

03.

STUDY AREA

FILED
April 21, 2025
INDIANA UTILITY
REGULATORY COMMISSION



The study area focused on the Town of Winfield defined by its town boundaries as well as the proposed southern growth area and fringe areas where Winfield borders other communities. The southern growth area extends past U.S. 231, south to E 157th Ave. covering the unincorporated land in this area. Though outside town boundaries at the time this plan was completed, it was important to account for this growth area as it represents the only opportunity for Winfield to expand due to the surrounding communities. The influence the communities have on land use around Winfield was also considered and described in the existing conditions analysis.

As part of the planning process, input from a steering committee was critical to informing findings of each project phase in relationship to the study area. The steering committee was made up of representatives from town council, plan commission, redevelopment commission, stormwater board, and town planning staff.

RELATED STUDIES

The planning team reviewed previous plans and studies completed by the town which included elements that were applicable to the new comprehensive planning process. These documents included:

- 2007 Town of Winfield Comprehensive Plan
- 2016 Winfield Downtown Master Plan
- 2014-2018 Lake County Parks Master Plan
- 2016 Sanitary Master Plan
- 2019 Thoroughfare Plan
- 2021 Park Impact Fee
- Town Zoning Map

The final comprehensive plan pulls from these documents and incorporates their findings and recommendations into the new comprehensive plan. This allowed the planning team to build from an established foundation that aligned with the town's current efforts and priorities.

Additional analysis completed by the planning team informed gaps and additional priorities for the town based on current and future trends.

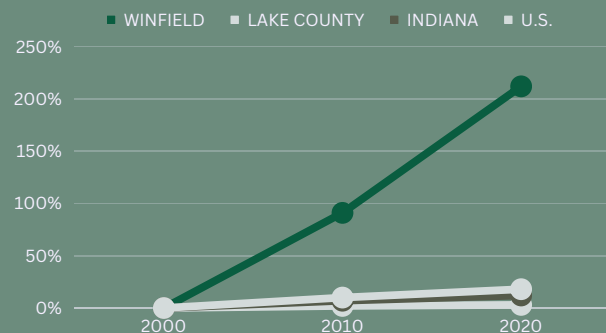
DATA ANALYSIS

DEMOGRAPHIC AND POPULATION TRENDS ANALYSIS

The planning process began with a review of existing demographic, socioeconomic, and market trends. A report was drafted indicating initial findings from the first phase of the project. These findings were used to identify key factors affecting and driving growth and development in the Town.

The analysis of these conditions has been compiled in this document to understand how socioeconomic, demographic trends, existing housing stock, and commuting trends have impacted the Town's development and could impact future growth considerations.

2000 - 2020 GROWTH COMPARISON



WINFIELD SNAPSHOT

212%

Percent population growth Winfield has experienced between 2000 and 2020

9th

Winfield is ranked the 9th largest growth rate for a town or city in the State of Indiana

7,181

The 2020 U.S. decennial census estimated Winfield's population over 7,000 residents

Data Source: Esri Business Analyst & the US Census Bureau

DATA ANALYSIS

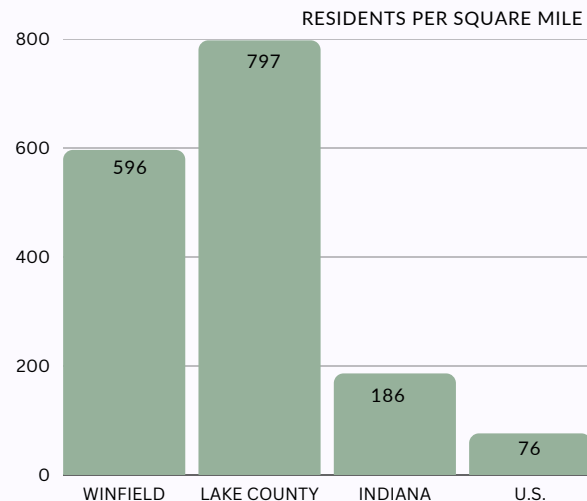
DEMOGRAPHIC AND POPULATION TRENDS ANALYSIS

While comparing Winfield's percent growth to Lake County, Indiana, and the United States, Winfield outpaced all three of these locations by a large margin which further demonstrates the significance of the Town's growth and the importance of sound planning to ensure new development does not overwhelm the Town's resources or services.

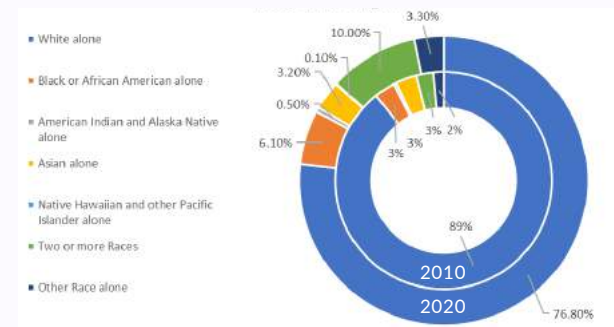
Winfield's population is fairly dense with an average of 596 residents per square mile. This is much greater than the population density of Indiana and the United States but lower than Lake County as a whole. Lake County's significant density is likely influenced by more urban development around the City of Gary and Chicago.

The following charts compare population composition including age, race, and education trends for residents in the Town.

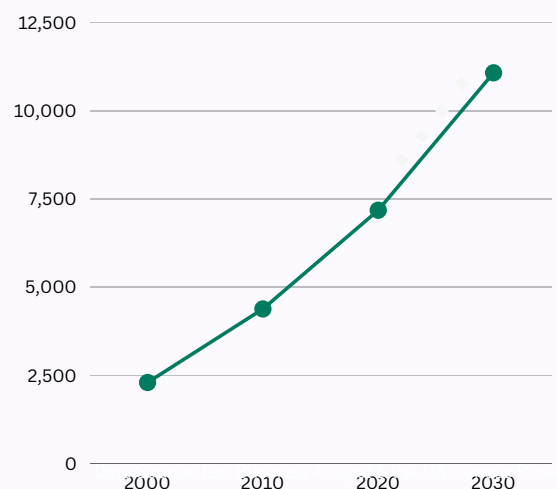
Data Source: Esri Business Analyst & the US Census Bureau



WINFIELD RACE & ORIGIN



WINFIELD POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTION



COMPOSITION OF WINFIELD POPULATION

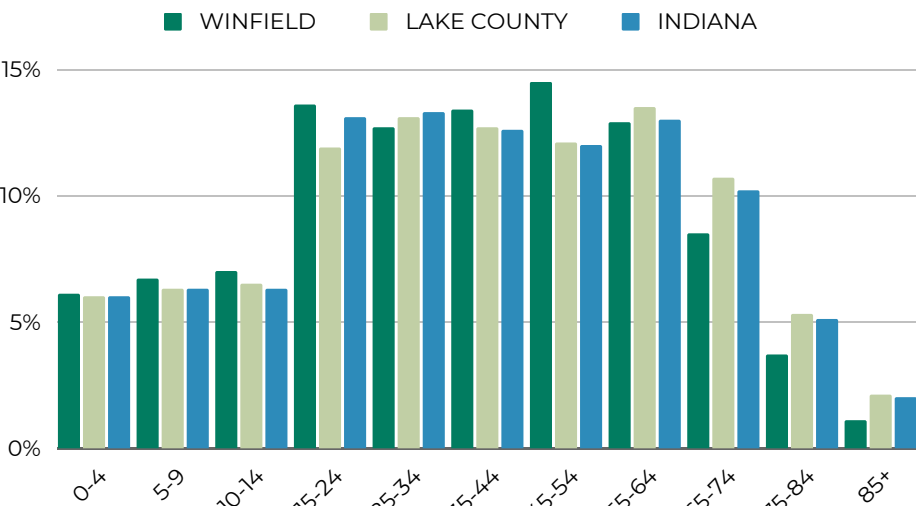
Age is important to consider in a planning process as the needs of residents in various age groups may differ considerably. Communities with aging populations may be more conscious about the impact new development has for older residents and how development address unique needs of older populations. Younger residents will also have unique preferences from a and development standpoint and planning efforts need to consider how communities can promotes spaces and amenities that server all ages.

Though younger overall, Winfield has a lower percentage of residents in the 25-34 age bracket than all areas of comparison. This age group represents young adults that may be starting a family or buying homes and is important for promoting sustainable growth in the community. Planning efforts may want to consider strategies that help Winfield attract more residents in this young adult age group through consideration in regard to housing stock and amenities.

Data Source: Esri Business Analyst & the US Census Bureau

Population by Age

This section compares key socioeconomic and demographic trends for the Town of Winfield, Lake County, Indiana and the United States.



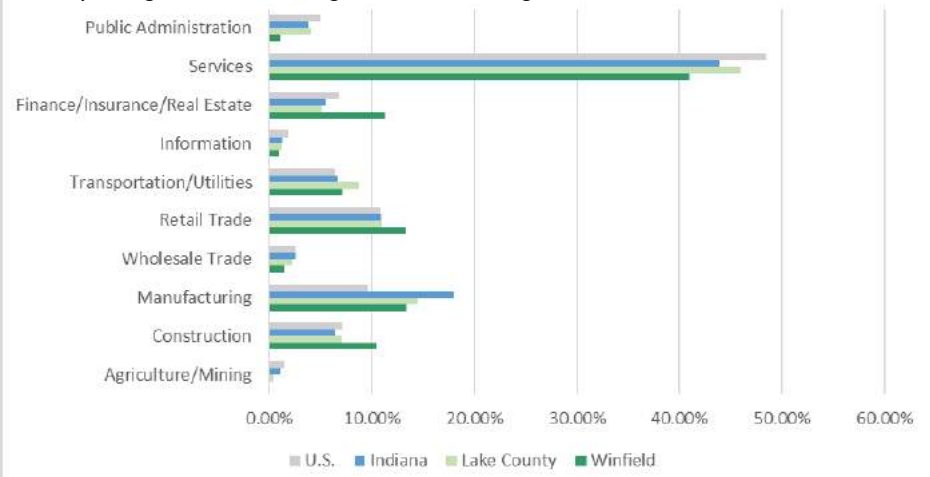
6 out of 10 Winfield Residents hold an associate degree or higher

38.3

Winfield Median Age

- The population of Winfield has a median age that is 1.5 years younger than Lake County as a whole however, the Town's median age is only half a year younger than Indiana and the United States.
- Data points were developed and identified utilizing Esri Business Analyst, the Census Bureau, and STATS Indiana. The Town's boundaries were used as the area of analysis.
- Winfield is a predominantly white (non-Hispanic) population but diversity is increasing when comparing 2010 to 2020 figures.
- Between 2000 and 2020, the Town population increased by 212% which is the 9th largest growth rate for a town or city in the state of Indiana.

Employment by Industry

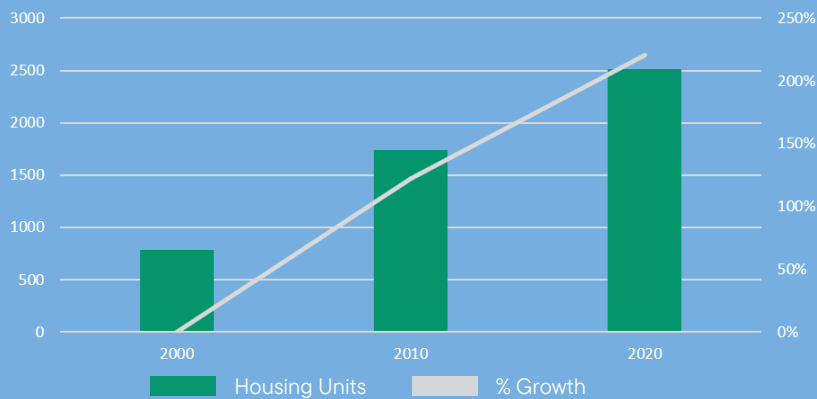


WINFIELD HOUSING & HOUSEHOLDS

74% Winfield
Homes valued

> \$250,000.00

WINFIELD HOUSING UNITS & GROWTH



Data Source: Esri Business Analyst & the US Census Bureau

Housing growth and development in Winfield has coincided with the Town's substantial population growth. Growth of total housing units in Winfield mirrors population growth trends as population is typically a driver of housing development. This figure illustrates the total number of units and percent growth of total units in Winfield from 2000 to 2020. During this period, the Town added 1,728 new units, an increase of 220%.

HOUSING GROWTH

Winfield's housing growth stands out when compared to state, county, and national growth rates over the same period. A comparison of Winfield's housing growth to the other areas of analysis is illustrated in Figure 10. In the last 20 years Winfield has outpaced national growth rates by nearly 200% and Lake County rates by 210%. It should be noted that County's growth rate may be affected by demolition of vacant and blighted units in more urbanized portions of the County.

DATA AS OF 2020

2.98 Average Household Size

240 Estimated New Housing Units

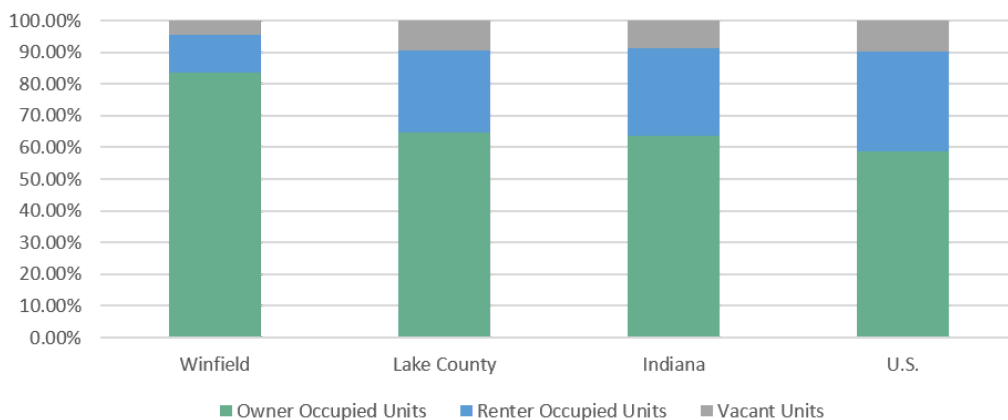
2,411 Estimated Number of Households

HOUSING STOCK

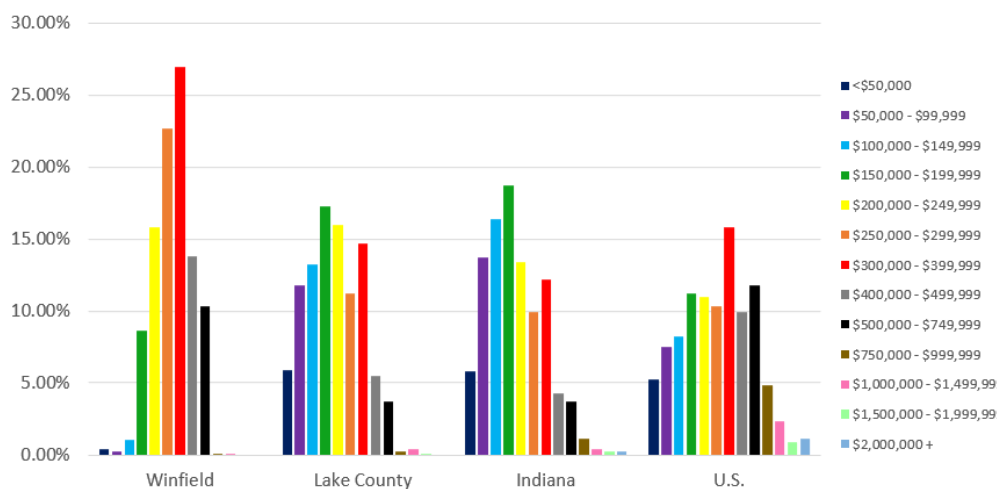
Winfield's housing stock mostly consists of owner-occupied units which, account for nearly 84% of all housing units in the Town. This is the greatest percentage of owner-occupied units for any of the areas of comparison as Lake County has the second largest percentage of owner-occupied units (64.7%).

Winfield's percentage of vacant homes is also very low at 4.4% which is approximately half the vacancy rate of Indiana, Lake County, and the United States.

WINFIELD HOUSING COMPARISON



WINFIELD HOUSING BY VALUE



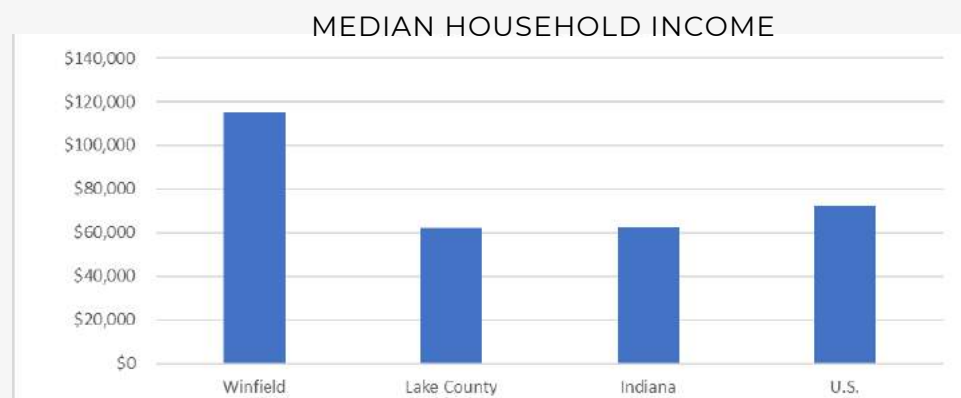
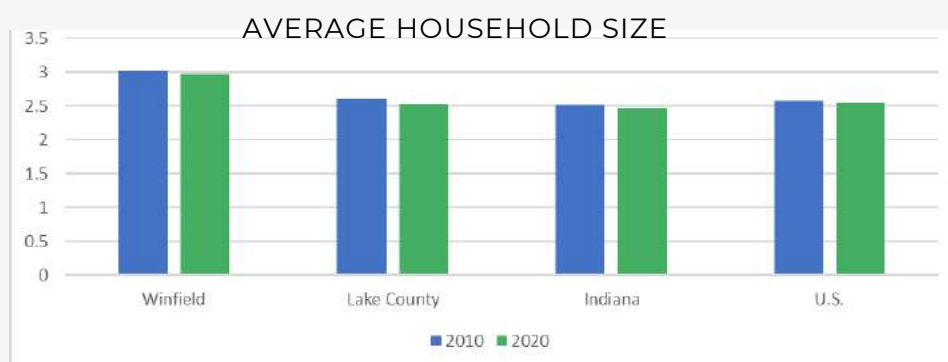
Data Source: Esri Business Analyst & the US Census Bureau

The low number of vacant units and significant number of higher value homes suggests that Winfield has a high-quality housing stock.

Housing units by value is demonstrated on page 23. Winfield has a much higher percentage of homes valued over \$250,000 (74.0%) than the areas of comparison. The low number of vacant units and significant number of higher value homes suggests that Winfield has a high-quality housing stock. However, this may create challenges for younger adults and younger families to find attainable homes in the community. This may be a factor affecting the lower percentage of residents age 25-34 which was illustrated on page 21.

The average number of individuals living in Winfield homes is larger than Lake County, Indiana, and the United States. This is likely due to a larger percentage of families with younger children living in the community. This trends may be driving development of larger more expensive homes in order to accommodate the housing needs of families with children. Planning efforts should give considerations to these trends in order to ensure the Town is able to support the needs of families from a housing perspective.

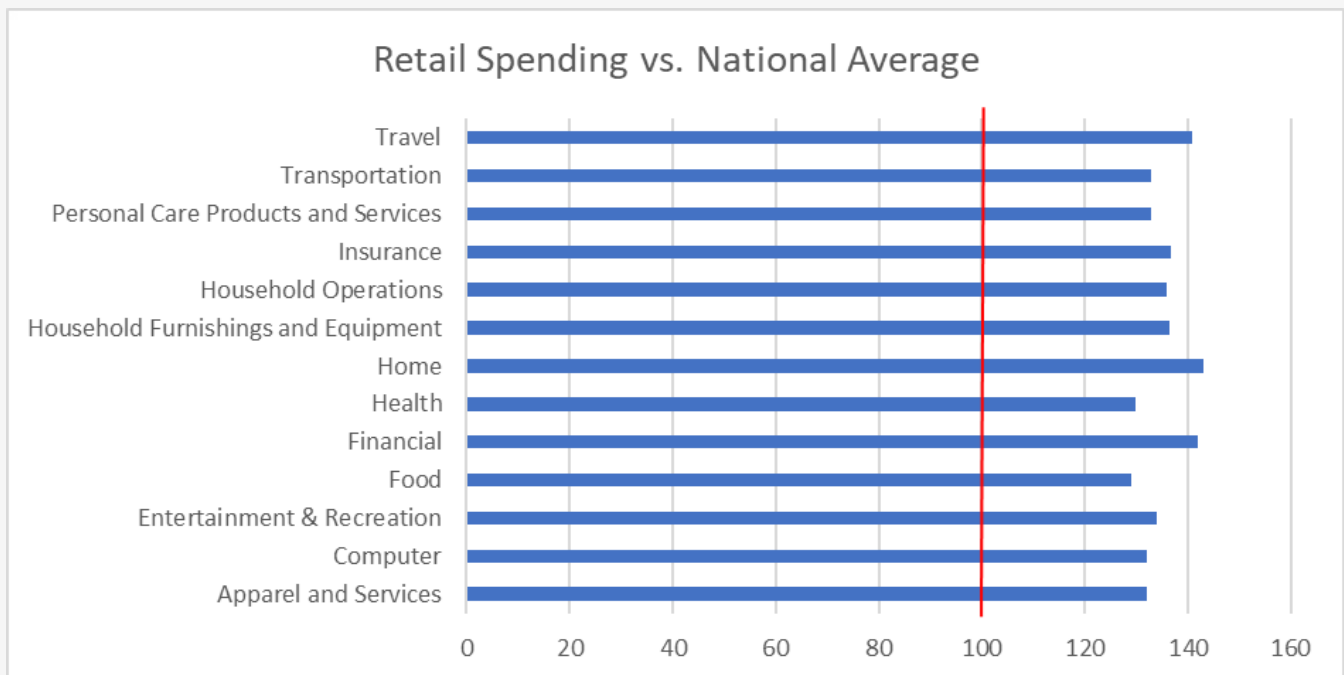
Median household income for residents in Winfield is over \$115,000 annually. This is almost twice as large as the median household income of Lake County and Indiana. Residents with higher incomes are likely to afford more expensive homes and spend more on commercial and retail services. The Town is positioned to grow its commercial base and could leverage positive socioeconomic and demographic trends.



WINFIELD HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURES

Household expenditures on retail products illustrates that Winfield Residents are spending more than the national average. The below figure measures the Spending Potential Index (SPI) of Winfield Households.

SPI is household-based, and represents the amount spent for a product or service relative to a national average of 100. Winfield has an SPI greater than 100 in all categories meaning Winfield residents are spending more on these good and services than the national average. A higher SPI suggests a favorable environment for commercial growth.



Data Source: Esri Business Analyst & the US Census Bureau

SPI takes into account factors such as income levels, disposable income, and overall economic prosperity of households within a given area. Higher income levels indicate greater purchasing power and the ability to spend on non-essential items or services. SPI also considers the spending habits and consumer behavior of area households. Factors like lifestyle choices, cultural influences, and demographic characteristics play a role in determining the propensity to spend on certain commercial products. In this case, Winfield households spend more than the average household on all identified retail categories.

The table below identified spending potential index in Winfield for family restaurants/steak houses and fine dining establishments. Nearly every category examined has an SPI greater than the national average indicating Winfield residents are more inclined to spend generously on their dining outings. Furthermore, SPI increased at each higher spending thresholds.

Family/Fine Dining	
Product/Consumer Behavior	SPI
Went to family restaurant/steak house in last 6 months	109
Went to family restaurant/steak house 4+ times/month last 30 days	109
Spent at family restaurant/steak house last 30 days: \$1-30	90
Spent at family restaurant/steak house 30 days: \$31-50	106
Spent at family restaurant/steak house last 30 days: \$51-100	112
Spent at family restaurant/steak house last 30 days: \$101-200	121
Spent at family restaurant/steak house last 30 days: \$201+	131
Went to fine dining restaurant last month	111
Went to fine dining restaurant 2+ times last month	121
Spent at fine dining last 30 days: \$1-100	102
Spent at fine dining last 30 days: \$101+	112

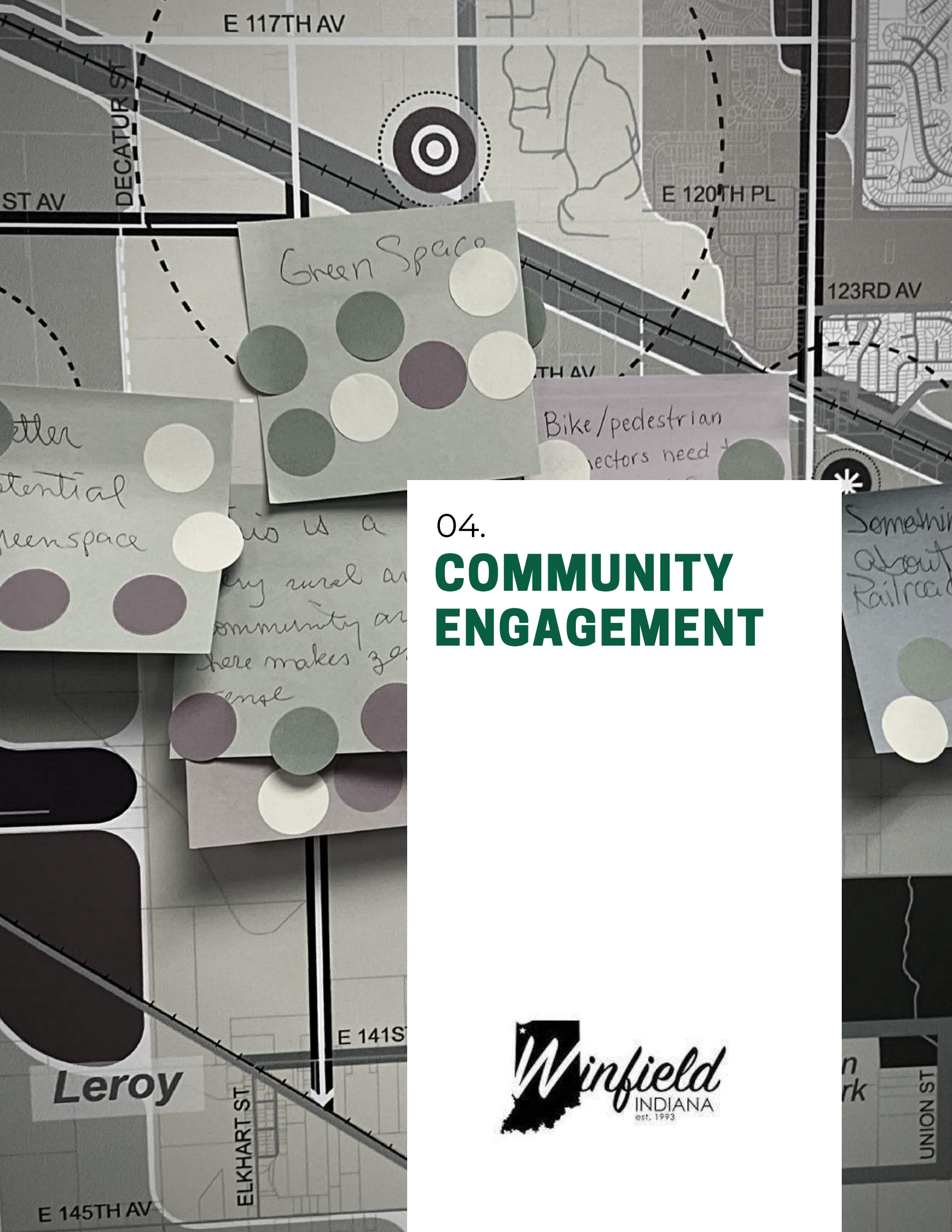
Data Source: Esri Business Analyst

SPI of Winfield households was also examined for fast food establishments. Trends for fast food spending were similar to trends for fine dining and family restaurants as they tended to demonstrate higher spending potential on fast food compared to the national average. SPI also grew as spending ranges increased, similarly to the other types of restaurants examined on the table above. The table on the following page suggests that Winfield households spending patterns at fast food establishments are greater than the average household. This may indicate a strong market for development of additional restaurants in the town.

Fast Food	
Product/Consumer Behavior	SPI
Went to fast food/drive-in last 6 months:	109
Went to fast food/drive-in restaurant 9+ times/month	109
Spent at fast food restaurant last 30 days: <\$1-10	90
Spent at fast food restaurant last 30 days: \$11-\$20	106
Spent at fast food restaurant last 30 days: \$21-\$40	112
Spent at fast food restaurant last 30 days: \$41-\$50	121
Spent at fast food restaurant last 30 days: \$51-\$100	131
Spent at fast food restaurant last 30 days: \$101-\$200	111
Spent at fast food restaurant last 30 days: \$201+	121

Data Source: Esri Business Analyst

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04.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SURVEYING THE NEEDS OF WINFIELD

The Town of Winfield Comprehensive plan include a variety of engagement opportunities for residents. These opportunities included two public open houses that allowed for input on the plan, process, and recommendations.

The engagement process also included a public survey that was hosted online and available to all residents of Winfield. The survey was open between March 22, 2023 and April 13, 2023 and collected over 580 responses.

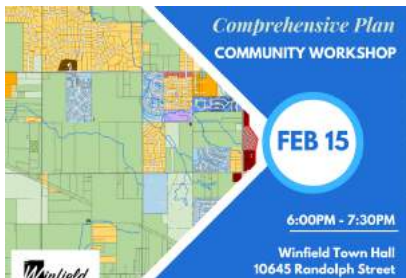
The goal for public engagement was to receive feedback from a broad cross section of the town by reaching residents, business owners, and employees working in Winfield. A description of each engagement opportunity and analysis of findings has been provided in this section.

The planning process began with a review of existing demographic, socioeconomic, and market trends. A report was drafted indicating initial findings from the first phase of the project. These findings were used to identify key factors affecting and driving growth and development in the Town. The analysis of these conditions was presented to the community during the first community workshop on February 15, 2023 and the group received input from the attendees regarding the socioeconomic, and demographic trends, existing housing stock, and commuting trends have impacted the Town's development and could impact future growth considerations.

Based on this first community meeting, the Veridus Group and Taylor Siefker Williams drafted a land use map, definitions, and characteristics of the town for use in the comprehensive plan. Initial goals and recommendations were drafted and introduced to the residents of the town at the second community workshop.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

On February 15th, 2023, the Town of Winfield held its first Community Workshop for input into the town's comprehensive master plan. Approximately 40 area residents attended and completed a mapping exercise to explore growth and development within the town. Residents were provided color-coded stickers indicating development types of Residential, Commercial, and Parks/Recreation, as well as post-it notes, and markers to map a plan for growth. Aerial maps with key roadways and geographical features were laid out on tables as residents were invited to provide input and asked to consider the town's population growth, pain points relating to traffic and commercial/retail industries, as well as housing, and future development opportunities.



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP # 1

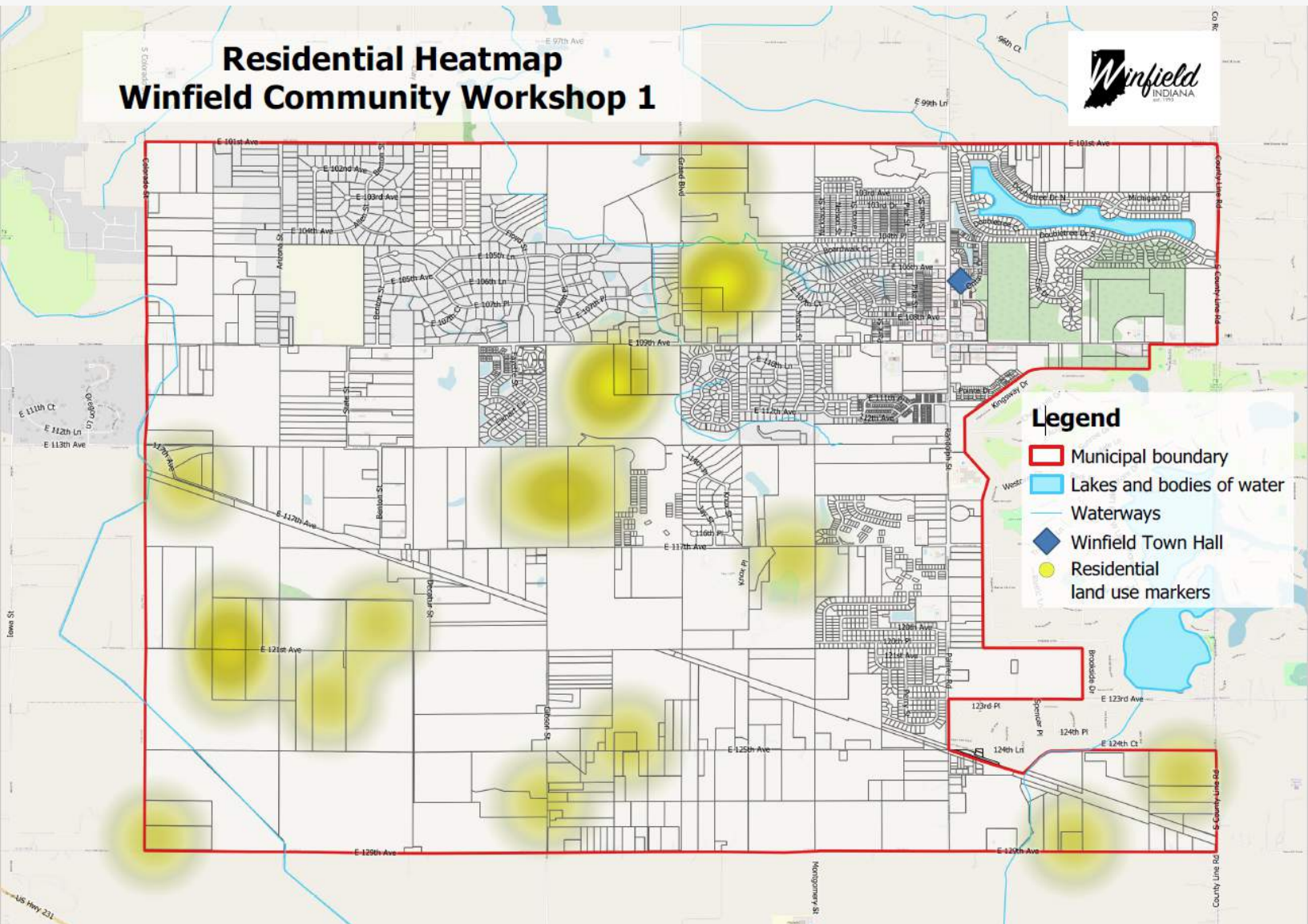
The first of two community workshops was held February 15, 2023. Approximately 40 residents attended and completed a mapping exercise.

Community input using a mapping exercise to show where residents would like to see specific growth types and focus on certain locations with three key focus areas: Residential, Retail/Commercial, Parks and Greenspace. Additional findings also incorporated infrastructure and corridor improvements.

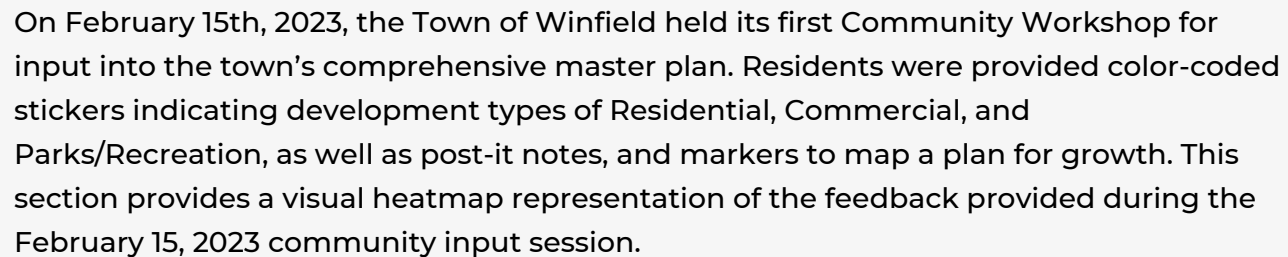
Key Findings:

- Focus on Trails and Connectivity, walkability
- Lower Density High Quality Housing
- Desire for Additional Retail/Commercial
- Address Road Congestion
- Integrate planned corridor improvements
- Preserve Greenspace and Community Character

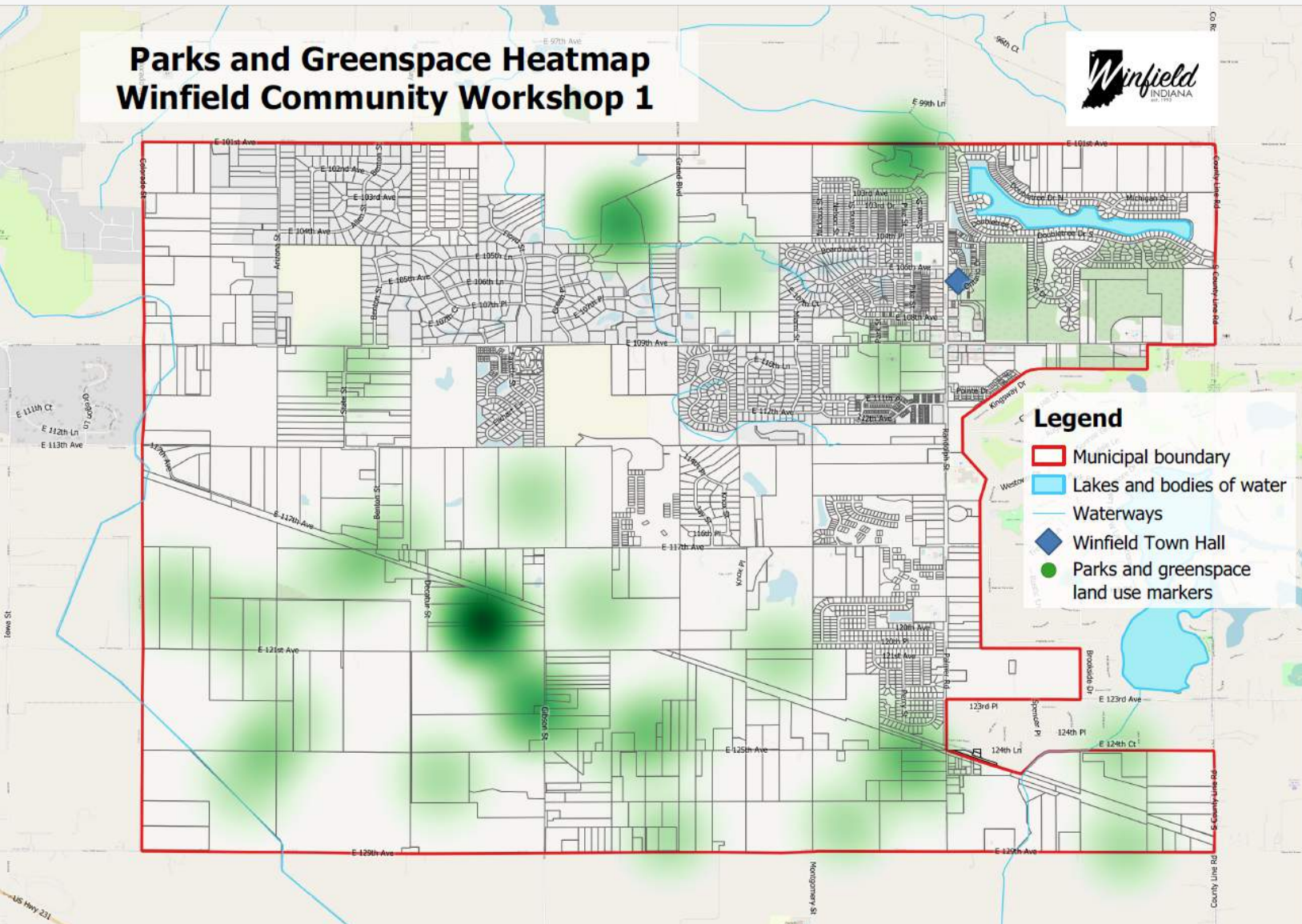
COMMUNITY WORKSHOP # 1 RESIDENTIAL HEATMAP



On February 15th, 2023, the Town of Winfield held its first Community Workshop for input into the town's comprehensive master plan. Residents were provided color-coded stickers indicating development types of Residential, Commercial, and Parks/Recreation, as well as post-it notes, and markers to map a plan for growth. This section provides a visual heatmap representation of the feedback provided during the February 15, 2023 community input session.



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1 GREENSPACE HEATMAP



On February 15th, 2023, the Town of Winfield held its first Community Workshop for input into the town's comprehensive master plan. Residents were provided color-coded stickers indicating development types of Residential, Commercial, and Parks/Recreation, as well as post-it notes, and markers to map a plan for growth. This section provides a visual heatmap representation of the feedback provided during the February 15, 2023 community input session.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK WINFIELD LAND USE



Reviewing existing land use patterns provides a broad understanding of growth patterns including areas of concentrated uses such as industrial parks, business, entertainment corridors, and residential subdivisions. A review of existing and proposed land use patterns can also identify the ways in which a community has grown, the way they hope to grow in the future, and the continued pressures being applied to the community based on adjacent patterns of growth and/or decline.

Land use describes how a property is being or could be used. It does not refer to what is allowed to occur on a property in terms of development standards or development location.

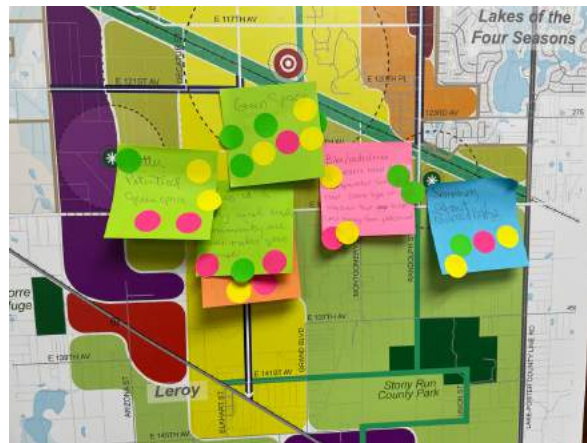
The community input received during the April 19th Community Workshop was consistent with the survey findings, the community is united in preservation and increasing greenspaces and quality of place amenities associated with public and private parks, community assets, and gathering places.



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #2

On April 19th, 2023, the Town of Winfield held its second Community Workshop for input into the town's comprehensive master plan. The presentation reoriented approximately 20 area resident attendees on the purpose of the planning process and comprehensive plan with an overview of survey responses, the draft land use scenario, and focus areas, goals, and recommendations.

After the presentation, the draft land use map, draft land use descriptions, and goals on large posters were set up around the room. An activity was facilitated to allow community members to give feedback and vote on additional goals and priorities or changes to proposed goals. Residents were provided post-it notes to add to or refine the provided goals, and color-coded stickers to dot vote for consensus on the topics provided.



COMMUNITY SURVEY

A public survey opened following the first community meeting to collect feedback from a broad range of town stakeholders. The survey was open between March 22, 2023 and April 13, 2023 and collected over 580 responses. This amount of participation demonstrated that there is significant public interest in the planning process. The survey helped the project team understand community perceptions about Winfield's future, new development, quality of life, public services, and infrastructure.

The vast majority of survey respondents were town residents as 97.1% indicated that they lived in Winfield. Most respondents were also under the age of 44 with residents age 35-44 making up the largest age cohort at 39.6% of responses. Most respondents have lived in the town for less than five years and newer residents were also well represented in the survey as 33.2% of respondents have been residents for 0-5 years. After assessing the demographic make-up of respondents, the survey gathered information on the town's strongest assets and challenges.



WINFIELD SURVEY TOPICS

ASSETS

Quality of local schools, quality of place/community character, public safety, parks, open space, and recreation opportunities

CHALLENGES

Walkability and pedestrian amenities, local business, parks, open space, recreational opportunities, utilities and infrastructure

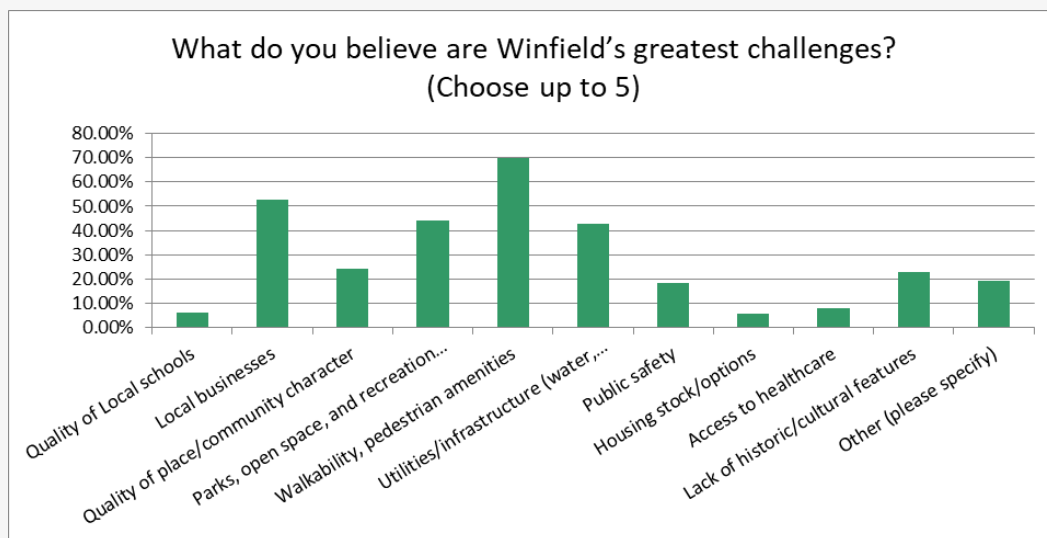
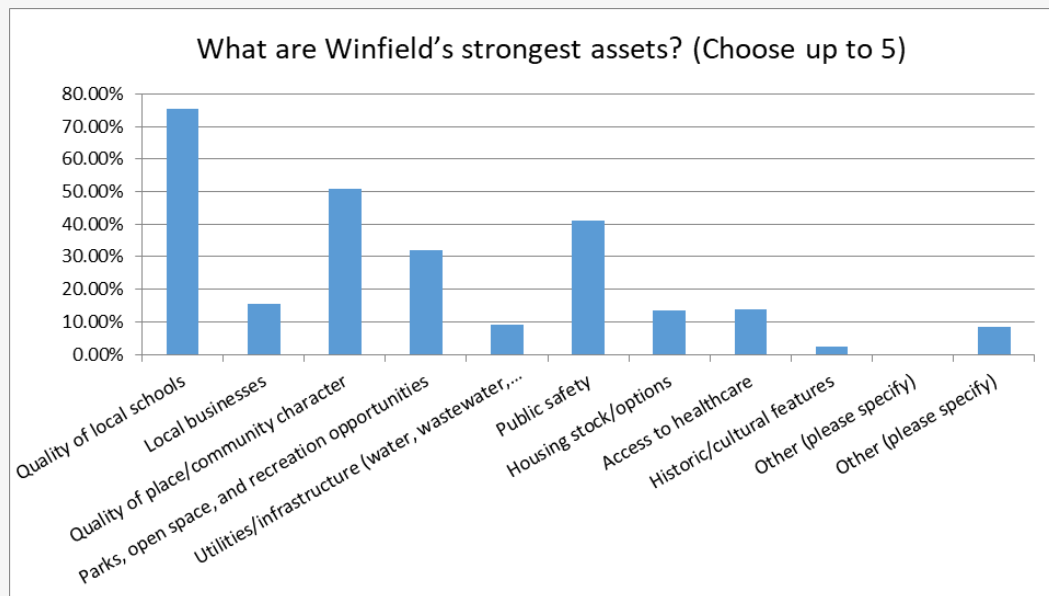
GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

Preservation and promotion of greenspace, balanced growth of residential and commercial developments

WINFIELD SURVEY SNAPSHOT

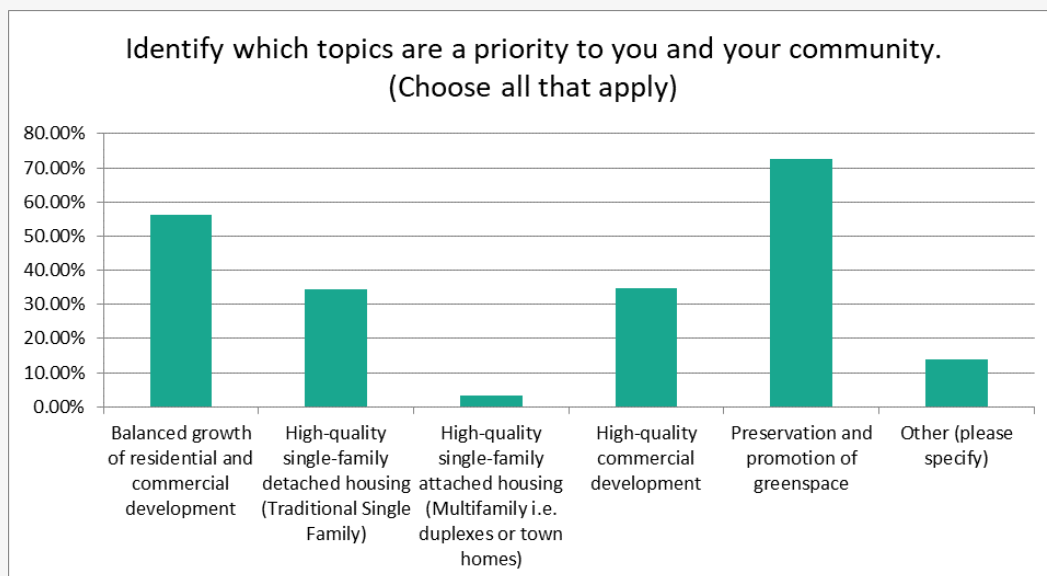
COMMUNITY ASSETS AND CHALLENGES

Participants were able to provide open ended responses to survey questions. The most common theme noted as an asset was the town's quiet rural setting and country feeling. This sentiment aligns with responses to additional questions as participants place a strong emphasis on maintaining Winfield's more rural small-town feel.



Respondents' answers are suggestive of the impact rapid growth may have on a community which, can strain utilities, infrastructure, and roadways. Residents may also perceive growth as a threat to parks and greenspace.

Open ended responses indicated a perception that growth could be detrimental to Winfield's small town character and balance is needed between residential development and the addition of new local businesses such as restaurants or retailers. Despite these challenges, respondents were generally positive about the quality of life in Winfield as 86% rated quality of life good, or better.

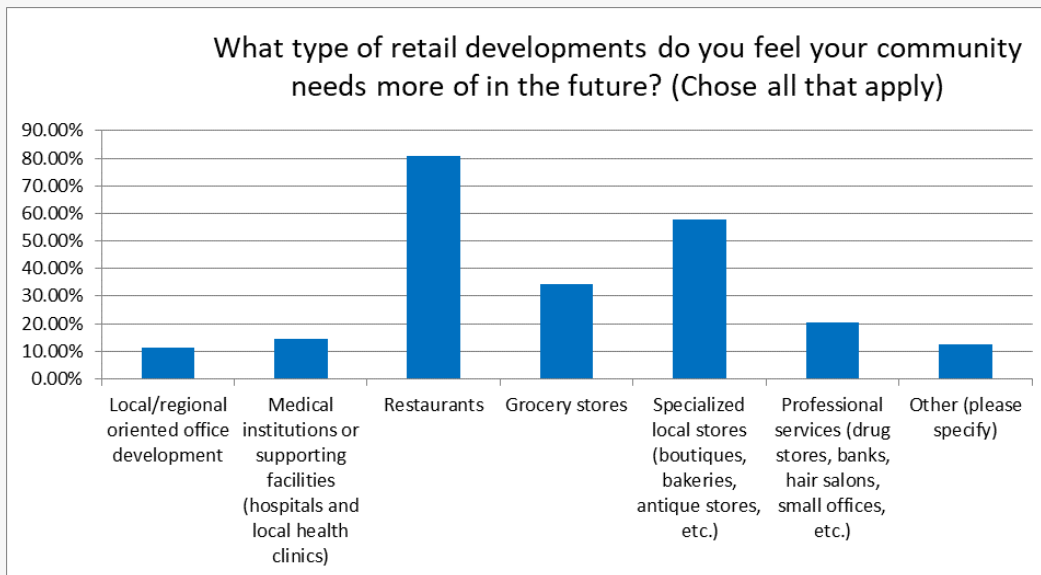
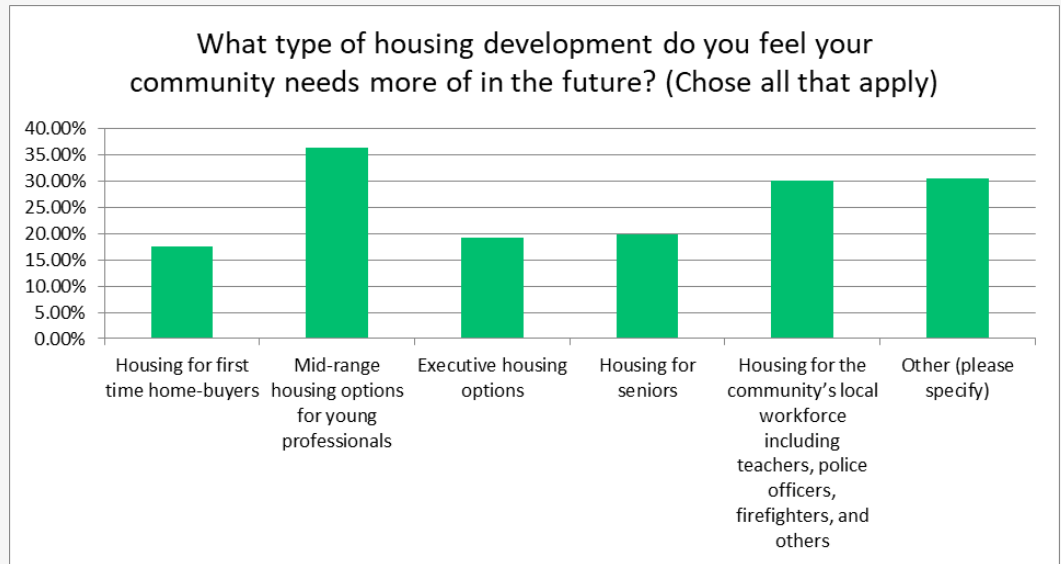


Responses indicate concern that high levels of rapid residential growth can create sustainability challenges and that the town should consider future impacts of growth on services, infrastructure, and open and natural space conservation.

WINFIELD SURVEY SNAPSHOT

HOUSING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Respondents were asked to specify residential and commercial development types that they felt Winfield needed more of in the future. Participants were allowed to select all answers that applied and two types of residential development were selected by 30% or more survey takers. These housing types included mid-range housing options for young professionals (36.5%) and housing for the community's local workforce including teachers, police officers, firefighters, and others (30.15%).



In addition to residential development, survey participants were asked to identify commercial/retail development types needed in the future. Two answers were selected by at least 50% of respondents. These answers included:

- Restaurants – 80.6%
- Specialized local stores (boutiques, bakeries, antique stores, etc.) – 57.6%

Respondents were more supportive of new commercial offerings than residential offerings and their answers indicated that they would like to see new and more diverse retail establishments.

WINFIELD SURVEY SNAPSHOT

COMMUNITY RECREATION & ACTIVITY



Survey participants were asked to identify community-oriented facilities and events that could be a priority for the town. Public facilities such as parks and community centers received nearly 80% of responses. This aligns with feedback received throughout community engagement opportunities where stakeholders placed a strong emphasis on parks and greenspace.

Survey responses also indicated that there is demand for program offerings such as recreational activities, programs, and services, as well as destinations, events, and festivals, as these answers received the second and third most responses respectively. Open-ended responses commonly noted a need for additional trails, bike paths, walkability, and connectivity.

