

Focus Group 1
March 23, 2026

Meeting Summary

The project team held the first Focus Group Meeting for the Horizon 2035 Miami County Comprehensive Plan on March 23, 2026 virtually. The meeting was held from 12pm to 1pm. The purpose of the meeting was to gather insight from key members of the community to get a variety of perspectives on different topics within Miami County.

Project Team –

- Sam Wiser (TSW)
- Daniel Blondet (TSW)
- Deborah Luzier (Code Crafters)

Attendees –

- Corey Roser (Miami County – Planning Department)
- Jill Miles (Miami County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA) & Business Owner)
- Corinne Becknell (Northern Indiana Community Foundation)

Overview

The project team opened with introductions. Everyone went through and introduced themselves. The project team explained where the project is in the planning process. The project is currently in the existing conditions phase. During the meeting, key questions were asked to gather insight about the county.

Opening Questions

1. What are reasons people come to Miami County?
 - Moved away and came back because of the value of the small towns, money goes further, and better quality of life.
 - Does not live in the county, but visits frequently. It is a very caring community. People in the county are welcoming and have a lot of pride in the county. The county has an amazing history and is incorporating it into their life.
2. What is the identity of Miami County and what can be improved upon?
 - There are a lot of new things for families to do. There is a Circus heritage and family friendly identity.



- There are a lot of new things. There is a new nuclear medicine facility being built that will bring employment to the county. The whole riverfront has been updated, and there is a new YMCA.
- There is a lot of recreation. The trail connects to Rochester and Kokomo, reservoir, and four golf courses. As well as murals and alleys.
- The large runway in Grissom Is an asset.
- Art plays a prominent role in Miami county. There are a lot of artistic people and galleries. There is also live music and a jazz club.
- The Cole Porter festival is a large part of the county culture and heritage.
- The agricultural heritage is pivotal, but clashes with the needs of the county.
- The county has a reputation of being safe and nice.

Topic Focused Questions

3. What needs are not being met? Are there services / activities that you have to travel outside of the county for? If so, which ones?
 - Need for more housing.
 - Need better public utilities. Well and sceptic is too costly.
 - Childcare is a need. The YMCA childcare is going to be expanded.
 - Need access to broadband
 - Access to land for development
4. Are the previously completed studies and initiatives still active and should they be incorporated into the plan?
 - There is an Economic Development Strategy that is currently being completed to replace the prior 2006 study.
 - The Boomerang sisterhood is still active
 - The Economic Development Authority is working with the Lilly endowment. They were invited to submit an application for community support funding for \$750,000. This would provide access to library cards.
 - There is a disconnect between the agricultural community and supporting local library. There is no county wide library system.
 - The Economic Development Authority is providing \$300,000 over the course of three years to provide access to the Peru Municipal Library. Converse also has a public library and computer services will be expanded.
5. Are there other organizations or groups that could be doing more with assistance?
 - Northern Miami Co, Denver, is updating their park and playground equipment
 - Nickel Plate trail needs restrooms.
 - Make sure the northern and southern parts of the county are not forgotten.



6. Is there a desire to have a more formalized Nickel Plate trail?
 - Improvements to the trail would be great.
 - It takes money to maintain and improve the trail.
 - It needs restrooms.
 - There is opportunity for small businesses to pop up along the trail.
7. What is the future of the US 31 corridor?
 - It needs to be finished like it is in other counties. It is very dangerous. Intersections need to be intersections and not J turns.
 - I agree. It is dangerous.
8. If development were to happen, where should it happen?
 - We need to consider if public sewer / water is available
 - There are a lot of places to put housing and studies that have been done.
 - Land owners have turned down offers in the past to sell.
 - Southern Miami County is prime for development, due to proximity to Indianapolis suburbs.

Closing Questions

9. Based on the conversation, what are the top two priorities that need to be addressed in the upcoming years?
 - Expansion of the YMCA.
 - Childcare is very important. Families really need childcare.
 - Housing at the local and county level.
 - School funding.

Closing

The project team shared the project website. The project timeline was highlighted. Currently, the project is at the end of the first phase, Existing Conditions & Visioning. The information gathered from the focus group meeting, stakeholder meetings, and public meetings will be used to create goals and strategies for the plan in the next phases. The public survey was shared and the focus group members were encouraged to share it and participate in it. Participants were thanked for their time and the meeting ended.

