

# TOWN OF MENTONE

*Through this data collection and analysis, the County, and the incorporated communities, can better understand what is happening today and what can be expected for the future. The key finding conclusion statements, highlighted within each community section, set the stage for the goals, objectives, and recommendations outlined within the final FORWARD Kosciusko County Comprehensive Plan. Unless otherwise noted, all data points were gathered from the US Census.*



## MENTONE

# PEOPLE

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### ***Demographic Trends***

Mentone's population is 1,239 people, or about 1.6% of the county's total population. Mentone has grown significantly since 2000 (38.0%), and is expected to continue to grow another 23.5% by 2030, or a total of 1,530 people. Mentone is predicted to have the third highest rate of growth, only falling behind Leesburg (88%) and Claypool (53%), and far exceeding the state's projected growth of 5.2%. This projected growth is likely influenced by the Town's steady, previous growth and the availability of land for development.

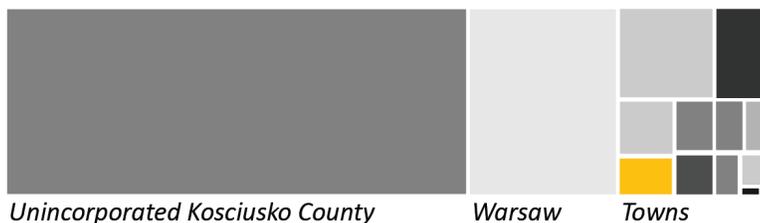
The median age of residents living within Mentone is 33.4 years, a slight increase from 2010 when the median age was 31.2 years. This increase signifies the local population is aging, but aging slower than other communities within Kosciusko County. The largest age cohort living within Mentone are those between 35 and 44 years of age (14.3%). The Town's lower median age is likely due to the large number of young families and teenagers within the community.

The majority (97.3%) of those living within Mentone identify as Caucasian, while 0.3% identify as American Indian and Alaskan Native, 0.3% as Black or African American, and 1.3% as two or more races. In addition, 3.6% of residents also identify as Hispanic or Latino in origin, a slight increase from 2.6% in 2010.

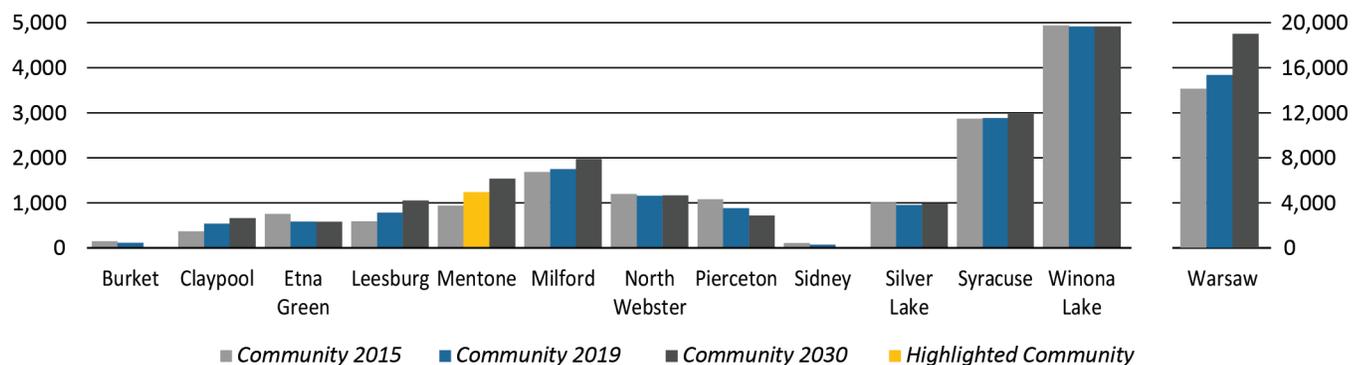
Mentone's median household income is \$57,361, a \$18,794 (48.7%) increase since 2010 but \$4,005 (6.5%) less than the County's median income. The Town's income per capita (\$22,459) follows a similar trend, raising 13.3% from 2010 to 2019. Per capita income is the average income of an area spread among all residents (including children) and is most often used to describe a community's purchasing power or income per resident. This increase in income is also reflected in the Town's poverty rate (9.2%), which declined since 2010 (11.9%).

1,239

Total population (2019)



Population Growth



Income and Poverty



\$57,361

Median Household Income

9.8%

County Poverty Rate

Race and Ethnicity



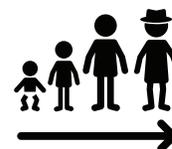
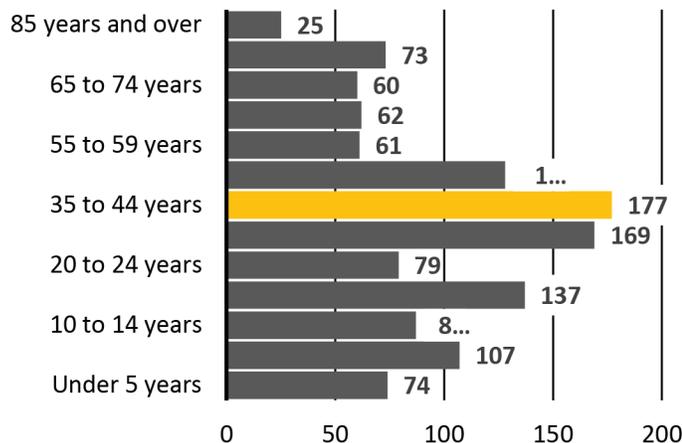
97.3%

Identify as Caucasian

3.6%

Identify as Hispanic

Population Age



31.2

Median Age

### ***Employment and Industry***

There are 85.2% of residents 25 years or older that have a high school degree or higher and 10.6% have a bachelor degree or higher. Mentone saw slight decrease in educational attainment since 2010 where 87.2% of residents over the age of 25 had a high school degree or higher.

Mentone's labor force (64.6%) has increased by 1.5% since 2010. Although the Town's population has grown by a more significant amount, the smaller growth in labor force could be explained by the higher proportion of children under the age of 18 or retired residents within the Town. Manufacturing industries (46.0%) employ almost half of Mentone's residents, while educational services, healthcare and social assistance (17.6%) are the second largest employers. The average earning for manufacturing jobs within the County is \$91,815, the second highest out of all major industry types.

The mean commute travel time for Mentone residents is 23.8 minutes. Most are driving to work alone (80.7%), while 15.4% carpool with other and 2.9% walk to work. The majority of residents are commuting outside of Mentone (89.0%) for work, but are still staying within Kosciusko County (75.0%). An estimated 7,549 Kosciusko County residents leave the County for work each day.

**932** Total Residential Labor Force (2019)

**95.4%**

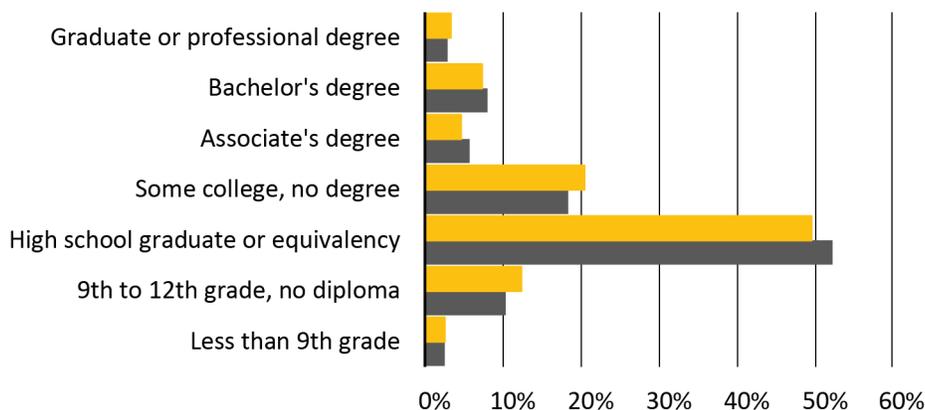
Of the local labor force is employed



**4.6%**

Of the local labor force is unemployed

**Educational Attainment**



**85.2%**

Have obtained a high school degree or higher

**Average Earnings for Manufacturing Jobs**



**\$91,815**

Average earnings within the County

Second highest out of all major industry types

**Commuting Time**



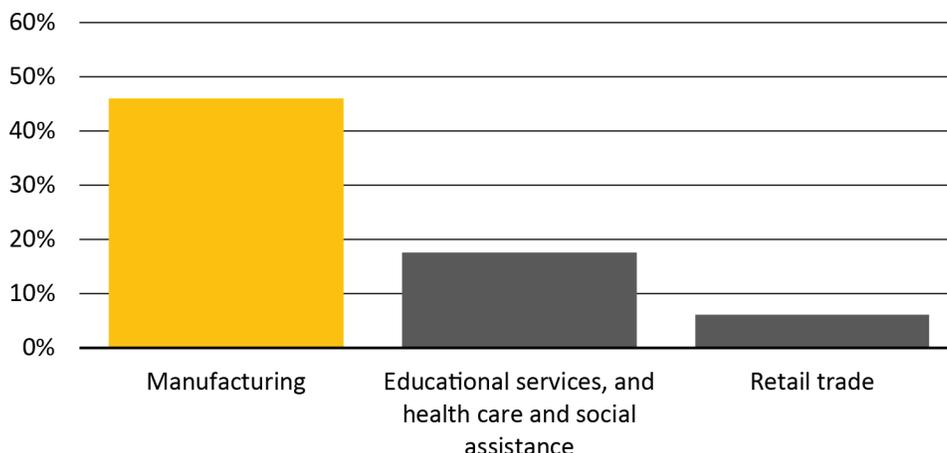
**23.8**

Average travel time in minutes

**80.7%**

Of workers prefer to drive to work alone

**Local Industries and Earnings**



## ***Housing***

Mentone has 505 housing units, an increase of 16.2% since 2010 and 38.4% since 2000. The Town has the highest increase in housing units of all other communities within the County since 2010. This rise in housing units is mirrored by the Town's growing population and has not greatly affected vacancy rates (7.9% in 2019).

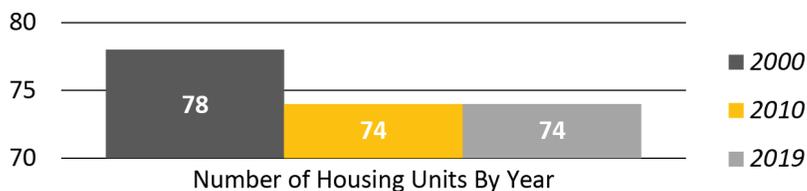
The housing within Mentone is aging, with 34.3% of housing built before 1940 and 58.0% of units constructed prior to 1970. This year is important because it marks when modern housing codes began to take effect throughout the country. Since 2010, approximately 82 units have been built within Mentone, about 16.2% of the Town's total housing. This is much different from the County, where the housing units built after 2010 make up just 4.2% of the County's total.

The most common type of housing structure within Mentone is single-unit detached, making up 69.5% of total housing units. The next highest are mobile homes (13.1%) and duplexes or 2-unit structures (4.2%). The occupied households within the Town are predominately owner-occupied (68.6%), with 63.1% of units being family households and 22.2% as single-person. The percentage of rented households (31.4%) in Mentone is higher than the County (25.2%). The Town has 40 vacant housing units (7.9%) out of its 505 total units.

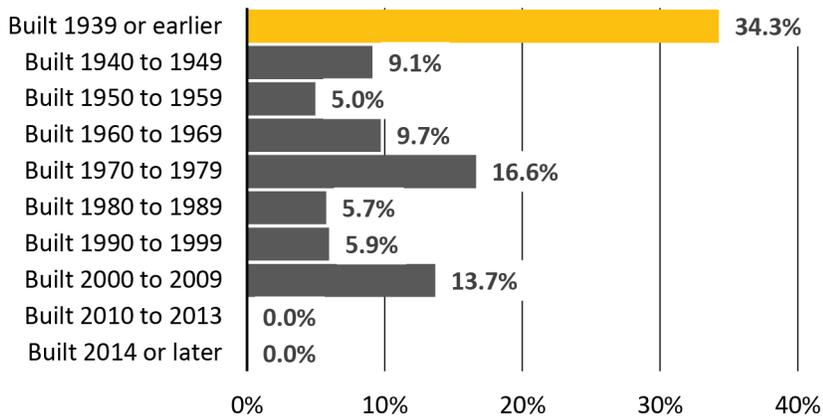
The median home value in Mentone is \$83,000, which greatly falls behind the County's median value (\$150,000) and is lower than other larger communities within the County. Although Mentone's home values are comparatively lower, they have been rising since 2000 (increase of 29.1%), when the median home value was just \$64,300.

Currently, based on Zillow Research data on the prices of homes being sold within the community, there is a large difference between the sales prices and the median assessed value of the homes as defined by the US Census. In 2019, the median home sale price was \$124,263 an increase of 34.9% since 2000 (\$92,071), and has increased 8.7% from 2019 to 2020 alone.

**505** Total housing units



### Age of Housing



**58.0%**

Of local housing units were built before 1970

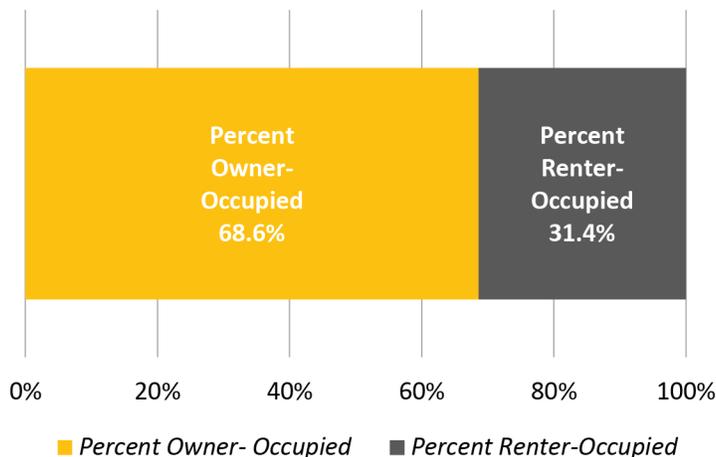
### Home Value



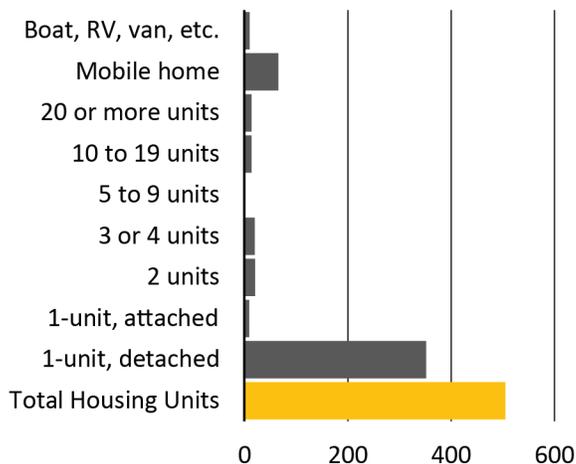
**\$83,000** Median Home Value

Versus a median home sale price of \$124,263 (Zillow Research)

### Housing Occupancy



### Housing Type



## MENTONE PLACES

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### ***Existing development***

Land use is the term used to describe the type of activity or development occurring on a parcel or within a structure located on the parcel. An existing land use map can often reveal development patterns that have occurred over time, potential conflicts or challenges, and opportunities for growth. Using Kosciusko County Assessor Office Class Code information at the property level, existing land uses were identified within the Town. Due to the way the data is aggregated, some inconsistencies may exist. Mentone's existing development patterns include the following:

#### **Residential**

Mentone's residential properties are located on either side of SR 25, with the majority to the north. The homes within the community are primarily small lot sizes, with a platted subdivision near S 950 West. The land surrounding the community is suitable for new development.

#### **Commercial/ Industrial**

The majority of Mentone's commercial and office spaces are located along Main Street (SR 25), stretching the entire length of the community and stopping near the train tracks on the western edge of Town. The community's major industrial sites, Cargill Animal Nutrition and Midwest Spring & Stamping, lie along the train tracks while other industrial sites can be found south along Franklin Street.

#### **Government/ Civic**

The majority of all government/civic land uses are located along Main Street (State Road 25), which includes the Menton Chamber of Commerce, public library, fire station, and Town offices. Mentone Elementary is located at the corner of Jackson and Yale Street. The Bell Aircraft Museum is on the west edge of Town along Oak Street.

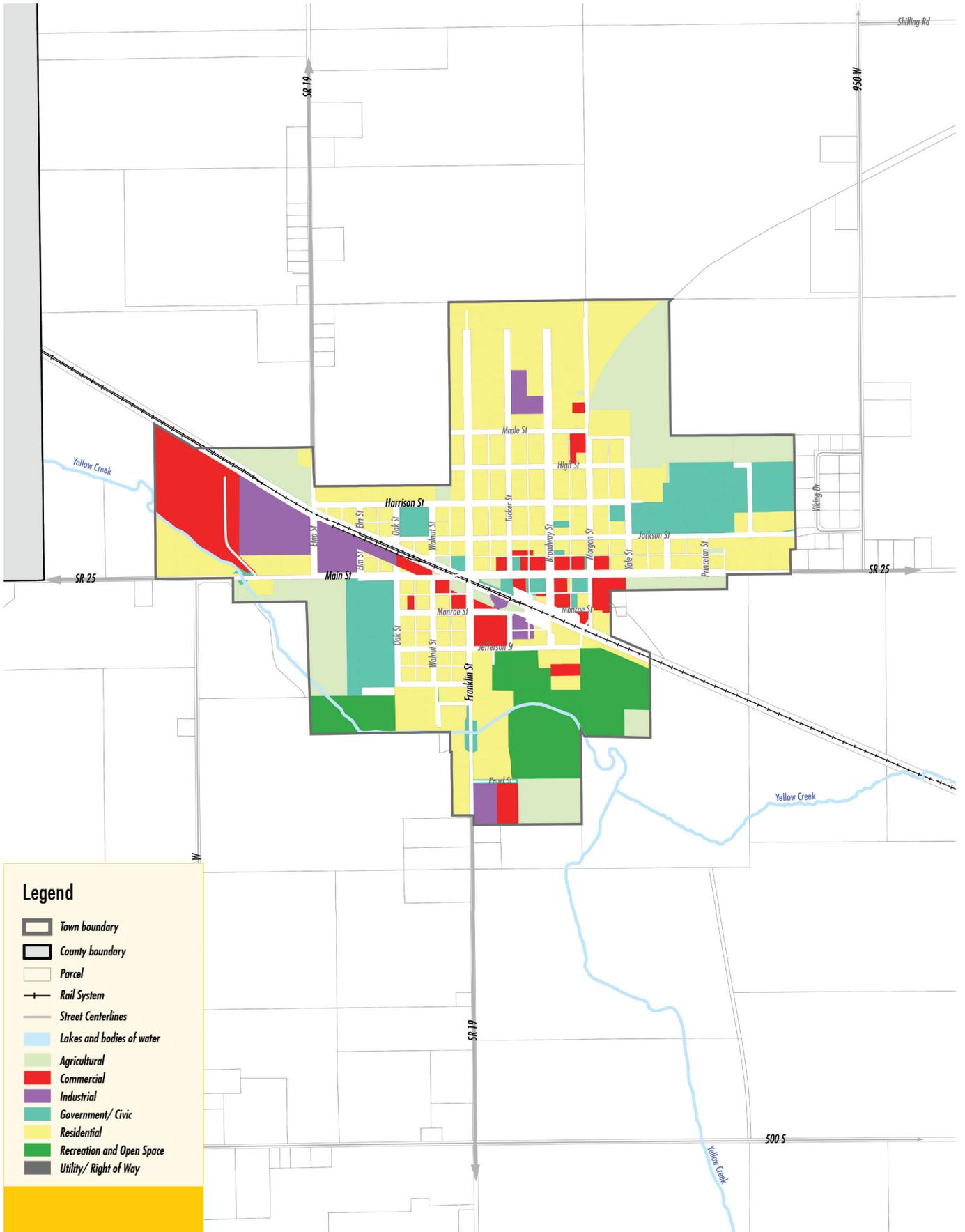
#### **Recreation and Open Space**

The majority of recreational space is south of Main Street, with the exception of the elementary school's athletic fields. This recreational space includes Mentzer Memorial Park which is located along S Franklin Street. Recreation amenities also exist at the Mentone Youth League facility, located along Jefferson Street, which includes two baseball sized fields and one softball field. The facility also includes seating and accessory structures for storage, restrooms and concessions.

The Mentone Cemetery is located within the southeast section of town and represents a large portion of open space within the community. The cemetery extends along S Morgan Street from Jefferson Street to Pearl Street.

#### **Agriculture**

Agricultural land uses surround Mentone and play a part in inhibiting the town's expansion. Additionally, large amounts of existing vegetation borders the community to the north east and south east.



**Legend**

-  Town boundary
-  County boundary
-  Parcel
-  Rail System
-  Street Centerlines
-  Lakes and bodies of water
-  Agricultural
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Government/ Civic
-  Residential
-  Recreation and Open Space
-  Utility/ Right of Way

## Zoning

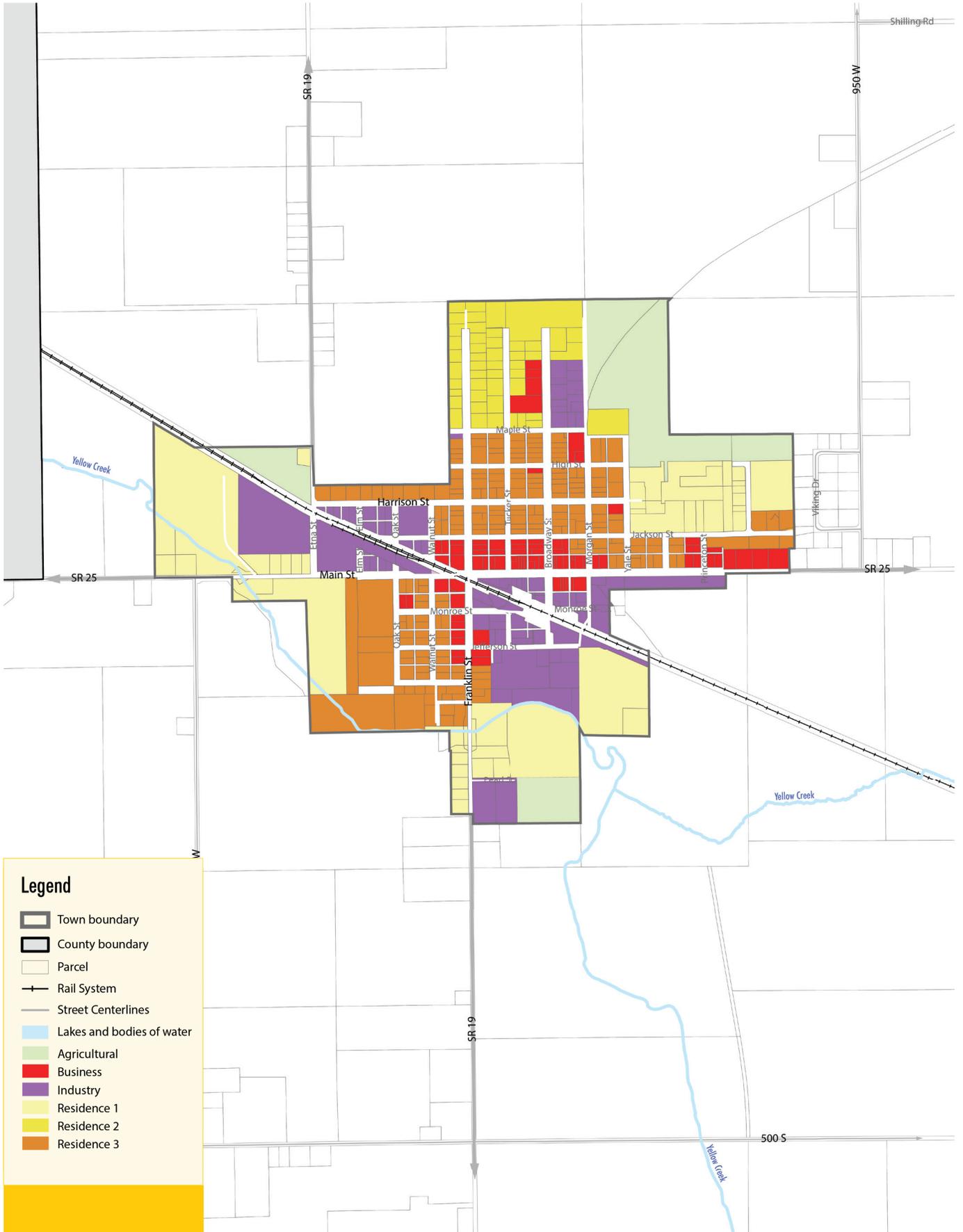
Zoning refers to municipal or local regulations that govern how property can and cannot be used in certain geographic areas. A zoning map and/ or ordinance includes designated districts that determine the appropriate uses and development criteria for each parcel of land. Within each district, there are regulations stating the permitted types of development, lot sizes, building area, setbacks, among others. In addition to preventing conflicts, zoning can play a major role in preserving the community's character and enhancing the local quality of life.

Mentone is one of the few communities within the county who are not part of the Kosciusko County Area Plan Commission (APC). The APC is a cooperative effort between Kosciusko County and many of the incorporated towns and is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations on rezoning requests, ordinance amendments and right of way vacations to the County Commissioners or associated Town boards. The Town of Mentone instead has its own zoning ordinance, which is divided into either residential, business or industrial districts. The zoning code, which dates back to 1965, identifies the following districts, but does not provide a specific definition:

**Residential District (R1, R2 & R3):** The residential district is limited to dwellings, public and semi-public uses which are normally associated with residential neighborhoods.

**Business District and Roadside Business District:** The commercial district is primarily for retail or service uses.

**Industrial District (I1 & I2):** This district is intended to provide areas for the development of industrial uses for the operation of fabricating, manufacturing, processing, wholesaling, warehousing, and ancillary related offices.



**Legend**

- Town boundary
- County boundary
- Parcel
- Rail System
- Street Centerlines
- Lakes and bodies of water
- Agricultural
- Business
- Industry
- Residence 1
- Residence 2
- Residence 3

## ***Development and Redevelopment Opportunities***

A key component to planning for future growth and development requires addressing the unique opportunities and needs of older or transitioning parts of the town. These areas present an opportunity to conserve land resources, leverage existing infrastructure, repurpose existing structures and capitalize on economic development tools if appropriate.

### **Historic Features and Districts**

Mentone does have a small downtown core. Spanning approximately two blocks along Main Street (SR 25) and an additional three blocks along N Broadway Street, the area includes multiple buildings including Town Hall, the post office, the library and numerous shops and restaurants. While the area serves as the center of the community there is no Main Street organization and no defined downtown district. Additionally, buildings within the downtown core are in need of structural and façade improvements.

Contributing to the informal downtown core, there are a number of structures classified by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). The Indiana State Historic Architectural and Archaeological Research Database (SHAARD) allows users to search cultural resource information on known historic resources throughout Indiana. The data contained in SHAARD was collected from previously conducted cultural resource inventories, National Register nominations, and cultural resource management projects. The quality of the data varies with the completeness and precision of the original records and may be out-of-date. The SHAARD is an ongoing initiative, and the associated data will undergo staged enhancements and constant updating however it offers insight into properties that may be of historical significance. The database uses four primary classifications for properties and structures:

***Outstanding-*** Meaning the property has sufficient historic or architectural significance that is listed, or is eligible for individual listing, in the National Register of Historic Places.

***Notable-*** Meaning the property does not merit the outstanding rating, but is still above average in its importance. Notable structures may be eligible for the National Register.

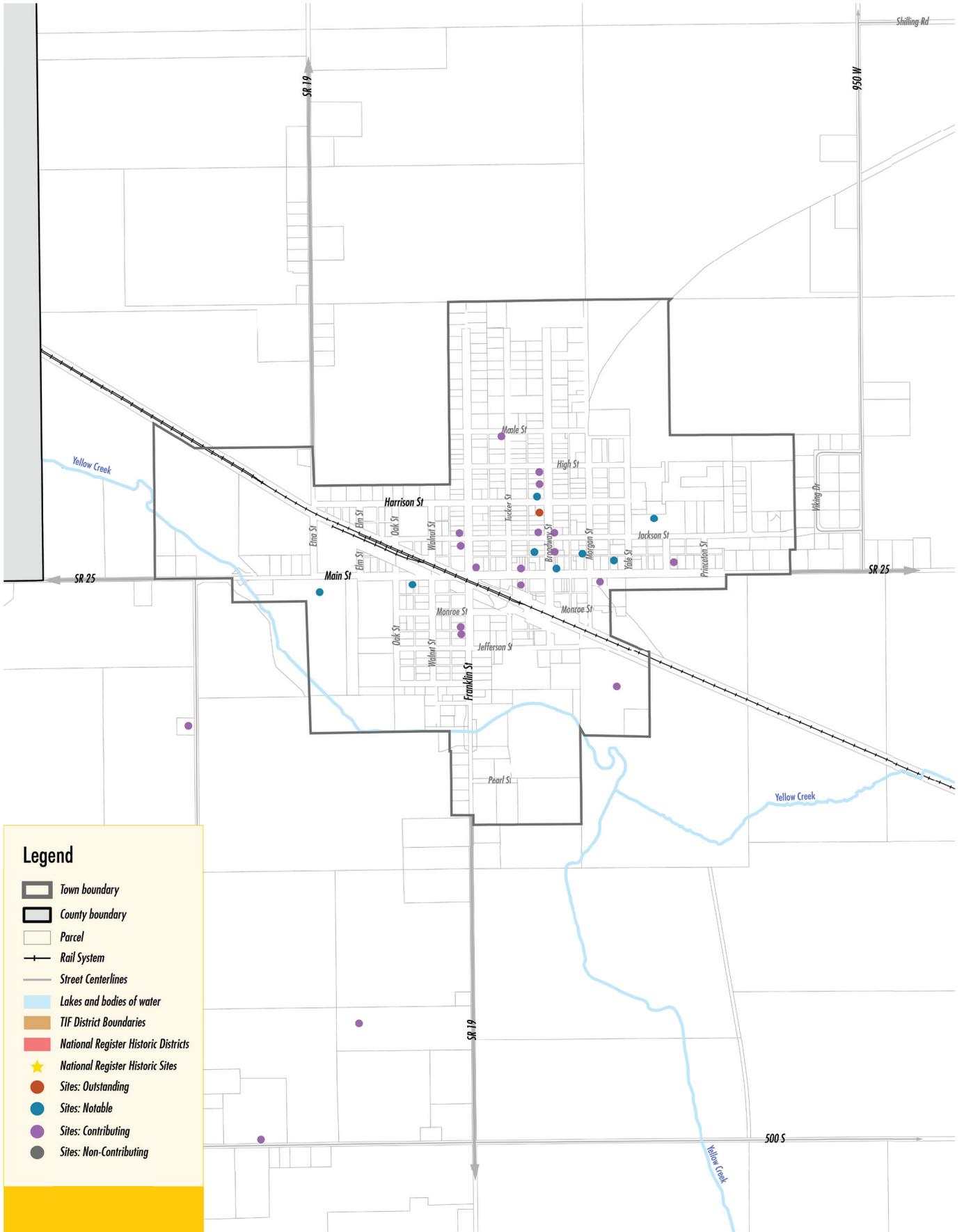
***Contributing-*** Meaning the property is at least 40 years old, but does not meet the criteria of outstanding or notable. These resources are important to the density or continuity of the area's historic fabric. Contributing structures can only be listed in the National Register as part of a historic district.

***Non-contributing-*** Meaning the property is not included in an inventory unless it is located within the boundaries of a historic district. These properties are not eligible for listing in the National Register.

Within Mentone, there are numerous properties mapped within the SHAARD database. The most significant is the Doane House located near the intersection of W Harrison Street and N Broadway Street. The house, noted as 'outstanding' was constructed in 1891. In addition to the Doane House, Mentone also features several 'notable' properties, many of which extend along N Broadway Street and several 'contributing' properties located throughout the community.

### **Development Incentive Districts**

Within the municipal boundary of Mentone there are no incentive districts; however, there is a large tax increment finance (TIF) district located to the east town. A TIF district is an economic development tool used by local governments to encourage development or redevelopment in an area of the community where private investment has not occurred or is difficult because of a number of limiting factors. Although not directly within the town, a large TIF district stretches south of SR 25 to 700 S between Mentone and Burket. While there have not been any developed properties within the district to date, its access to a major highway would make the area suitable for many types of development.



**Legend**

- Town boundary
- County boundary
- Parcel
- Rail System
- Street Centerlines
- Lakes and bodies of water
- TIF District Boundaries
- National Register Historic Districts
- National Register Historic Sites
- Sites: Outstanding
- Sites: Notable
- Sites: Contributing
- Sites: Non-Contributing

## MENTONE

# TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

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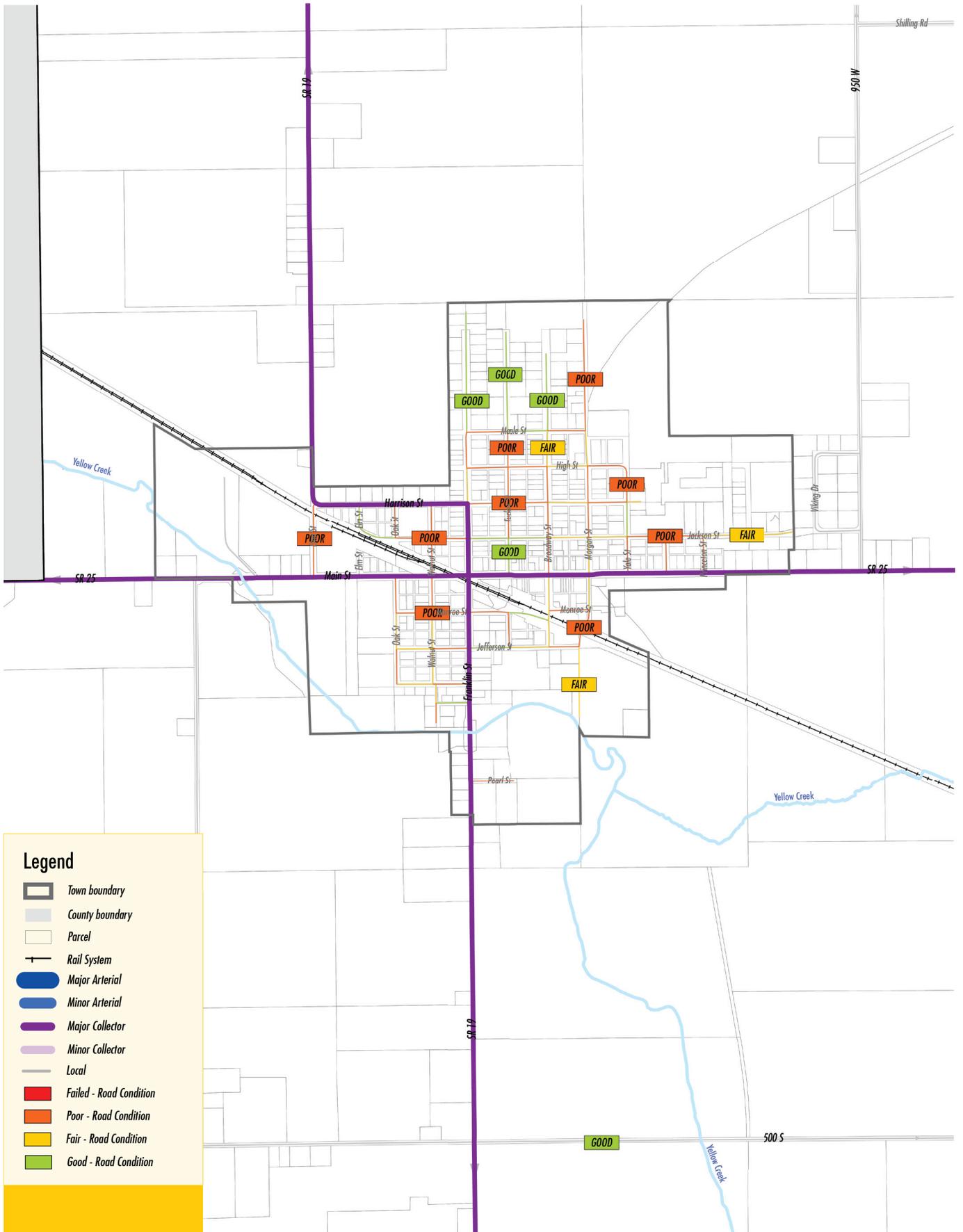
### **Motorized**

Roadways within and surrounding the Town of Mentone can be classified under the Highway Functional Classification system established by the Federal Highway Administration. This system was established to group streets and highways into classes based on the level of service there are intended to provide. These classifications not only allow the roads system to be evaluated and maintained in an efficient manner, but also rate roadways based on the concepts of mobility and accessibility.

Made up of Local Collectors, the Town of Mentone has only two roads of a different classification; Main Street/SR 25 (Major Collector) and SR 19 (Major Collector). These two Major Collectors intersect at the center of the community, and provide streamlined traffic flow both to the north-south and east-west.

The bulk of local traffic passes through the community along Main Street, with an annual daily average of between 2,500-5,000 commuters. This can also be seen to a lesser degree for SR 15, with average daily traffic between 1,250 and 2,500 drivers. While many of these commuters are passing through Mentone, many of them (including residents) likely transfer from one road to the other with Mentone acting as the exchange point.

Given its strategic location along SR 25 and SR 19, Mentone has a high level of regional mobility. Following SR 19, the City of Elkhart lies to the north, with south travel eventually reaches the cities of Peru and Kokomo. SR 25 gives direct access to the county seat of Warsaw in the east, and gradually trails southwest to the City of Rochester.



**Legend**

- Town boundary
- County boundary
- Parcel
- Rail System
- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local
- Failed - Road Condition
- Poor - Road Condition
- Fair - Road Condition
- Good - Road Condition

### **Roadway Character**

SR 25, locally known as Main Street, is the primary east-west corridor leading in and out of the Town. The corridor offers wider travel lanes and narrow shoulders near the edges of Town. Within Town, the corridor transitions to a more urban cross section that includes curbs, a pedestrian sidewalk along one or both sides, and paved parking (angled and parallel) through the core of the community.

SR 19, locally known as N Franklin Street and W Harrison Street, is a primary north-south route into and out of Mentone. The corridor offers wider travel lanes and narrow shoulders along the corridor near the edges of Town and is similar in character to SR 25. Through town, the majority of the SR 19 corridor is immediately adjacent to residential properties, and within these areas the corridor also features a pedestrian sidewalk on at least one side of the road as well as parallel parking spaces on both sides of the roadway.

While no additional streetscape enhancements are present along SR 25 or SR 19, the pedestrian facilities, on-street parking facilities and concrete curbs help to calm traffic and contribute to the downtown aesthetic and neighborhood sense of scale.

Aside from SR 25 and SR 19, the roadways within and surrounding Mentone, are predominately rural in nature and include varying levels of facilities and amenities. N Broadway Street offers the most unique character. Features two travel lanes, N Broadway also accommodates angled parking along portions of the street. The corridor also includes wide tree lawns and pedestrian sidewalks on both sides of the roadway, providing enhanced connectivity along the roadway. This character extends nearly the entire length of N Broadway Street.

The remaining corridors predominately consist of two-lane roads, approximately 20-24' in width, that lack shoulders, curbs and centerline pavement markings. Along many roadways are tree lawns and pedestrian sidewalks, however the location and condition vary throughout the community.

While the majority of Mentone's roadways are designed for vehicular traffic, the community also sees transportation occur through horse and buggy. The well-known community at Nappanee is located a few miles to the southwest of the largest and oldest Amish community, the Elkhart-Lagrange settlement. With a continual outward spreading of Amish settlements, for some settlements, Mentone is the closest location to find supplies, party goods and fresh foods.

### **Roadway Condition**

As an incorporated community, Mentone is responsible for the public right of way within the town boundary. Kosciusko County, and many of the incorporated communities, utilize the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating System (PASER) to visually assess and rate the condition of local roads. The PASER system rates the condition of the road from 1 (failing) to 10 (excellent). With this information, local governments are able to project future conditions of the pavement and plan for the most effective maintenance. Pavement conditions, as defined by the PASER system, have been collected on a regular basis for County roads from 2016 to 2020, including all roads within the Town of Mentone. Nearly all of the roads within Town are classified as a "Good" rating or above, with several roadway segments being noted in "Fair" condition. Currently, there are no roadways classified as "Failed".

Based on available data, there are no known roadway improvement projects currently being planned or considered by Kosciusko County or the Town of Mentone. However, the Town will be impacted by one project that is being led by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). Minor structural improvements including a HMA (hot mix asphalt) overlay to repair and resurface a 6.9-mile segment between Mentone and Etna Green is currently underway. This \$1.6 million effort is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2021.

Mentone, IN | TSWDG



**Rail Corridor**

A single rail line, owned by Norfolk Southern, passes through the center of the community between the northwest and southeast. This line, the Chicago District, runs between Chicago and Fort Wayne, and crosses five community roads. Two of these being on the community's main traffic arteries of Main Street (SR 25) and Franklin Street (SR 19). At all crossings there are crossing arms and signals to indicate the presence of trains.

**Public Transportation**

The Kosciusko Area Bus Service (KABS) provides countywide demand-responsive public transportation service. The service is operated by Cardinal Services of Indiana, a not-for-profit corporation that provides services for persons with disabilities and other life challenges. Ridership in 2019 was about 58,000 trips, a slight reduction from the 2018 figure of about 59,000 trips. The system owned 12 ADA-accessible vehicles in 2019, and received funding from fares and contributions from Kosciusko County, the Indiana Department of Transportation, and the U.S. Federal Transit Administration.

**Non-Motorized (trails/ sidewalks map)**

To compliment a community's vehicular transportation system, often a series of sidewalks, multi-use paths and trails are established to provide residents and visitors with transportation alternatives. These non-motorized systems can be used for both commuting and recreational purposes. In the case of Mentone, there are only limited non-motorized facilities currently in place within the community.

No dedicated trail or bike systems exist within the Town of Mentone, outside of facilities that exist within public parks or open spaces. While sidewalks are prevalent throughout the community, especially along major roadways, they do not cover the entire town. Additionally, sidewalk conditions vary wildly in both maintenance and coverage depending on the location within the community.

There are no other trails, or dedicated biking infrastructure exist within the community.

Mentone, IN | TSWDG



## MENTONE

# UTILITY SYSTEMS

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### **Water and Wastewater**

Mentone owns and operates its own water and sewer system, with a water treatment plant located northwest of the community in Kosciusko County. The Mentone Elementary School is the largest local utility user. Residents all own and operate their own septic systems. The existing water and wastewater systems do have the capacity to handle additional residential, commercial and industrial development in the future. Maintenance and regular repair to the Town's water and wastewater systems are ongoing.

### **Gas and Electric**

Mentone and its immediate surroundings are serviced for electric and natural gas by the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO). Some residents may have the alternative electricity provider of the Kosciusko Rural Electric Membership Corporation (REMC), or the Marshall County REMC to the southwest. NIPSCO also owns and operates all street lighting on Main Street Mentone. In terms of natural gas, NIPSCO owns and operates a gas line that connects to the community's east side.

### **Broadband**

According to BroadbandNow, a digital database that utilizes data from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and local service providers, there are 12 internet providers in Mentone, with 8 of those offering residential service. The majority of service within the town is gained through DSL or satellite providers, although commercial service is available through cable/fiber. Due to the way broadband data is reported, and collected at the FCC, some zip codes report having a higher number of providers and subscription plans available to local residents. While there are numerous providers, coverage varies depending on the specific provider. Broadband speeds are measured by upload and download speeds and are measured in Megabytes per second (Mbps). The average download speed within Mentone is 7.75 Mbps, which is 92.8% slower than Indiana's average. For reference, the Federal Communications Commission defines broadband as a minimum download speed of 25Mbps and upload speed of 3Mbps.

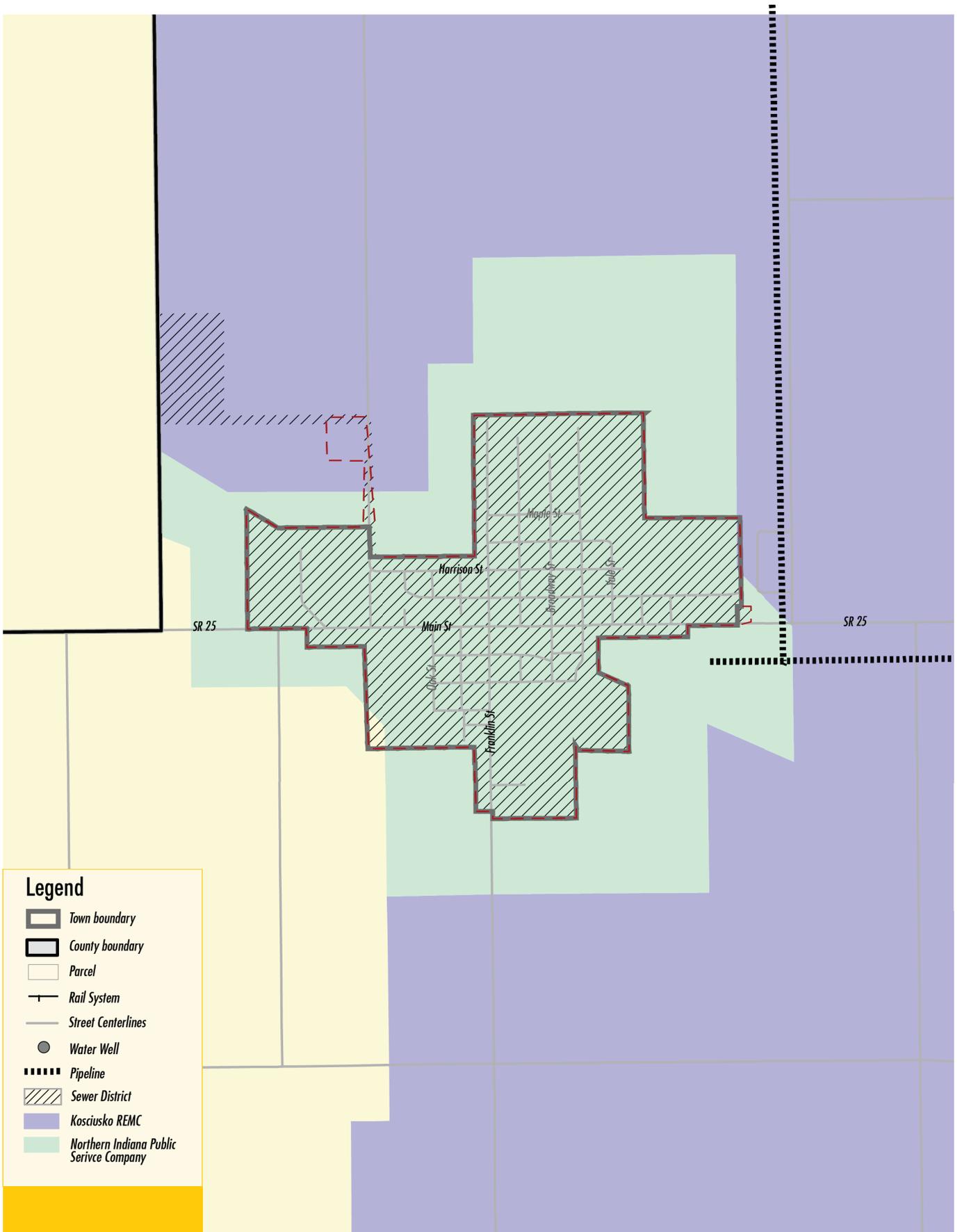
Rural Indiana Stats, an application managed by Purdue University and the Indiana Office of Community & Rural Affairs, offers an alternative view of local broadband statistics. The application, which aggregates FCC data at the Census tract level, reports that 17.7% of area residents do not have internet access, 6.3% have no computing device, and nearly 20.3% of residents use only a mobile device.

Because of the way data is aggregated and reported, both databases use geographic boundaries that include the Town of Mentone as well as unincorporated areas of the County in the statistics identified above.

### **Public Safety Systems**

Mentone is the home to a volunteer fire department which serves three separate townships. They recent built a new structure on the west end of Main Street to house all community emergency services. A town marshal oversees the public safety of Mentone and is supported by two accompanying officers. The current police vehicle fleet is adequate but could be upgraded in future years. A town marshal operates slightly different from a conventional sheriff's office, as a marshal's main duties are the enforcement of local and state laws or ordinances as well as code enforcements within their community.

Mentone has volunteer EMS members, with two vehicles at their disposal.



**Legend**

-  Town boundary
-  County boundary
-  Parcel
-  Rail System
-  Street Centerlines
-  Water Well
-  Pipeline
-  Sewer District
-  Kosciusko REMC
-  Northern Indiana Public Service Company

## MENTONE

# DESTINATIONS

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### ***Community Facilities and Support Services***

#### **Government Facilities**

Most of the governmental services for Mentone are housed in the recently updated building on the west end of Main Street. The town's post office and library are located on Main Street as well.

#### **Public Health Facilities**

Mentone has a general practice doctors' office on the east end of the community, giving the people the option of staying within town for basic healthcare needs. The community also has a dentist office near the downtown. More specialized medicine or hospital needs are located within Warsaw which is approximately 12 miles away.

#### **Schools and Learning Institutions**

Mentone Elementary is part of the Tippecanoe Valley School Corporation and is located on east side of the community. The school owns portions of the land to the east and has expressed interest in using the wetlands behind the property for educational and recreational purposes. Both the Tippecanoe Valley middle (grades 6-8) and senior high school (grades 9-12) are just south of Mentone along State Road 19.

#### **Child Care and Early Childhood Facilities**

Based on a search of INconnect, an online database of childcare or early childhood facilities, Mentone has two established early childhood programs but does not have any stand-alone childcare or early childhood facilities within the Town. The Mentone Kindergarten Readiness Center, and the Kosciusko County First Start, both of which are located at the Mentone Elementary School offer specific early childhood programs. Outside of these programs, parents are forced to take their children outside of the community for such longer term childcare needs. The nearest facilities lie in Warsaw, Bourbon or Rochester, all of which are approximately 12 miles away. INconnect allows any individual to search for care providers by a variety of criteria and provides listings for both licensed and unlicensed, centers, homes and ministry-based facilities.

#### **Grocery and Convenience Stores**

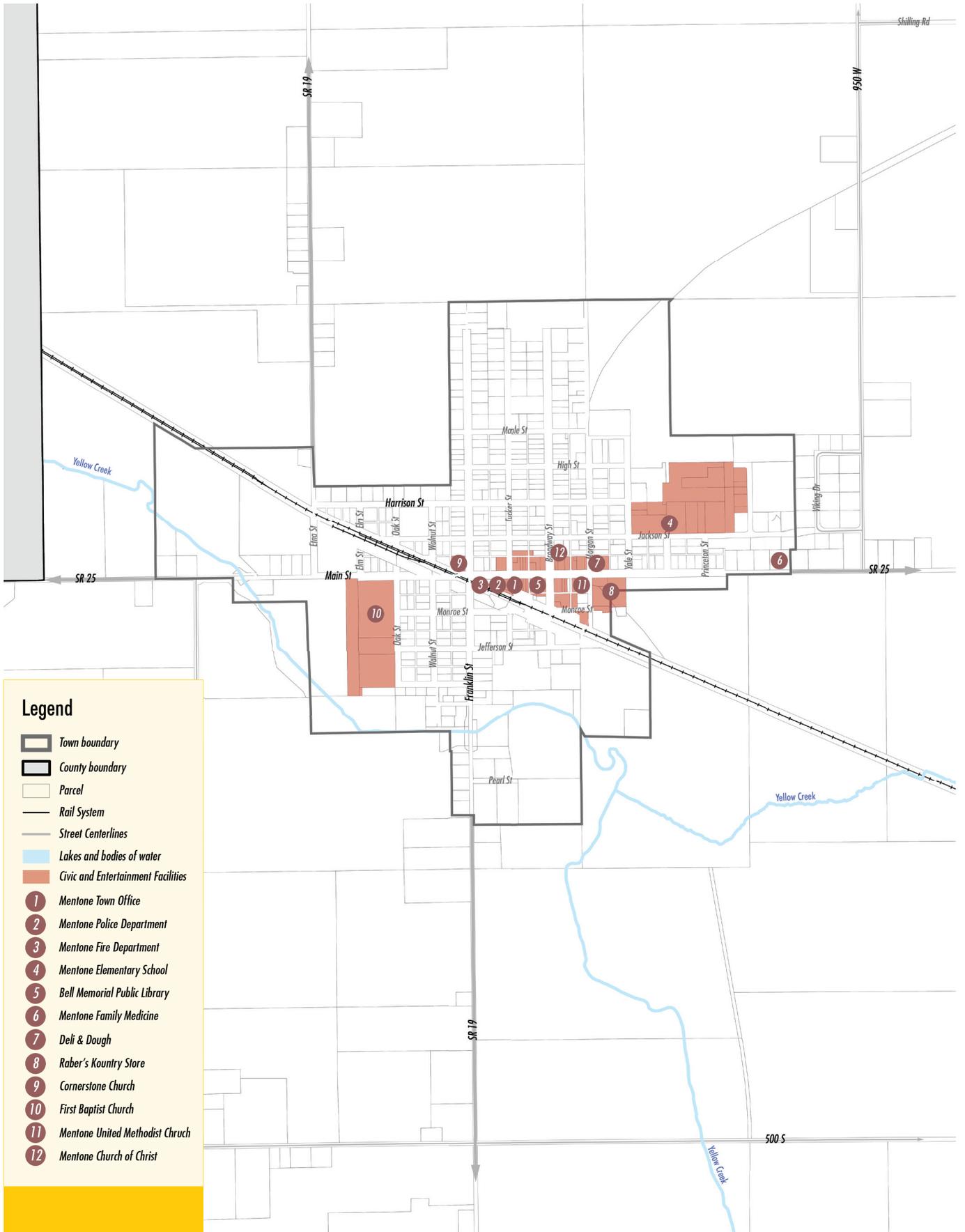
Mentone has two options residential grocery needs. Rabers Kountry Store, located at the intersection of Main Street and S Morgan Street offers discounted groceries but does include frozen foods, cheeses and fresh produce in addition to pantry staples. Residents can also shop at Dollar General which is located along SR 25 to the east of the Mentone boundary. The town is one of the few within the county to have a place to buy groceries and specifically fresh foods.

#### **Civic and Entertainment Facilities**

While Mentone lacks some of the larger entertainment options seen in other communities, the town does have a number of restaurants and bars that serve as daily entertainment options. The Town is also home to the Bell Aircraft Museum, which is a regional draw for those interested in aviation.

#### **Religious and Cultural Facilities**

There are four religious' institutions within Mentone.



**Legend**

- Town boundary
- County boundary
- Parcel
- Rail System
- Street Centerlines
- Lakes and bodies of water
- Civic and Entertainment Facilities
- 1 Mentone Town Office
- 2 Mentone Police Department
- 3 Mentone Fire Department
- 4 Mentone Elementary School
- 5 Bell Memorial Public Library
- 6 Mentone Family Medicine
- 7 Deli & Dough
- 8 Raber's Kountry Store
- 9 Cornerstone Church
- 10 First Baptist Church
- 11 Mentone United Methodist Church
- 12 Mentone Church of Christ

### ***Parks and recreation***

Mentone has a single, large park located on the south side of town just within town limits known as Mentzer Park. The town also has two recreational facilities, one for active recreation in the form of a sports complex and the other passive recreation in the form of an environmental park. Mentone has some natural water features of interest including Yellow Creek that bisects Mentzer Park, and wetland just north of Mentone Elementary School.

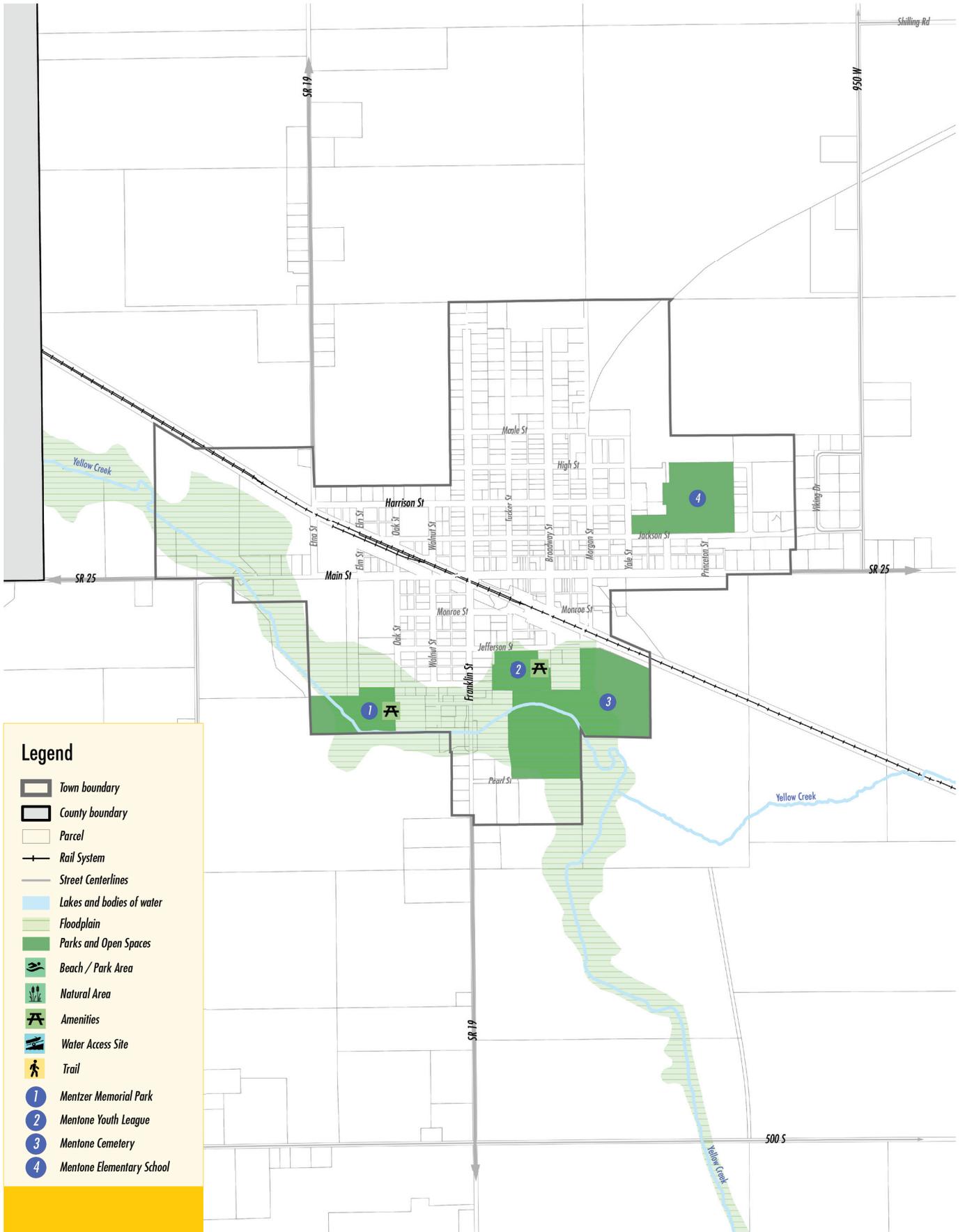
Mentzer Park covers nearly 7 acres of land with large, open lawn spaces with mature trees peppered across the interior and a mature, vegetated edge along the southern end. It has an entry off of West Washington Street and is surrounded by the Bell Aircraft museum to the north, residential properties to the north, east, and south, and farmland to the south and west. The site includes public amenities such as a playground, swing set, basketball court, and covered shelter with picnic tables as well as benches and water fountains. There are concerns with the need to properly maintain and make improvements to the park and its amenities as well as create connections to the park, from the surrounding neighborhoods and downtown, via improved sidewalk infrastructure.

The sports complex along West Jefferson is located between residential properties to the east and west with the southern boundary being defined by Yellow Creek. The site includes three ball fields: two standard size and the third at a smaller scale for children's use. The fields are accompanied by bleachers and team dug-outs with one field including a press box. The site includes several other ancillary structures as well as associated parking and a small area designated for play equipment.

Mentone Elementary School is working to develop a small, environmental park from existing greenfield directly adjacent to the school grounds. The plan is to create a habitat that reflects the natural environment of the area in support of local flora and fauna with a trail network for passive recreation that can be expanded upon over time. The area is surrounded by residential properties to the east and south, school grounds to the west, and wetland to the north. This wetland area covers approximately 11.5 acres of land and expands northerly outside of Mentone town limits.

### ***Lakes and waterways***

Yellow Creek is the primary waterway impacting the Town. The creek enters Mentzer park at the lower southwest corner and runs along the southern boundary for approximately 450 feet until it makes a turn, traveling another approximately 550 feet on a northwest diagonal through the space. This creek travels northwardly to the park from its Loon Lake source point, which is approximately 6.25 miles up creek. Upon exiting Mentzer Park, Yellow Creek traverses for another approximately 5.5 miles, connecting to Tippecanoe River in the neighboring Marshall County. The creek does have a mapped floodplain that covers the area around the Bell Aircraft Museum, Mentzer Park and the Mentone Cemetery. While some surrounding neighborhood properties are also included within the floodplain, the majority of the developed areas sit outside of the floodplain limits.



### Legend

- Town boundary
- County boundary
- Parcel
- Rail System
- Street Centerlines
- Lakes and bodies of water
- Floodplain
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Beach / Park Area
- Natural Area
- Amenities
- Water Access Site
- Trail
- 1 Mentzer Memorial Park
- 2 Mentone Youth League
- 3 Mentone Cemetery
- 4 Mentone Elementary School

## MENTONE

**KEY FINDINGS**

*The key findings of the Mentone community condition assessment have been organized into two key categories: Strengths/ Opportunities and Weaknesses/ Threats. Strengths and opportunities are internal, positive attributes of your department and/or system. These are things that are within your control. Opportunities are external factors in your environment that are likely to contribute to your success. Conversely, weaknesses and threats are negative factors that detract from your strengths. These are things that you might need to improve on to be competitive. Threats are external factors that you have no control over. You may want to consider putting in place contingency plans for dealing with them as/ if they occur.*

**Strengths and Opportunities:**

- Mentone has seen a large population increase in the last decade and is expected to continue that rapid growth into the future.
- Mentone Elementary is a major anchor for the Community and helps draw in new residents looking for quality schooling away from a larger city.
- The existing sidewalk infrastructure within the Town can be improved and expanded to provide alternative transportation routes to local residents.
- There is a strong sense of community through Mentone which can be seen in the seasonal events offered.
- The town has recently constructed a new community building which houses town offices and emergency services, this was paid for entirely by the community and money from a local estate.
- There are multiple properties of historic significance in the community.
- The housing market in Mentone is strong, with very few current residential properties for sale.
- Mentone does have housing options for individuals over the age of 55. The Garden Courts Apartments for seniors is always at capacity with a wait list. It is available for residents 55 and older and offers 25 apartment units. There is a demand for additional senior housing in the area.
- There is a strong Amish population nearby that comes regularly to Mentone for goods and services. Accommodations for buggy traffic need to be considered with any physical enhancement program for the streets, parking and sidewalks.

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### ***Weaknesses and Threats:***

- The town is landlocked, as agriculture is inhibiting the community from creating new housing developments.
- There are almost no vacancies along the town's commercial corridor, although there is little space for new commercial development unless it is on the east side of town.
- Mentone does not have a formal Main Street organization which could make improvements to their downtown core difficult to implement.
- The Town has portions of roadways that have been categorized as 'Fair' condition per the PASER rating system. Improvements and maintenance will be needed.
- Sidewalk infrastructure is present but portions of the system are in varying conditions. Improvements may be needed to repair existing segments.
- The lack of residential amenities including child care and early childhood education facilities negatively impacts the Town's ability to draw future residents.
- There is a need for additional community event space. The Mentone Youth League and Bell Library offer limited availability to the public.
- Local broadband services fall far below the national baseline of 25 Mbps download and 3Mbps upload. Additionally, most services are based off wireless and satellite technologies which are unreliable.
- Local parks do need improvements including general maintenance and playground equipment upgrades.

