

# Cass County

## *Community Engagement Summary*



**BALL STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

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Office of  
**COMMUNITY &  
RURAL AFFAIRS**

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

## Introduction

The Rural Engagement and Development (RED) initiative conducted an extensive community engagement effort in Cass County during summer 2025. Over 1,260 survey responses were gathered across two online surveys, supplemented by face-to-face conversations at the Cass County Career Expo, Pioneer Days, Galveston Summerfest, and over five days at the County Fair.

Community members were asked three questions; What do you like to do? What else would you like to do? Is there anything else we should know? This report organizes their feedback into clear themes, supported by direct quotes and specific project suggestions.

The purpose of this report is to faithfully present what residents said, without prescription. Leaders and stakeholders can draw their own conclusions and priorities from this raw input

## Overview

Cass County residents want more reasons to gather, play, and stay local. Recreation and parks, food and retail, and community events that build identity and vibrancy are the highest priorities. Youth opportunities and cultural inclusion consistently cut across all categories. Lower-frequency mentions such as housing, jobs, and healthcare are still important, but recreation, food, and culture emerged as the clearest and most urgent resident priorities.

### Resident Remarks:

- "Cass County is home!"
- "Small town feel, trails, tree lined streets, people coming together to support each other and make things happen."
- "Community Events, Parks, walk, learn about gardening and sustainable practices."
- "Cass County needs more restaurants and shops so we don't have to drive elsewhere."

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## Key Findings

### What Do You Like to Do?

#### Overview:

In response to the survey question, “What do you like to do?” residents consistently emphasized parks, recreation, and gathering spaces as their favorite community activities.

#### Top mentions:

- Parks, trails, and rivers -Walking, biking, fishing, enjoying rivers, and dog parks
- Restaurants and local businesses – dining out, shopping, supporting local stores
- Community events and festivals – concerts, fairs, parades, cultural gatherings
- Arts and culture – Logansport Art Association, murals, music, visual art, and theater
- Volunteering and faith life – churches, YMCA, Little Turtle Trail, community service
- Family activities – youth sports, playgrounds, and family-friendly programs

#### Patterns:

Residents value opportunities to gather, be outdoors, and participate in arts and events. Food and recreation serve as social connectors, and pride in Cass County is tied closely to local culture and community life.



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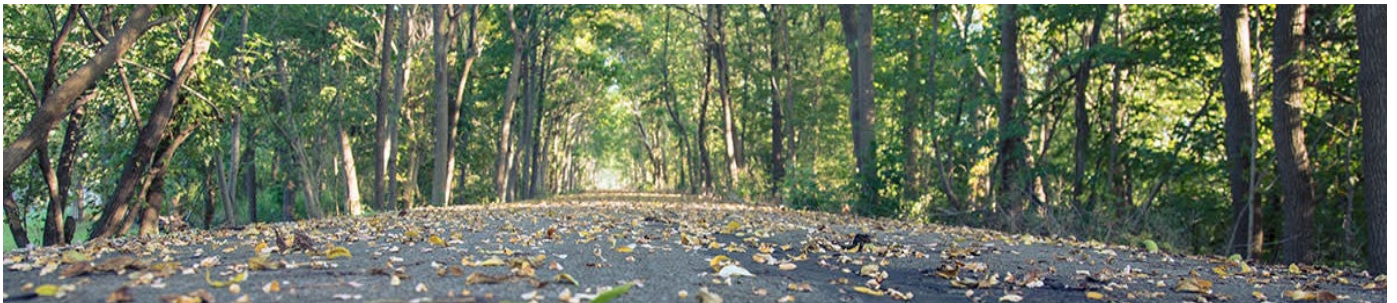
## What Else Would You Like to Do?

### Overview:

In response to the survey question, "What else would you like to do?" residents expressed strong demand for expanded recreation, food, and entertainment options, alongside improvements to community spaces.

### Outdoor Recreation

- More walking and biking trails, with better connections
- Dog parks and fenced pet areas
- Skateboard parks
- Basketball courts (indoor and outdoor)
- Ice skating rink (seasonal and/or permanent)
- Roller skating rink
- Swimming pools (indoor/outdoor)
- Splash pads
- Waterpark or expanded aquatic center
- Open swim events
- Expanded green spaces and picnic areas
- Fishing access improvements
- Community gardening programs and planting days
- Neighborhood and spring cleanup programs



## What Else Would You Like to Do? (continued)

### Food & Shopping

- New restaurants and chains, especially Chipotle (named repeatedly)
- Expanded fast food variety
- More sit-down restaurants for families
- Department store or mall
- Specialty shops – clothing, hair supplies, niche retail
- More clothing stores
- Expanded farmers markets

### Community Events & Culture

- More festivals and seasonal events
- Outdoor concert venues
- Music pavilions at parks
- Parades and traditional celebrations
- Cultural festivals highlighting Latino, Haitian, Black, and other traditions
- Small group workshops, learning, and sharing events
- Expanded youth entertainment options to keep teens local
- Teen centers or safe hangouts
- Expanded arts programs for all ages
- More murals and public art to beautify spaces



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## What Else Would You Like to Do? (continued)

### Community Life & Infrastructure

- Senior gathering spaces with programming
- More handicapped parking near parks, trails, and sports venues
- Better sidewalk maintenance and walkability
- Street and downtown beautification programs
- Improved lighting in public spaces for safety
- Affordable housing (apartments and family-friendly housing)
- Job creation projects and career opportunities
- Expanded healthcare services (clinics, urgent care)

### Patterns:

When asked “What else would you like to do?” residents most often pointed to the need for more shopping choices, including clothing stores, specialty shops, and even a mall; greater variety in restaurants and food options; and more community events such as concerts, festivals, and cultural gatherings. Many emphasized family and kid-friendly recreation like better parks, safe places for kids to spend time, and more outdoor activities. Alongside these requests, residents also expressed a broader desire for a “better” and more vibrant community—cleaner, more welcoming, and offering enough amenities that people don’t feel the need to leave Cass County for dining, shopping, or entertainment.



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## Anything Else We Should Know?

In response to the question, "Anything else we should know?" the following themes and concerns rose to the top:

- Pride in place: "Cass County is home," repeated by multiple respondents
- Accessibility & safety: Requests for handicapped parking, cleaner sidewalks, and safer public spaces
- Image of the county: Calls to clean up, beautify, and improve downtown and neighborhoods
- Employment & housing: Need for job opportunities and affordable housing
- Health access: Some noted gaps in clinics and urgent care
- Inclusion: Diversity and cultural representation are seen as strengths and opportunities



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## Additional Community Concerns

*(These were found in the engagement data, with less frequency)*

- ❖ **Jobs & Employment (80 mentions):** Calls for better paying jobs and career opportunities without commuting
- ❖ **Cleanliness & Safety (80 mentions):** Requests to address neglected properties, crime, and drug issues
- ❖ **Housing (40 mentions):** More affordable apartments and quality homes
- ❖ **Healthcare (9 mentions):** Desire for expanded medical and mental health resources

## Differences by Location

- ❖ **Galveston, Walton, Royal Center, Lucerne, Twelve Mile, Young America:** More emphasis on parks, trails, and festivals
  - "Would love more trails and outdoor spaces in Walton."
  - "Bring events like Summerfest to other towns."
- ❖ **Logansport:** Strongest calls for restaurants, retail, and cultural variety
  - "Logansport has potential but needs more sit-down restaurants and a mall."
- ❖ **Rural Areas:** Emphasis on cleanliness, safety, and recreation
  - "Our rural roads need upkeep and better lighting."



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## Differences by Age

- ❖ **Youth (under 20):** Asked for fast food, malls, skating rinks, and “things to do”
  - “Nothing for teens to do here.”
  - “We want a waterpark.”
- ❖ **Adults (20–40):** Balanced mix of housing, jobs, and family activities
  - “Affordable apartments are hard to find.”
  - “Better career opportunities for young families.”
- ❖ **Older Adults (40+):** Focused on cleanliness, safety, health services, and community pride
  - “Too many drugs and crime in certain areas.”
  - “Mental health resources are limited.”

## Differences by Race & Ethnicity

- ❖ **White respondents:** Focused on parks, outdoor recreation, and safety
  - “Clean up the trash houses and make the town look better.”
- ❖ **Hispanic/Latino respondents:** Strong interest in family-friendly spaces, diverse food options, and cultural celebration
  - “More family activities and restaurants that reflect our culture.”
- ❖ **Black and Haitian respondents:** Emphasized youth activities and gathering places
  - “Our kids need more safe places to go.”
- ❖ **Asian respondents:** Highlighted food variety and cultural learning opportunities
  - “Would love more restaurants with Asian food and cultural events.”

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## Assets, Opportunities, and Areas for Growth

### Assets:

- Small-town atmosphere, friendly neighbors, community support
- Schools, teachers, 4-H, and youth sports
- Hospital and local healthcare
- Parks, lakes, trails, and ballfields
- Churches and the faith community

### Opportunities:

- Expand youth and family programming
- Build and maintain parks, trails, and outdoor spaces
- Strengthen downtown revitalization and attract new businesses
- Support cultural food, art, and events
- Invest in visible improvements to safety and cleanliness

### Areas for Growth

- Limited entertainment and youth opportunities
- Few restaurant and shopping options (especially beyond pizza)
- Lack of good-paying jobs and career options
- Shortage of affordable, quality housing
- Community cleanliness, property upkeep, and beautification



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## Projects Suggested by Residents

### Recreation & Outdoors

- Parks, trails, and green spaces
- Basketball courts
- Skating facilities
- Swimming pool, splashpad, waterpark
- Dog parks
- Fishing access improvements
- Community gardens and gardening programs
- Open swim events
- Spring cleanup and beautification programs

### Food & Shopping

- New restaurants and chains
- Expanded fast food variety
- Sit-down restaurants
- Department store or mall
- Specialty shops – clothing, hair supplies
- More clothing stores
- Expanded farmers markets

### Community Events & Culture

- Festivals and community events
- Outdoor concert venue / music pavilion
- Youth-focused entertainment
- Arts and culture programs
- Cultural diversity festivals
- Parades and traditional celebrations
- Workshops and small-group learning opportunities
- Community Life & Infrastructure
- Cleanliness and beautification
- Job creation and career development
- Accessibility improvements – handicapped parking at parks and venues
- Senior gathering spaces
- Better lighting in public spaces
- Affordable housing



### Overall Top Five Priorities (by mention)

1. Parks, recreation, and outdoors (especially trails, courts, pools, skating)
2. New restaurants, retail, and mall/department store options
3. Festivals, concerts, and cultural events
4. Youth and family opportunities (safe spaces, entertainment, programs)
5. Arts, murals, and beautification of public spaces

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## Conclusion

Cass County residents are clear: they want **more opportunities for recreation, food, and culture, especially for youth and families**. They want more reasons to gather, play, and stay local. They also want visible improvements in cleanliness, safety, and housing. Differences across towns, ages, and racial/ethnic groups show that while county-wide investments are needed, local tailoring will also be important.

This report reflects the **authentic voices of Cass County residents** during summer 2025 and provides a foundation for leadership discussions about the county's future.

