



2026 STARKE COUNTY SAFETY ACTION PLAN

Table of Contents

- Safety Action Plan Overview4**
 - County at a Glance..... 5
 - County by the Numbers 6
- Current State of Safety8**
 - Safety Overview8
 - Crash Density By Crash Severity9
- High Injury Network..... 10**
 - Top 10 HIN Segments..... 10
 - Top 10 HIN Intersections..... 10
 - High Injury Network Map 11
- Road Safety Audit 12**
 - US-35 (Heaton Street)12
- Starke County Emphasis Areas..... 14**
 - Emphasis Area Overview.....14
 - Emphasis Areas14
 - Emphasis Areas Crash Map15
- Recommendations 16**
 - Emphasis Area Recommendations 16
 - Countermeasure Recommendations.....17
 - Capital Project Recommendations..... 18

SAFETY ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW



The Starke County Safety Action Plan is a county-specific supplement to the KIRPC Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. It is designed to help translate regional safety goals into clear, locally relevant priorities that reflect Starke County's rural and urban roadway network and travel patterns.

Where should Starke County focus to reduce fatal and severe injury crashes?

Starke County's transportation system is defined by high-speed rural corridors, state and U.S. Highways supporting regional travel, and small communities where local activity is concentrated along main streets and at key intersections. While overall crash volumes are relatively low, higher operating speeds on rural roadways, limited pedestrian infrastructure, and long distances to trauma care increase the likelihood that crashes result in fatal or severe injuries. Communities such as Knox, Hamlet, and North Judson experience elevated safety risks where regional traffic moves through town centers, creating conflicts at intersections, near schools, and along corridors with limited separation between vehicles and vulnerable road users.

This plan is intended to support county-level decision-making by identifying priority corridors and community locations where safety investments can have the greatest impact in Starke County. It provides a practical framework for targeting strategies that address both rural roadway departure risks and town-center safety needs, coordinating with state and regional partners, and strengthening future funding applications focused on reducing fatal and severe injury crashes.

How to **USE THIS PLAN**

This plan is designed to be used, not archived. Starke County should reference it to:

- 1 Focus safety efforts where they matter most**
Use the High Injury Network and emphasis areas to identify roadway segments, intersections, and communities where safety improvements are most likely to reduce fatal and severe injury crashes.
- 2 Guide project planning and prioritization**
Apply the plan's findings when evaluating capital projects, maintenance activities, and operational improvements, especially when resources are limited.
- 3 Support coordination and funding**
Reference this plan when working with INDOT, KIRPC, municipalities, and emergency response partners, and when preparing state or federal grant applications.
- 4 Select context-appropriate solutions**
Use the emphasis areas and prioritization framework to match the scale of safety improvements to Starke County's rural roadway conditions and needs.



Image Source: Google Maps

County at a Glance

Starke County is in the northeast corner of the KIRPC region. The county seat is Knox where Northwest Health – Starke Hospital is located. Starke County has 7 public schools. Major north-south roads are US 35 and US 421 and major east-west roads are US 30 and IN 14 (**Figure 1**).

On average, 143,000 daily trips occur on roadways within Starke County. Almost 4 in 5 residents (78 percent) are employed outside the county.



7

Number of Public Schools



1

Number of Hospitals

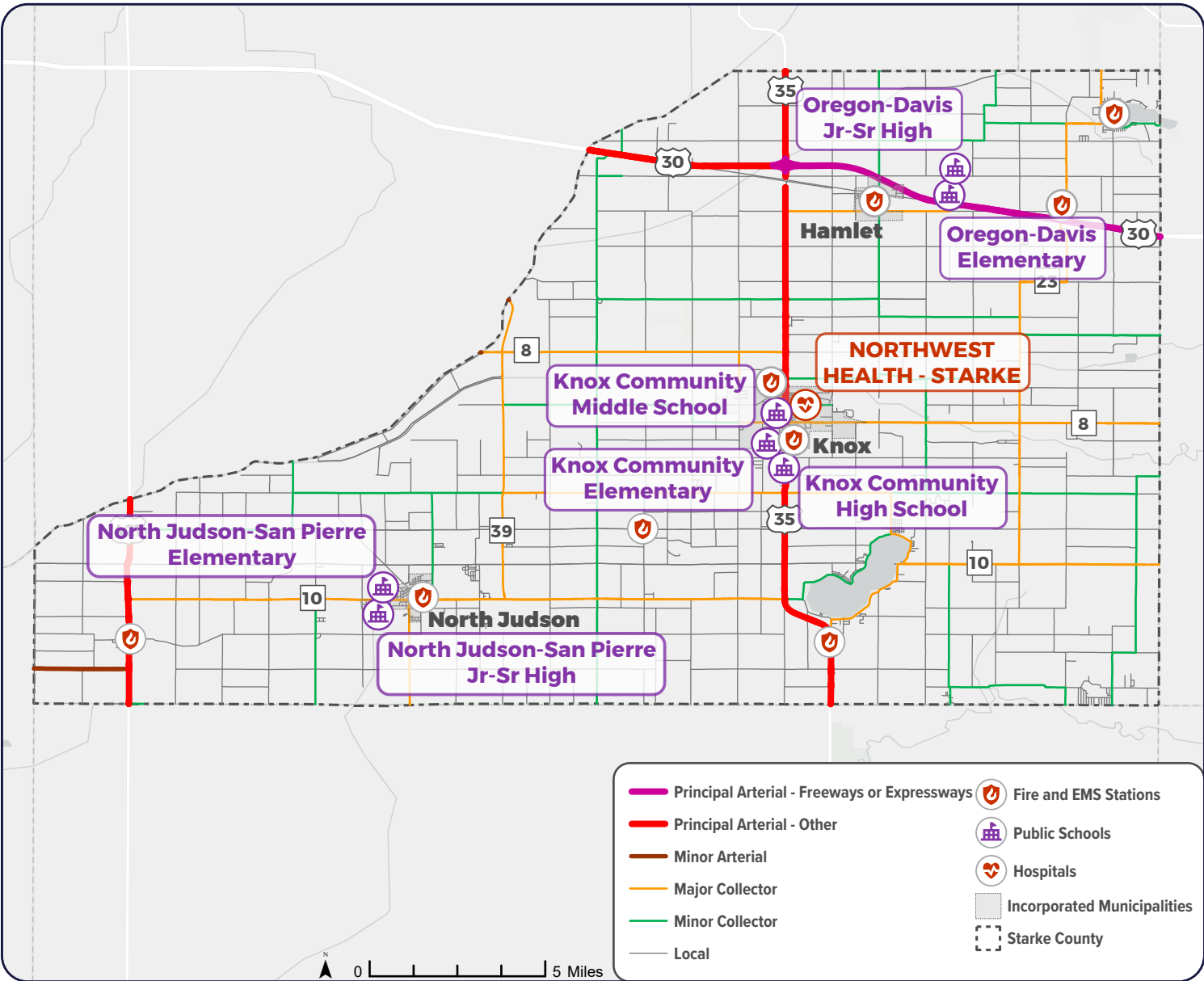


Figure 1. Starke County Plan Study Area

Starke County's travel patterns focus on key regional corridors such as US 35, US 30, and State Route 10, which connect the county's communities including Knox, Hamlet, and North Judson. Residents regularly travel along these routes for work, school, and services, with both local and through-traffic sharing the same roadway network.

In addition to internal travel, many commuters travel to nearby employment centers such as Plymouth, Valparaiso, South Bend, and Indianapolis **(Figure 2) (Table 2)**. These patterns reflect Starke County's position within northern Indiana's regional economy and highlight how its roadways serve as critical links between small towns and larger job markets.



Image Source: Google Maps

County by the Numbers

Starke County **COMMUNITY PROFILE** In 2024



23,463
TOTAL POPULATION
(2024)¹



3,992
TOTAL JOBS
(2024)²



309.1
TOTAL AREA
(Square Miles)



Image Source: Google Maps

Table 1. Starke County Municipalities

	Starke County Municipalities
1	Hamlet
2	Knox
3	North Judson

Starke County **ROADWAY NETWORK**



1,934
TOTAL ROADWAY
(Miles)



336.5
TOTAL URBAN ROADWAY
(Miles)



1,597.5
TOTAL RURAL ROADWAY
(Miles)

Source: ¹ U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables

² U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables

Starke County **COMMUTER TRENDS** In 2024 ¹

Table 2. Top 5 Commuting Destinations

Rank	Commuting Destinations	% Of County Workforce
1	Knox, IN	12.7%
2	Plymouth, IN	7.6%
3	Valparaiso, IN	4.5%
4	South Bend, IN	3.3%
5	Indianapolis, IN	3.2%
	All Other Locations	68.7%

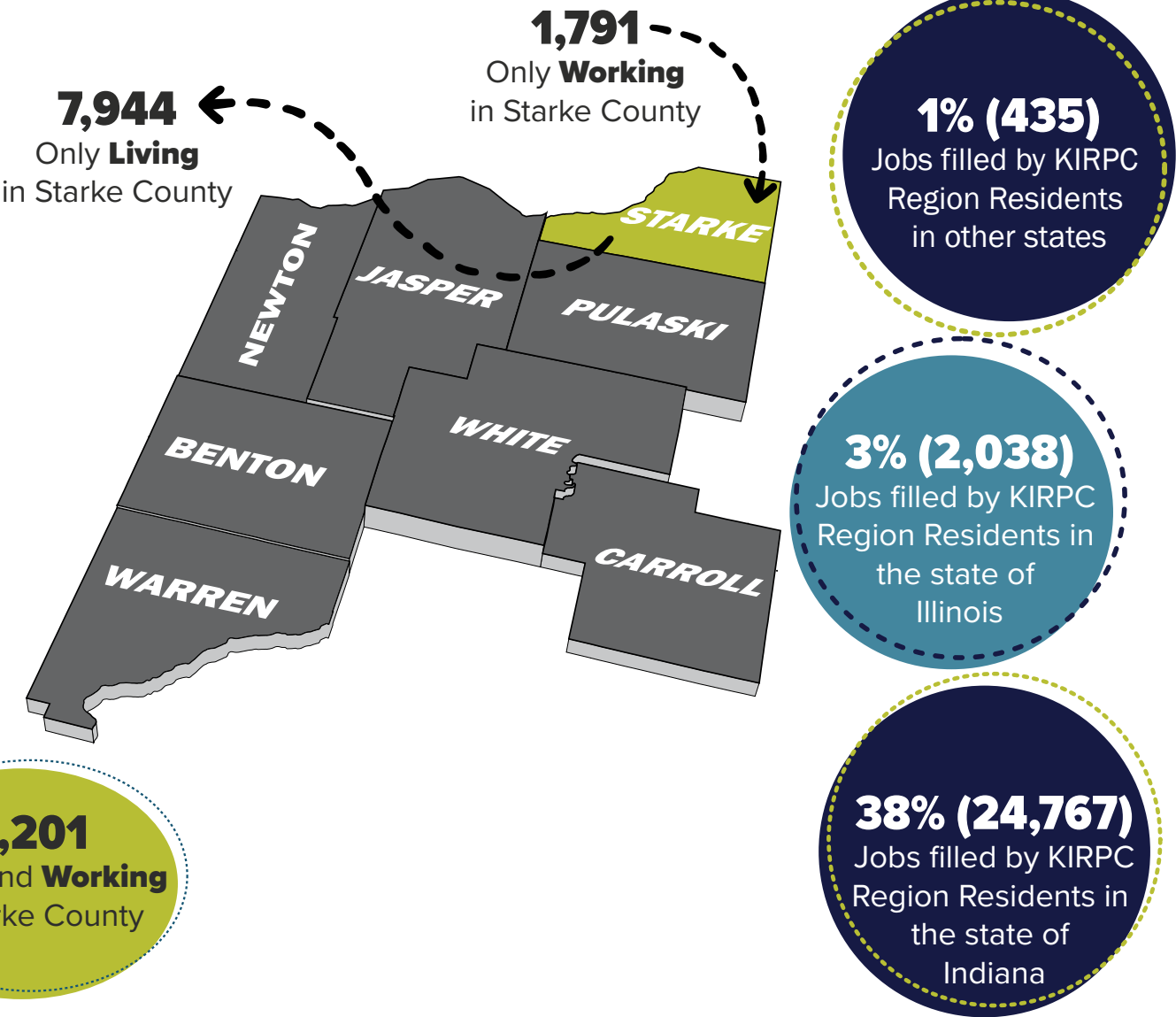


Figure 2. Starke County Travel Patterns

Source: ¹U.S Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables

CURRENT STATE OF SAFETY

Safety Overview

Crash safety analysis examined all crashes in Starke County that resulted in an injury or fatality from 2015 to 2023. In that nine-year period, of all crashes 5% involved fatalities, 61% resulted in incapacitating injuries, 25% were non-incapacitating injuries, and 9% were classified as possible injuries (Figure 3).

Rate of crash fatality measures the likelihood any crash that occurs results in a fatality. Starke County's rate is 1.3 fatalities per 10,000 crashes, the same as the state average (1.3) (Table 4). This combined with a high percentage of incapacitating injury crashes emphasizes the urgency to address traffic safety.

An analysis of state crash data shows that 66% of all reported crashes that result in a person being injured or killed occur on just 14% of Starke County's roads. The High Injury Network (HIN) identifies roadway segments and intersection locations with the highest concentrations of severe crashes. The HIN should be prioritized when considering crash countermeasures.



Table 4. Crash Comparison

Jurisdiction	Crash Fatality Rate (Per 10k Crashes)
Starke County	1.3
KIRPC Region	2.5
Indiana	1.3

Understanding Crash Severity

For the purposes of this report, Crash severity can be identified as:

- K Fatal Injury** Any injury that results in death within a 30 day period after the crash occurred.
- A Incapacitating Injury** Any non-fatal injury that prevents the injured person from walking, driving or normally continuing the activities the person was capable of performing before the injury occurred. Hospitalization is usually required.
- B Non Incapacitating Injury** Any injury, other than a fatal or incapacitating injury, which is evident to the officer at the scene of the crash and may require medical treatment. Although, hospitalization is usually not required.
- C Possible Injury** Any injury reported or claimed which is not visible.

Crash Severity By the numbers

	Angle	Backing	Head On	Non Collision	Object/ Animal	Ran Off Road	Rear End	Side Swipe	Other
K	8	0	3	0	1	14	1	0	1
A	95	1	26	1	13	123	45	17	26
B	32	1	2	2	18	46	24	5	13
C	12	0	3	2	3	12	8	7	2

Table 3. Crash Type Totals by Severity

Crash Severity Heatmap

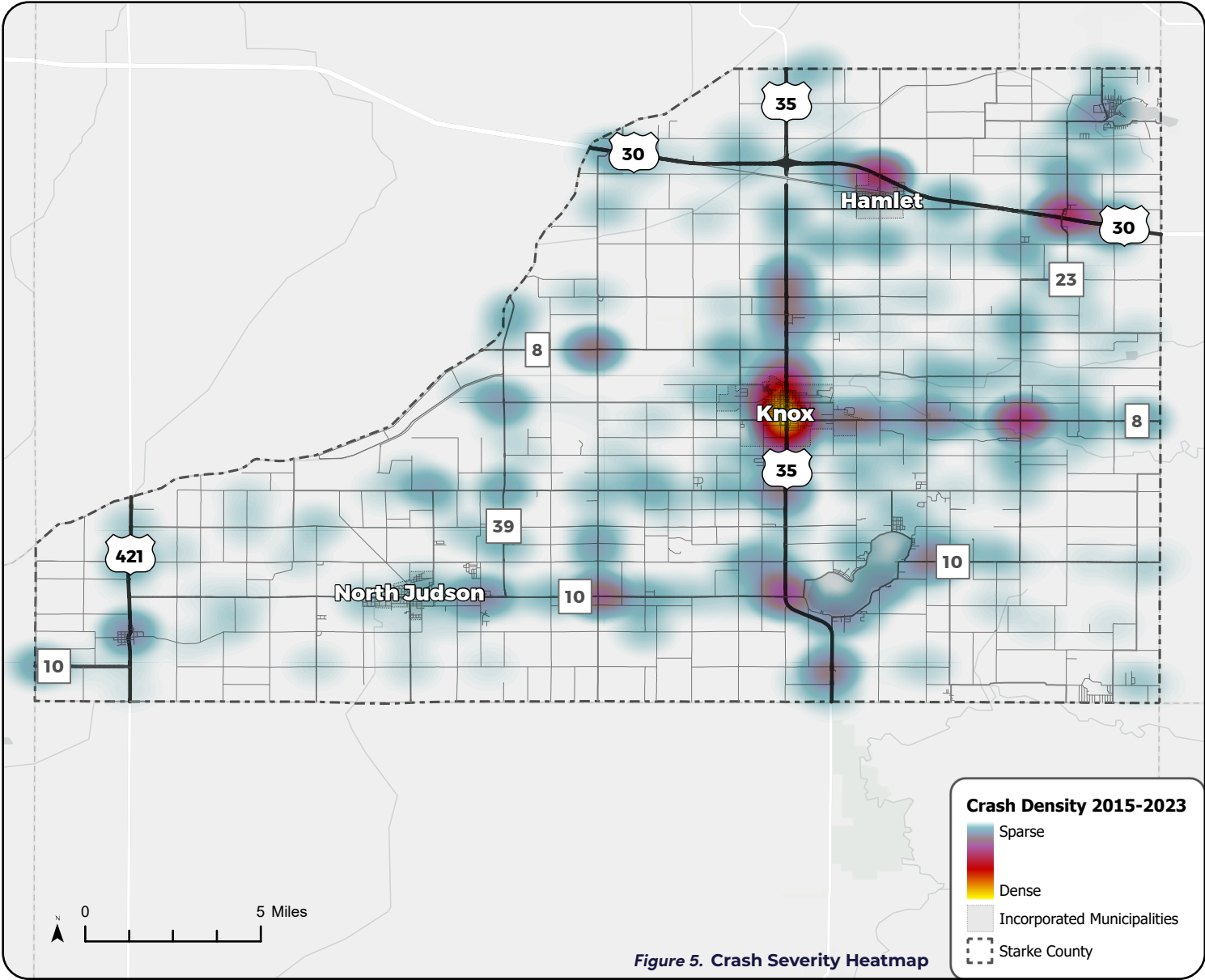


Figure 4. Crash Types Resulting in Death or Severe Injury (%)

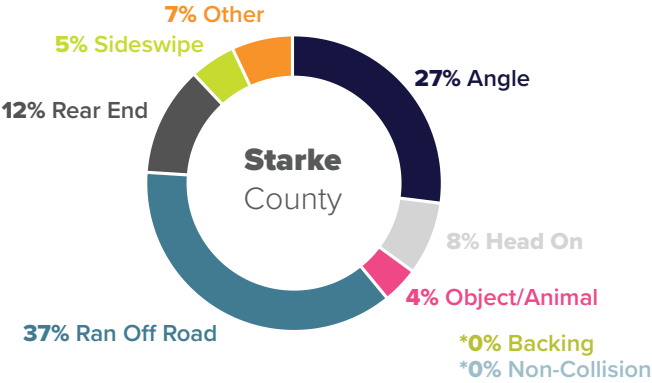
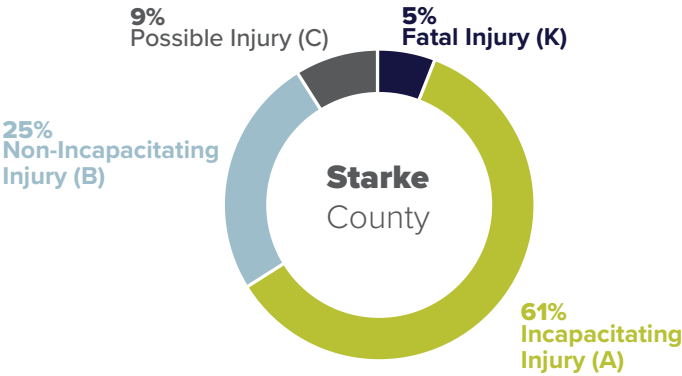


Figure 3. Crash Severity (%)



HIGH INJURY NETWORK

A High Injury Network is a selection of the roadways in an area with the highest incidences of fatal and severe injury crashes (**Figure 6**). To produce this high injury network, fatal and severe injury crashes from 2015 to 2023 were used. Intersection crashes were assigned to be half weight to identify the top 10 HIN Segments (**Table 5**) and Intersections (**Table 6**).

Crashes were averaged over a distance of 2,600 feet. Only corridors over a half mile were considered. HIN segments had a minimum length of 1,500 feet. Segments that were closer than 900 feet together were merged.

Each county has a different threshold of fatal and severe injury crashes, so that even if a county has fewer crashes, it still identify a robust set of priority corridors for targeted safety improvements.

Top 10 HIN Segments

Rank	Primary Roadway	Segment Start	Segment End
1	Heaton St	U.S. 35	Carlson Dr
2	CR 600 (E)	U.S. 30	Starke St
3	Range Rd	CR 625 (S)	CR 250 (S)
4	CR 1100 (E)	U.S. 30	U.S. 30
5	Culver Rd	Kloeckner Dr	CR 500 (E)
6	Main St	Water St	Veterans Pkwy
7	CR 700 (E)	SR 8	SR 8
8	CR 25 N	SR 23	SR 23
9	CR 800 (S)	U.S. 35	U.S. 35
10	CR 200 (S)	W. Country Ln	U.S. 35

See map on next page with all HIN segment locations.

Table 5. Top 10 High Crash Segments

Top 10 HIN Intersections

Rank	Primary Roadway	Secondary Roadway
1	CR 600 (E)	CR 600 (N)
2	SR 8	SR 23
3	CR 600 (S)	SR 10
4	Heaton St	Carlson Dr
5	CR 1200 (E)	SR 8
6	Heaton St	Clabaugh Dr
7	CR 50 (S)	SR 39
8	Toto Rd	SR 39
9	CR 500 (S)	CR 350 (E)
10	CR 210	SR 10

See map on next page with corresponding numbers labeled.

Table 6. Top 10 High Crash Intersections

HIN Facts

14% OF ALL ROADS IN THE COUNTY ARE IN THE HIN



56% OF ALL CRASHES OCCUR ON HIN ROADWAYS

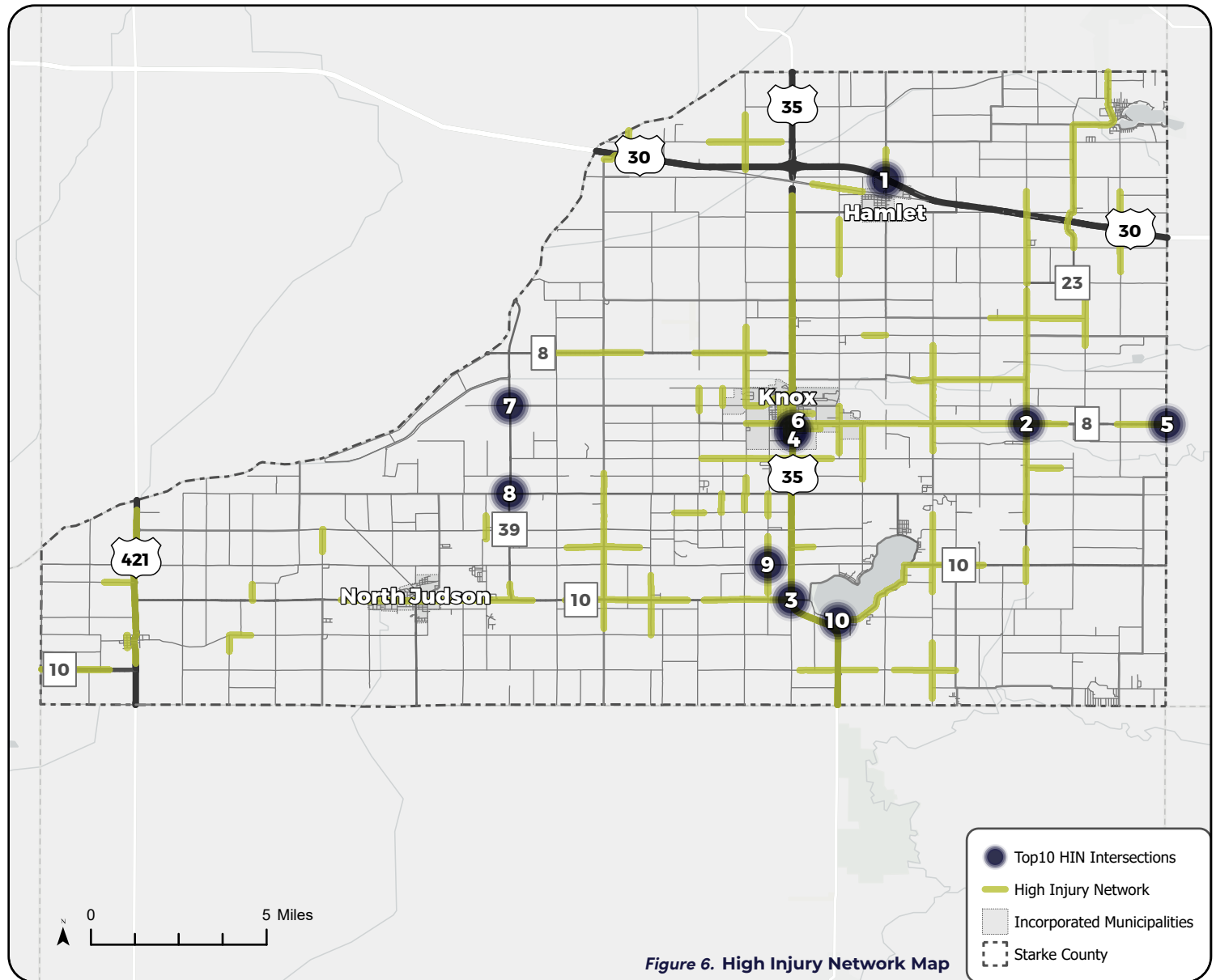


940
TOTAL COUNTY ROAD
(CENTERLINE MILES)

124.5
TOTAL HIN COUNTY ROADS
(CENTERLINE MILES)

142
TOTAL HIN INTERSECTIONS

High Injury Network Map



Check the **REGIONAL PLAN** to see the HIN for the rest of the **KIRPC REGION!**

ROAD SAFETY AUDIT



CORRIDOR OVERVIEW

HEATON STREET:

Between Yellow River to CR 150

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

1.5 Miles

ADJACENT KIRPC COUNTIES:

Jasper Co., Pulaski Co.



ROADWAY DESIGN

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION:

Principal Arterial (urban)

ROADWAY CHARACTERISTICS:

Wide lanes (12 ft.) with curbs and sidewalks

NUMBER OF LANES:

4-lanes, no median, no dedicated turn lanes (except Culver Rd)

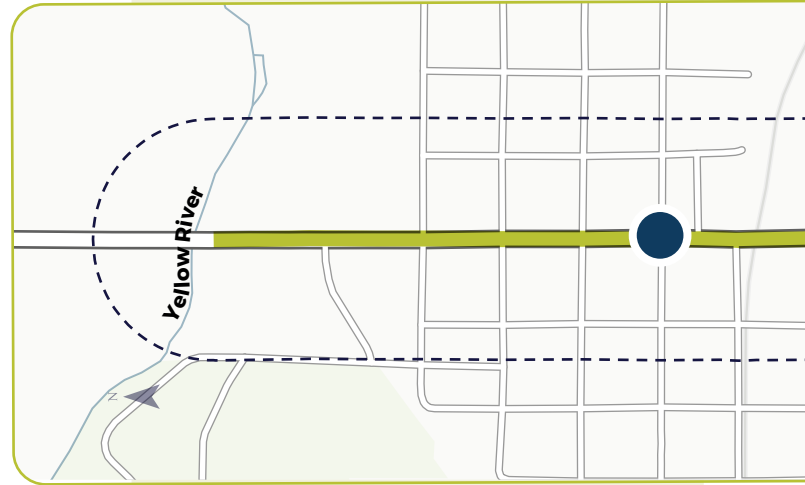
POSTED SPEED LIMIT:

35 mph

TRAFFIC VOLUME:

6,426 - 9,947 AADT (2024)

US-35 (HEATON STREET)



LEGEND:

- Priority Intersections
- Priority Segments
- Corridor Segment
- - - Study Area



CRASHES BETWEEN 2015 AND 2023

41

Injury
Crashes

1

Fatal
Crashes

22

Severe Injury
Crashes

TOP FACTOR



41%

Failure to Yield

TOP CRASH TYPE



27%

Right Angle

Figure 7. Crash Percent by Primary Factor

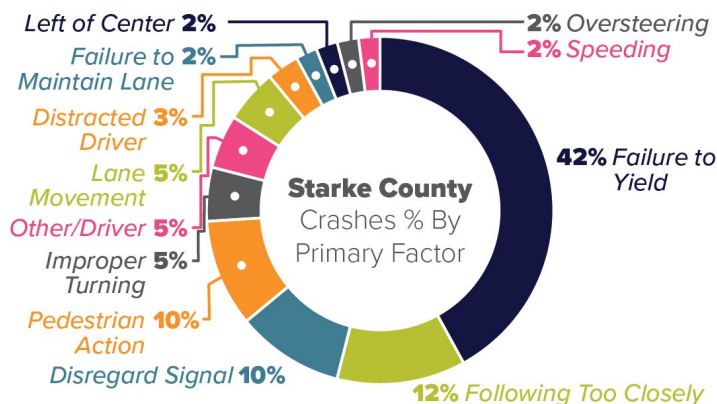
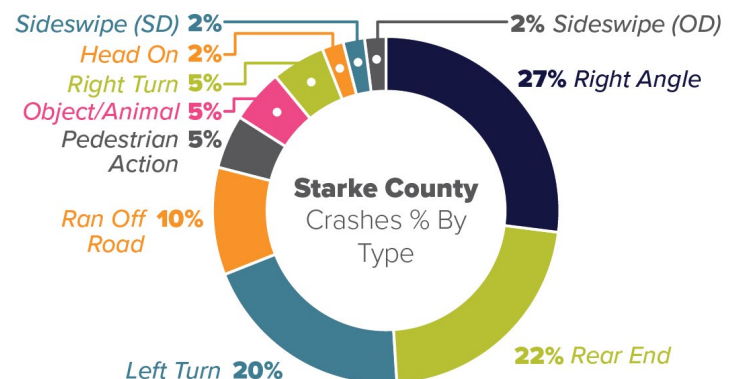


Figure 8. Crash Percent by Type



In Fall 2025, KIRPC launched a series of Road Safety Audits across the region, focusing attention at the highest priority location in each county. The following is a summary of the corridor selected for this county along with a set of short-term, mid-term, and long term recommendations for improving safety.

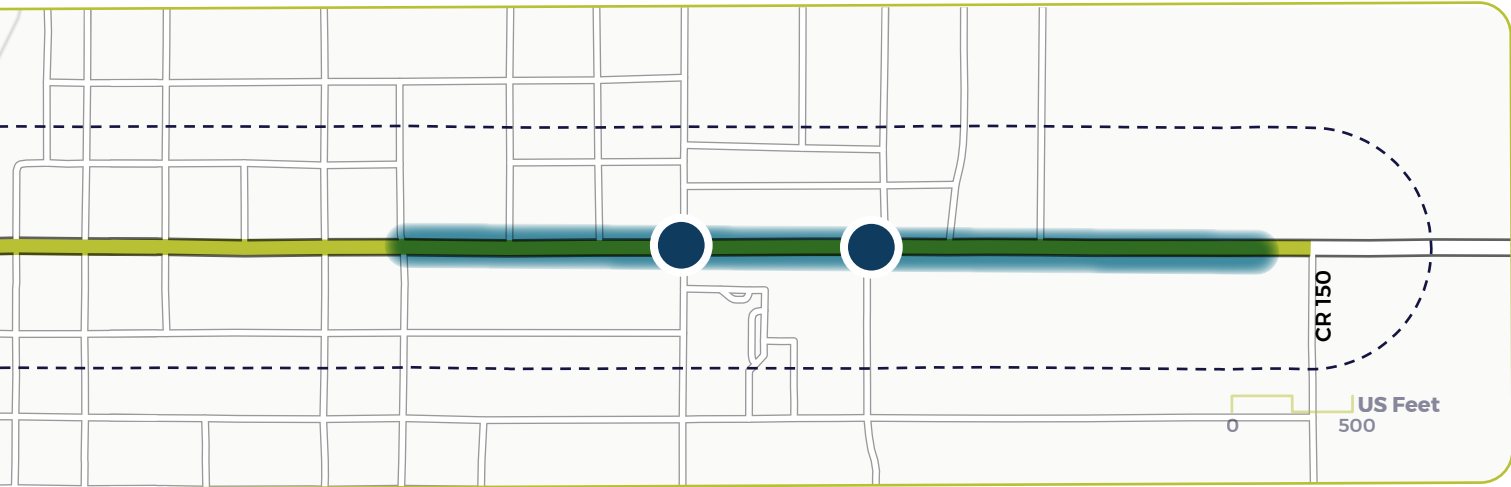


Figure 9. Road Safety Audit Study Area

COUNTERMEASURES recommended:

SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS	
Increase police enforcement on speeding	Review/update yellow and red clearance times
Add additional “Speed Limit” signs	Add overhead “School Crossing” signage (Clabaugh Dr)
Refresh pavement markings	Reduce exit lanes from driveways to one lane
Short-Term Improvements Total Cost: \$35,000 - \$55,000	
MID-TERM IMPROVEMENTS	
Install speed radar feedback signs	Install smart detection for red-light runners
Add backplates to signal heads	Review/update signal timings to increase pedestrian crossing time (Clabaugh Dr)
Add left-turn arrow signal heads	Add leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs) (Clabaugh Dr)
Mid-Term Improvements Total Cost: \$275,000 - \$475,000	
LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS	
4-to-3 lane conversion (road diet)	Access restrictions along the corridor
Add offset left-turn lanes	Convert signalized intersections to roundabouts
Long-Term Improvements Total Cost: \$11,350,000 - \$12,350,000	

Table 7. Countermeasures Recommended

STARKE COUNTY EMPHASIS AREAS

EMPHASIS AREA OVERVIEW

As part of the KIRPC Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP), six emphasis areas were identified to address the most critical roadway safety challenges across the eight-county region: Benton, Carroll, Jasper, Newton, Pulaski, Starke, Warren, and White Counties.

These emphasis areas were selected through a comprehensive analysis of regional crash data and stakeholder input. These areas reflect the most pressing roadway safety concerns across the region and serve as the foundation for identifying appropriate countermeasures.

By examining the types and patterns of crashes associated with each emphasis area (**Figure 10**), the plan ensures that recommended interventions are both targeted and evidence-based. This approach supports the overarching goal of reducing severe injuries and fatalities.

Crashes By Emphasis Areas:



195 RUN-OFF-ROAD
Crashes



**138 EMS RESPONSE
HOSPITALIZATION**
Crashes



**18 INTERSECTION
KSI RELATED
CRASHES**



50 HIN SEGMENT
Crashes
Near Schools

STARKE COUNTY EMPHASIS AREAS



RURAL RUN-OFF-ROAD CRASHES

Run-off-road crashes involve a vehicle departing the roadway. Typically, a single vehicle collides with fixed objects or terrain beside the road. Of all crash types, run-off-road crashes are the most common in Starke County, accounting for 37 percent of all injury crash types. These crash types result in the most fatal and severe injury crashes at 66 percent of the time.

Majority of run-off-road crashes occur in rural areas. Roadways containing the most concentration of rural run-off-road crashes include US Routes 30 and 35 and Indiana SR 8. Run-off-road crashes can be caused by unsafe roadway geometry, speed, distracted driving, vehicle defects, and swerving to avoid objects in the road.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE / POST-CRASH CARE

Post crash care is a component in the safe system approach, a holistic method for strategies to reduce traffic fatalities and injuries. Post crash care involves the handling of crashes after they have occurred. The effectiveness of fire, police, and EMS personnel at crash scenes to treat patients involved could make the difference between life and death in severe situations.

Starke County has Northwest Health – Starke Hospital in Knox, but the facility cannot handle major traumatic incidents. The county has strong coverage by 10 fire and EMS stations. However, areas in the northwest part of the county are over five miles away from the nearest fire or EMS station. These areas had 23 crashes with injuries or fatalities from 2015-2023.

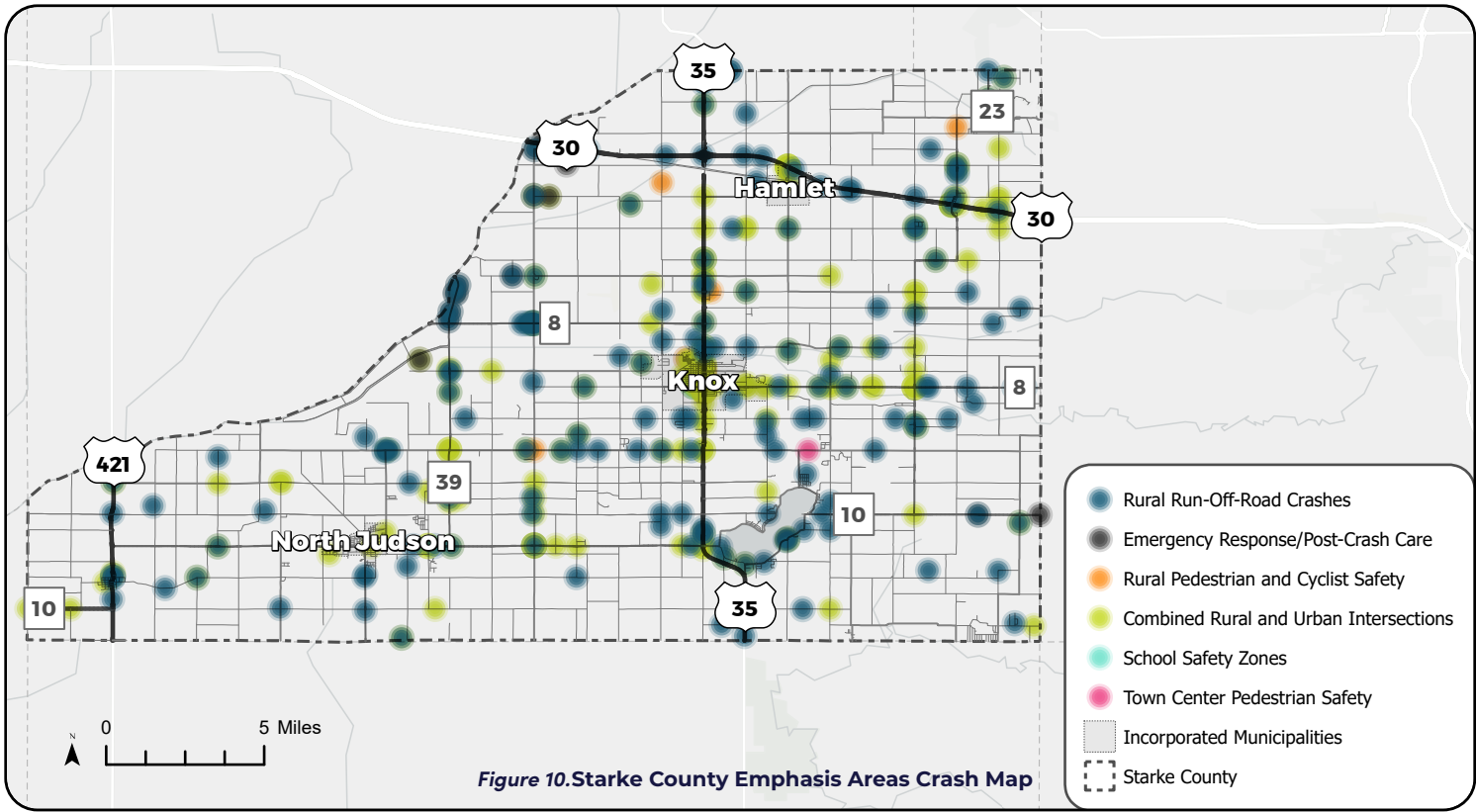


RURAL PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST SAFETY

In Starke County, there were four injury crashes involving a pedestrian or cyclist on rural roadways from 2015-2023. These crashes were mostly severe and 3 caused incapacitating injuries. The roads where these take place are often state and county roads with higher operating speeds, limited lighting, and no sidewalks or designated crossing facilities.

Common contributing factors included pedestrian actions, such as walking along or crossing high-speed roads, driver failure to yield, and distraction. Several crashes happened at night or in low-light conditions, where visibility was poor and roadway design offered little margin of safety for non-motorized users.

STARKE COUNTY EMPHASIS AREAS CRASH MAP



COMBINED RURAL AND URBAN INTERSECTIONS

In Starke County, 205 injury crashes occurred at intersections accounting for 36 percent of all injury crashes in the county. Intersections are a particular area of concern because of the high number of potential conflicts that can occur between vehicles.

Rural intersections often present unique risks, such as higher travel speeds, limited sight distances, and fewer traffic control devices, while urban intersections typically see greater pedestrian and cyclist activity alongside higher traffic volumes. Intersections are a smaller location compared to long road segments and can be targeted for specific interventions.



SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY

School zones have an elevated risk of crashes involving vulnerable road users (VRUs). From 2015–2023, there were 13 injury crashes within 1,000 feet from public school zones with one incapacitating crash involving a pedestrian. The most common street for crashes was West Culver Road near Knox Community Elementary and Middle Schools.

Contributing factors for crashes in school zones include speeding, distracted driving, improper turning, and failure to yield right-of-way. Challenges include high-speed arterial roads near schools, low-density rural land use, insufficient pedestrian infrastructure, traffic congestion during drop-off/pick-up times, and inadequate lighting during early morning hours.



TOWN CENTER PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Town centers in Starke County, such as Knox and Hamlet, serve as community hubs concentrating schools, shops, services, and civic spaces within walkable distances. From 2015–2023, eight vulnerable road user crashes occurred in these town centers, resulting in injuries or fatalities.

Contributing factors for pedestrian crashes is the failure of vehicles to yield to pedestrian right of way, underscoring the need for improved driver awareness and pedestrian-priority infrastructure. Notably, the majority of crashes occurred in clear, dry, daylight conditions, indicating that environmental factors were not the primary cause and reinforcing the role of behavioral and design-related issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Emphasis Area Recommendations



Rural Run-Off-Road Crashes

- 1 Conduct RSAs at sites where multiple rural run-off-road crashes have occurred.
- 2 Consider adding edge lines or widening the shoulder where applicable.
- 3 Advocate to INDOT on behalf of KIRPC in support of safety improvements on rural roads under state control



Emergency Response / Post-Crash Care

- 1 Convene a safety steering committee that includes representatives from the EMS community.
- 2 Look for opportunities to increase agency funding for supplies and life saving equipment.



Rural Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety

- 1 Identify areas along Starke County's rural road network that may be considered higher pedestrian and cyclist activity areas and implement low cost countermeasures such as reducing speed, narrowing lanes, and adding bicycle lanes or sidewalks.



Combined Rural and Urban Intersections

- 1 Intersection improvements are context sensitive. Conduct informal RSAs at the 10 high crash intersections defined earlier in this plan.
- 2 Implement high impact countermeasures that are contextually appropriate (examples at right).
- 3 Advocate to INDOT on behalf of KIRPC in support of safety improvements on rural roads under state control



School Zone Safety

- 1 Support KIRPC in developing a regional Safe Routes to School Plan.
- 2 Implement low-cost safety countermeasures within "school zones" such as pedestrian gateway treatments, RRFBs, and reduced speed limits.



Town Center Pedestrian Safety

- 1 Crashes involving pedestrians should be investigated further for causation with the KIRPC leadership team.
- 2 Soon after an incident occurs, low-cost quick-build crash countermeasures such as lane narrowing, left-turn traffic calming, and restrict right on red should be deployed to address geometric deficiencies.

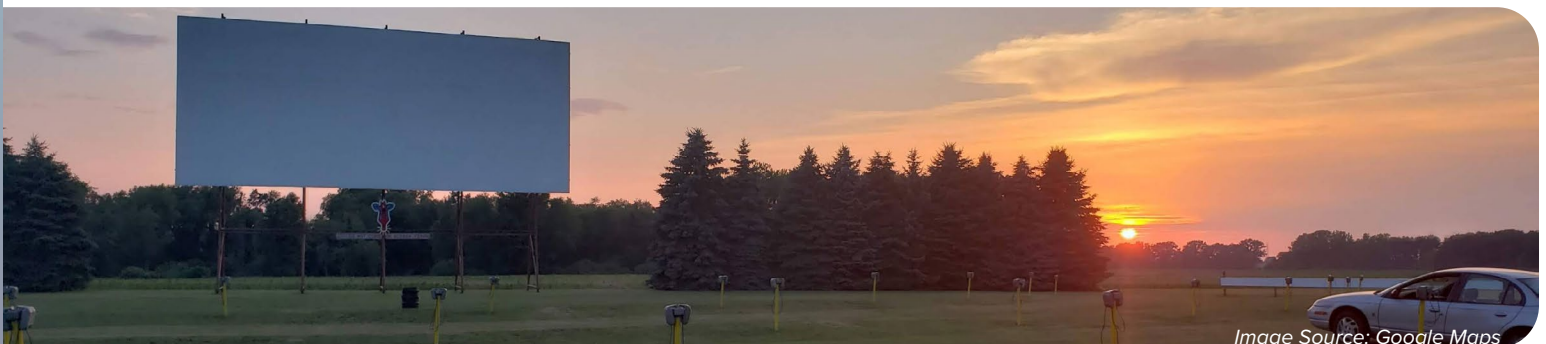


Image Source: Google Maps

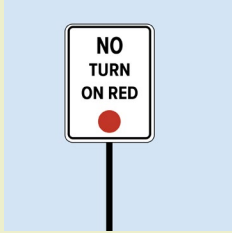
Countermeasure Recommendations

Low-Cost / Quick-Build

Restrict Right on Red

\$\$\$\$

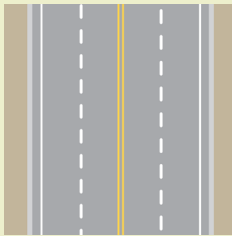
This tool could reduce crashes by **40%**



Edge Lines & Parking Lines

\$\$\$\$

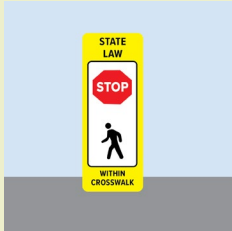
This tool could reduce crashes by **52%**



Pedestrian gateway treatment

\$\$\$\$

This tool results in yield rates up to **80%**



Slow zones / reduced speed

\$\$\$\$

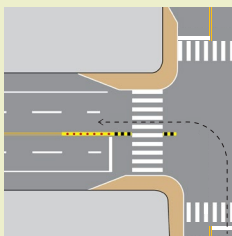
This tool could reduce crashes by **26%**



Left-turning traffic calming

\$\$\$\$

This tool could reduce crashes by **24%**

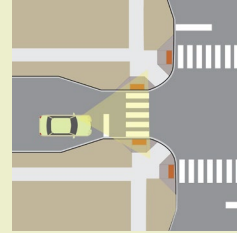


Higher-Cost

Intersection daylighting

\$\$\$\$

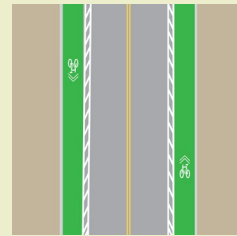
This tool could reduce crashes by **49%**



Protected bike lanes

\$\$\$\$

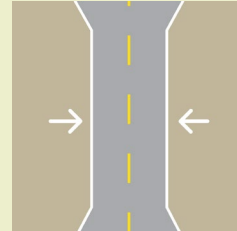
This tool could reduce crashes by **23%**



LANE NARROWING

\$\$\$\$

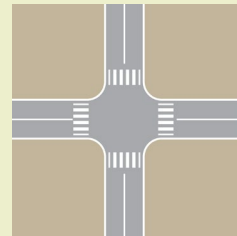
This tool could reduce crashes by **42%**



Intersection Realignment

\$\$\$\$

*Benefits vary based on degree of intersection Skew



Raised median / limited access control

\$\$\$\$

This tool could reduce crashes by **71%**

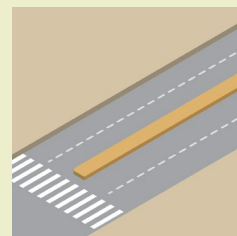


Figure 11. Countermeasure Recommendations

Starke County Capital Project Recommendations

STARKE COUNTY						
ID	Street	Start	End	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
1	Heaton St	U.S. 35	Carlson Dr	Install radar speed signs to alert drivers of their speed	Relocate bank sign at Carlson Drive intersection to improve sight distance. Prohibit left-turns from Carlson Drive on to US 35.	Reconfigure road into two through-lanes, a center left-turn lane, and bike lanes/shoulders.
2	CR 600 E	U.S. 30	Starke St	Intersection conflict warning system	Close the median and make CR 600E right-in/right-out	Reduced conflict u-turn intersection
3	Range Rd	CR 625 S	CR 250 S	Add stop signs to all intersection approaches. Paint stop bars. Cut back vegetation at intersections.	Intersection conflict warning system	Roundabout intersection
4	CR 1100 E	U.S. 30	U.S. 30	Intersection conflict warning system	Close the median and make CR 1100 right-in/right-out	Reduced conflict u-turn intersection
5	Culver Rd	Kloeckner Dr	CR 500 E	Add radar speed signs to alert drivers of their speed. Stripe edge and centerlines. Paint stop bars.	Add rectangular rapid flashing beacons at the school crossing.	Convert intersections to all-way stop.
6	Main St	Water St	Veterans Pkwy	Stripe all pedestrian crosswalks and add stop signs or RRFBs at intersections with cross walks. Stripe shoulders and parking areas to narrow the travel way.	Add stop signs on Main Street at intersections with right-angle collisions.	Install traffic calming features to the corridor such as raised crosswalks and curb extensions into the parking lanes.

* Non-Local Roads

Table 8. Benton County Capital Projects

STARKE COUNTY

ID	Street	Start	End	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
7	CR 700 E	SR 8	SR 8	Add additional stop signs on CR 700E to the left side of the road. Add signs alerting drivers that cross traffic does not stop.	Add stone shoulder to CR 700E, N. Of SR 8. Cut back crops at CR 700E and SR 8 intersection.	Resurface CR 700E north of SR 8. Stripe center line and edge lines. Add edge line rumble stripes.
8	CR 25 N	SR 23	SR 23	Stripe stop bar closer to the intersection and add warning signs explaining that cross traffic doesn't stop. Add stop sign at the intersection approach.	Install intersection warning signs and radar speed signs on SR 23.	Intersection conflict warning system
9	CR 800 S	U.S. 35	U.S. 35	Add stop signs to the left side of CR 800S at intersection. Stripe edge lines and center lines on CR 800S. Stripe stop bars.	Cut back crops at CR 700E and SR 8 intersection	Add signs on US 35 warning drivers of approaching intersection.
10	CR 200 S	W. Country Ln	U.S. 35	Install edge line striping	Stone shoulder, safety edge, edge line rumble stripes	Pavement widening and asphalt shoulders

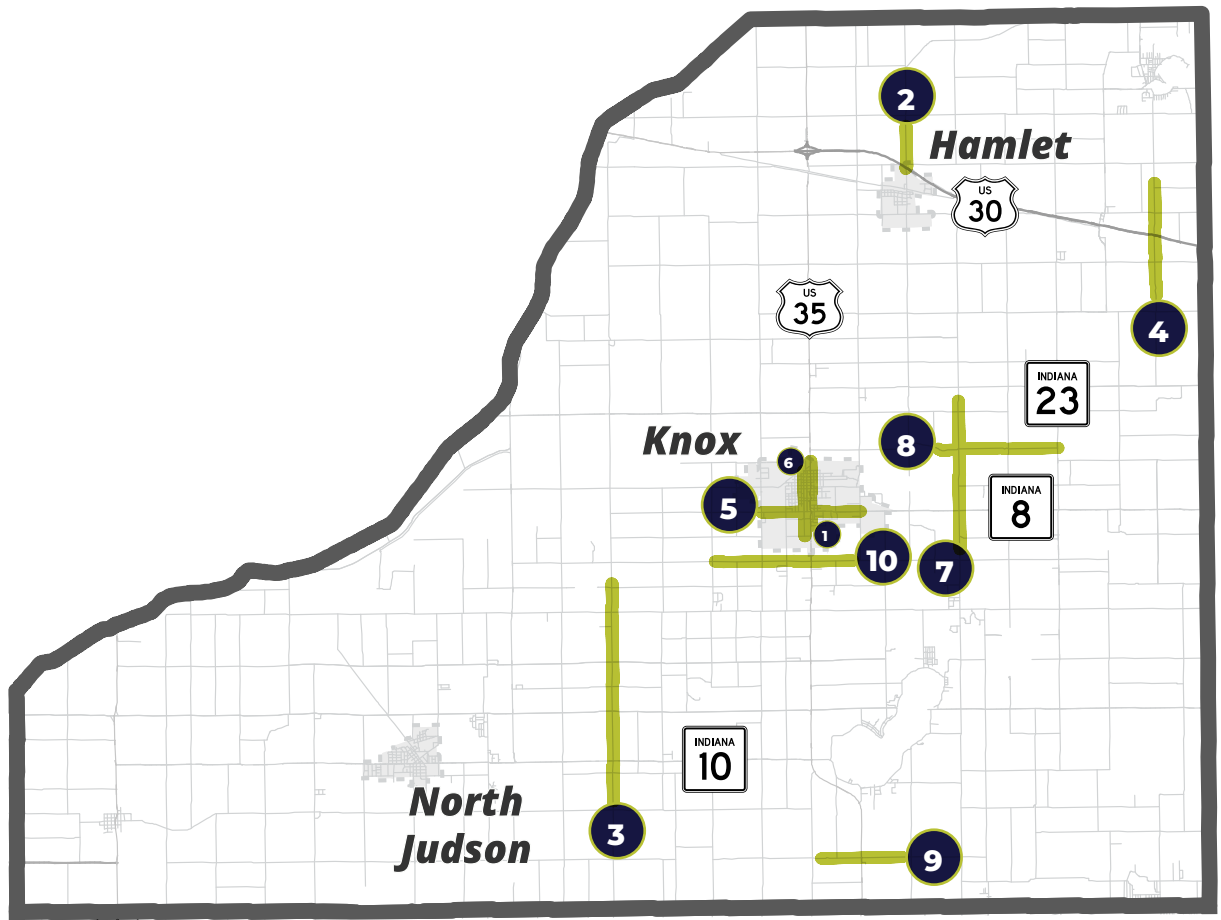


Figure 12. Starke County Capital Project Recommendations Map

