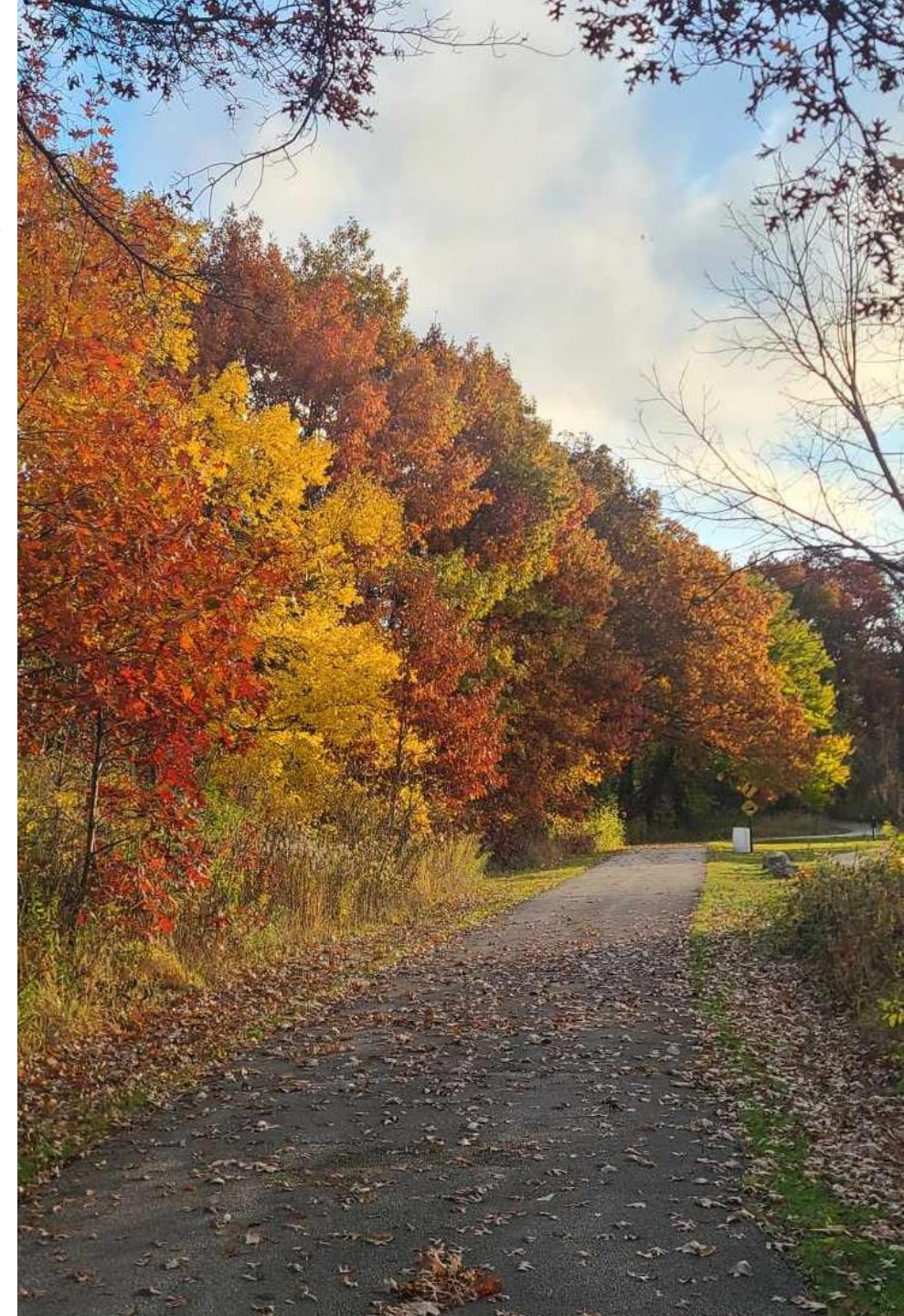
 Townships

*See methodology and definitions
in Appendix B



Environmental Protection

- Majority of County's natural resources (soils, water, animals, plants, and air) are maintained and protected via private or public agency stewardship
- Boone County Conservation District plays a crucial role in environmental protection with its various conservation areas, natural areas, and prairies
- Multiple other agencies contribute to environmental sustainability:
 - Boone County Soil and Water District
 - Belvidere Park District
 - Boone County Health Department
 - Water Preservation and Protection Action Committee
 - Northern Regional Groundwater Planning and Protection Committee
 - Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
 - The Natural Land Institute
 - Regional Environmental Committee
 - Winnebago-Boone County Farm Bureau



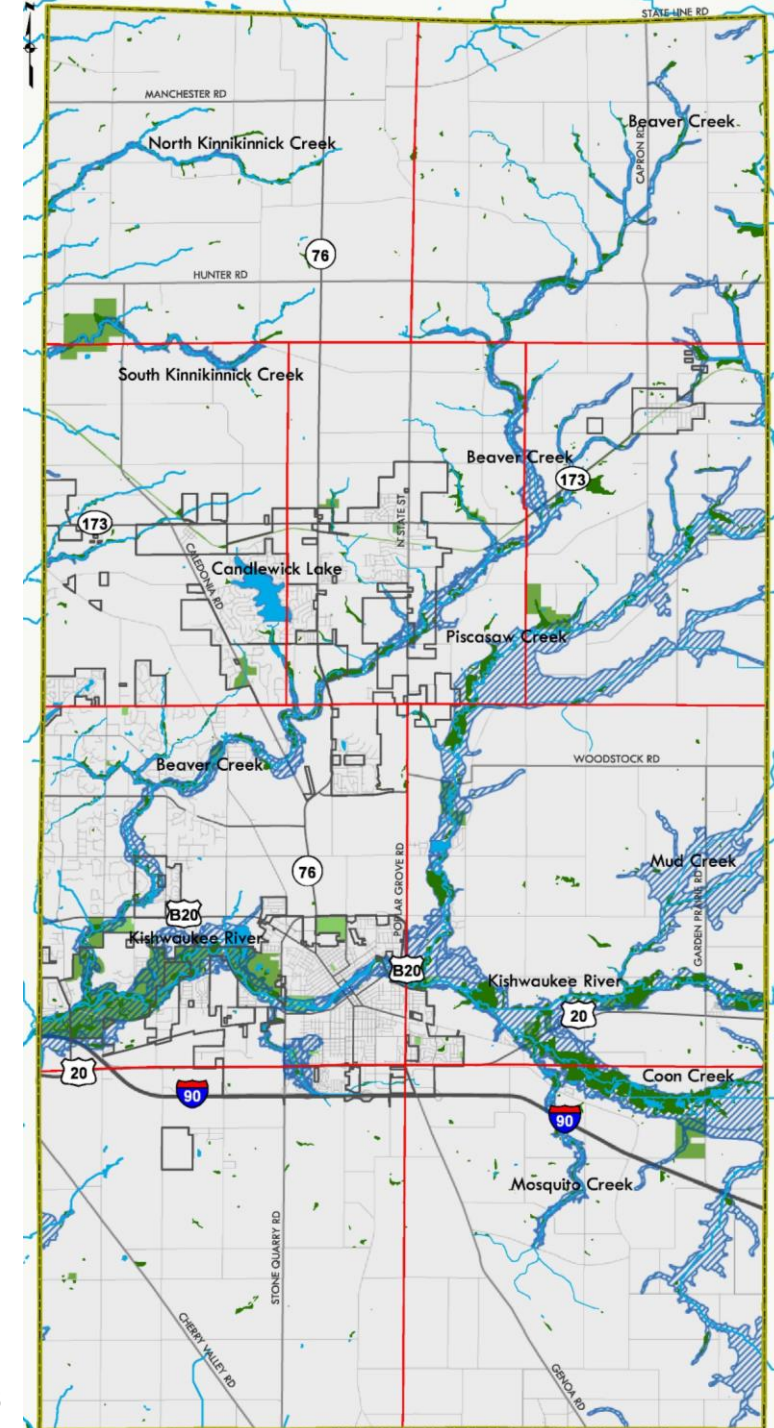
Environmental Protection

Environmental Features

Source: 2020 Boone County Comprehensive Plan

KEY

-  Hydrology
-  Wetlands
-  100-Year Floodplain
-  Public Conservation Land
-  Park/Open Space
-  Municipalities
-  Townships
-  Boone County



Environmental Protection

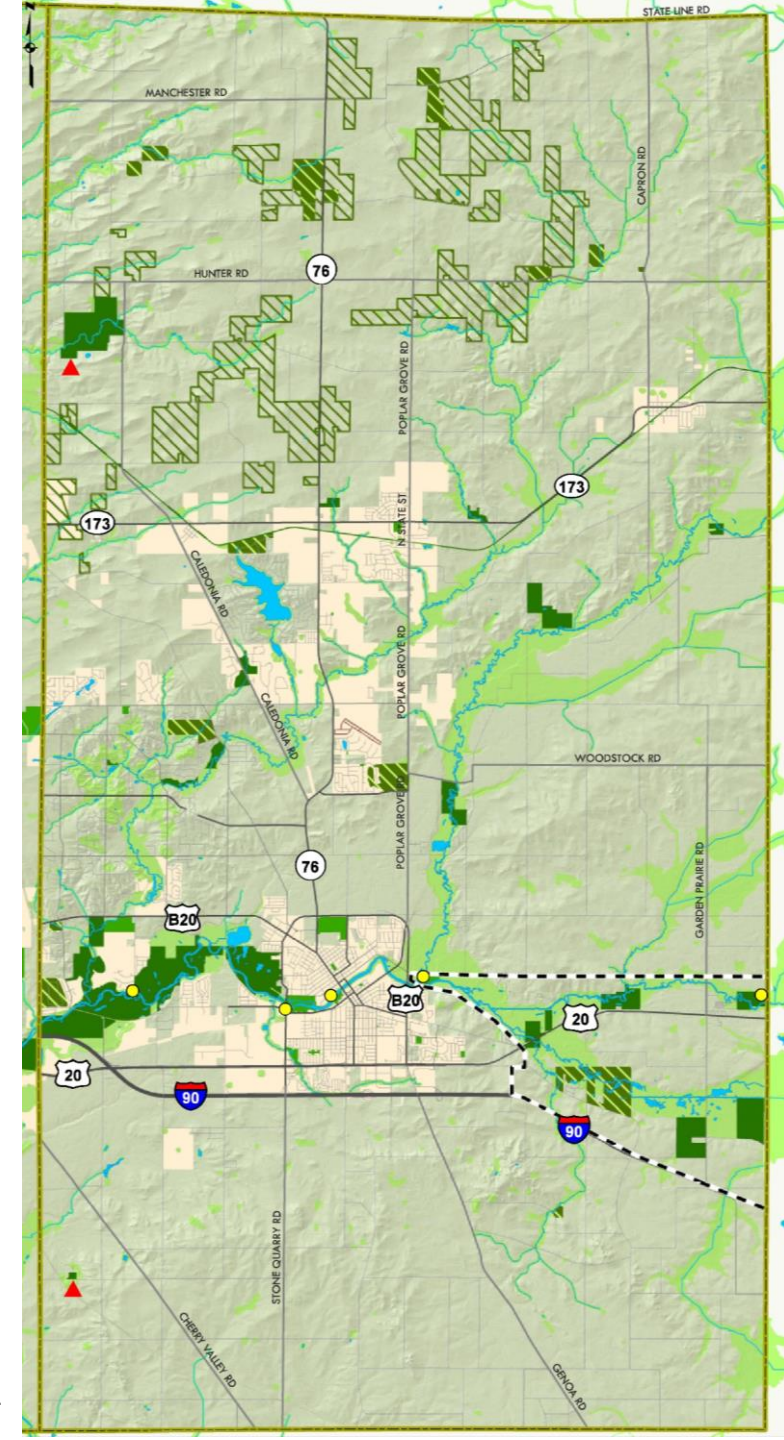
Greenways

Source: 2020 Boone County Comprehensive Plan

KEY

-  Public Parks
-  Conservation Area/
Public Preserve
-  Privately Protected
-  Critical/Sensitive Area
Priority Aquisition
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Agricultural Preservation
Areas
-  Lakes & Ponds
-  Rivers, Streams & Creeks
-  Illinois Protected Natural
Area/Preserve
-  Canoe Launch

The Critical/Sensitive Areas includes property in the floodplain, steep slopes, 150ft buffer around all hydrology, and any special areas identified as priority for aquisition.



Renewable Energy Infrastructure

- Solar farms continue to emerge in various spots across the County
- Wind farms are also increasingly becoming more prominent in rural parts of the state with potential future impacts on Boone County
- Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations are increasingly becoming a major part of renewable energy infrastructure and a unique contributor to economic development activity geared towards travelers
- Continued growth of solar, wind, and EV energy facilities accentuates the need for more up-to-date policies and zoning regulations for renewable energy infrastructure at varying scales and within public and private properties



Current Sustainability Practices

- Local farms draw water from private on-site wells for their daily operations, crop production, and animal raising
- The two-year 3D geological mapping and ground water modeling study will provide the foundation for a Sustainable Water Supply Plan, which will have broad impacts on sustainability practices
- Boone County Conservation District and other agencies take appropriate actions to protect natural habitats, flora, and fauna
- Boone County agencies, businesses, and homeowners have taken steps to improve their energy consumption by:
 - Pursuing alternative energy sources
 - Adopting eco-friendly practices
 - Being more mindful of energy efficiency
 - Educating the public on conservation practices



CURRENT CONDITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

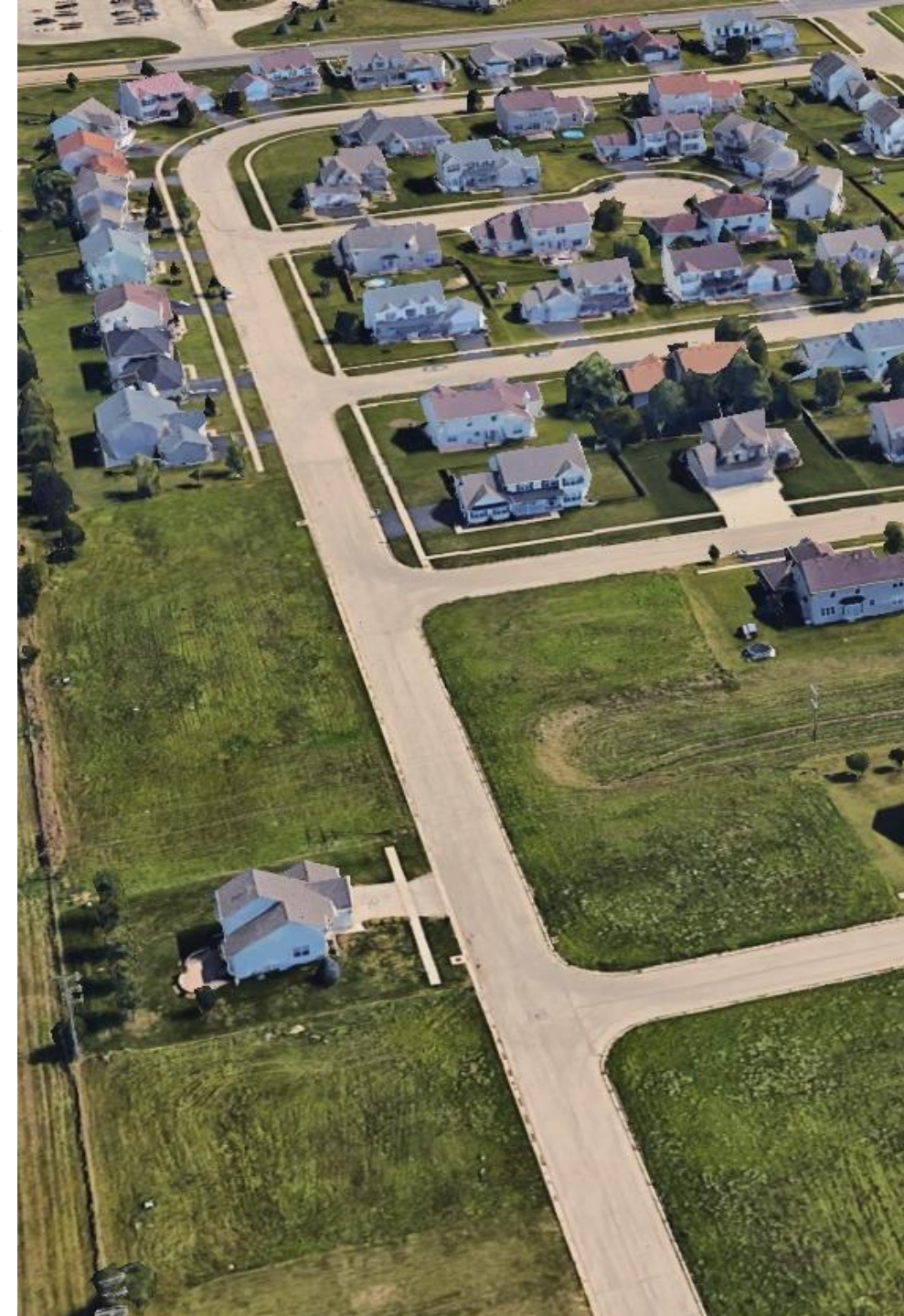
Land Development

- Recent Development Patterns
- Municipal Comprehensive Plans
- Growth Areas
- Utilities Infrastructure

Recent Development Patterns

- Residential development in the County has occurred both on the outskirts of municipalities and out in more rural areas creating multiple unincorporated subdivisions
- While most subdivisions are platted, not all residential lots are built out yet, with the buildout enabling the County to add more housing even before considering new developments
- Commercial and industrial development is most prominent along major roadways, particularly on the north and south sides of Belvidere's planning area
- Future commercial and industrial development will likely continue in these same areas to capitalize on existing utilities and major roadway access

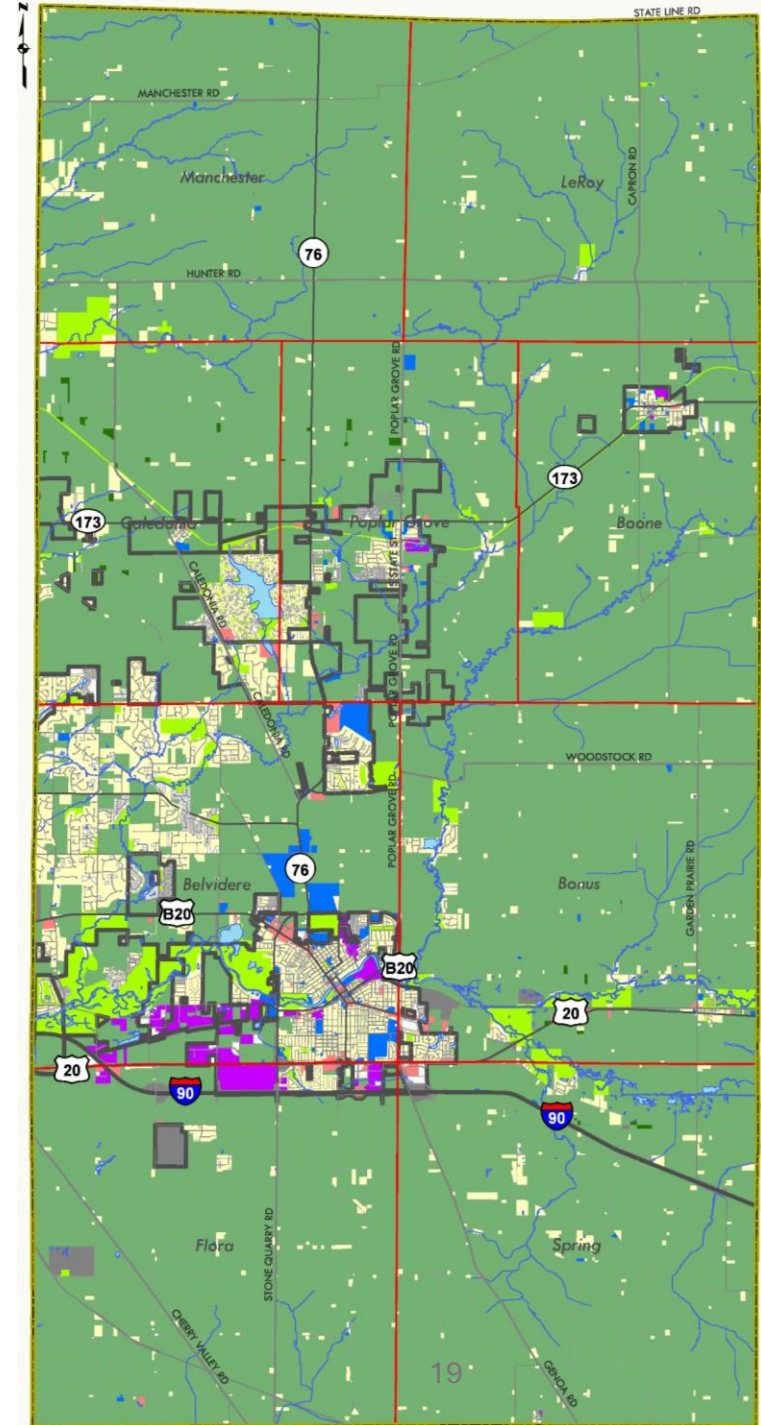
Comprehensive Plan will define a major policy decision by the County to balance preservation with development, particularly with respect to protecting a sustainable water supply and productive farmland



Existing Land Use

KEY

-  Agricultural Production
-  Agricultural Residential
-  Commercial
-  Extraction
-  Industrial
-  Institutional
-  Open Space/Recreation
-  Residential
-  Other Infrastructure
-  Vacant
-  Townships
-  Water
-  Municipalities
-  Boone County



Development Patterns

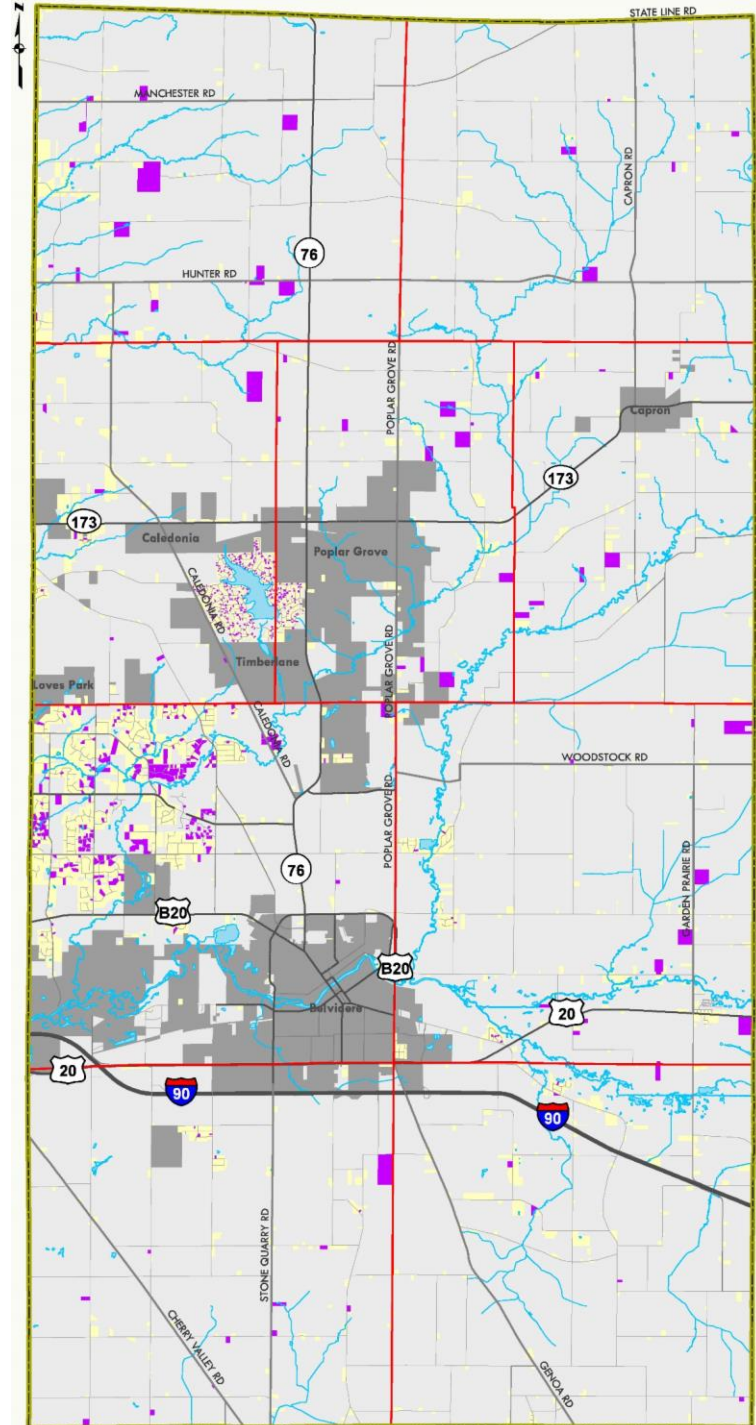
Unincorporated Residential Growth Areas

Source: 2020 Boone County Comprehensive Plan

KEY

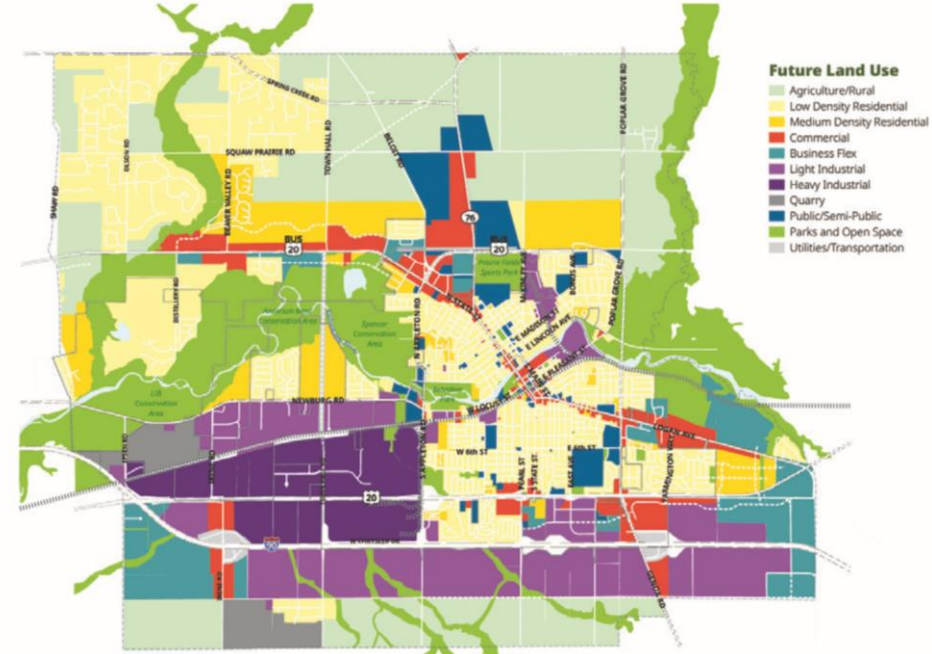
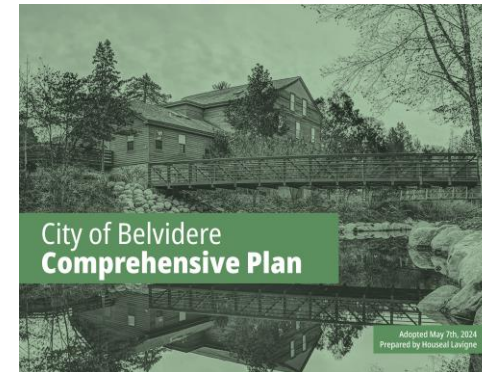
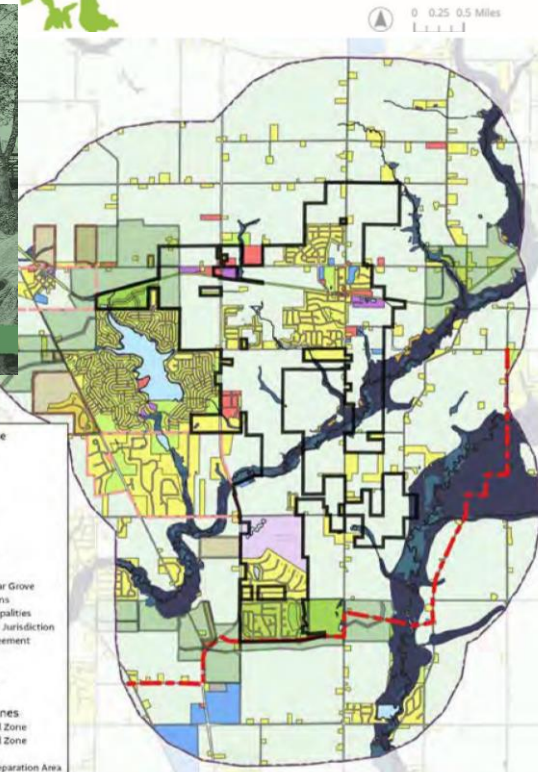
NEW UNINCORPORATED HOUSING STARTS

-  2000 - 2017
-  Currently Unincorporated Residential
-  Incorporated Parcels
-  Townships



Municipal Comprehensive Plans

- Belvidere and Poplar Grove both recently updated their Comprehensive Plans in 2024 with future land use plans that will influence the County's land use recommendations
- Belvidere accounts for a Preservation and Agriculture Growth Area on the north and south fringes of the city's planning area
- Poplar Grove preserves substantial amounts of agricultural land, open space, and environmental areas like wetlands and floodplain
- The planning areas for municipalities identify existing developments and areas that are currently unincorporated but have the potential for annexation



Growth Areas

- Growth areas seem most appropriate around Belvidere, Capron, and Poplar Grove based on recent development patterns
- Priority residential growth areas:
 - Infill in existing subdivisions
 - Buildout of platted but unfinished subdivisions
 - New subdivisions in appropriate areas
- Priority commercial and industrial growth areas:
 - U.S. Business Route 20 (north of Belvidere)
 - U.S. Route 20 (north of I-90 around Belvidere)
 - State Highways 173 and 76 (near Poplar Grove)
- Factors that influence growth areas:
 - Ability to tie into existing utilities
 - Contiguous to existing development, particularly within municipalities
 - Access to main roads
 - Proximity to services, jobs, schools, etc.
 - Limited to no impact on prime farmland, open spaces, and environmentally sensitive areas



Utilities Infrastructure

- Many County residents have private on-site well and septic systems
- Well and septic infrastructure requires certain soil conditions suitable for proper treatment
- Future land use planning in municipalities like Belvidere, Poplar Grove, and Capron will impact the ability of property owners to utilize private on-site well and septic; otherwise, they would need to shift to municipal water and sewer service
- Public water and sewer connections require annexation into one of the municipalities
- Municipal water and sewer capacity is generally adequate; however, some issues to consider for future planning:
 - Belvidere: Sewer lift infrastructure on west side
 - Capron: Significant need for investment to improve and extend existing utilities
 - Poplar Grove: Current amount of platted lots may overwhelm sewer capacity
- Broadband infrastructure is most prominent with strongest internet speeds around urbanized areas with weaker spots in the undeveloped rural areas
- Access to water, sewer, and telecommunications infrastructure is a major factor to attract new commercial and industrial development



CURRENT CONDITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

Access & Mobility

- Regional Access
- Roadways
- Bikes and Trails
- Transit

Regional Access

- Boone County is a major regional crossroads with the Chicago region to the east, Rockford to the west, and Wisconsin to the north
- East-west access:
 - Primary: I-90, US Route 20, IL Route 173
 - Secondary: Manchester Rd, Hunter Rd, Woodstock Rd
- North-south access:
 - Primary: IL Route 76
 - Secondary: Capron Rd, Poplar Grove Rd, Caledonia Rd, Garden Prairie Rd, Cherry Valley Rd, Stone Quarry Rd, Genoa Rd
- Proposed Amtrak and Metra transit service will further enhance the regional accessibility of Boone County
- Coordination of a regional trails network, particularly in conjunction RMAP's* 2017 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

*RMAP: Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning



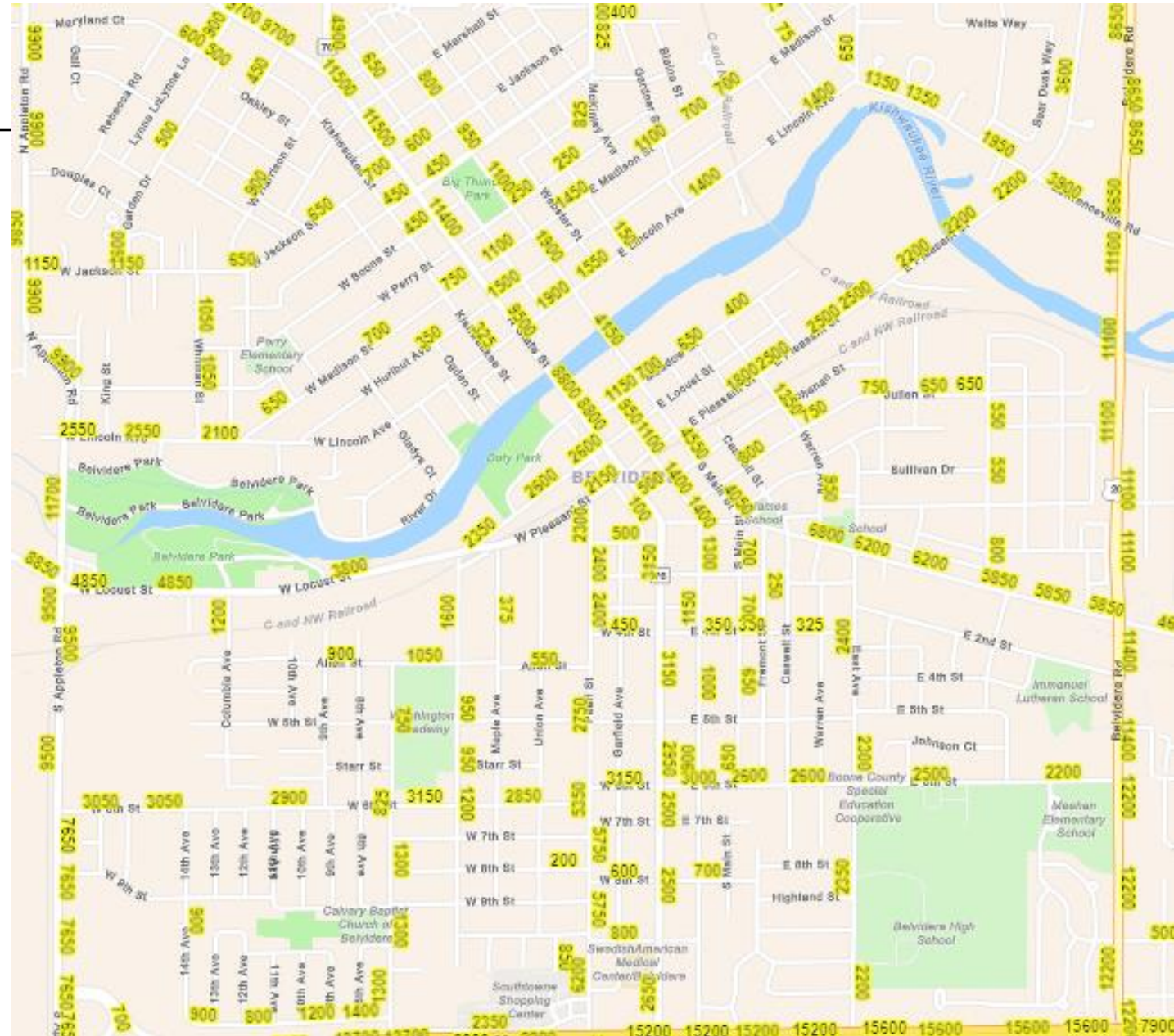
Roadways

- Boone County has over 775 miles of roadways, including 85 miles of designated truck routes
- Range of road jurisdictions:
 - IDOT
 - Illinois Tollway Authority
 - Boone County
 - Townships and Municipalities
 - Private
- Truck routes will need to be monitored as industrial growth continues in the County
- Road safety is increasingly becoming a major issue as development and local attractions generate more traffic
- Increasing need for traffic calming and road safety measures that are effective with minimal impact on the County's rural quality of life
- Conditions of roads and bridges are amplified by increasing truck traffic and the prevalence of farm vehicles



Traffic Volume

- I-90 (bottom left) sees significant traffic throughout, but it tends to be about 10% more congested east of Stone Quarry Road (54,000 compared to 50,000 in annual average traffic)
- B20 (top and bottom left) begins from west to east at 13,400, and decreases the further east it goes with 8,650 at its turn southward towards Belvedere, and only 2,400 as it approaches Route 20
- Route 20 (bottom left) unlike other roads is more congested the further east one drives with 1200 immediately east of Prairie View and 8,550 once within Garden Prairie
- 173 (top right) is slightly more congested in the west than in the east, but is relatively similar throughout with 6,250 west of Caledonia and 5,000 in Capron
- 76 (in all figures) running north to south experiences annual average traffic of 7150 just north of Belvedere, and trickles down as it continues north being less than half its traffic by the time it intersects with 14 (where it sees between 3,050 and 2,300 in average annual traffic)



Bikes and Trails

- Boone County has about 28 miles of existing bike trails
- All trails are presently off-street shared use paths
- Regional trail network is gradually being built up, including 14.2-mile rails-to-trails project and potential future trails on northern part of County
- Priority bicycle corridors:
 - Squaw Prairie Road
 - Beloit Road
 - Town Hall Road
- Agencies that play a role in building up the regional trail network:
 - IDOT
 - Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (RMAP): 2017 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
 - Boone County Highway Department
 - Boone County Conservation District
 - Belvidere Park District
 - Townships and Municipalities



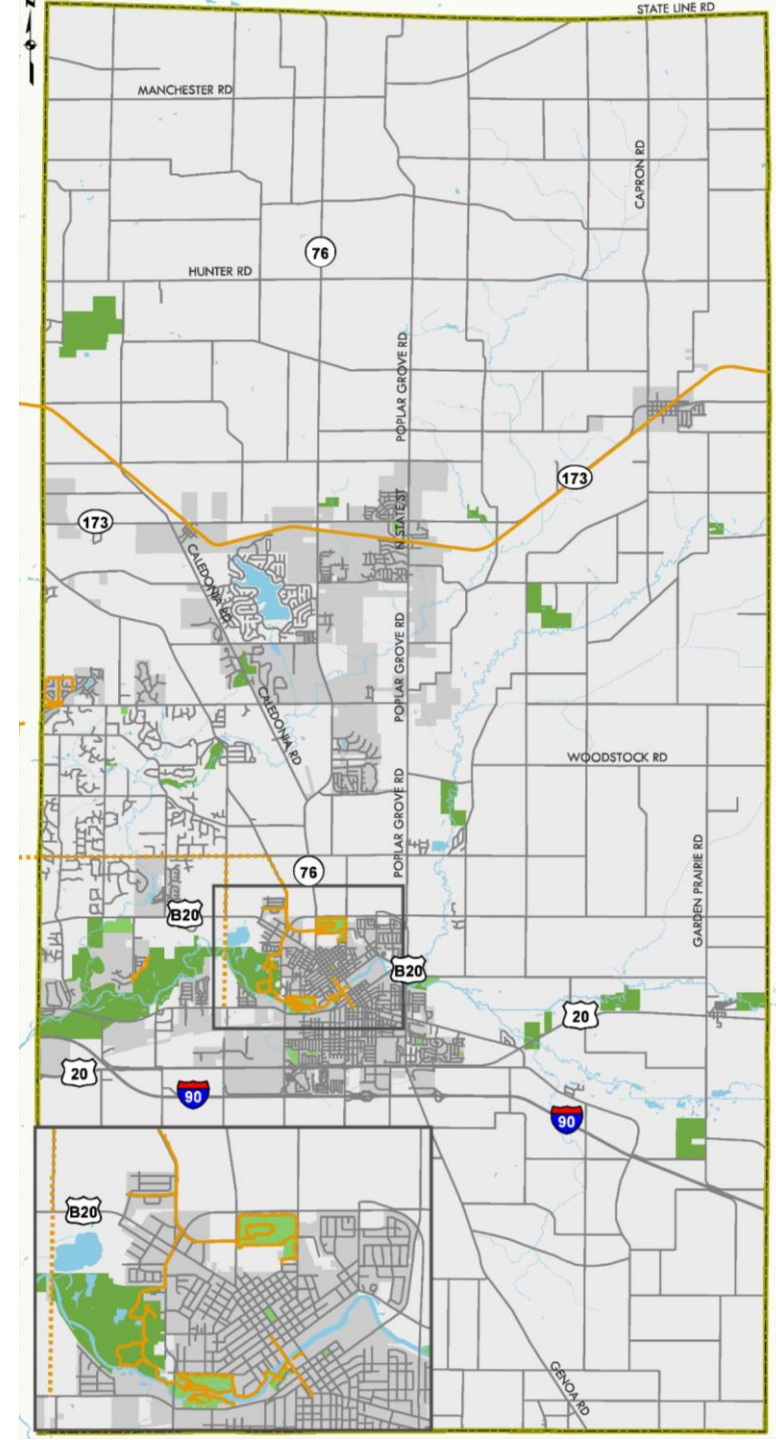
Bikes and Trails

Existing Bike Facilities

Source: 2020 Boone County Comprehensive Plan

KEY

- Shared Use Paths
- Priority Bicycle Corridors
- Boone County
- Water
- Public Conservation Land
- Park/Open Space
- Municipality



Transit

LOCAL TRANSIT

- Boone County Transit enables residents to reserve bus rides for convenient transit service, typically within 24 hours with limited same-day service
- Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) offers paratransit service available $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile beyond the RMTD Fixed Route system and/or jurisdictional boundaries for people who meet ADA criteria set by the USDOT
- These options stem from the on-demand microtransit approach, which is a common option in rural or underserved areas using small vans or shuttles for ride request service approach (similar to ride share services like Lyft and Uber)



Transit

AMTRAK

- Plans to extend Amtrak service into Boone County with a station in Belvidere
- Part of a \$500M State appropriation for two new Amtrak service routes from Chicago to the Quad Cities and Rockford (with future extension to Dubuque)
- Includes \$50M in dedicated funding for bike and pedestrian infrastructure to access transit

METRA

- Belvidere is also a planned station for the proposed Metra Rockford Intercity Passenger Rail service
- Continuation of Metra's current UP-W Line from the Big Timber Road station in Elgin westward with stops in Hunley, Belvidere, and Rockford
- \$275M State funding via the Rebuild Illinois capital plan



CURRENT CONDITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

County Assets

- Schools
- Parks
- Other Assets

Schools

- School system is strong with two school districts that provide 17 total schools from grades PreK-12
 - Belvidere CUSD 100
 - North Boone CUSD 200
- Population growth in both the County and municipalities will impact student enrollments and the local workforce
- Colleges and universities in the region:
 - 9 within 30 miles, including 2 within 10 miles
 - Rock Valley College operates its Advanced Technology Center in Belvidere
 - University of Illinois operates one of its Extension Offices in Belvidere

7,407

2024 school enrollment for Belvidere CUSD 100, down from recent high of 8,012 (2019)

1,484

2024 school enrollment for North Boone CUSD 200, down from recent high of 1,635 (2018)

Source: Illinois Report Card



Parks

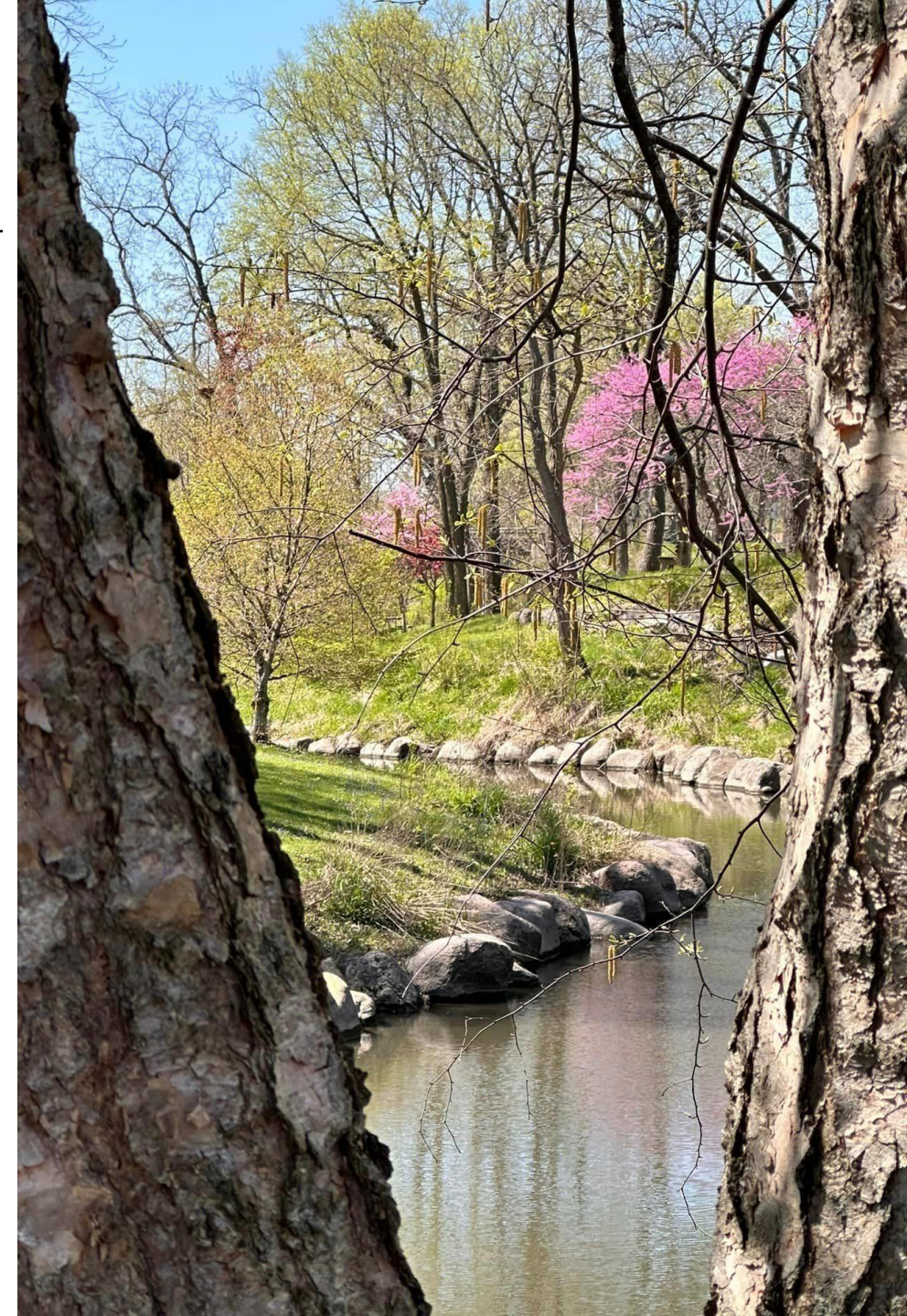
- Boone County Conservation District manages two parks among its various conservation areas:
 - Brown Conservation Park
 - O.O. Stimes Memorial Park
- Belvidere Park District also manages:
 - 15 parks, open spaces, or playgrounds
 - 13 park shelters
 - 6 other recreational facilities
- Rockford Park District's coverage area also overlaps into Boone County
- Open space and trails network continues to evolve into one of the crown jewels of the County
- County has several recreational and agricultural assets and activities that enhance its tourism draw

2,500+

Acres of parks and open space throughout Boone County

61+

Parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities throughout Boone County



Other Assets

- Historic sites include four (4) sites on National Register of Historic Places
 - Pettit Memorial Chapel
 - Belvidere High School
 - Lampert-Wildflower House
 - U.S. Post Office
 - Other historic buildings or sites
 - Boone County Historical Society Museum
- Tourist attractions
 - Historic sites
 - Agritourism businesses
 - Parks and open space
- Healthcare
 - Boone County Health Department
 - ER suites and medical offices in Belvidere
 - Opportunity to expand access to physical and mental health resources
- Assets within municipalities:
 - Religious institutions
 - Ida Public Library
 - U.S. Post Office
 - Veterans Assistance Commission



CURRENT CONDITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

Housing

- Housing Stock
- Housing Market
- Housing Affordability
- Housing Opportunities

Housing Stock

County housing stock is largely comprised of single-family homes with opportunities for greater diversity with more housing types and affordable options, particularly for younger and aging populations

84%

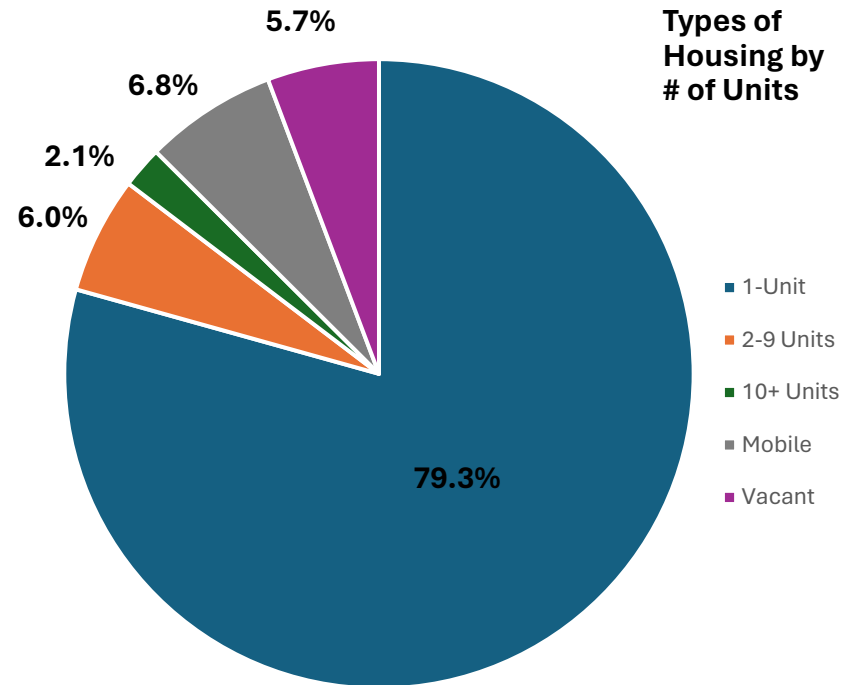
Residents who own their homes compared to Illinois at 67%

16%

Residents who rent their homes compared to Illinois at 33%

33

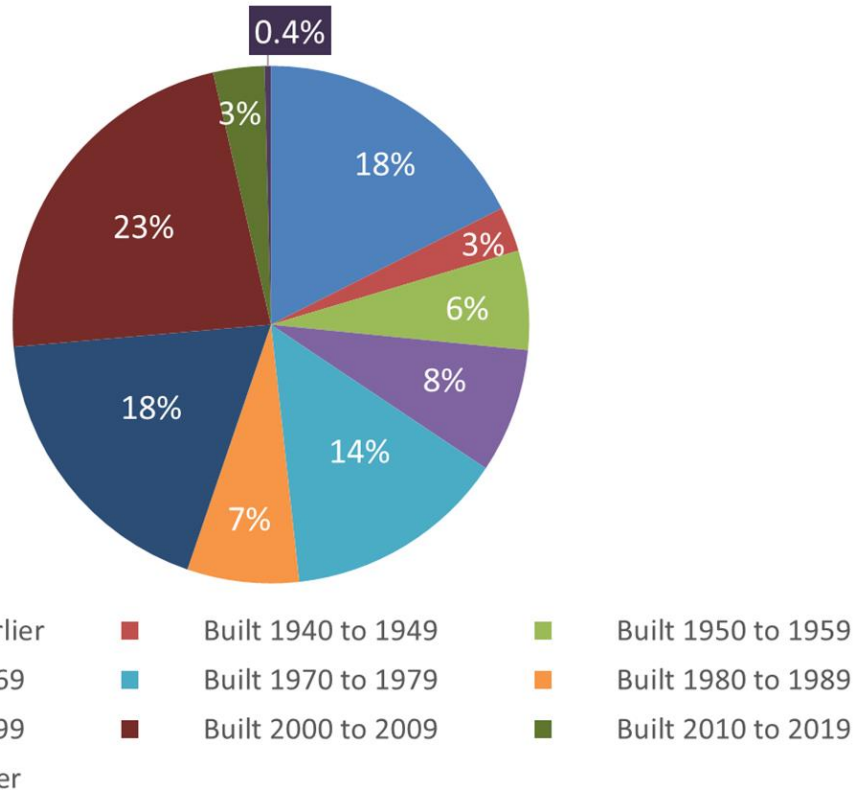
Average number of home sales from July 2023 to June 2024, down from 37 in previous year



Housing Stock

- The county's housing stock is aging, with over 1/3 more than 50 years old
- Approximately of homes 1/4 are under 20 years old, mostly built 2000-2009

Boone County Housing Structures
by Year Built



Source: US Census - American Community Survey, 2022, Tables K202505



Housing Market

Data on the Boone County housing market is mixed over the past year*. Home sales and listings are down, possibly due to an increase in interest rates, home sale prices, and quality of stock on the market. The increase in selling price and decrease in properties sold may be related, particularly since inventory is similar from 2023 to 2024. New listings have declined which may further push prices up. There is some evidence that numbers have stabilized in recent months.

12.2%
Decline in residential
properties sold

10.9%
Decrease in new
home listings

12.2%
Decrease in pending
home sales

7.8%
Increase in average
home sale price

*Timeframe: June 2023 to June 2024

KEY MARKET STATISTICS			
STATISTICS	Jun-23	Jun-24	Change
Residential Properties Sold	369	324	-12.2%
3-Month Rolling Average Selling Price	\$198,254	\$213,644	7.8%
New Listings	469	418	-10.9%
Monthly Inventory	265	268	1.1%
Sales Pending	491	431	-12.2%
Absorption Rate (months)	0.78	0.85	9.0%
Distress Properties (percentage of total sales)	1%	2%	100.0%
Interest Rates (30-year fixed)	6.71%	6.92%	3.1%



Comparison to Illinois and US

- While median home value is significantly lower than that of the state, median list price is much closer
- A much higher percentage of households are homeowners than statewide
- The drop in permits and value within the county is much steeper than that of the state or country

	Boone County	Illinois	USA
Median Estimated Home Value	\$258K	\$314K	\$366K
Estimated Home Value 12-Month Change	+10.7%	+8.1%	+5.8%
Median List Price	\$326K	\$340K	—
List Price 1-Month Change	+1.8%	+0.3%	—
List Price 12-Month Change	+5.6%	+6.2%	—
Median Home Age	49	45	43
Own	84%	67%	65%
Rent	16%	33%	35%
\$ Value of All Buildings for which Permits Were Issued	\$6.98M	\$4.52B	\$365B
% Change in Permits for All Buildings	-78%	-2%	-6%
% Change in \$ Value for All Buildings	-67%	-5%	-5%

Source: Realty Property Resource Neighborhood Report, Boone County

Housing Affordability

Housing affordability in Boone County is mostly in line with Illinois and the Rockford metro area and has improved over the past ten years, according to U.S. Census ACS data; however, this should not dismiss the cost burden and affordability crunch felt by certain residents

19.4%

Homeowners who are cost burdened by housing costs, compared to 31.5% ten years prior

22.1% Illinois
18.6% Rockford Metro

9.6%

Homeowners who are severely cost burdened by housing costs, compared to 11.4% ten years prior

9.2% Illinois
7.8% Rockford Metro

44.3%

Renters who are cost burdened by housing costs, compared to 49.0% ten years prior

43.9% Illinois
45.2% Rockford Metro

18.2%

Renters who are severely cost burdened by housing costs, compared to 23.0% ten years prior

22.4% Illinois
23.2% Rockford Metro

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2018-2022

Cost Burdened: 30% or more of household income cover housing costs
Severely Cost Burdened: 50% or more of household income cover housing costs

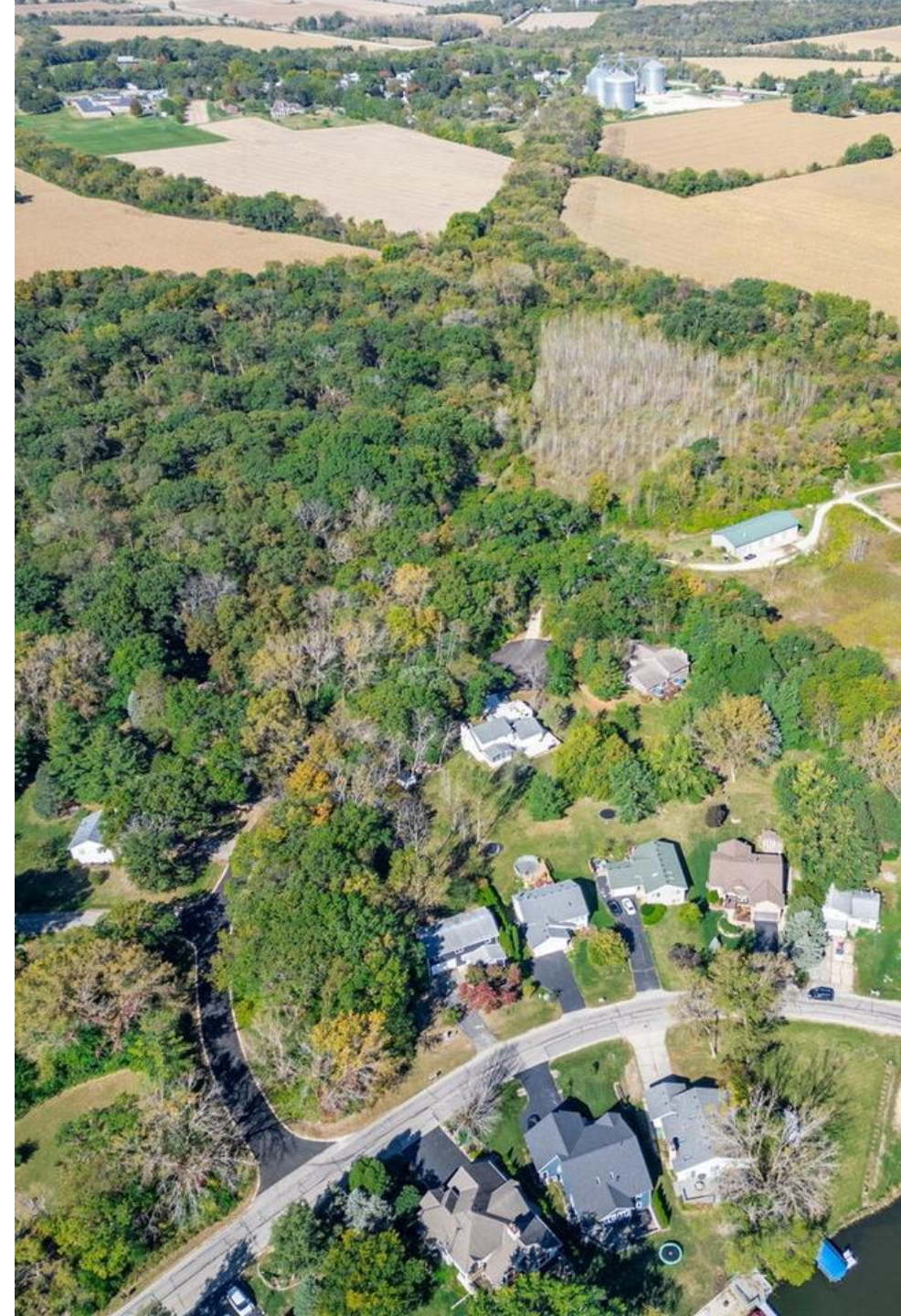
16.7%

Percent of homes that are likely affordable for a 4-person family, compared to 15.3% across Illinois

66.8%

Percent of two-bedroom rental units that are likely affordable for a 4-person family, compared to 33.9% across Illinois

4-person family earning 50% of area median income (AMI), which is \$40,250 for Boone County



Housing Opportunities

- Multiple instances of platted but partially developed residential developments, which enables the County to add more housing by building out these lots even before considering new developments
- Diversification of the housing stock beyond single family homes would provide more options that meet varying budgets, life stages, and other needs
- Potential steps to improve housing affordability
 - Increase the housing supply
 - Provide more housing types
 - Remove zoning barriers
 - Allow for small scale housing, e.g., tiny homes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), small square footage units, etc.
 - Provide dedicate funding to subsidize fees and infrastructure costs
 - Explore initiatives like land banks and community land trusts





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Commercial and Industrial Uses

COMMERCIAL

- Commercial types:
 - Retail shops; restaurants; services; small and large offices; healthcare; hospitality; farm-based businesses; agritourism
- Small-scale near neighborhoods
- Larger-scale regional along corridors

INDUSTRIAL

- Industrial types:
 - Light: Technology; research and design; data centers; warehousing and storage; aerospace and defense
 - Heavy: Manufacturing; automotive; metal, plastic, wood, and chemical products; heavy machinery; agriculture and food processing; earth extraction; transportation; distribution; logistics and trucking
- Hybrid commercial/industrial provides for a mixed-use environment that brings different uses together in a cohesive site design with shared amenities (e.g., parking, open space, site access, etc.)
- Southwest part of Boone County has four quarries that play a crucial role in construction across the region



Employment

- County's major employers spread between corporate enterprises, civic entities (County and school districts), and agricultural uses (six farm operations)
- Targeted industry clusters:
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Transportation, Logistics, Distribution
 - Agriculture, Food Processing
 - Productive Agriculture
 - Healthcare, Medical Sciences

Source: Northern Illinois Region CEDS

Employment Indicators

	Boone County	Rockford MSA	Illinois
Unemployment Rate	7.0%	6.3%	4.5%
Per Capita Income (\$)	37,055	34,040	43,198
Poverty Rate	9.8%	15.1%	11.8%
Population Age 25-44	11.4%	12.0%	13.4%
High School Graduate	32.3%	31.3%	25.3%
Associate's Degree	30.3%	32.8%	28.1%
Bachelor's Degree	15.1%	15.3%	22.0%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2008-2022



Employment Trends

- The two figures provide a snapshot of employment growth
- Overall, the number of jobs declined 2019-2023 (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- Job growth was highest in management, information and business services
- The greatest decline was in manufacturing

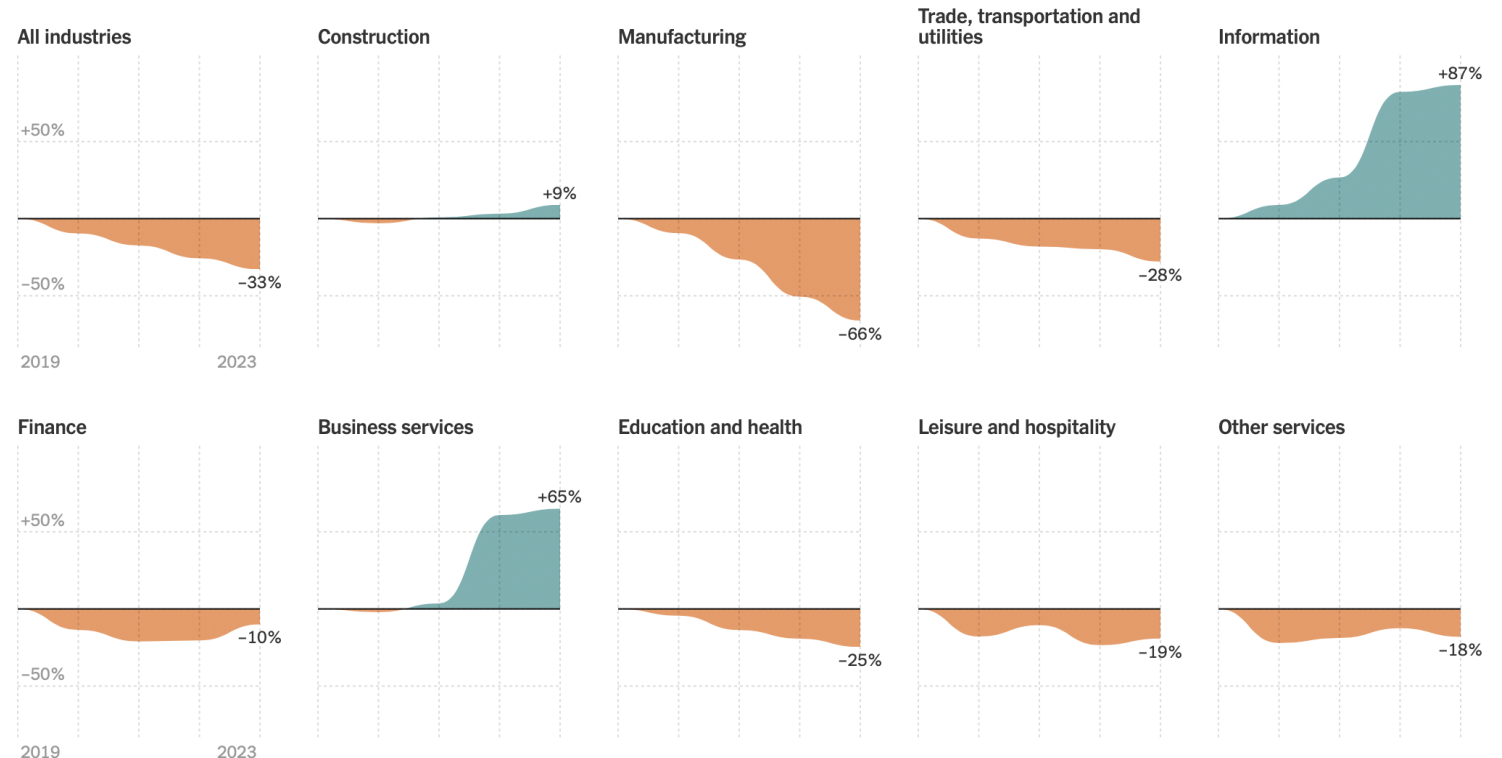
- Growth Sectors
- Declining Sectors

Employment by Sector

	2008-2012	2013-2017	2018-2022	
Management, Business, Financial	11.1%	12.1%	17.3%	●
Computer, Engineering, Science	4.4%	3.7%	3.8%	●
Education, Legal, Com Services, Arts, Media	6.8%	7.0%	6.0%	●
Healthcare and Technical Practitioners	5.7%	6.1%	4.9%	●
Healthcare Service Support	2.2%	1.9%	2.8%	●
Police and Fire Protective Services	1.3%	2.0%	2.3%	●
Food Prep and Service	3.8%	4.7%	7.3%	●
Bldg and Grounds Cleaning, Maintenance	3.3%	4.7%	5.2%	●
Personal Care and Service	2.2%	2.3%	1.3%	●

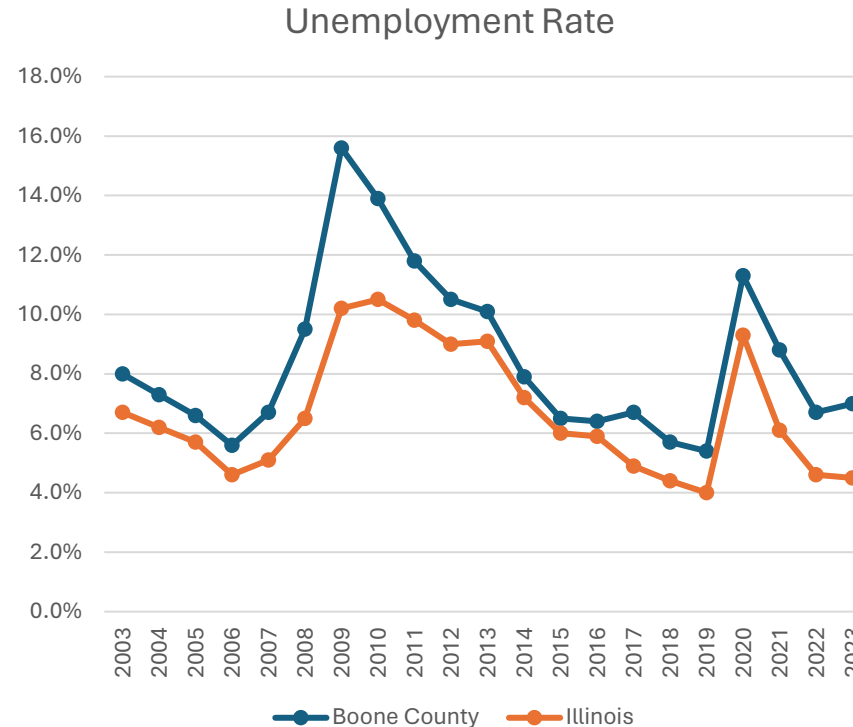
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2008-2022

Boone County Cumulative Percentage Change in Jobs: 2019-2023



Employment

- Unemployment rate mostly stayed in the 5% to 7% range except during notable spikes
- Expansion of Boone County Enterprise Zone through 2031 will support job generation and retention
- Growing importance to prepare local workforce with the skills and knowledge for the County's evolving job market
- Employment resources:
 - Growth Dimensions
 - Workforce Connection
 - Rock Valley College
 - School Districts
 - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Regional Plan
 - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)



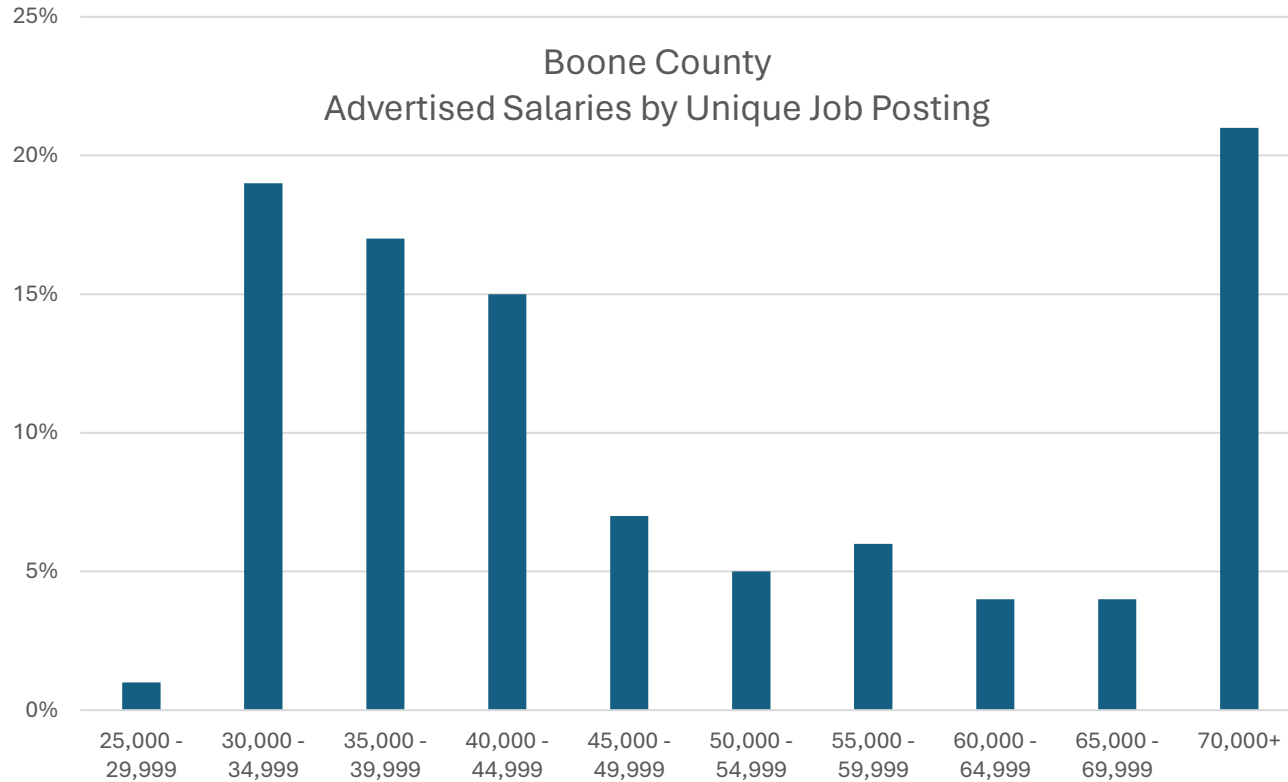
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2018-2022

7.0%

Unemployment rate (2023) in Boone County, which experienced a 20-year low of 5.4% in 2019 before the pandemic



Employment



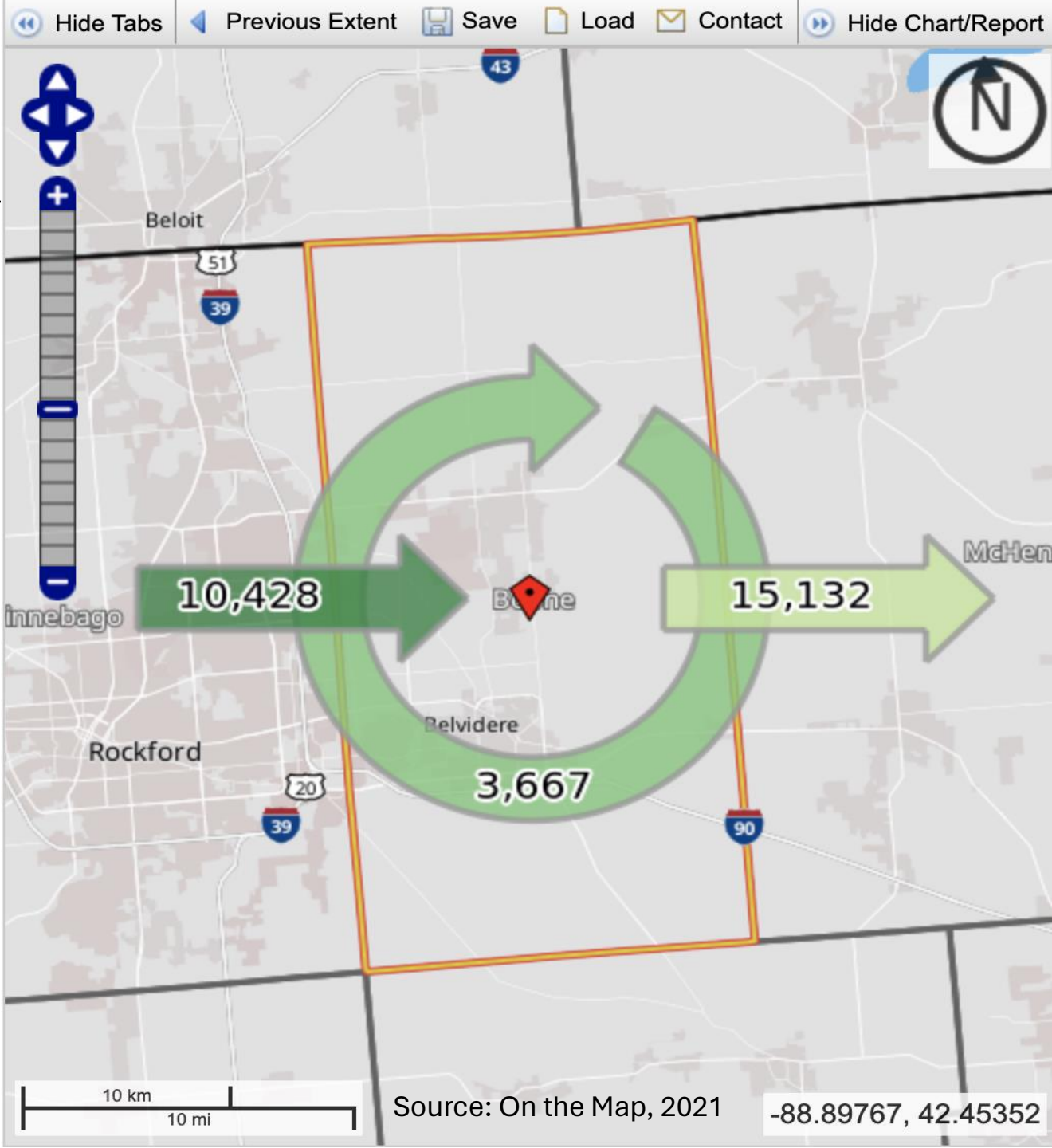
Source: Lightcast, 2023

- Over half of all job postings have an advertised salary of under \$45,000
- Advertised salaries are widely divided with the next largest category at \$70,000
- There are few jobs advertised between \$45,000 and \$70,000



Commuting Patterns

- While 10,428 workers commute into Boone County, 15,132 residents commute out for work
- 3,667 workers both live and work in the county
- The county is a net exporter of workers
- Remote workers are an opportunity to increase the number of people both living and working in the county



Farming and Agritourism

- Edwards Apple Orchard is among the agriculturally-based businesses that support agritourism in the County
- Fruit and vegetable production and nurseries also add to the local economy and agritourism
- Extensive farmland production creates potential to build up the food processing and manufacturing target cluster

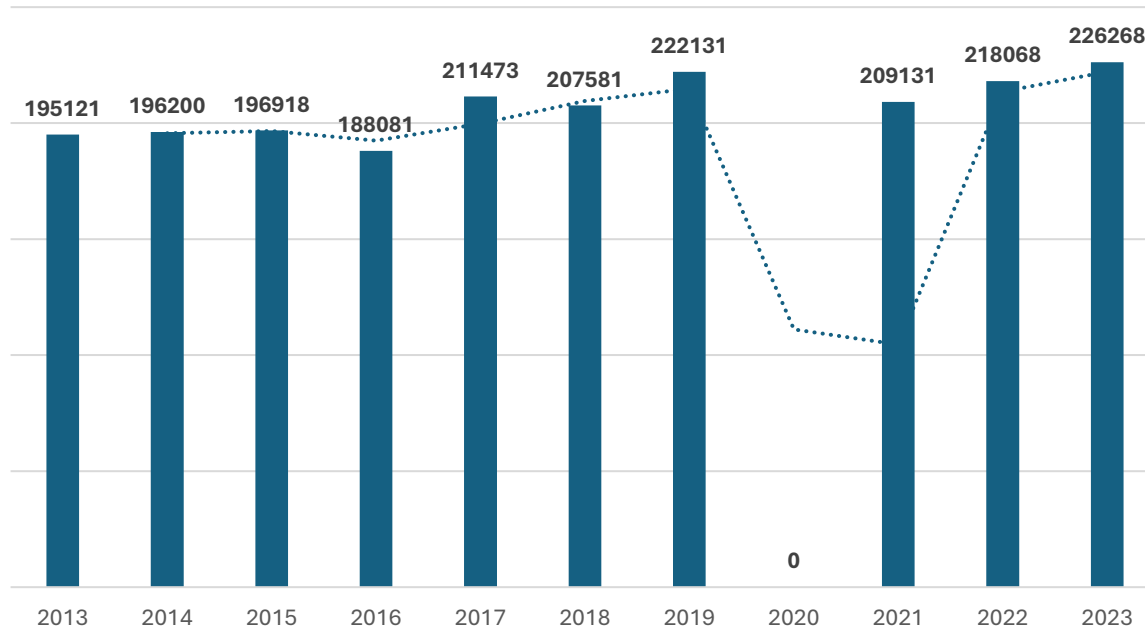
10+

Local farms that contribute to agritourism in Boone County



Farming and Agritourism

Boone County Fair Attendance



<https://www.boonecountyfair.com/attendance>

- Fair attendance continues to increase, reaching an all-time high in 2023
- The fair is an opportunity to showcase Boone County assets to visitors from all over



Business Resources and Incentives

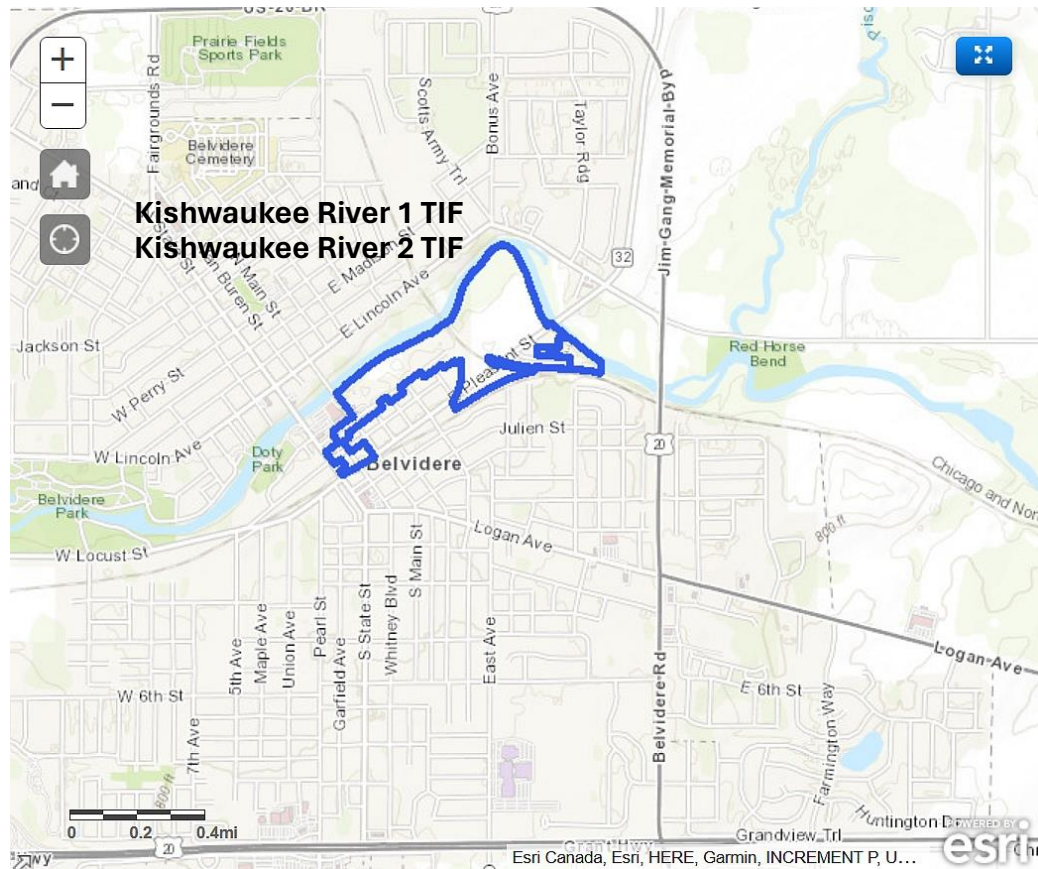
- Boone County Enterprise Zones provide opportunities to enhance economic development around Belvidere, Capron, and Poplar Grove
- Municipal TIF districts provide funding for eligible site improvements and development activities
- Business resources:
 - Municipal incentives
 - Growth Dimensions
 - Belvidere Chamber of Commerce
 - County Site Selection Support
 - State of Illinois Business Portal
 - Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)
 - Federal Small Business Administration (SBA)
- Opportunities to provide other resources to existing businesses, including small businesses and entrepreneurs



Business Incentives

Belvidere TIF Districts

Source: Esri



Enterprise Zones

Source: 2020 Boone County Comprehensive Plan

KEY

Enterprise Zone

MUNICIPALITY

Belvidere

Caledonia

Capron

Cherry Valley

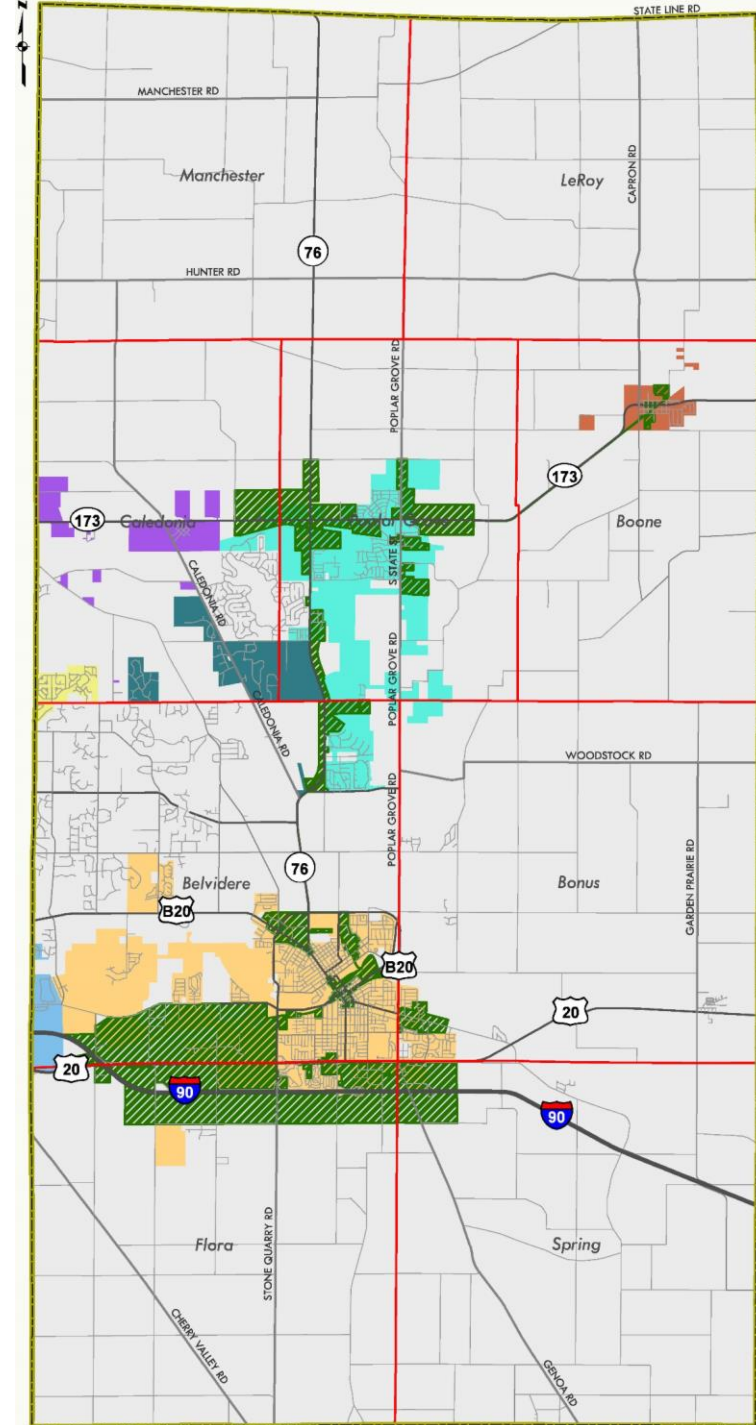
Loves Park

Poplar Grove

Timberlane

Townships

Boone County



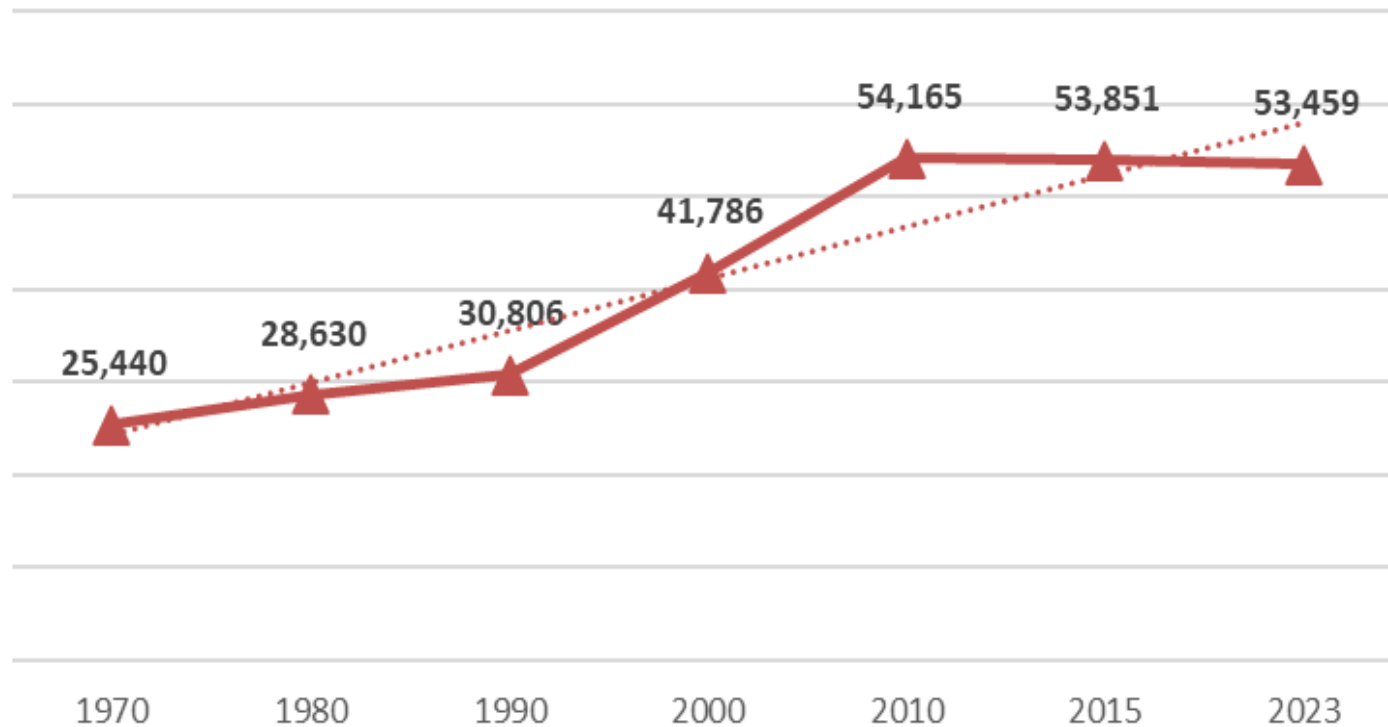


DEMOGRAPHICS AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Population Growth

- After rapid growth from 1990-2010, population has slowly declined.

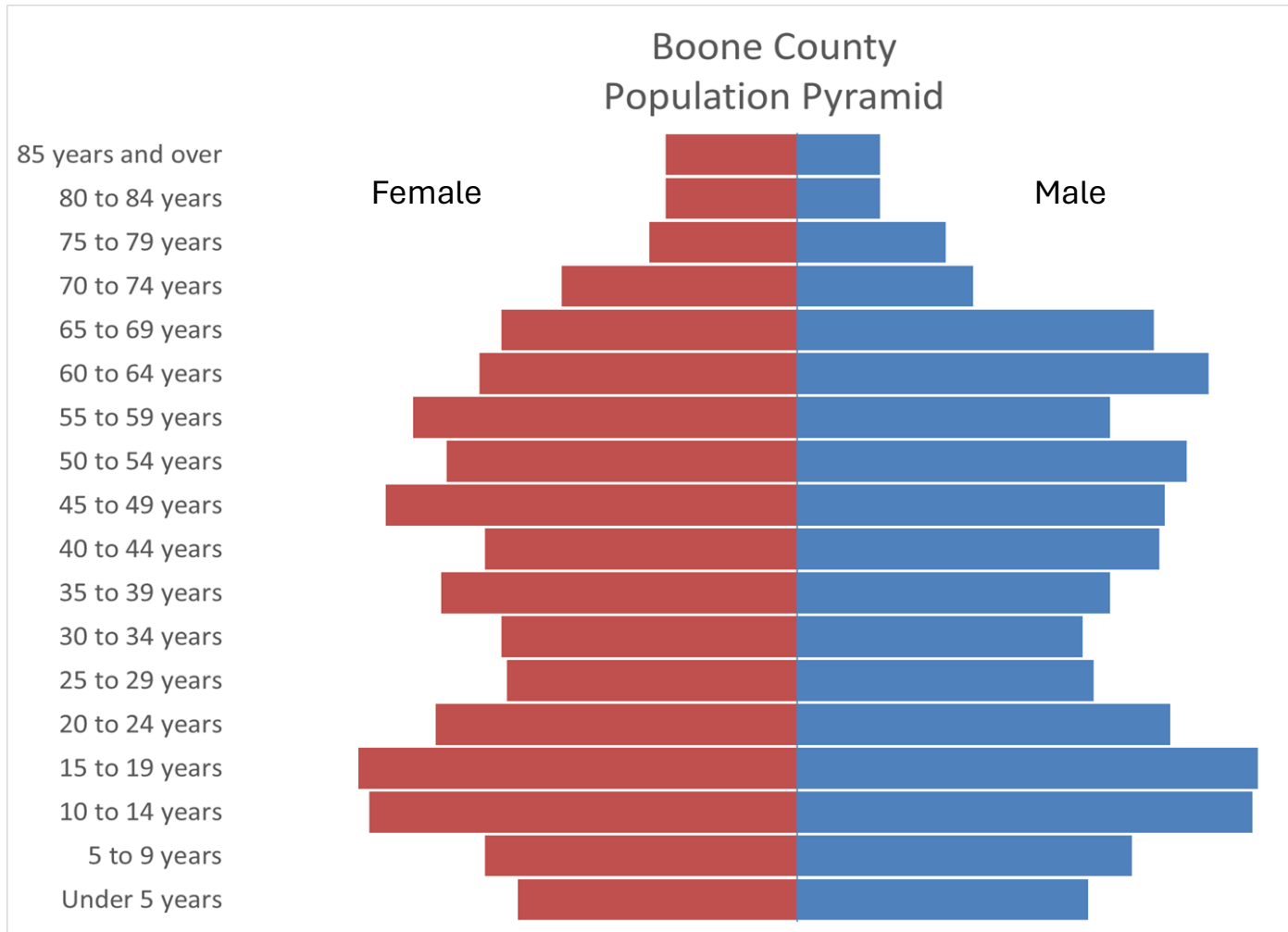
Boone County Population by Year



Source: US Census - American Community Survey, 2023, Table B01001



Age/Sex Distribution



- The number of young children is smaller than in recent past years, affecting planning for schools, housing and other aspects of life
- Large numbers age 10-19 bode well for potential future residents and workforce if they can be retained as residents
- Large numbers age 60-69 may change housing and services needed as they age

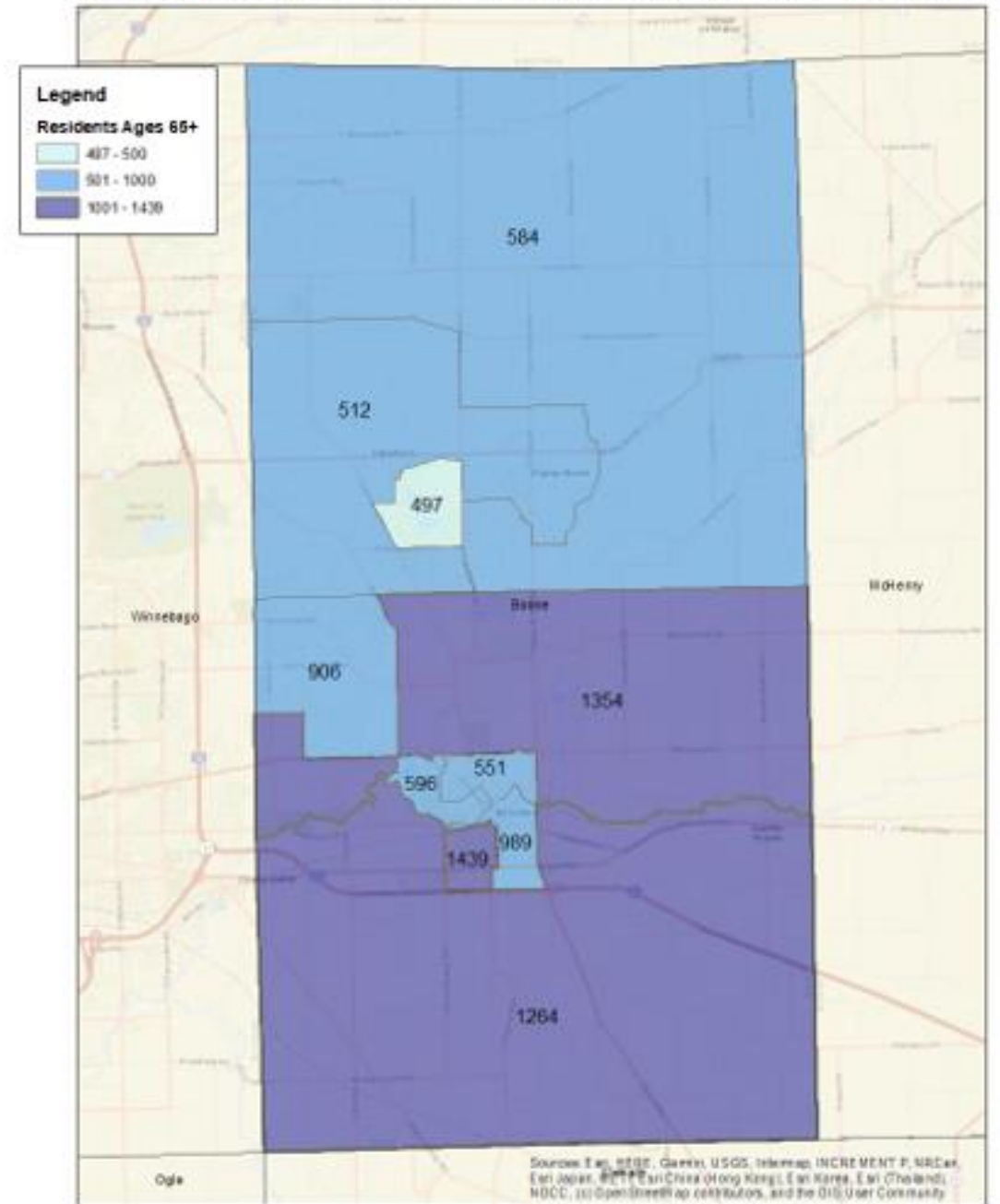
Source: US Census - American Community Survey, 2022, Table S0101

Geographic Distribution of Older Residents

Boone County's older residents are concentrated in the southern half of the county. Belvidere, while located in the southern half of the county, generally does not have a high concentration of older residents except in the southwest portion of the city, marked with "1439".

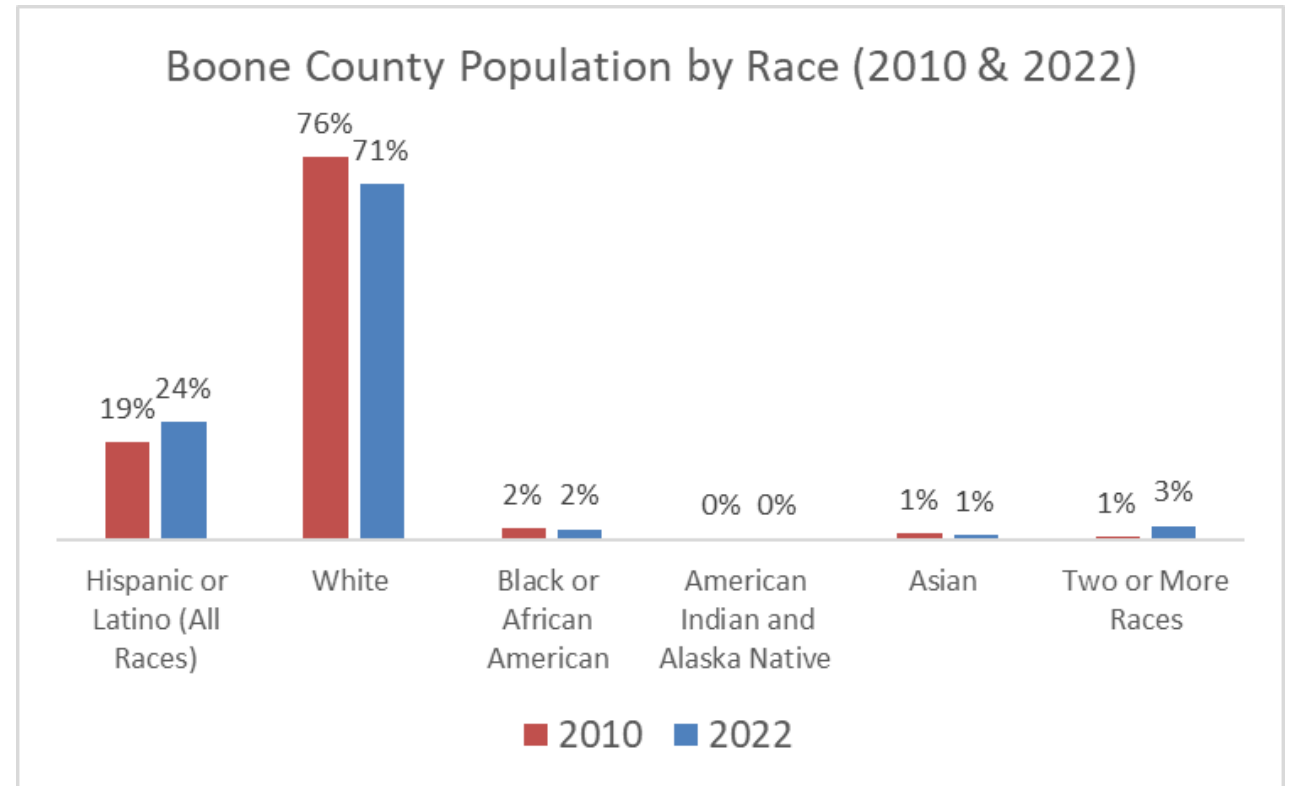


Population Ages 65+ in Boone County Census Tracts



Population by Race

- The percentage of residents who identify as Hispanic increased from approximately 19% to approximately 24% from 2010-2022. This group represents a significant portion of all county residents and is gradually increasing over time.
- The “white only” portion of the population is decreasing while other racial groups remain stable.



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 1-Year Survey, Table DP05, 2010 & 2022

Economic Indicators

- Boone County per capita income is between that of the state and Rockford
- Boone's poverty rate is lower than both the state and Rockford by wide margins
- The county high school and college graduation rates are similar to the Rockford MSA
- Both the Rockford MSA and Boone County have fewer college graduates than Illinois

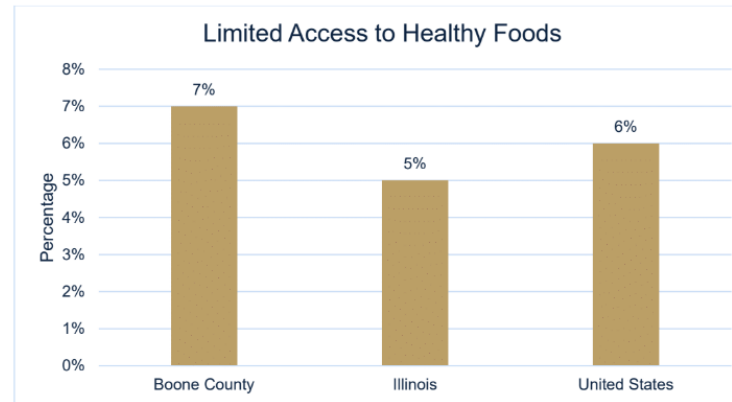
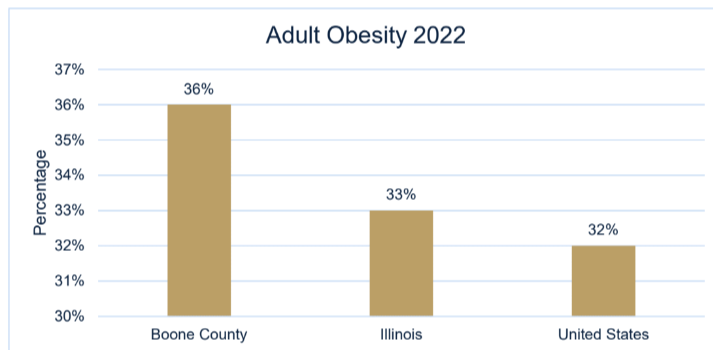
Economic Indicators	Boone County	Rockford MSA	Illinois
Unemployment Rate	7.7%	8.6%	6.0%
Per Capita Income	\$37,055	\$29,187	\$43,317
Poverty Rate	9.80%	22.20%	11.90%
Population Age 25-44	23.0%	25.2%	26.8%
High School Graduate or Higher	86.6%	85.4%	90.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	24.0%	23.1%	37.7%

Source: US Census - American Community Survey, 2022, Tables DP03 and DP05

Health Indicators

Ratio Population Per 1 Provider - Boone County
2023

Provider Type	Boone County	Illinois
Mental Health Providers	2,510:1	370:1
Primary Care	1,850:1	1,230:1
Dentists	2,780:1	1,220:1



- Boone County has a significantly higher population to provider ratio when compared to the state, indicating less access to services
- In Boone County, 7% of people had low incomes and did not live close to a grocery store, limiting access to healthy foods
- Boone County has a higher rate of obesity than the state or country

Source: Boone County IPLAN 2024

Health Indicators

The Community Health Assessment Data Table displays different factors that contribute to overall health outcomes in Boone County. The chart shows if these issues were voiced by the community (in the CCA Survey), it compares how Boone County is doing when compared to the State, and it also highlights if the data shows any disparities to race, ethnicity, social economic status, age, or gender. Housing has become a more significant issue. Housing cost burden and childcare cost burden were both issues voiced by the community. Boone County is doing worse than the State in childcare cost burden but is doing better in severe housing cost burden.

Quoted from the Boone County IPLAN 2024

Factors Contributing to Health Outcomes in Boone County

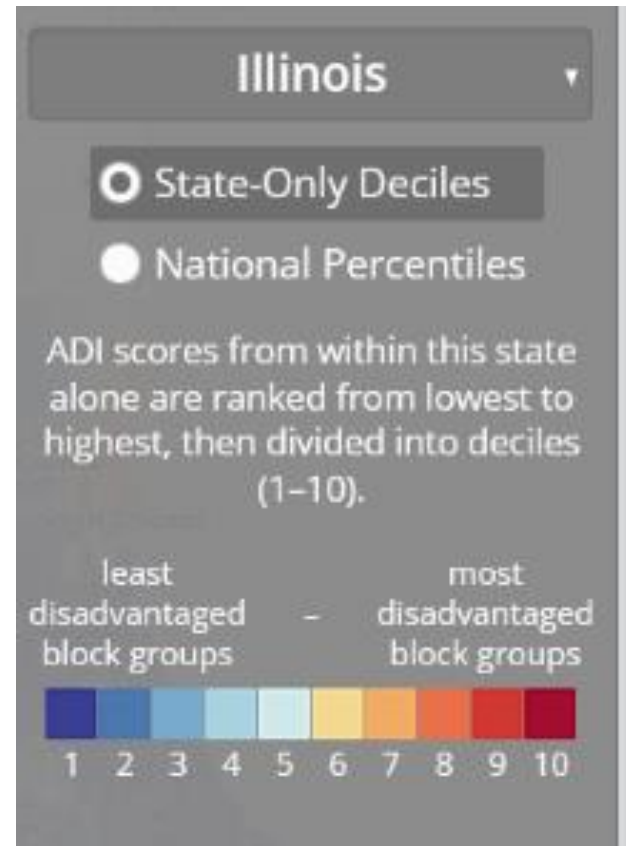
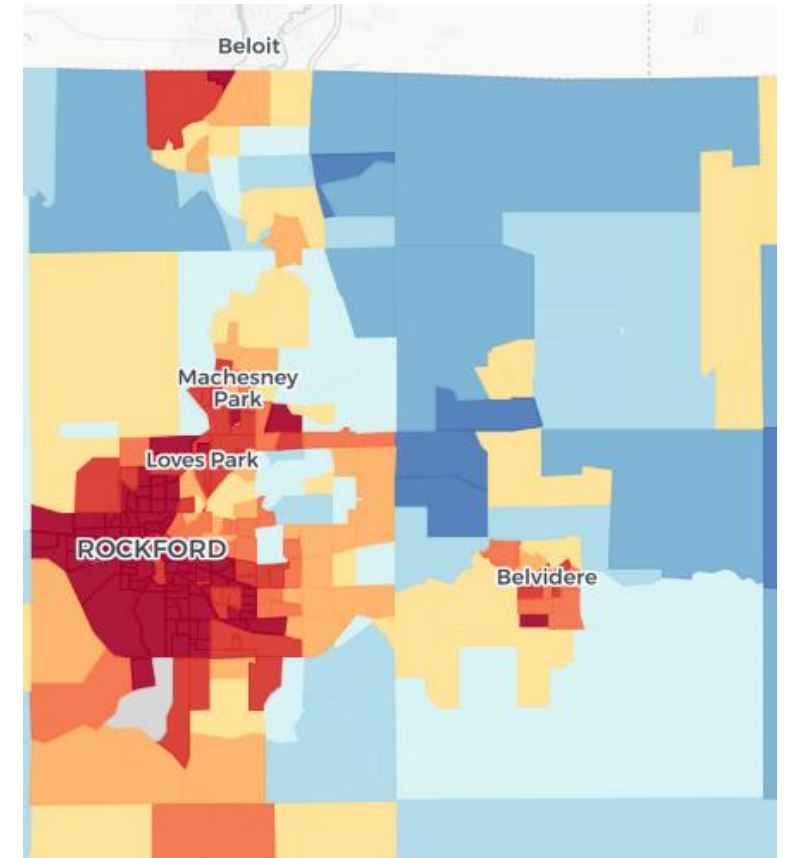
Identified Community Needs in Boone County		Voiced by community	Boone Data compared to State		Data shows disparities
			Better	Worse	
Health outcomes	Infant mortality		X		X
	Low birth weight babies		X		X
	Death rate due to stroke		X		
	Incidence rate of diabetes		X	X	X
	Death rate due to heart disease		X		X
	Incidence rate of (all) cancers			X	X
	Obesity prevalence			X	X
	Asthma prevalence			X	X
	Mental health conditions	X		X	X
	COVID-19 Death Crude Rate		X		X
Factors Contributing to Health Outcomes in Boone County, IL	Unhealthy Behaviors	Tobacco use	X	X	
		Youth E-Cigarette Use	X		
		Physical Inactivity	X	X	X
		Excessive drinking	X	X	
		Substance Use	X	X	X
		STI Incidence		X	X
		Insufficient Sleep		X	X
	Clinical Care	Access – insurance		X	X
		Access – providers	X	X	X
		Access – dental	X	X	
		Access – mental health care	X	X	X
		Access – location	X	X	
		Access – Substance Use Treatment services	X	X	
		Access to higher education	X	X	X
	Social/Economic	Access to public transportation	X	X	
		High School graduation		X	X
		Domestic Violence	X		X
		Child Abuse		X	X
		Access to good paying jobs	X	X	X
		Access to healthy food	X	X	
		Discrimination	X		X
		Childcare Cost Burden	X	X	
		Firearm injuries	X	X	X
		Severe Housing Cost Burden	X	X	
	Physical Environment	Access to exercise opportunities		X	X
		Safe, affordable housing	X	X	X
		Parks and Recreation		X	
		Walkable neighborhood		X	
		Access to Broadband Internet		X	
		Households with a Computer		X	
		Housing Units per person		X	
		Access to childcare centers	X	X	
		Insecure Housing	X		

Source: Boone County IPLAN 2024

Quality of Life

Area Deprivation Index (ADI): Income, Education, Employment, and Housing Quality

- The map show differing levels of deprivation based on income, education, employment and housing quality
- The least deprived area of Boone County is adjacent to a more deprived area of Winnebago County
- Deprivation is most concentrated in and near Belvidere



Source: UW-Madison and the Health Resources and Services Administration

Quality of Life

- Livability Index scores are based on a scale of 1-100 with 50 being the median
- Boone County's overall score is at the median
- The county scored well for environment and opportunity
- Neighboring DeKalb County scored similarly to Boone
- Winnebago County scored mostly similarly to Boone County except for higher scores for housing and transportation and lower for health and opportunity
- For information on the categories go to <https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/>

AARP Livability Index

	<u>DeKalb County, Illinois</u> ×	<u>Winnebago County, Illinois</u> ×	Boone County, Illinois	2024 Median US County
Overall Score	49	48	50	50
 Housing ⓘ	47	56	47	59
 Neighborhood ⓘ	46	45	46	36
 Transportation ⓘ	49	57	49	44
 Environment ⓘ	52	62	60	61
 Health ⓘ	44	36	46	40
 Engagement ⓘ	46	44	44	47
 Opportunity ⓘ	60	40	60	50



BOONE COUNTY COMMUNITY SURVEY FINDINGS

Survey Background

- The survey was conducted primarily online
 - CGS sent recruitment emails to a randomly selected sample of households in unincorporated Boone County
 - Additionally, Boone County publicized the survey and included a link to complete the survey
 - The questionnaire was available in English and Spanish
- Hard copies of the survey were distributed at the Boone County Fair
- The survey opened on August 6, 2024
- The survey closed on September 19, 2024
- A total of 338 completed surveys were received
 - 204 of these surveys were completed by residents of unincorporated areas of Boone County
 - Data in this presentation includes all respondents, unless there was a statistically significant different between incorporated and unincorporated Boone County respondents. In that case, responses are identified as all, incorporated or unincorporated.

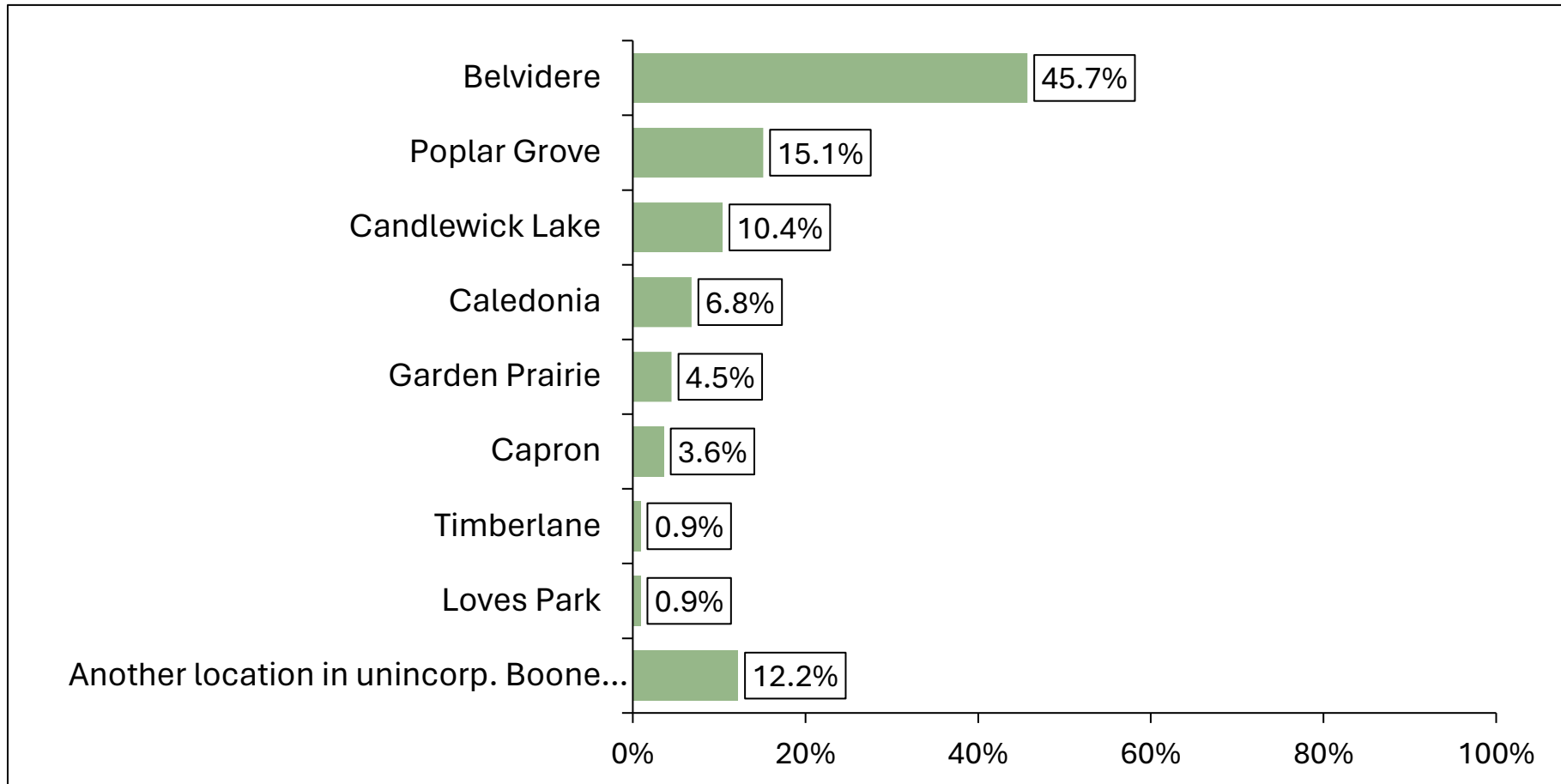


Living in Boone County

Living in Boone County

Living Situation

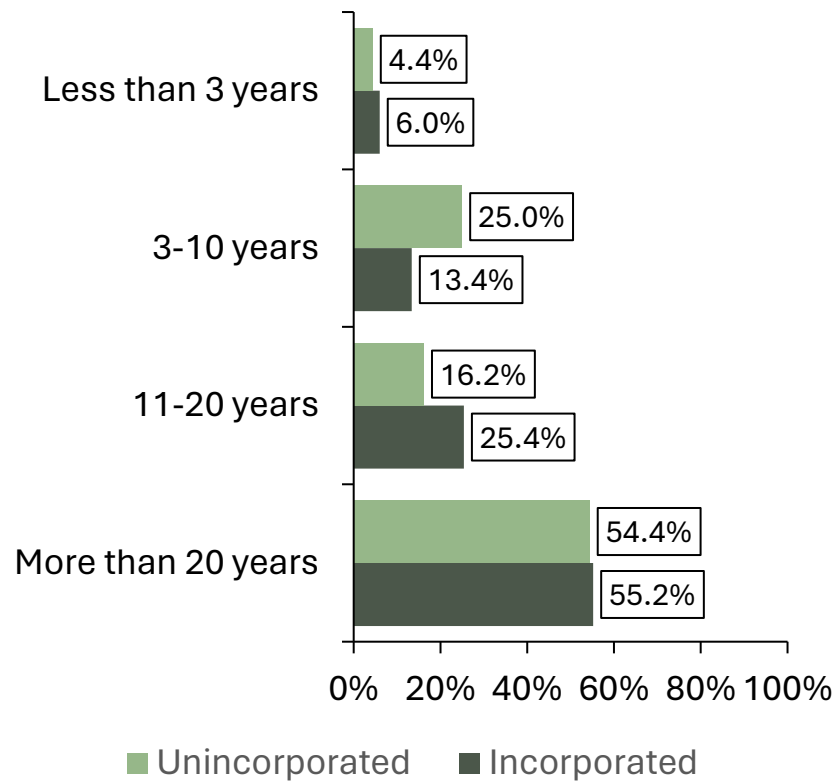
Where do you live?



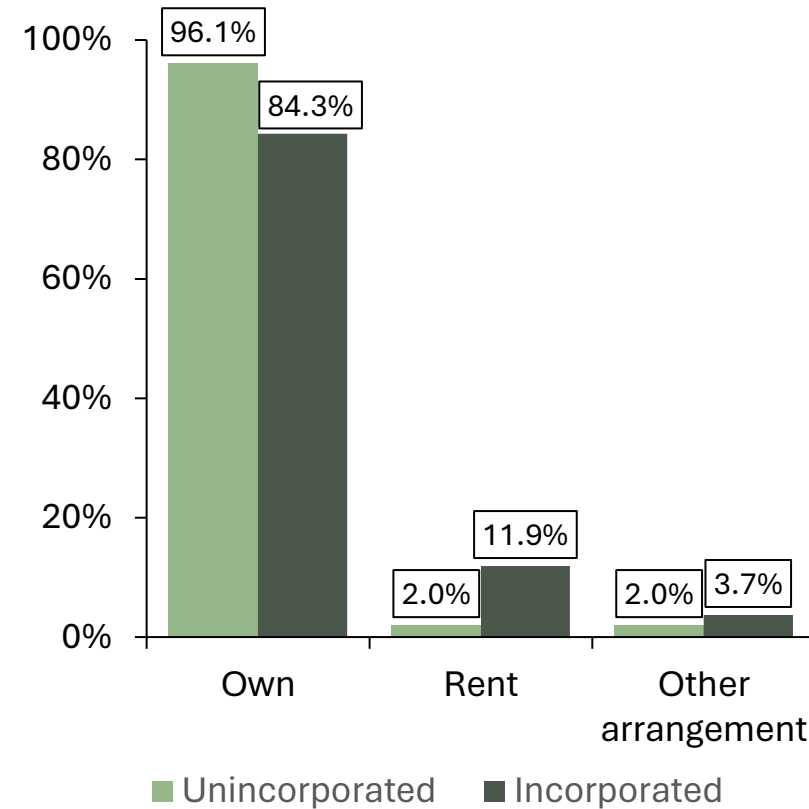
Living in Boone County

Living Situation

How many years have you lived in Boone County?



Do you own or rent your home?



Living in Boone County

Reason for Living in Boone County

Among **unincorporated Boone County respondents**, the most commonly selected reasons for choosing to live in the County are:

1. Natural areas and rural environment (28.4%)
2. Family ties (27.0%)
3. Cost of living (12.3%)

Among **incorporated Boone County respondents**, the most common reasons are:

1. Family ties (35.6%)
2. Cost of living (18.2%)
3. Reasonable commute to job opportunities (10.6%)

Living in Boone County

Best Aspects of Living in Boone County

Among **unincorporated Boone County respondents**, the most commonly named best things about living in the County are:

1. Location, convenience, and proximity to resources (15.5%)
2. Rural areas, country life, and small communities (15.1%)
3. Area is clean, quiet, peaceful, or beautiful (10.9%)

Among **incorporated Boone County respondents**, the most commonly named best things about living in the County are:

1. Rural areas, country life, and small communities (16.1%)
2. Location, convenience, and proximity to resources (12.7%)
3. Quality public services, such as police, fire, City Hall, etc. (10.2%)

Living in Boone County

Aspects in Need of Improvement

Among **unincorporated Boone County respondents**, the most commonly named aspects in need of improvement in the County are:

1. Taxes are too high (16.5%)
2. Quality of roads or streets (12.1%)
3. Need more types of shopping or restaurants (10.1%)

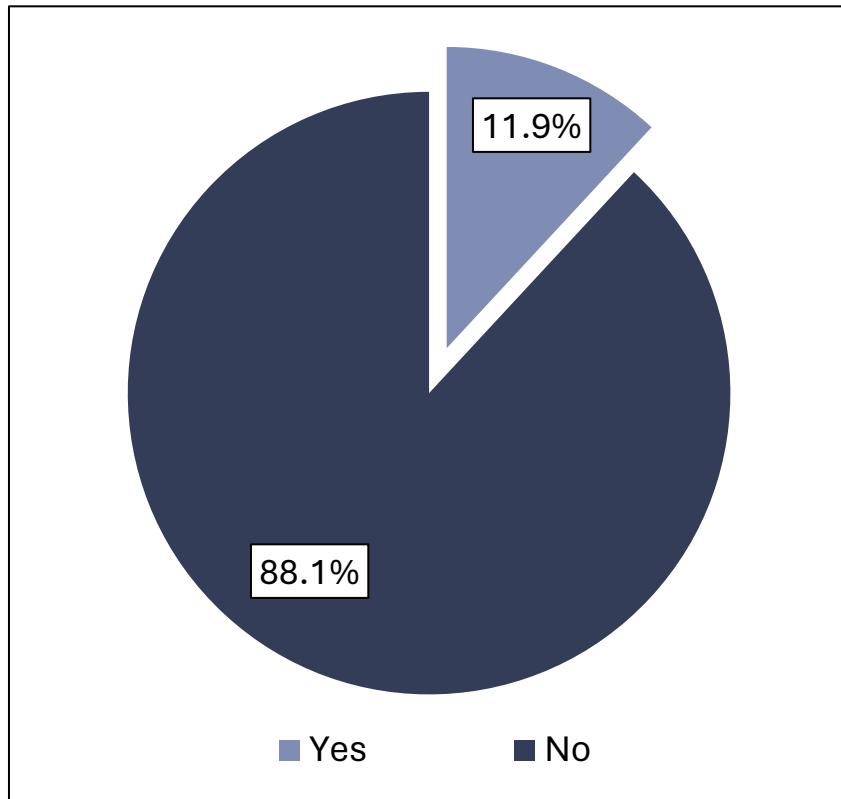
Among **incorporated Boone County respondents**, the most commonly named best things about living in the County are:

1. Need more types of shopping or restaurants (15.6%)
2. Taxes are too high (9.6%)
3. Quality of roads or streets (7.5%)

Living in Boone County

Farmland

Do you currently own farm property of ten acres or more?



Long-term plans for farm property

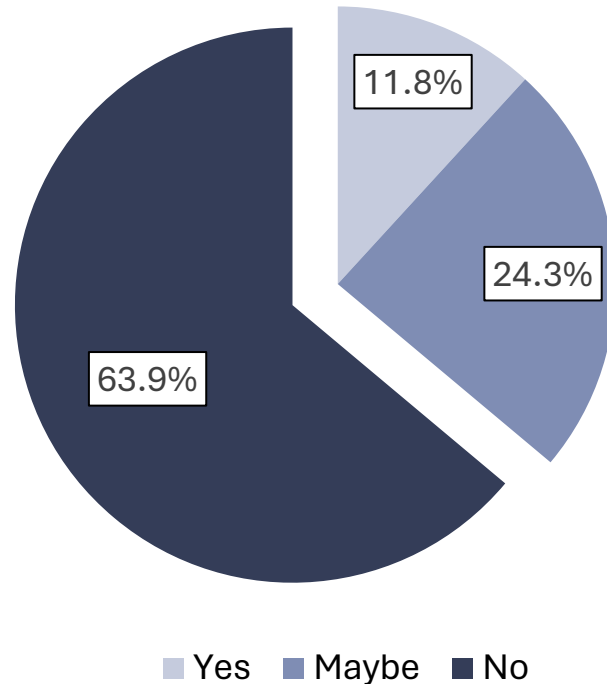
Most farmland owners plan to keep the property in the family

- 69.2% of farmland owners plan to **keep the land in the family for future generations**
- 15.4% plan to **sell or lease to another farmer**
- 12.8% plan to **sell to the highest bidder, including buyers planning for nonfarm use of the property**
- 2.6% plan to **preserve the land as open space or restore it as a natural area**

Living in Boone County

Moving Considerations

Are you considering moving out of Boone County in the next 3 years?



The most **commonly cited reasons** for considering moving out of Boone County include:

- **Taxes** (26.7%)
- **Retirement or age** (10.0%)
- **Employment reasons or job opportunities** (9.2%)
- **Closer to family or friends** (8.3%)

These residents want to move:

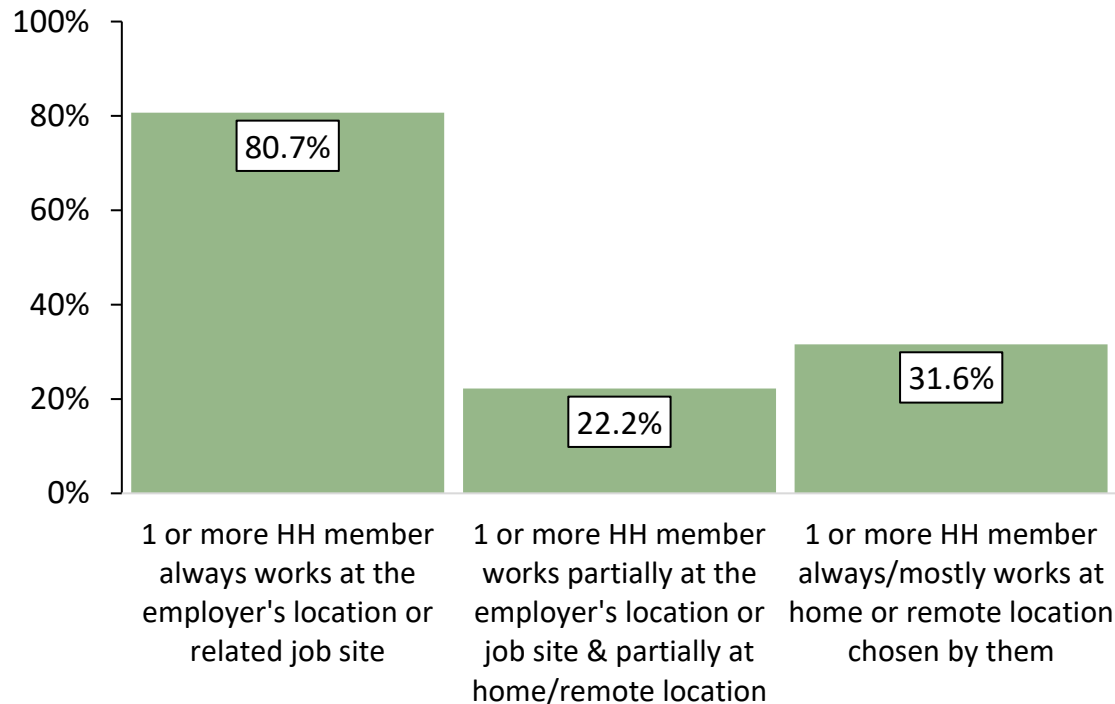
- **Within Illinois** (12.0%)
- **Outside Illinois but within the US** (51.3%)
- **Outside the US** (1.7%)
- **Another response** (16.2%)
- **Not sure, do not know** (18.8%)

Living in Boone County

Work Location

Where do working adults in your household do their paid work?*

Households with at least 1 wage earning adult



*Respondents could select a work location for up to 3 adults in the household.

For 20.8% of working adults, this work location is different than it was a few years ago; however, this varies by the household member's usual work location:

- 38.5% of those who always work at home say this work arrangement is different than it was a few years ago
- 56.5% of those who work partially at an employer's location and partially at home
- Only 9.0% of those who always work at the employer's location or job site



Government Services

Boone County Government

Satisfaction with Services and Programs

Respondents were most likely to be very or somewhat **satisfied** with:

- Police and fire protection (75.9%)
- Snow removal (69.6%)
- Recreation areas and facilities (66.3%)
- County road maintenance (64.8%)

Respondents were most likely to be very or somewhat **unsatisfied** with:

- Ride share or public transportation (40.2%)
- Arts and cultural opportunities (35.6%)
- County permitting process for building and property improvements (30.8%)

Boone County Government

Satisfaction with Services and Programs

Incorporated Boone County respondents were significantly **more likely** than unincorporated Boone County residents to say they were **unsatisfied** with 2 services/programs:

- Ride share/public transportation
 - 50.0% of incorporated Boone County respondents were **unsatisfied**
 - 32.6% of unincorporated Boone County respondents were **unsatisfied**
- Healthcare
 - 41.3% of incorporated Boone County respondents were **unsatisfied**
 - 20.5% of unincorporated Boone County respondents were **unsatisfied**

No other statistically significant differences in satisfaction were found between incorporated/unincorporated respondents

Boone County Government

Areas in Need of Improvement

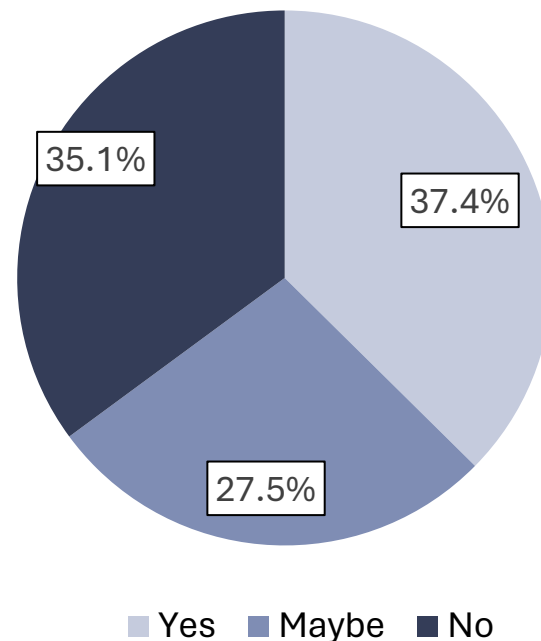
Respondents were asked if there was a **particular location in unincorporated Boone County** in need of improvement

- 12.1% of Boone County residents named such a location.
- Responses varied, though **roads and streets** were a common concern.

Boone County Government

Property Maintenance Code for Unincorporated Areas

Should the County develop and enforce a property maintenance code for properties in unincorporated areas?



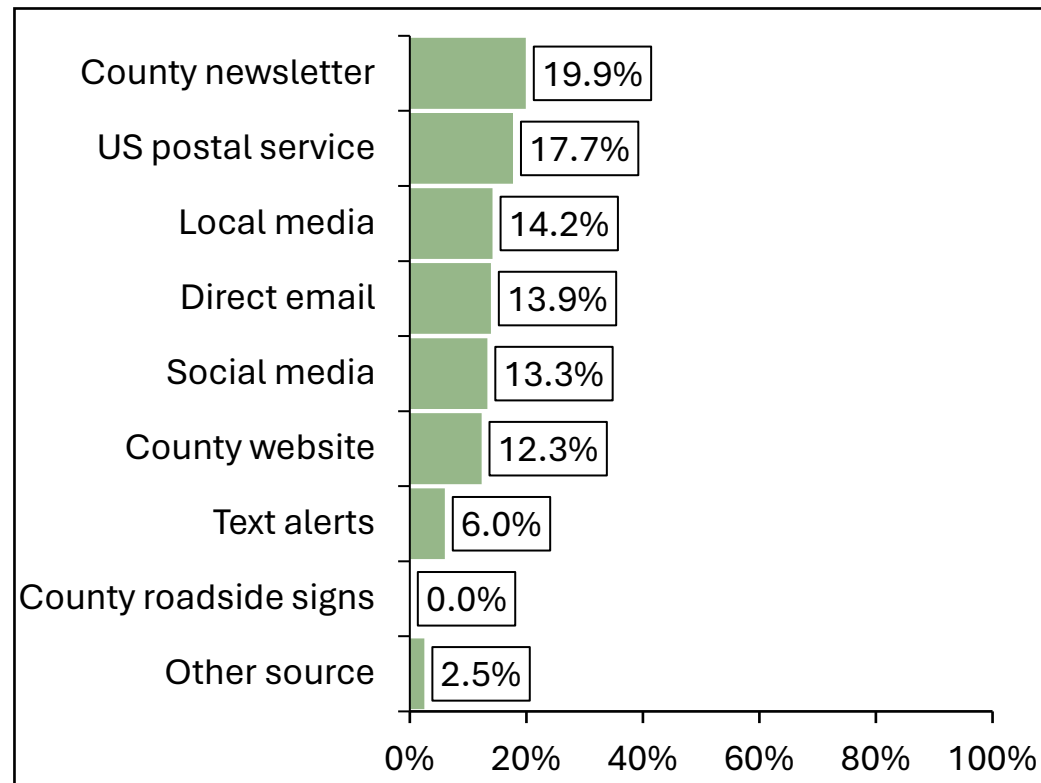
Among respondents, there is no clear consensus about whether the County should develop and enforce a property maintenance code for properties in unincorporated areas:

- 37.4% **agree** that the County should develop such a code
- 27.5% responded "**maybe**"
- 35.1% **disagree** that such a code should be developed/enforced

Boone County Government

Preferred Sources of News from the County

How would you *most like* to receive news from the County?



No single source of County news was preferred by a wide margin of respondents.

The most commonly preferred sources of information about the County were:

- **County newsletter** (19.9%)
- **US postal service** (17.7%)
- **Local media** (14.2%)
- **Direct email** (13.9%)
- **Social media** (13.3%)
- **County website** (12.3%)

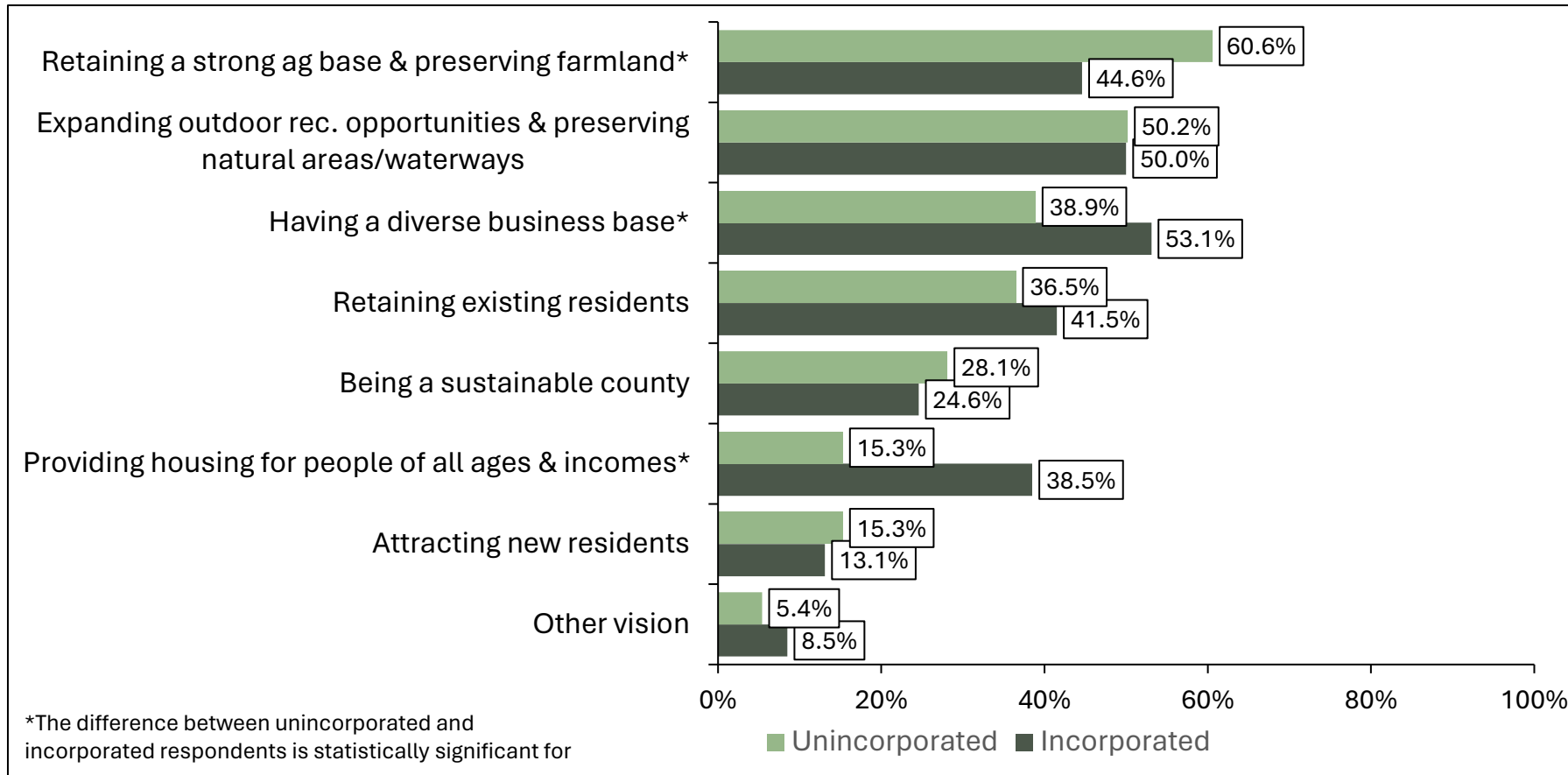


Future Planning and Development

Future Planning and Development

Vision for the Future of Boone County

Thinking about what you would like Boone County to be like in 5-10 years, which of the following are most important? (Select up to 3)



Future Planning and Development

Vision for the Future of Boone County

What is your biggest concern for the future of Boone County?

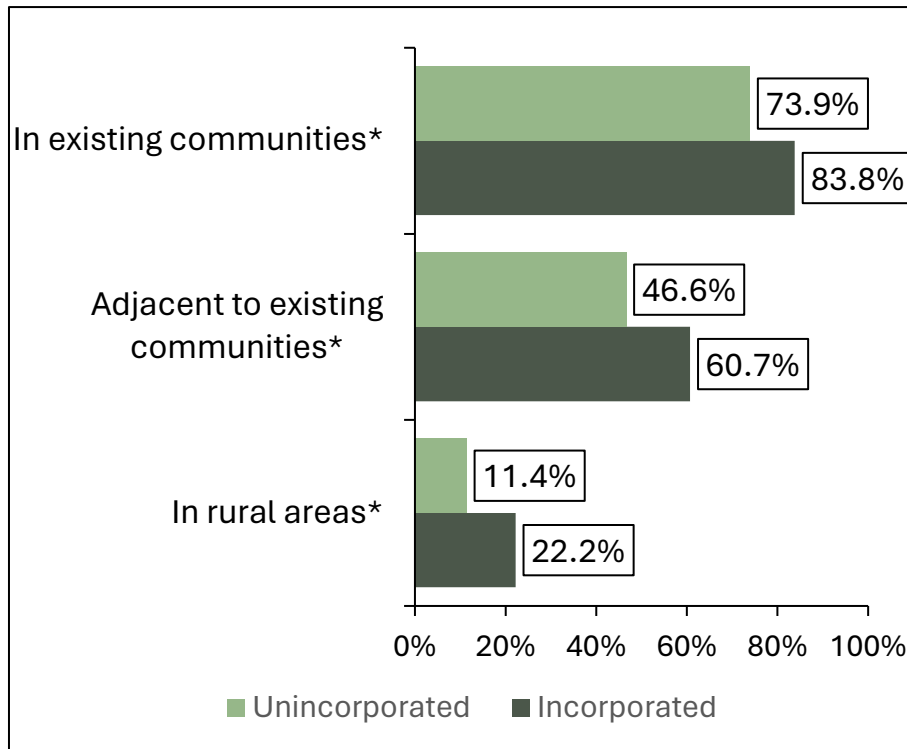
Most common responses

1. **Unmanaged growth** of business and residential areas, suburbanization, overpopulation
2. **Loss of farmland** and open space
3. **Taxes** remain too high

Future Planning and Development

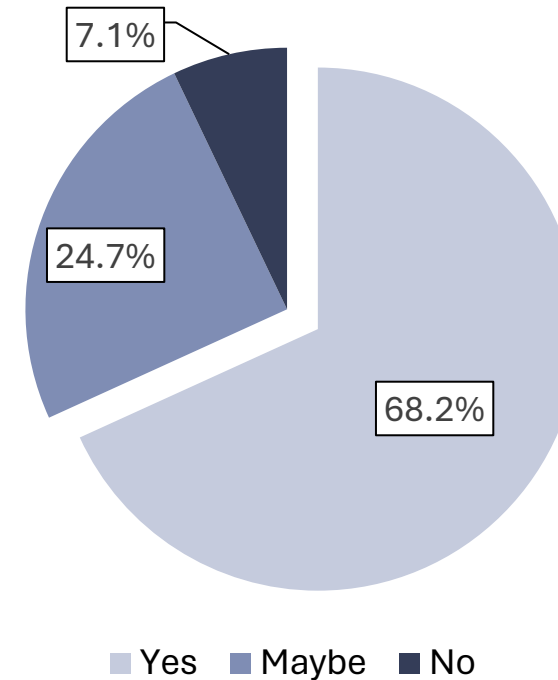
Location of Future Development

Where should future residential growth occur? (Check all that apply)



*The difference between unincorporated and incorporated residents is statistically significant for this item

Should open space in the form of farmland or natural areas be retained as separation between communities?



Future Planning and Development

Rating Current Amounts of Development Types

Respondents were most likely to say there is **too little** of the following types of development:

- **Hotels and other overnight accommodations** (65.2% of unincorporated residents and 88.0% of incorporated residents say there is too little of this type of development)
- **Entertainment/cultural activities** (64.5% of unincorporated residents; 80.9% of incorporated residents)
- **Retail shops, including grocery stores** (63.5% of unincorporated residents; 86.0% of incorporated residents)

Future Planning and Development

Rating Current Amounts of Development Types

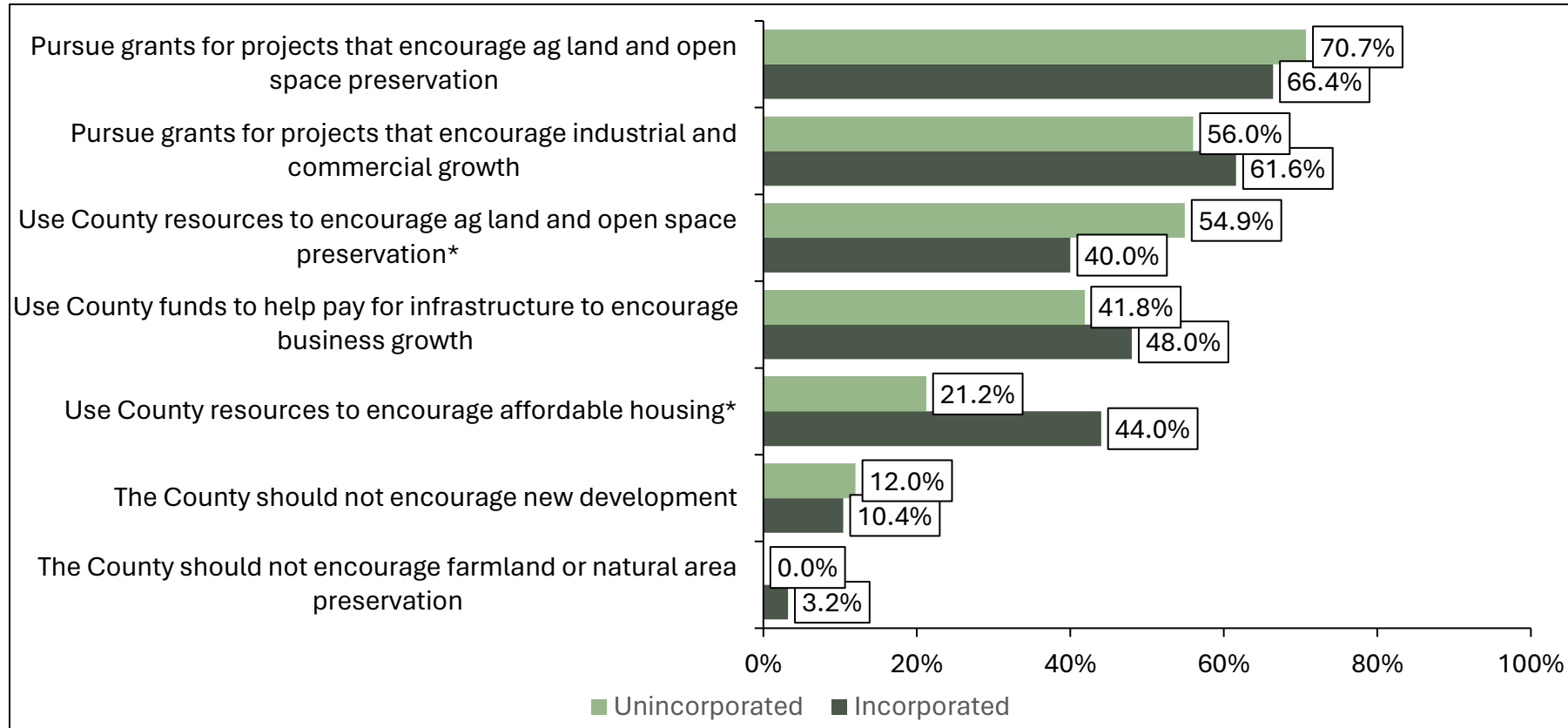
Respondents were most likely to say there is **too much** of the following types of development:

- **Rental units** (37.2% of unincorporated residents and 13.6% of incorporated residents say there is too much of this type of development)
- **Multi-family residential** (36.1% of unincorporated residents; 22.6% of incorporated residents)
- **Single-family residential** (16.0% of unincorporated residents; 11.7% of incorporated residents)
- **Industrial and warehouses** (14.4% of unincorporated residents; 29.1% of incorporated residents)

Future Planning and Development

Resources to Encourage New Development

Which of the following should the County use to encourage new development?
(Check all that apply)

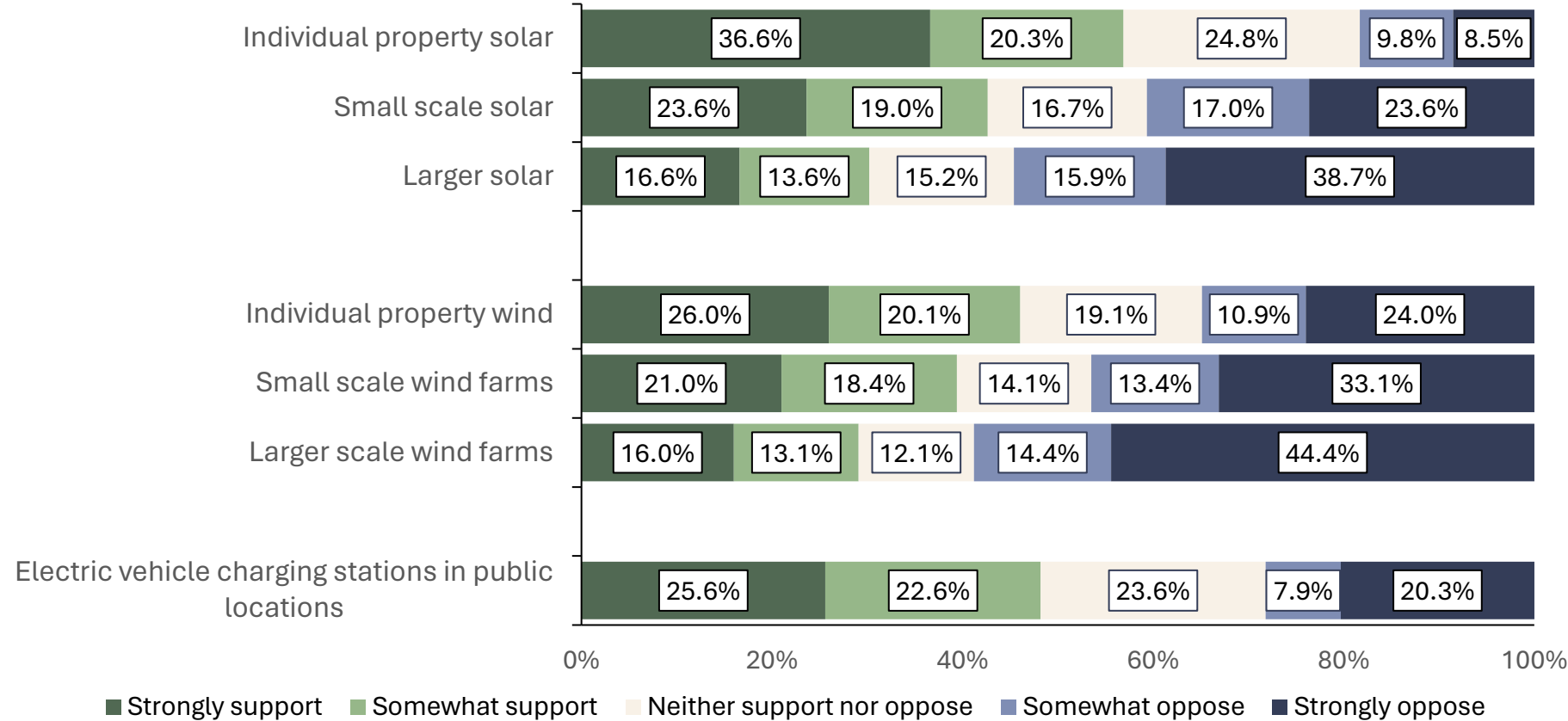


*The difference between unincorporated and incorporated respondents is statistically significant for this item

Future Planning and Development

Support for Alternative Energy Sources

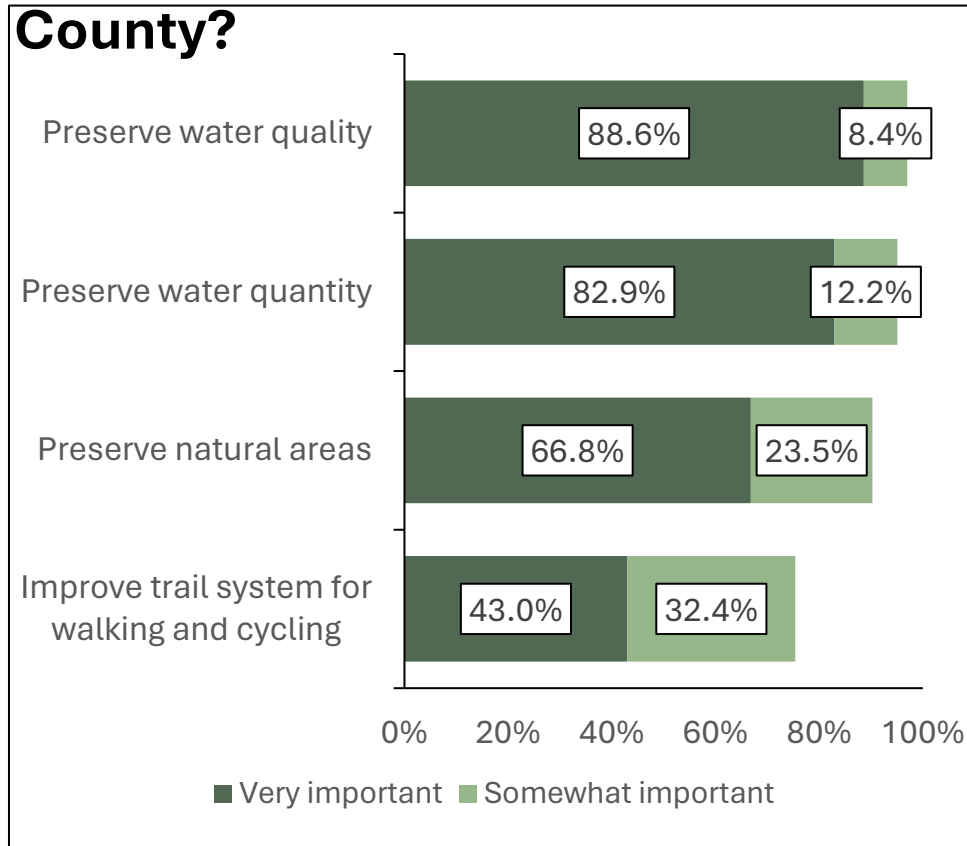
What is your opinion of the use of the following alternative energy sources in Boone County?



Future Planning and Development

Importance of Nature Preservation Initiatives

How important or unimportant is it to do the following in the County?



At least 9 of 10 respondents said it was **very or somewhat important** to:

- **Preserve water quality** (97.0% said this was very or somewhat important)
- **Preserve water quantity** (95.1%)
- **Preserve natural areas** (90.3%)

Three-quarters said it was **very or somewhat important** to:

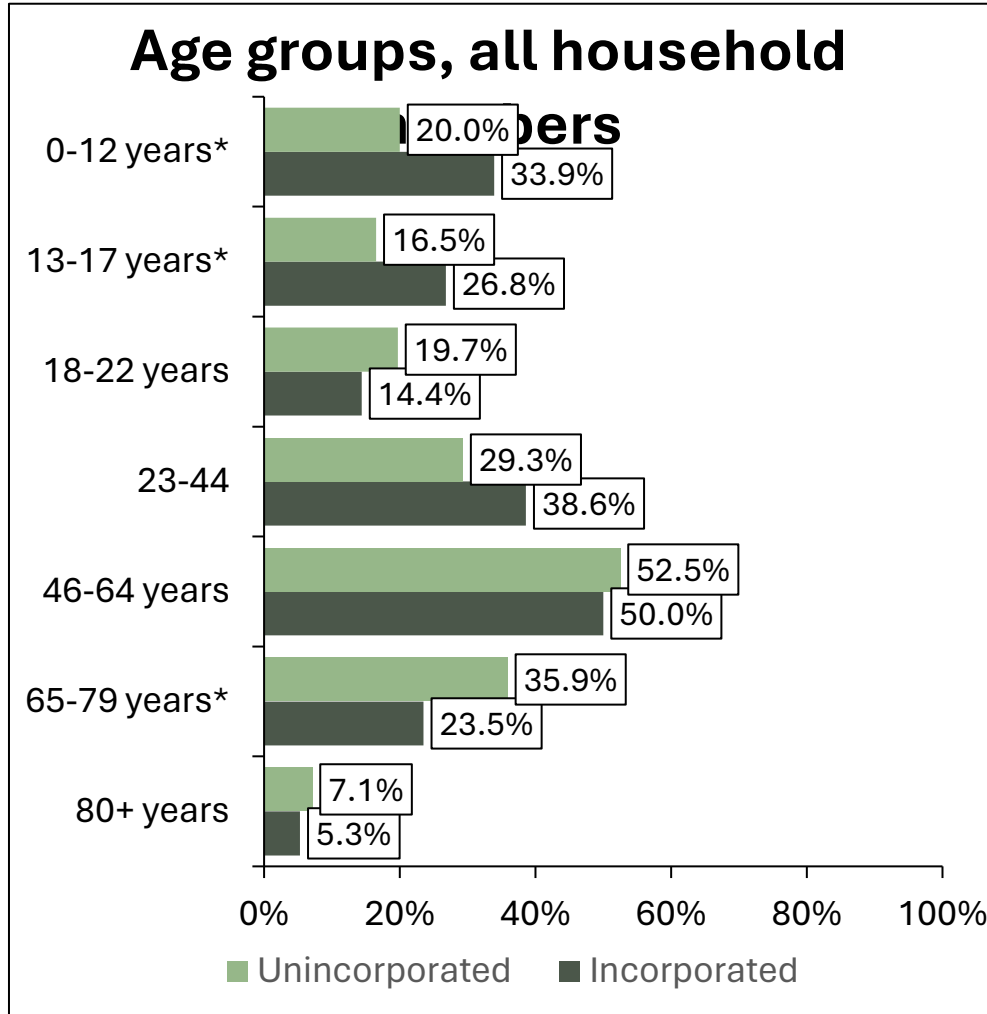
- **Improve trail system for walking and cycling** (75.4%)



Household Characteristics

Household Characteristics

Ages of Household Members, Including Respondent



Overall:

- 31.8% of households include **children ages 0-17**
- 73.6% include **adults 18-64**
- 35.8% include **adults 65+**

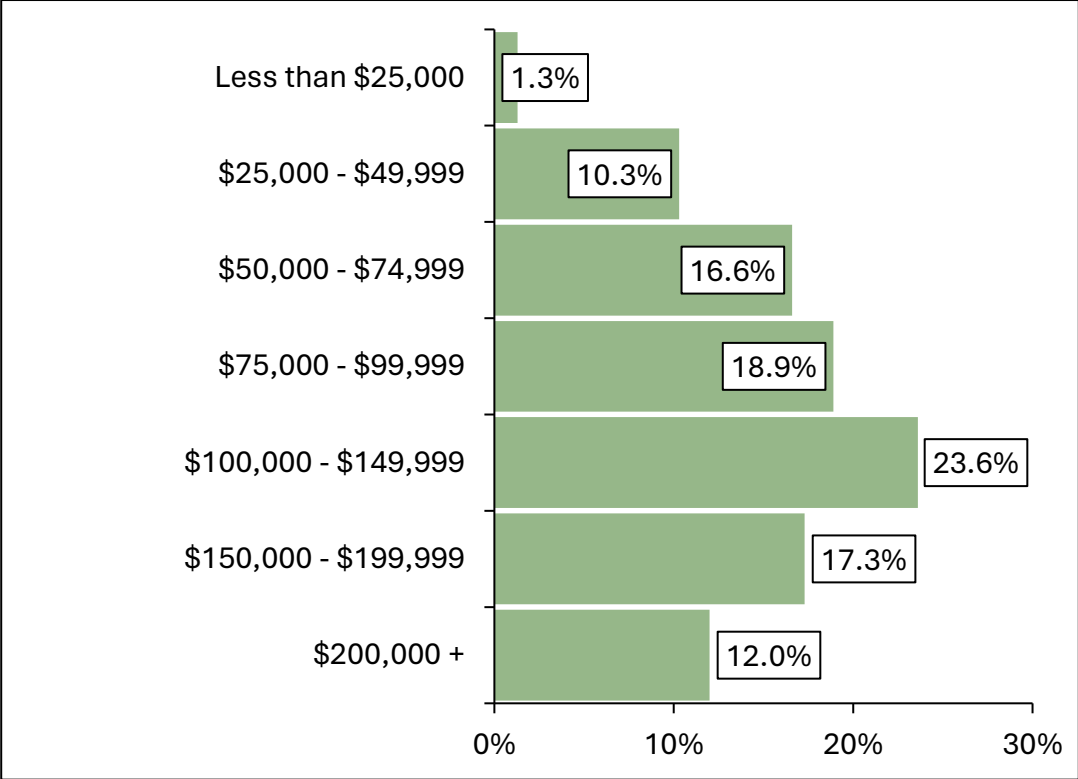
Compared to incorporated households, unincorporated households are:

- Less likely to include **children under age 18**
- More likely to include **adults ages 65-79**

Household Characteristics

Household Income

What was your 2023 household income? *Consider all sources of income, before taxes, for everyone living with you in 2023*



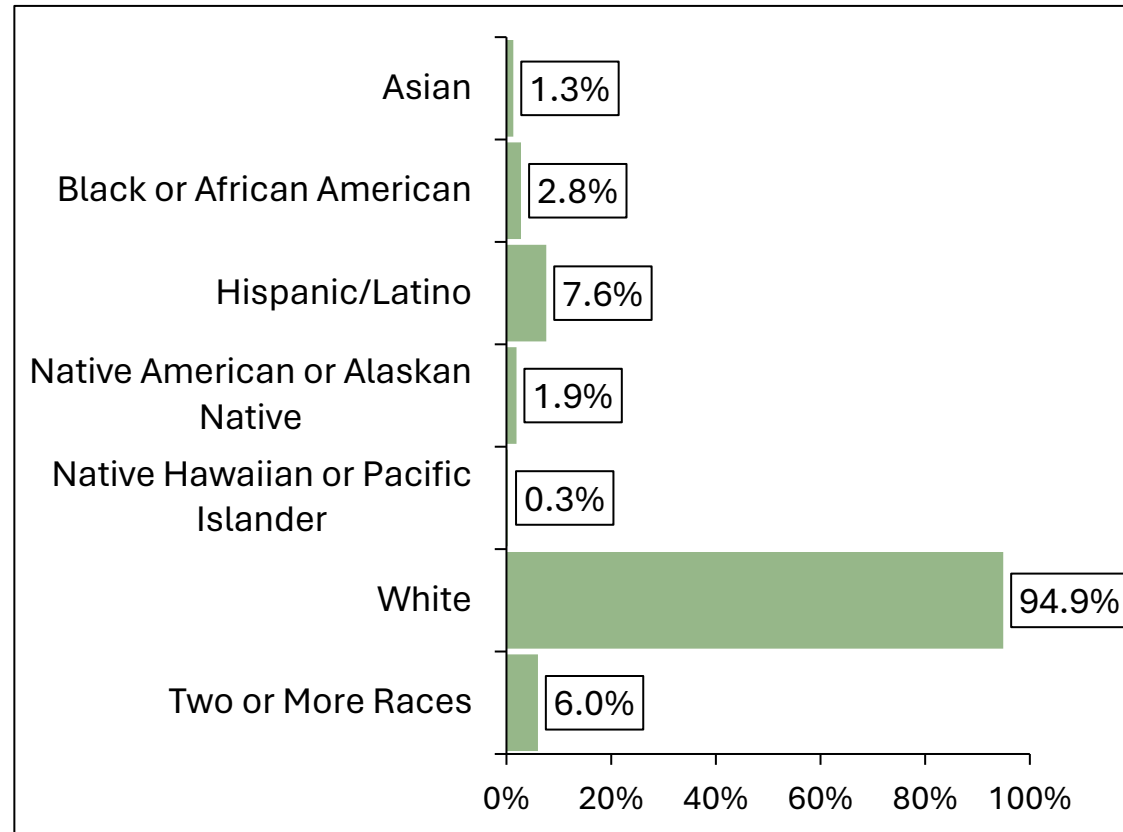
11.6% of households had a 2023 household income of **less than \$50,000**

52.9% had a household income of **\$100,000 or more**

Household Characteristics

Races/Ethnicities of Household Members and Primary Language in Household

Do you or any members of your household identify as... *(select all that apply)*



English is the primary language spoken in 98.2% of households

1.2% of households (4 households) report speaking **Spanish**, either in addition to English or as the sole primary household language



Survey Conclusions

Government Services

- The County should consider improving the services respondents are **least satisfied** with:
 - Ride share or public transportation
 - Arts and cultural opportunities
 - County permitting process
- The County should consider using **multiple forms of communication** with the community
 - **No single source of information** is preferred by a wide margin of residents



Business Development

- The County should consider increasing business development
- Many respondents say that the County has **too little** of the following types of development:
 - **Hotels** and other overnight accommodations
 - **Entertainment** and cultural activities
 - **Retail shops**, including grocery stores
- Among the top visions for the County in the next 5-10 years is
 - “**Having a diverse business base** including industry, services, office space, and shopping”
- A common suggestion for improvement in the County is that the County needs **more types of shopping or restaurants**



Agriculture, Rural and Natural Areas

The County should consider when developing its comprehensive plan that many respondents value Boone County's **natural and rural areas**, as well as the County's **agricultural base**. This is particularly true of residents in unincorporated areas.

For many residents, top visions for the County in the next 5-10 years are to:

- Retain a strong agricultural base** and preserve farmland

- Expand outdoor recreational opportunities** and preserve natural areas and waterways

Respondents' major concerns for the area include

- Unmanaged growth**

- Loss of farmland and open space**

Among those who own farm property, **most plan to keep the property in the family**, and relatively few of those who do not plan to do this are considering selling the land for non-farm use



Sustainability and Preservation

The County should consider respondents' opinions when deciding on sustainability and nature preservation initiatives

Respondents support some types of sustainability/nature preservation initiatives

A broad majority of respondents indicate it is important to

Preserve **water quality**

Preserve **water quantity**

Preserve **natural areas**

In terms of alternative energy use, respondents were:

Most likely to support **individual property solar and wind farms**,

Least likely to support **larger-scale solar and wind**

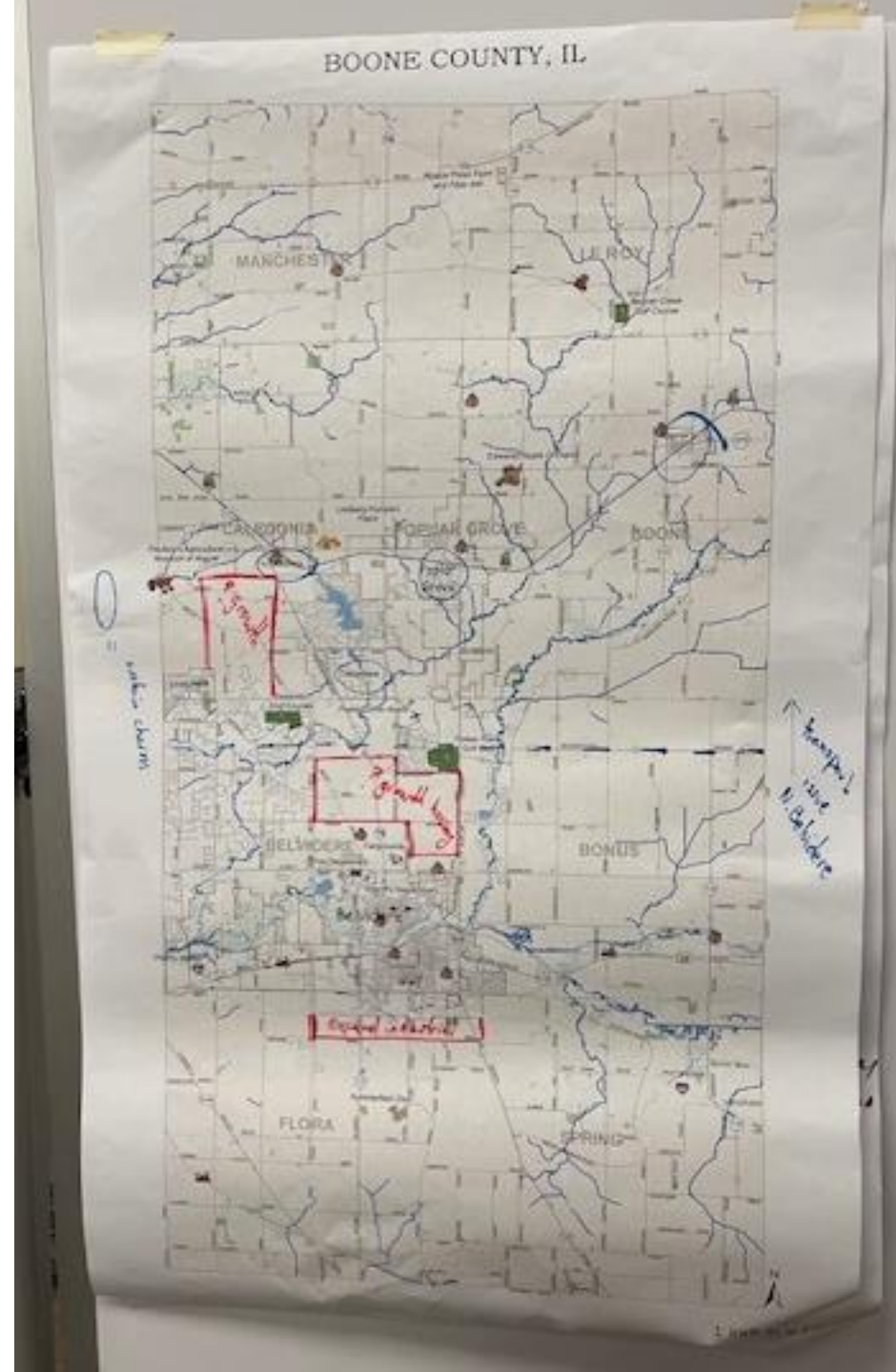




The Comprehensive Plan and UDO Task Force

The Task Force's Work to Date

- The comprehensive plan and UDO task force includes 23 members representing stakeholders across the county.
- The task force has held two meetings during which they reviewed background information and the community survey, identified issues and locations to be addressed by the updated comprehensive plan, and began work on a vision statement.



Issues Identified by the Task Force

During the first task force meeting, the task force members identified key issues. These are summarized below. At a later meeting, the task force will develop a set of goals that address these issues. The goals included in the existing Boone County Comprehensive Plan and other sources will also be considered.

Water Resource Management

Food Desert

Shortage of Housing Variety and Affordability

Roads

Funding

Leadership

Municipal Cooperation

Development Barriers

Signage

Farmland Preservation

Noise in rural areas

Healthcare Availability

Broadband / Communication Infrastructure

Traffic

Alternative Energy Regulations

Transportation

Land use compatibility

Business Growth

Next Steps

The task force will resume meetings in January to complete the following tasks:

- Complete vision statement
- Develop goals
- Develop objectives for each goal
- Later meetings will focus on the future land use map, prioritizing objectives and implementation.



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