**CARROLL COUNTY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

Conversations

WITH OUR COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
of Carroll County

September 2019

Executive Summary

As the Carroll County Community Foundation looks toward a process of developing more intentional and focused investment strategies for the future goals of Carroll County, it embarked on a process of engaging in Community Conversations through the services of Project Matters, LLC. These conversations were based upon the *Harwood Public Innovation and Turning Outward Model*. This endeavor allowed the Foundation to conduct community conversations representing 14 different demographic segments of Carroll County. The information gathered into this report will allow the Foundation to continue its mission of connecting people, resources and causes to produce a positive and sustainable change in the communities it serves.

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

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

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

The results of the community conversations reveal that of the three emergent aspirations (participants wanted a safe/drug-free/mentally healthy, progressive/growing/vibrant, and supportive/engaging/inclusive community), the substance-abuse issue is a factor that impacts all themes. For a community to be vibrant and supportive, its population must be healthy enough to be productive and contributing to a constructive income growth. When people have their basic needs met you restore their hope. Their choices then become more productive resulting in positive community impact.

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

We Listened

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

1. Carroll County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
2. Carroll County Community Foundation Board of Directors
3. Carroll County Economic Development Corporation
4. Educators
5. Elected Officials
6. Healthcare Professionals
7. High School Youth
8. Law Enforcement/Fire/Emergency Personnel
9. Non-Profit Organizations
10. Pastors/Faith-based Organization Leaders
11. Senior Citizens
12. Small Towns of Carroll County
13. Trustee Clients/Low-Income Households
14. Veterans

Conversation Demographics

*The following statistics share the demographic diversity within the conversations we held with **107** different members of the community.*

GENDER

47

59
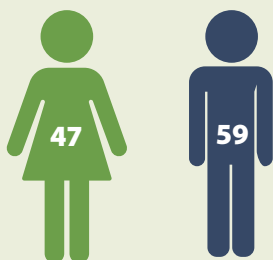
ETHNICITY

98%
WHITE, CAUCASIAN OR OF EUROPEAN DESCENT

0%
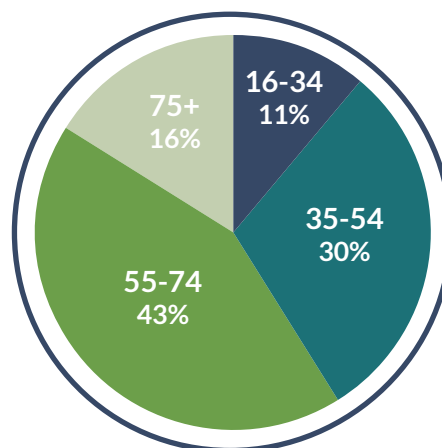BLACK, AFRICAN AMERICAN OR OF AFRICAN DESCENT

1%
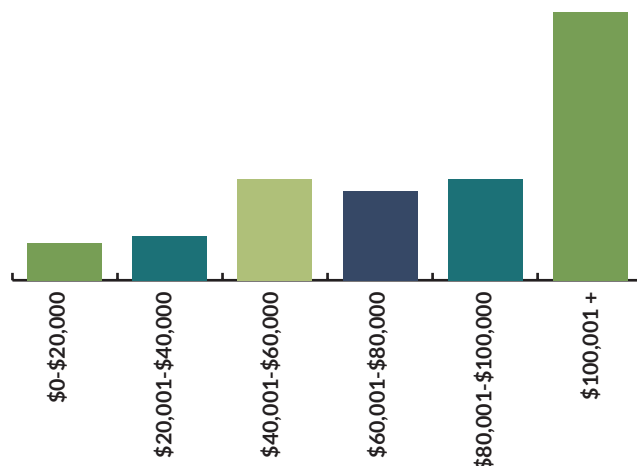LATINO OR HISPANIC

1%
OTHER

PRIMARY LANGUAGE

100%
ENGLISH

AGE RANGE

- 16-34: 11%
- 35-54: 30%
- 55-74: 43%
- 75+: 16%

INCOME

- $0-$20,000
- $20,001-$40,000
- $40,001-$60,000
- $60,001-$80,000
- $80,001-$100,000
- $100,001 +

Leading Aspirations

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

Safe, Drug-Free & Mentally Healthy

Progressive, Growing & Vibrant

Supportive, Engaging & Inclusive

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

"We want a safe, drug-free and mentally healthy community."

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

- Drugs
- Mental Health
- Post-murder unease
  (February 2017 crimes against Abby/Libby)

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

- Poverty
- Crime
- Drug addiction
- Lack of resources and facilities for substance abuse and mental health treatment
- Lack of strong family units
- Cultural influences leading to anxiety for students (active shooters, cyber-bullying)

They say we need to focus on the following ACTIONS:

- Offering more mental health resources
- Looking at other counties and what they are doing successfully to address these issues
- Offering more wrap-around services for schools and families
- Creating transitional facilities
- Ensuring the local Area IV office has consistent and accessible hours
- Eliminating recidivism
  (study other successful models)
- Re-engaging offenders into the community

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

- Churches/pastors
- Carroll County Chamber of Commerce
- Healthcare organizations such as Valley Oaks Health, Family Health Clinic, Logansport Memorial Hospital and Indiana University Health

"Poverty and trauma/abuse are prevalent. We have long mental health waiting lines. We need more professionals. It's hard to hire people due to insurance regulations for different clearances."

"I believe there is a stigma for those who have abused drugs. No one wants the transitional home in their backyard (neighborhood). I think we don't have enough (treatment) programs here. Funding is an issue."

"We have SRO's (school resource officers) in our schools. We do active shooter role playing. Kids shouldn't have to know all of this to feel safe."

"We need the state leadership to get on board with treatment as opposed to jail. We need to adjust our mental health provider requirements. Other states around us are picking up our qualified people."

"(I) don't feel as safe since the murders; I don't want to worry if the grandkids can walk somewhere safely. The murders have changed things in the community."

"We have cyclical and generational issues from drugs. Children of incarcerated parents are left to the care of grandparents, aunts, uncles or a single parent or other relative."

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

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

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

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

2018 IU Health Frankfort Hospital - Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)

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

Identified Concerns:
1. Access to Health Care Services: Under-supply of primary care physicians, mental health professionals and dentists;
2. Drug and Substance Abuse (including Opioids): The opioid crisis, and other forms of drug and substance-abuse, were identified by community members as particularly significant.
3. Health Care and Social Services for Seniors: Demographic data indicate rapid growth in the population aged 65 years and older. Aging and older adult needs are significant issues.
4. Mental Health: Mental Health status was identified as a significant problem. Data indicate that peer counties have many more mental health providers available on a per-capita basis.
5. Obesity and Diabetes: Obesity and diabetes were top concerns. Physical inactivity, a lack of access to exercise opportunities and food insecurity are contributing factors.
6. Smoking: Smoking rates are comparatively high, including among pregnant women and lower income residents.
7. Social Determinants of Health: Carroll Co.'s overall poverty rate has been below the Indiana average. Data indicate a higher than average prevalence of housing problems and homelessness.

"We want a progressive, growing and vibrant community."

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

• The lack of upwardly mobile jobs
• Our kids graduate and leave the community (and aren't returning)
• The lack of organized activities for kids

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

• The need for better and more accessible internet service
• The (lack of) availability of a stronger workforce (skills matched with emerging technology and workforce needs)
• The lack of a shared vision for the community
• The housing shortage
• Resistance to change
• The need for community pride and engagement
• The struggle of small businesses
• Lack of access to (affordable public) transportation

They say we need to focus on the following ACTIONS:

• Creating a quality of life council
• Creating a leadership program
• Working on workforce development/work ethics with our schools
• Creating an entrepreneurial support system
• Enforcing our zoning laws
• Creating a shared community calendar
• Enticing builders to build here

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

• Carroll County Chamber of Commerce
• Flora Community Club
• Redevelopment Commission (whether this was city or county wasn't specified)
• Carroll County Community Foundation

"The older generation is resistant to change and bringing new (ideas and businesses) to the community; and the younger generation doesn't want to stay because there is nothing here."

"We are surviving, not thriving. We have to provide the infrastructure and ability to start a business and thrive."

"Carroll County does not have a shared vision. We are working on a shared vision, but we have a lot of work to do."

"We want a vibrant, cultural, active town with pubs and coffee shops."

"People don't know how to create a pathway for the students to learn skills for future careers."

"We have an identity crisis both as individuals and a community. We don't like change, but we want different results."

"In a perfect world, the commissioners and economic development would all work together."

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

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

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

2017 Kankakee-Iroquois Regional Planning Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Annual Update
Identified Actions:
1. Prioritize brownfields in the region by county.
2. Improve and expand affordable broadband access.
3. Establish TIF districts to access funding options.
4. Identify the opportunities available for natural resources available within the region and promote.
5. Access existing and potential tourism amenities and promote from across the region.
6. Address deteriorating roads, rail and connect with non-motorized transportation opportunities in the region.
7. Integrate high school skills attainment and job readiness; launch student mentoring/internship programs and promote available workforce training.

2019 City of Delphi (Draft) Strategic Plan

Identified Actions:
1. Identifying and developing a plan for agricultural land, empty lots, and dilapidated structures which could provide for new residential construction;
2. Identifying niche businesses and staple goods and a unified marketing strategy;
3. Identify and collaborate with other agencies on ways to beautify the community and use social media strategies to get youth engaged in efforts;
4. Facilitate historical tours and festivals; promote activities and develop/utilize our natural resources. Collaborate with other agencies;
5. Update master utility plan and collaborate with other local entities;
6. Foster diverse workout classes open to the public; work with children on importance of diet/exercise; develop strategies for prevention of drug use and identify recovery opportunities within the community.
7. Provide cultural and educational opportunities and work with the schools and other local agencies to increase awareness/participation.
8. Work with the City Council and Area Plan Commission to update zoning, subdivision, and thoroughfare ordinances to support and encourage desired development.
9. Create opportunities for local artists, writers and other cultural assets to develop events and encourage local businesses to display works.
10. Develop relationships with officials in surrounding counties to promote the Delphi Community and opportunities.
11. Learn from other successful communities across the state.

2015 – 2020 Flora Community Club Strategic Plan

Identified Actions:
1. Create a marketing plan and material for all sponsored activities and gather feedback about each event;
2. Get an estimate for the cost of construction of arena and develop a strategy for, and implement, a capital campaign to provide needed funding; Develop and implement a phased construction plan to complete the project;
3. Provide more opportunities for members to have a meaningful impact on Flora and develop a plan to provide small incentives for participation.

FOSTER PROGRAMS:
1. Provide Financial Oversight and training to board members and employees of foster organizations;
2. Educate members of foster organizations about the "ins & outs" of operating a NFP Organization;
3. Help foster organizations transition to independent operations and obtain 501C3 status.

2015 – 2020 Flora Main Street Strategic Plan

Identified Actions:
1. Identify buildings or areas needing improvement and prioritize needs; secure funding from town council to address.
2. Identify Adopt-a-Spot Garden Spots for beautification by committee;
3. Coordinate with town council on planting and maintenance of curbside and hanging flower-pots.
4. Form Fundraising Committee to consult with area non-profits and develop a concept for a fundraising activity that results in plan development and implementation.
5. Research/apply for grants including matching grants; research and apply for a Downtown Enhancement Grant for 2nd phase of building facade improvements.
6. Secure an estimate for the cost of moving, reassembling and refurbishing the Flora Depot. Research appropriate funding options for the project. Plan and implement a fundraising event to grow the Depot. Fund and create a website for the Depot.
7. Develop the short (less than 5 year) and long-range plans (6 - 10 yrs.) for completing all projects.

2015-2020 Carroll County Event & Education Center Strategic Plan

Identified Actions:
1. Maximize usage of facility through a wide variety of public and private events;
2. Repair and regularly maintain building, equipment, technology.
3. Provide new facility functions and amenities to make CCEEC are attractive to potential community users.

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

The following ASPIRATIONS were identified, but no actions were expressed in the report.
1. Community Vitality: Access to parks and trails; quality affordable healthcare, and shopping/dining as their most valuable community asset.
2. Community Education: Align workforce/education, provide work ethic certification and youth workforce opportunities and entrepreneur co-working space.
3. Community Connectivity: Community-wide, high speed Internet, creating a public transportation system and improving community interactions.

"We want a supportive, engaging, and inclusive community."

While people want a SUPPORTIVE, ENGAGING and INCLUSIVE community, they are CONCERNED about:

- The need for better collaboration (among organizations and diverse people)
- The need to be less judgmental (toward others)
- That we are not relationally engaged

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

- The lack of availability of resources for the impoverished (low-income)
- Repairing the pride in the community
- A sense of hopelessness
- A lack of interaction (between different ages, socio-economic sectors and cultures)
- The need for volunteers
- People being afraid to run for leadership positions
- The community not being inclusive or very welcoming
- There is a divisiveness in the county

They say we need to focus on the following ACTIONS:

- Connecting with state-based resources and funding opportunities
- Sharing success stories
- Clearly communicating and promoting resources, events and opportunities

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

- Carroll County Community Foundation
- Carroll County Chamber of Commerce
- Flora Community Club
- Mayor Shane Evans
- Town Councils
- Non-profit organizations
- Churches/pastors

"I see silos of repeated services. We could be better at collaboration. We don't realize what resources each other provides. CONNECT meetings are at noon but can't get there then."
(The Chamber of Commerce sponsors Business Connect)

"People need to speak out more, but they don't want to commit to be more involved. Part of it is that people may not know about the opportunities to get more involved."

"Communication in the community needs to be improved."

"(We are) not connected enough with each other or with our neighbors."

"I'm an outsider and I've been here for 44 years. Roots go deep here. It's generational."

"Transportation is a problem for seniors. The Senior Center has a transportation bus, but it's booked up. There is no evening transportation or weekend transportation."

"Our image outside of Carroll County is better than our inner image."

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

2015 – 2020 Flora Main Street Strategic Plan

Identified Actions:
1. Identify buildings or areas needing improvement and prioritize needs; secure funding from town council to address.
2. Identify Adopt-a-Spot Garden Spots for beautification by committee;
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7. Develop the short (less than 5 year) and long-range plans (6 - 10 yrs.) for completing all projects.

2019 City of Delphi (Draft) Strategic Plan

Identified Actions: (in part, relevant to connected and supportive)
1. Identifying and developing a plan for agricultural land, empty lots, and dilapidated structures which could provide for new residential construction;
2. Identifying niche businesses and staple goods and a unified marketing strategy;
3. Identify and collaborate with other agencies on ways to beautify the community and use social media strategies to get youth engaged in efforts;
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Conversation Insights

We hope the Carroll County community will use the findings in this report to respond to the public's desire for more economic diversity, developing a skilled workforce, creating a healthy and supportive community environment and initiating collaborative actions in reaching their aspirations. The participant insights let those in roles of leadership create opportunities and actions for positive impact.

The people of Carroll County are trying to feel hopeful again. They acknowledge the good which people and organizations are doing across the county. However, they also understand the sense of frustration which arises from the lack of coordination, communication and accessibility among agencies, county government and services, especially for the less fortunate. Addressing the mental health and substance-abuse issues without stigma, including both the lack of local qualified providers and services, as well as enough volunteers to assist multiple non-profit agencies, was important to many residents. There was a strong voice for better communication in knowing what is going on in Carroll County, as well as what the needs truly are, in order to increase community engagement.

There was also a notable cry for more employment opportunities that would provide a living wage for families. The youth who were interviewed said they would come back to live in Carroll County if there were adequate job opportunities and things for them to do. People also mentioned the lack of a supportive entrepreneurial eco-system to develop and sustain small businesses. Many people thought the four-lane highway would help attract more business growth but are disheartened that they aren't seeing the positive demographic growth they had anticipated. Instead they felt the area was becoming an in-migration pool of only the impoverished from larger metropolitan cities like Chicago. They acknowledge that the lack of availability of mid-range housing and high-wage jobs also plays a role in the declining demographic income base. They also see these factors contributing to more crime and drug issues.

Residents were pleased to have been given a chance to express their aspirations for Carroll County and the individual communities in which they live. From their post-conversation surveys, we know that as a result of these community conversations, 53% of the respondents were "more likely" to get involved in other conversations and activities about important community issues. Below are a few of their comments from those surveys:

- "Wonderful discussion, very open."
- "Would love to help. Discussion was very good. My problem is that over the course of my career, I have been involved but have seen very little follow-through."
- "Would like to know how these conversations impacted the community."
- "Thanks for asking us!"
- "Thank you for engaging in our community and your efforts to help improve it."

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

Project
Matters LLC

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