

Petitioner's Exhibit 3

K.K. Gerhart-Fritz, AICP, The Planning Workshop



Town of Winfield Comprehensive Plan

Adopted September 19, 2006

Resolution #2006 - 10

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Approval recommended August 23, 2006 by the Winfield Plan Commission
Adopted September 19, 2006 by the Town Council of the Town of Winfield,
Resolution # 2006 - 10.

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Communication + Education = Effective Planning



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The Town of Winfield is sincerely grateful to all those who participated in the Comprehensive Planning process.

I: Planning Basics

The first steps in the Planning Process

Purpose

One of the reasons communities engage in a planning process is to ensure that the needs of the whole community are considered, not just benefits to individuals. Community planning is based upon a concept of the public interest. Some flexibility in the use of individual land is given up in exchange for creating a community in which the interests of all are considered.

Today's Winfield citizens are trustees of the future, and have a responsibility to help prevent growth patterns that result in wasteful and inefficient use of our resources. When communities plan, they establish and implement a public policy for the community. They create a guideline for decisions on development. Plans help a community achieve a character of its own, one that residents of the community recognize and support.

If all our communities were the same, one plan would suffice for all. But each community is different, and a plan should enhance the unique characteristics of each place. One town may wish to emphasize its historical importance while another may pride itself on being a community of the future. A plan that works for one will not work for another!

Through the planning process, residents decide what their community character should be. Attitudes and values also differ from one place to another, and a good plan will reflect the local culture.



The Comprehensive Plan

Plans developed for communities are called comprehensive plans. In Indiana, comprehensive planning is permitted by the 500 Series of Title 36-7-4 of the Indiana Code. This law empowers cities, towns, and counties to adopt plans. Any plan adopted in Indiana must contain at least the following three elements:

1. Objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction.
2. Policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction.
3. Policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.

Comprehensive Plan vs. Zoning

A comprehensive plan is a policy document, not a zoning ordinance or regulatory document.

Alone, the Comprehensive Plan has no power to govern land development or the provision of community services. However, it becomes a valuable tool when it is used in setting policy and in making decisions.

In addition, the law provides for a number of optional elements, including parks and recreation, flood control, transit, natural resource protection, conservation, farmland protection, education, and redevelopment of blighted areas. Most comprehensive plans in Indiana have some of these optional elements. Winfield's plan contains several optional elements.

The Planning Process

In all cases, the plan commission has primary responsibility of preparing the plan and recommending it to the county commissioners or town/city council for adoption. The law specifically provides that plans may be adopted as separate elements; examples include land use, transportation and parks.

These steps apply to adoption of an entire plan or to a plan element:

1. Plan Commission prepares the plan.
2. Plan Commission holds a public hearing on the plan
3. Plan Commission adopts the plan by resolution and recommends it to the legislative body for adoption.
4. Legislative body adopts the plan by resolution.

In Indiana, it is the plan commission's responsibility to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan and to recommend it to the city or town council or county commissioners for adoption. In preparing a plan, the plan commission may be assisted by staff, by consultants, by volunteers, or by any combination of the three. Winfield's plan was prepared by a professional planning consultant and a group of volunteers who served as a steering committee.

Amendments to an adopted plan may be initiated by the plan commission or by the legislative body. The procedure for adopting an amendment is the same as the procedure for adopting the plan.

Early in the planning process, the steering committee expressed concerns that the current plan was no longer adequate to address the heavy growth pressure the Town is experiencing. The agreed upon strategy was to go ahead and adopt the new goals and objectives immediately. This would help address current development pressures by setting a tone for future development, and would also become the official document for planning officials to reference, since state law requires consulting the comprehensive plan when considering whether criterion has been met for rezoning requests and use variances.

Written goals and objectives, standing on their own, meet the list of the three Indiana Code requirements for a comprehensive plan, as discussed in the previous section, *The Comprehensive Plan*.

The goals and objectives guided the direction of the remaining plan elements as they were created, and adoption by the Plan Commission was an implicit agreement that there is consensus about the direction of the plan.

Since Indiana Code makes it clear that the comprehensive plan may be adopted in phases, the plan commission unanimously voted to proceed with the adoption of the goals and objectives, and the town council adopted the goals and objectives on June 8, 2006.

IC 36-7-4-508 Comprehensive plan; adoption; certification; plan and summary availability for inspection

Sec. 508 (c) The plan commission may approve each segment of the comprehensive plan as it is completed. However, that approval does not preclude future examination and amendment of the comprehensive plan under the 500 series.

This strategy of adopting the goals and objectives first is not unusual for Indiana communities. The best comparable and recent example is the Town of Avon, Indiana, also a very fast-growing and "young" community.

Using this Plan

The citizens of Winfield are encouraged to consult this document because it can give them reasonable reassurance about the future direction of the town. This document is also designed for use on a regular basis by community officials, including board of zoning appeals, plan commission and town council members, as a tool to guide development. Official actions regarding budgets, town services, infrastructure and utilities, transportation, the environment, community character, parks and recreation, land use, annexation and housing should be based on the comprehensive plan. The following components of the plan are intended to give direction to town officials:

- Goals and Objectives -- The goals and objectives set forth the residents' vision for Winfield's future. The goals set direction, while the objectives define ways in which the goals can be achieved.
- Future Land Use Map -- The future land use map serves as a general guide for future development and represents generalized future land uses proposed for the Town of Winfield. Since these land uses are "generalized", they are not intended to reflect precise boundaries, dimensions, allowable uses, or density of individual property parcels. Note that areas that are not called out on the future land use map for a new use are governed by the existing land use map -- in other words, the future land use of these parcels is considered to continue to be whatever the existing land use is.
- Growth Management Policies -- Growth management policies are a series of written criteria that direct where growth should occur.

Other planning efforts are equally important in planning for future growth and development. These efforts are companion documents to the Comprehensive Plan, and therefore will not be duplicated in this plan. However, the following documents are hereby incorporated by reference into the Comprehensive Plan and should be given ample consideration in all Town land use decisions:

- Sanitary Sewer Limited Scope Master Plan

II: Planning Background

These steps in the Planning Process ensure that adequate inventory and analysis have taken place.

History

Winfield was established as a new town in Indiana in 1993. Winfield's comprehensive plan was adopted December 20, 1995.

Regional Context

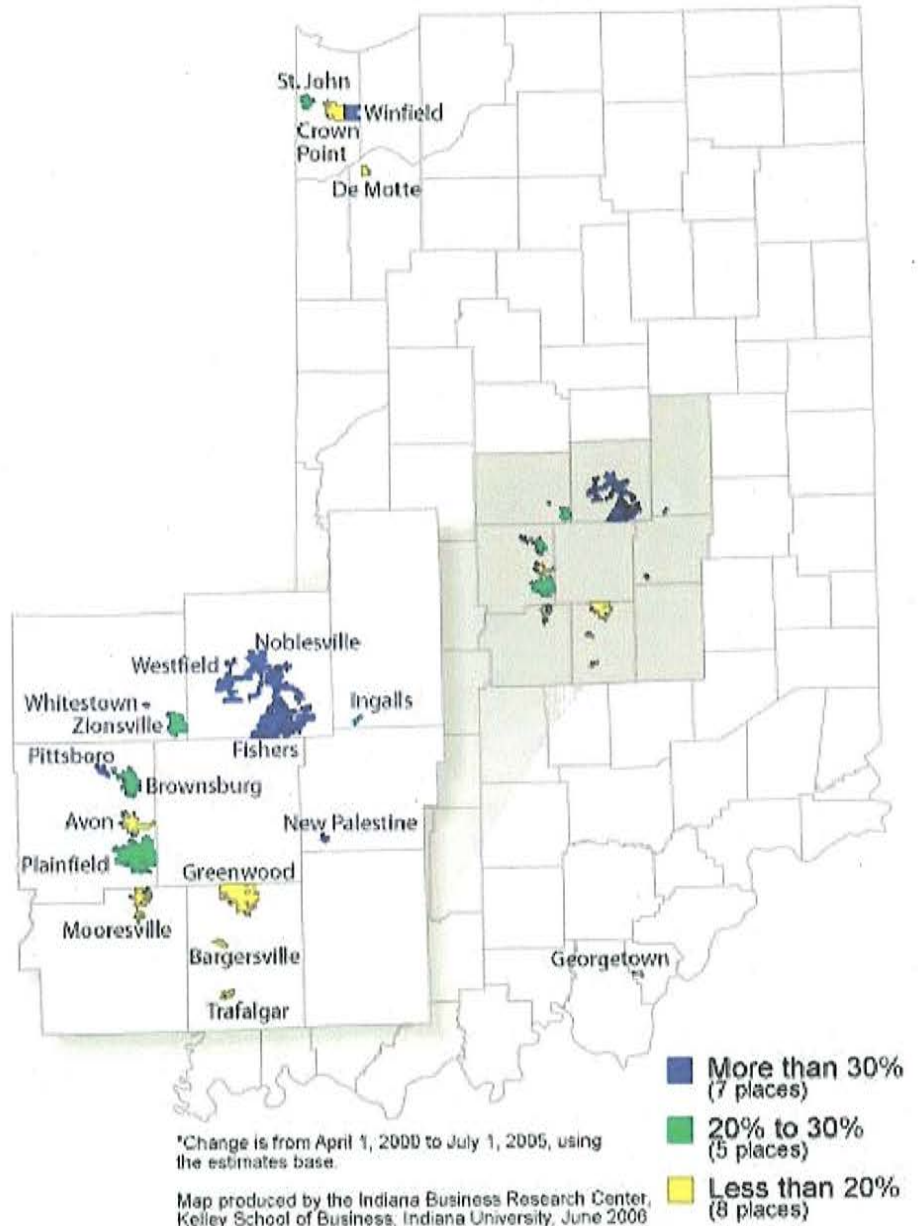
Since its creation, Winfield has experienced a high degree of growth, primarily residential. Much of this growth is the result of Winfield being part of the Chicago region. As this map shows, the town of Winfield is located within Winfield Township in Lake County, Indiana. The municipalities of Merrillville and Crown Point are adjacent to the town on the north and the west, respectively. The US Bureau of the Census estimated Lake County's 2005 population, more than 50 times the population of Winfield. The populations of Crown Point (approximately 22,000) and Merrillville (approximately 31,000) are six to nine times larger than the town. Not only is Winfield a new community, compared to other Lake County municipalities, it is also a relatively small one.



Indiana Places:

**20 Fastest Growing Cities and Towns
Based on Percent Change, 2000 to 2005***

The increased population growth in many small towns, including Winfield, may be part of a developing national trend. Many small towns located near large cities are growing, while the larger urban cities are losing population. This may be due to a desire for a simpler, more traditional community environment to raise a family in, with better schools and high quality of life. Many of these growing small towns are within easy commute to the jobs in the big city (Winfield is 52 miles from Chicago). If this trend takes off, Winfield is well positioned to continue to be a desirable place to live.



The region is still experiencing a great deal of growth pressure. The Census Bureau recently released the 2005 population estimates for cities, towns and townships, naming Lake County municipalities Winfield, Crown Point and St. John as three of the 20 fastest growing cities and towns in Indiana (2000 to 2005). Winfield, population 3,523 in 2005, was one of seven places in the state with a growth rate of over 30%. In fact, Winfield had the highest growth rate of any Indiana city or town in those five years, at over 73%. Not all of Lake County is growing however; the larger industrial communities of Gary and Hammond continue to lose population.

Environmental Analysis

Winfield still has a rural character that local residents wish to preserve. Natural resources that contribute to this are wooded areas, agricultural land and wetlands and waterways. Winfield should also strive to be a healthy community, meaning air and water quality must also be considered.

Farmland & Rural Character

There are still many farm parcels of various sizes in Winfield Township. Much of the undeveloped land is classified as prime farmland per the Lake County Soil Survey. In order to preserve rural character, the previous comprehensive plan advocated preserving farmland by prohibiting development south of the town. The only recommended tool to accomplish this was to assess land in agricultural production at a lower tax rate. Since farmland has continued to see development, it must be concluded that this was not an effective strategy.

According to the previous comprehensive plan, residents believed Winfield reflected a rural character, and cited the following elements as contributing to that character:

- Farmland
- Rolling topography
- Trees along fence rows
- Street Trees
- Hilly roads
- Open views
- Large residential lots
- Low density subdivisions
- Farm structures
- Wetlands and small ponds
- Low levels of light pollution
- Homes on private wells and septic systems
- Narrow roads

While preserving rural character is still important to Winfield citizens, there is a realization that this fast-growing area will continue to develop, and without the use of extreme farmland preservation tools (like purchase of development rights), most farmers will sell their land off for development. While the presence of farms is part of a rural character, that character won't be entirely lost if the other elements are preserved to the extent possible. Winfield's Open Space Standards for Subdivisions Ordinance and Mandatory Park Dedication Ordinance will go a long way in preserving the open space that contributes to the feeling of rural character.

Air Quality

Air all over the United States is monitored to protect public health and the environment. The Federal Clean Air Act created the National Ambient Air Quality Standards to ensure healthy air for all citizens. An area where air pollution levels persistently exceed the national ambient air quality standards may be designated "nonattainment." Several different pollutants can cause an area to be nonattainment. Lake County is classified as a nonattainment area based on the following pollutants: Ozone (8-hour) and Particulate Matter (PM-2.5).

Not only is polluted air a health and environmental issue, it also has financial ramifications, since there are penalties associated with the designation. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management is currently preparing a Redesignation Petition and Maintenance Plan in association with the 8 hour ozone standard, for Lake and Porter Counties, that must be submitted consistent with United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) guidance.

Water

Three watersheds generally cover Winfield: areas tributary to Deer Creek, Niles Ditch and Stoney Run Ditch. Most existing development has occurred within the Deer Creek and Stoney Run watersheds.

Waterways are important to consider when planning because of possibilities of preserving corridors as natural areas and because they typically have floodplain associated with them, where building is regulated.

Winfield has adopted the State of Indiana's model flood ordinance and participates in FEMA's federal flood insurance program. Refer to the official FEMA flood maps to see the location of Floodplain areas within Winfield Township.

The Clean Water Act effectively controls discharges into U.S. waters from pipe discharges. Nonetheless, surface water quality in the Northern Indiana Region continues to be a problem, based on reports of algae blooms, fish kills and other occurrences of contamination. These problems are usually associated with non-point source pollution (NPSP), meaning the water body is polluted by discharge of contaminated water associated with human activity from an unidentified source, such as illegal sewage pipes, or from farm-field runoff.

Surface water bodies, such as streams, ponds and estuaries that do not meet water quality standards, are classified as impaired by federal regulations. The federal government gives Indiana control, by requiring the state to establish Total Maximum Daily Loads for each impaired water body, and then implement land-use strategies called best management practices and other methods to clean up and maintain impaired water bodies.

What is an impaired biotic community? By definition, a community is impaired if it is in any way different from the natural condition. Impairments to the state of biological communities focus on control, in this case, type and number of members in the community. Appropriate best management practices will be aimed at controlling these parameters. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) will continue to monitor Winfield Township's water bodies for their safety for fish consumption or primary recreation.

According to their 2006 list, some Winfield Township water bodies are impaired. Specifically, Deep River and the East Branch of Stoney Creek are listed as having impaired biotic communities. Of most concern is that the East Branch of Stoney Run, which has high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus. IDEM did not assess the following Winfield Township water bodies: the main Beaver Dam Ditch and its tributaries (including tributaries of Niles Ditch), Deer Creek and its tributaries, and the Middle

Branch of Stoney Run. Niles Ditch was listed as having impaired biotic communities in 2003, but did not make the 2006 list.

Wooded Areas

There are still undeveloped parcels within the town and the township where there are stands of mature trees. It is important to develop regulations that protect these wooded areas, including development of incentives for tree preservation. New development can occur without cutting down all the mature trees. Wooded areas reduce summer temperatures on a site, act as wind breaks, provide habitat for wildlife and even clean up air pollution, an important consideration since Lake County is on the Environmental Protection Agency's non-attainment list for air quality.

Parks

No public parks are currently within Winfield's Town limits. One county park, Stoney Run Park, located at 142nd Avenue and Union Street is within Winfield Township and is within the area identified for future annexation by Winfield. Stoney Run Park offers the following:

- hiking trails
- barbeque facilities
- barrier free toilet
- camping (groups by reservation only, primitive facilities)
- cross country ski rental
- cross country trails
- fishing (not currently stocked nor fees charged)
- fitness trails
- hayrides (tractor driven in the fall)
- hiking trails
- horseback riding on perimeter trail (no rentals)
- jogging
- open play fields
- parking fee (when gatekeeper on duty)
- picnic shelters
- picnic tables
- creative playground
- recreational equipment rental
- toilets (pit)
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- volleyball standards

Chicago Wilderness

Chicago Wilderness is a coalition of more than 160 public and private organizations, launched in 1996, and is physically a regional nature system that stretches from southeastern Wisconsin through the 6-county Chicago region and into northwestern Indiana, to include Lake County and Winfield within its boundaries. It has 225,000 acres of protected natural lands and a variety of unprotected natural areas. This network of wild places contains woodlands, forests, grasslands, streams and wetlands. These places include the best surviving examples of eastern tallgrass prairie and open oak woodlands or savannas. Lands are protected as forest preserves, state parks,

federal lands, county preserves, and privately owned lands. There are also many unprotected natural areas that offer refuge to native wildlife.

Chicago Wilderness is working to protect, restore, study, and manage the natural ecosystems of the region. They have produced a Biodiversity Recovery Plan that includes the following recommendations for local officials and decision-makers:

- Encourage local citizens to offer ideas for habitat preservation and restoration in community visioning exercises.
- Identify lands with high habitat value and lands with good restoration potential and designate them as natural resource preserves in comprehensive, strategic, and special area plans. Consider municipal ownership and management of these lands for open space and biodiversity values.
- Designate stream corridors, swales, and hydric-soil networks as open-space links in comprehensive plans and in strategic and special-area plans.
- Develop five-year capital improvement programs for stormwater management and sewage treatment that minimize infrastructure investment, replacement, and maintenance by using best management practices.
- Develop general-purpose capital improvement programs that minimize infrastructure investment, replacement, and maintenance using best management practices.
- Adopt zoning ordinances that incorporate natural-resource overlay zoning districts and hydric-soil overlay districts, which supplement other zoning requirements that apply to specific areas. Adopt zoning ordinances that require developers to protect and restore natural resources, to provide buffers for wetlands and streams, to minimize impervious surfaces, and to cluster home sites.
- Adopt subdivision regulations that require:
 - Inventory of natural habitats, designation of hydric soils, and location of underground tiles at the sketch-plan stage
 - Design of detention areas to achieve or approach zero discharge for two-year storms
 - Preservation of habitats and hydric soil systems
 - Buffers for wetlands, streams, and drainage corridors
 - Designation of lands with conservation easements or dedication to local government at the preliminary planning stage.
 - Use engineering standards and practices that incorporate measures to protect and restore natural resources, that emphasize infiltration over discharge of storm water, and that are flexible enough to respond to varying environmental situations.
 - Insure the municipal code allows and encourages the restoration of natural plant communities and habitats for native wildlife in residential and commercial landscaping.

- Use native landscaping on municipal lands and restore existing natural areas to create wildlife habitat, protect water quality, and demonstrate these landscaping practices for residents and businesses.
- Creatively design annexation and development agreements to protect and restore natural resources to the highest possible degree, including immediate identification and protection of major resources and a process for identification and protection of other resources in later stages.
- Use TIF districts to acquire or restore natural habitats and community open space as part of redevelopment, to provide habitat and implement hydrological best management practices such as those recommended by municipal consultants and by NIPC (1992).
- Adopt intergovernmental agreements between or among neighboring communities to coordinate protection and restoration of natural resources and of hydrology.
- Undertake municipal conference initiatives that focus on the protection and restoration of natural resources, the identification of local ecosystems, and the modification of storm-water systems.
- Participate in training and technical assistance program put on by Chicago Wilderness or member organizations, in order to receive information on how to incorporate biodiversity in plans, programs, ordinances and regulations.

These are sound recommendations that Winfield should give serious consideration to, especially as they implement this plan and begin updating ordinances.

Infrastructure Analysis

A community is only as good as its support network and Winfield's infrastructure forms the support network for the town. Because of its rapid growth, there has been little opportunity to be proactive and plan for that infrastructure.

Communities often use infrastructure as a way to direct where their growth should occur. It is important to develop a policy for the infrastructure Winfield controls - roads, sidewalks, sewer and water. After policy has been determined, the next step is to codify that policy in the town's subdivision control ordinance. While the Subdivision Control Ordinance includes some infrastructure-related policy, an Infrastructure Policy for the Town of Winfield should determine such things as:

- whether developers should pay for all road costs associated with new development
- whether roads should be upgraded before new development occurs (and who should pay for this)
- whether sidewalks should be required in all new subdivisions on all streets
- whether developers should be allowed to substitute trails for sidewalks in their developments, and if so, under what circumstances
- whether sidewalks should be located on both sides of the street
- Whether the town should try to extend sewer and water throughout the corporate limits, or whether people can continue to develop lots within the town on well and septic.

The comprehensive plan can act as the instrument to spur the town to think about their infrastructure constraints and the need to address them. The Town's existing Subdivision Control Ordinance was adopted in 1997, and while there have been some amendments in the subsequent years, after 10 years it is time to holistically re-examine this important document. If for no other reason, changes in construction materials and new practices (i.e., traffic calming) dictate that this document be reassessed periodically.

Roads

Old county roads make up most of the major roadways within the town of Winfield, roads that were in place long before the town was created. These roads were not designed to handle the large amount of traffic they carry today, and their deterioration can be traced to the following problems:

- the roads have insufficient pavement thickness
- the roads have a poor sub-base and drainage
- the roads are too narrow
- the roads aren't getting proper maintenance due to lack of adequate funding
- the roads do not routinely contain such things as turn lanes, accel-decel lanes, etc.

Roadways within Winfield's older subdivisions have been largely built to Lake County standards, as residential subdivisions were first approved while under the county's jurisdiction, then later incorporated into the town. This leaves the town with new roadways that still may not meet their minimum needs. The Town completed a Pavement Management System Study in 2003. At that time, Winfield contained approximately 30 miles of paved roadways; that number has increased since new subdivisions have been built and as new areas have been annexed into Winfield.

There are many specific concerns that the citizens of Winfield expressed in their survey and workshop responses. These include the need for at least one other north-south thoroughfare. Citizens also expressed concerns about the condition of several major roads.

Governor Mitch Daniels' administration recently introduced their *Major Moves* highway plan, which will be funded for the most part by the Indiana Toll Road lease. Of the several Lake County projects included, the proposed project with the biggest impact on Winfield will be the new 109th Avenue Interchange on I-65. Total cost will be approximately \$20 million, with the federal government paying for half and the state paying for half. INDOT's *Major Moves* Project List shows the 109th Avenue interchange project as beginning in 2011, although Crown Point officials are lobbying to move the start date up to 2009. Crown Point Mayor Dan Klein and other local and state officials believe that building the new interchange will help attract bio-tech and light industrial companies to the area. It will also help spur growth in already rapidly developing Winfield Township and areas to the east. By using 109th Avenue, commuters will be able to avoid U.S. 30 to the north, which has become clogged with truck traffic. While the economic development potential of this interchange may positively impact Winfield's future, of more immediate concern is the increased pressure on Winfield's roads.

While the toll road lease to a private consortium will enable the state to spend more than \$1.4 billion per year on road projects by 2015, as compared to the current \$800 million, it is unlikely that Winfield would receive any of that funding for road fixes. The 10 years worth of *Major Moves* projects are big projects, like the new 109th Avenue Interchange and not smaller scale "fix-its". There is, however, one source of potential funding for roads that Lake County has not tapped into. Lake County is one of only two counties in the State of Indiana that does not have a local option income tax, a matter that town officials should explore in more detail.

The regional transportation planning organization, Northwest Indiana Regional Plan Commission called for highway and transit proposals in 2003, and 154 projects were suggested, none by Winfield. Funding proposals to NIRPC must be for roads included in transportation plans and the roads must be classified as a collector, minor or principal arterial, expressway or interstate (local streets are generally not eligible for federal funding and are therefore not considered). Winfield does not currently have a transportation plan, so is not prepared to make proposals for federal funds

It is imperative that Winfield prepare a Transportation (Thoroughfare) Plan and adopt it as an element of the comprehensive plan, so that it can be eligible for federal funds for road improvements. Winfield's roads must also be assessed as to level of service, so that the Town can begin to plan improvements and upgrades to their system, based on level of service, especially in light of the new 109th Avenue Interchange. The town should also become much more proactive in planning for pedestrians and bicycles.

Current Public Transportation Service

NICTD's South Shore Train Line currently makes five stops at stations in northern Lake County: Hammond, East Chicago, Gary/Chicago Airport, Gary Metro and Gary Miller. Winfield residents may very well use this service, although no figures were available.

Pace is the suburban bus division of the Regional Transportation Authority, operating throughout Chicago's six-county suburbs. Fixed Route operators provide bus service in East Chicago, Gary and Hammond, while some of the rest of Lake County, excluding Winfield, is served by a paratransit "Dial-a-Ride" service for disabled and elderly. No information was available as to whether Winfield residents used any part of Pace's services, but since bicycle racks are available on every Pace bus, it is possible that Winfield residents could bike to or drive to a Pace bus stop and transfer to bus service.

In 2002, Pace launched the biggest transit initiative ever proposed for Chicago's suburbs, called Vision 2020: Blueprint for the Future. The goal of the plan is to create a faster, more convenient and a more user-friendly network. The major component of Vision 2020 is Pace's state-of-the-art Intelligent Bus System (IBS), which offers improved efficiency and reduced waiting times. A conceptual service plan for Northern Indiana, included in the Northwest Indiana Regional Plan Commission's 2030 Connections Plan shows Winfield as an urban demand response area for public transportation, meaning customers will call for door-to-door service, sharing a vehicle with a number of travelers with different origins and destinations.

Pace also operates the second-largest vanpool program in the country, with 600 different vanpools, whereby groups commute to work in a van that is owned, insured and maintained by Pace, but driven by a vanpool participant. There are vanpools currently serving Winfield residents. There is also a range of public transportation services for elderly and disabled persons, offered by program-based providers.

Commuter Rail

According to the 2000 Census, over 41,000 Lake County residents commuted to Cook County (Chicago), Illinois for work. The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) is performing a \$3 million preliminary engineering and environmental assessment for a new commuter rail line from Chicago (Randolph Street) to Munster, branching also to Valparaiso and Lowell. It is estimated that it will cost \$340 million to build and implement the service, half of which will have to come from state and local

sources, with an additional \$6-\$7 million in operating costs needed annually from local or state resources. No estimated date has been set for completion of this line, which depends on availability of necessary funding.

Pedestrian and Bicycle

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) produced a regional pedestrian and bicycle plan, *Ped and Pedal*, which was adopted in January of 2005. This plan recommends that local governments address pedestrian-specific needs in their comprehensive land use plans by encouraging compact and mixed use development that facilitates walking; promoting school and residential siting so as to accommodate walking as the primary mode; and providing for continuous sidewalk connectivity. This last point is of urgent nature due to the increasing trend of siting new development far from established community centers and destinations (parks, schools, etc.), and plan commission approvals for waiving sidewalk requirements along major collector or arterial routes. The plan also provides sample standards for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Regional Trails

According to the plan three regional trails will impact Winfield Township, all which are shown in this comprehensive plan's Future Land Use Map. The Town should preserve a minimum of a 50' width along the proposed trail corridors, which should be dedicated to the Town as property along the trail corridors develops.

The first trail is the Veterans Memorial Trail, approximately 9 miles in length, and extending from Crown Point to Hebron, along SR 231 (the abandoned Erie-Lackawanna Railroad corridor). This trail is considered a high-priority corridor by NIRPC. This trail will connect with the Pennsy Greenway project at Crown Point, which will go to the Illinois State Line. This route is also proposed to be part of the northern route of the American Discovery Trail, a 6,800-mile route stretching across 15 states from Delaware to California,

In 1999, the Indiana Department of Transportation awarded the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department a grant of \$1.4 million toward construction of the Veterans Memorial Trail, and currently many parcels of property have been acquired. Seven of the proposed nine miles will have an equestrian trail paralleling the bike/hike path. As of January 2006, the Lake County Parks Department expected to complete this facility within the next two to three years.

The second regional trail to impact Winfield is the Winfield Trail Corridor, an extension of the high-priority Pennsy Greenway Trail. Although this portion of the trail is considered a medium priority corridor by NIRPC, it would have the most impact on the Town of Winfield, simply because it would cut right through the middle of the town, making it more accessible and useful to all residents. The entire trail would ultimately include 26 miles along the Erie Railroad Corridor from Crown Point east out of the region.

The Winfield Trail Corridor is one of the primary trail corridors identified in the current Crown Point Master Plan, adopted in 2005. Unfortunately proposed new developments in Crown Point are currently causing the city to consider rerouting this trail away from the railroad corridor to 109th Avenue, a very heavily traveled road which is slated to have the new I-65 Interchange. Diverting the route away from the railroad corridor to a busy road along a noisy interstate is not a change Winfield should support. Despite

this, because of local funding and population mass, the most likely part of the Winfield Trail Corridor segment to develop is the area within Crown Point. Winfield should put every effort into supporting the original trail alignment and building the segment from Crown Point's eastern jurisdictional boundary through the town, connecting to Stoney Run County Park.

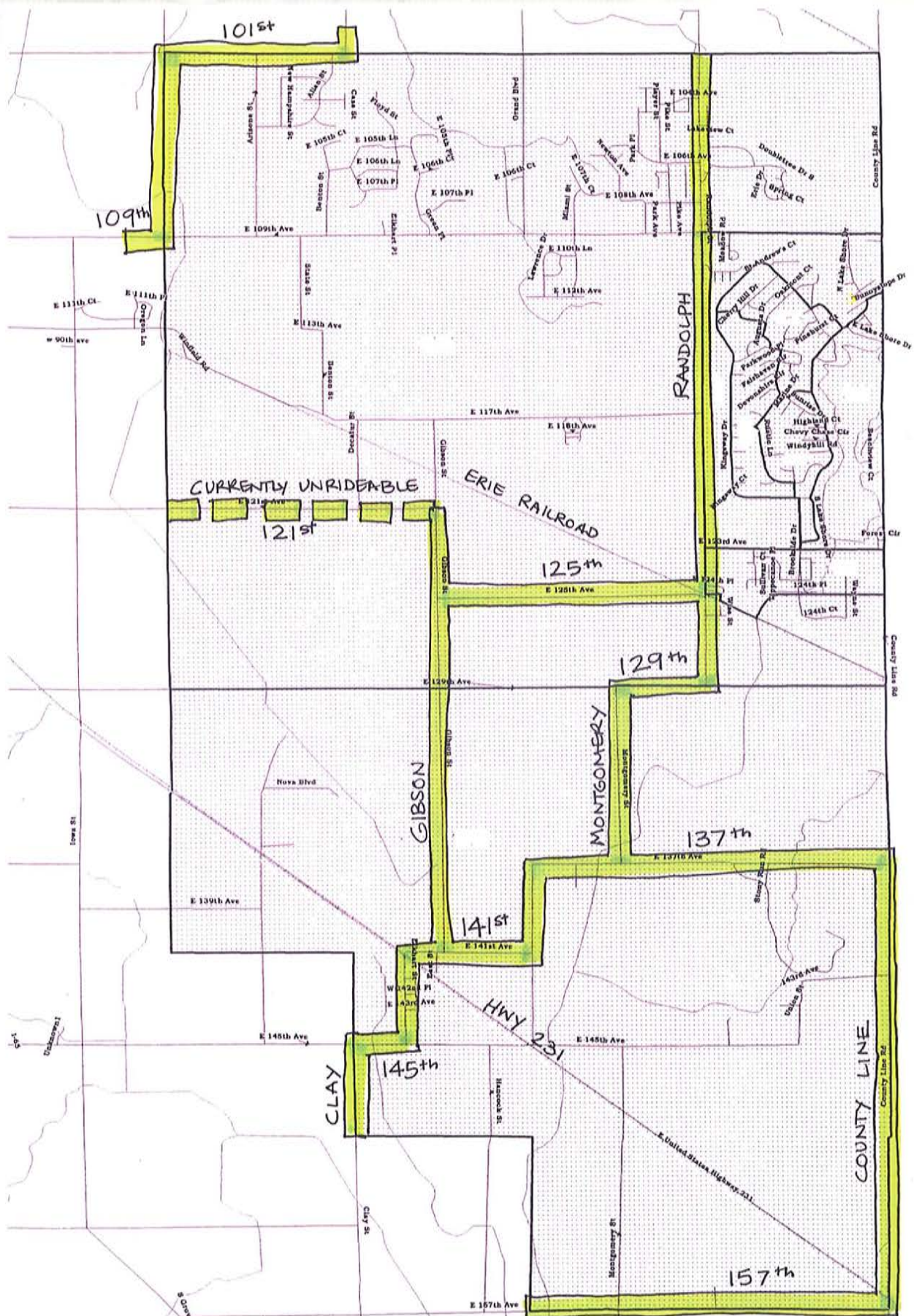
The third regional trail that could impact Winfield is the long abandoned C & O Rail Corridor, which runs from Griffith southeast to just north of Winfield; the trail would be linked to the Westfield-Southlake Mall area on U.S. 30. There are also plans to link the trail down to Winfield along County Line Road, in order to tie it into the Four Seasons Development. This multi-jurisdictional effort would rely on Winfield to help pave the section of the trail along County Line Road. As of 2004, only Merrillville has pursued funding for a portion of their section of the trail. Winfield represents a critical population center for this trail, and as such should step up and help pave this last critical section of the trail.

Coordination with Adjacent Jurisdictions

Adjacent Crown Point adopted a Bike Network Plan in 2001 that includes a proposed 21 miles of routes, using both on and off-road facilities. Winfield should coordinate their bike planning efforts with Crown Point, so that citizens can access Crown Point's system, which includes two abandoned rail corridors which criss-cross the city. Merrillville does not currently have a trails plan, but Winfield should also communicate with that jurisdiction when developing their plan. The town should also consult NIRPC's 3-county regional bike and pedestrian map for more potential connections.

Potential Bike Routes

The Calumet Citizens for Connecting Communities (C4) is a coalition including NIRPC, the National Park Service and other local organizations from Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties encouraging environmentally friendly, alternative transportation and recreation for all citizens. C4 has developed a draft Lake County Bike Routes Map that shows proposed bicycle routes through Winfield (*see Winfield C4 Proposed Bike Routes Map*). This map shows routes recommended by the membership of C4 for use by bicyclists and should be considered as a starting point for Winfield's completion of a Bike and Pedestrian Element of the Transportation Plan.



C4 Proposed Bike Routes Map **Town of Winfield Comprehensive Plan**



John Gehan-Fritz AICP The Planning Workshop



Recommendations for Developing Bike and Pedestrian Facilities

The *Ped and Pedal* plan sets forth recommendations for local officials to use when integrating pedestrian and bicycle facilities into their existing development processes:

- **Local Bicycle Plan:** Make the bicycle plan an interdepartmental effort and establish a mechanism to ensure coordination. Basic plan elements should include a needs assessment; facility projects and a hazard removal program; education and enforcement programs; and a funding and implementation strategy. Refer to the AASHTO Guide for Development for Bicycle Facilities for approach and standards, or to equivalent state guidelines.
- **Interlocal Agreements:** Develop inter-jurisdictional agreements as needed for acquisition, development and maintenance.
- **Master/Comprehensive Plans:** Incorporate affirmative policies for bicycle use. Adopt a local bicycle plan or element, including policies and programmed projects. Modify local street standard to accommodate shared bicycle/motor vehicle use. Include ordinances that encourage mixed use and cluster zoning, combined with more open space, dedication of rights-of-way for trails and interconnected street patterns.
- **Transportation/Highway Plans:** Identify roads in local jurisdiction for preferential development of bicycle facilities. Adopt a policy to make all roads safer for shared use. Tie in bicycle improvements with town capital improvement plan. Review all proposed road maintenance and improvement plans or opportunities to incorporate bicycle-friendly design. Develop uniform signage to identify bicycle facilities and educate motorists of potential bicycle use on road.
- **Parks, Open Space and Recreation Plans:** Incorporate trails and greenway plans as part of Master Plan. Encourage and use alternative methods of open space, greenway acquisition, including nonprofit purchase and financing options, conservation easements, and transfer of title options. Consider expanding the town's Park Dedication Ordinance to include using payments in lieu of parkland dedication for bicycle facilities. Adopt a corridor/greenway element that includes bicycle access. Work with adjoining parks and recreation agencies and communities to plan coordinated facilities.
- **Zoning:** Zone for cluster development, mixed uses and open space preservation. For strip development, consolidate road access but encourage interconnections between developments to encourage pedestrian and bicycle access. Develop a bicycle-parking ordinance. Examine roadway standards and change to allow traffic calming and interconnected, narrower, slower roads and paths. Review ordinances that ban bicycles from roadway or shoulder areas – most are not warranted.
- **Site Design Review:** Establish a method to amend site designs to improve non-motorized access to and between sites.
- **Local Traffic Planning Efforts:** Consider traffic calming but maintain maximum access for pedestrians and bicyclists. Consider traffic-free zones as well as bicycle boulevards and other preferential treatments. Establish a hazard reporting system for bicyclists and pedestrians. Establish a regular maintenance program for

bicycle facilities and shoulders used by bicycles. Allow bicycle access to shopping centers.

- **School Access Plans:** Ensure safe routes for bicycle and pedestrians. Provide adequate bicycle parking. Provide bicycle safety education.
- **Private Development:** Consider bicycle access incentives such as showers and lockers at employment locations. Provide bicycle access and parking. Provide public access to bicycle facilities whenever possible. Connect bicycle facilities to adjacent developments.

The above recommendations, contained in the *Ped and Pedal* plan should be considered as Winfield implements this plan, particularly as a transportation plan and a park master plan are prepared and as zoning and subdivision control ordinances are updated and a capital improvements budget is created.

Water

Originally Winfield's subdivisions were developed with well water due to the lack of an available municipal water source. Winfield's water table is generally at 20 - 50 feet. Many homes in the Trees Subdivision experienced low volume from their wells, prompting residents to drill multiple wells and a hand full of residents even tried a deep rock well, despite issues of methane gas and sulfur. The low volume made it very difficult for residents to do normal household tasks like showering and washing clothes. According to a resident, hydrologists confirmed that this was due to an unreliable water aquifer.

While many communities offer their own water service, Winfield is part of a growing trend where a private provider is responsible for water service. American Water supplies public water from Lake Michigan to town residents. This company paid for a 1½ mile extension of a 16" water main from the intersection of Randolph and 109th Avenues to the Trees Subdivision in order to serve residents who desired public water, with the majority of property owners deciding to connect. Currently public water serves the northeast quadrant of town, including the commercial area at 109th and Randolph and Doubletree East and West. It appears that a developer may end up extending that line south on Randolph almost to 125th Avenue. If this is the case, an oversized line should be installed so that there will be adequate future water capacity for this area.

Two other subdivisions in Winfield (Hidden Creek and Meadows) were developed before public water was available, but so far have not indicated a strong wish to be served. Hidden Creek 2, adjacent to the Trees Subdivision was approved with wells, although officials have encouraged the developer to hook onto public water. It seems like bad policy for the Town to approve additional development on wells, based on the history of problems town residents have faced. Ordinances should be amended to ensure that all future development takes place on public water.

Drainage and Storm Sewers

Winfield's drainage requirements are contained in its Subdivision Control Ordinance. The town's detention requirements are a bit more restrictive than other communities are; however, the calculations use a 5-year storm, which is less restrictive than others are. The storm standard should be changed to the standard, accepted 10- year storm.

Although Winfield currently favors subdivision designs with storm sewers using curb and gutters, there are not that many storm sewers in Winfield.

Many communities are starting to go back to a more rural standard of using roadside ditches, partly in response to the Environmental Protection Administration's clean water standards. EPA Phase 3 may prompt Winfield to reconsider the use of storm sewers. Another reason for the use of roadside ditches is that they work very well with conservation subdivisions and contribute to the rural appearance that Winfield's residents wish to preserve.

The Town of Winfield should give more attention to drainage, first by completing a drainage master plan and then by exploring the establishment of a drainage board, similar to the one operating in the Town of Hebron.

Sanitary Sewer

The Town of Winfield's existing wastewater collection system currently covers the area near the intersection of Randolph Street and 109th Avenue, including the commercial areas northeast and southwest of the intersection and five different residential subdivisions.

On June 20, 2006, the Winfield Town Council adopted a Sanitary Sewer Limited Scope Master Plan. The plan was limited in that it addresses immediate development concerns along three major road corridors: 109th, 117th and Randolph Streets. The plan includes the following:

- Planning area wastewater flow analysis
- Planning area wastewater flow map (to be refined upon completion of this comprehensive plan)
- Analysis of immediate development concerns along the three corridors
- Future improvements map identifying the recommended location of future pump stations, force mains and trunk sewers (to be refined upon completion of this comprehensive plan)

The master plan recommends that the town try to limit the number of pump stations because they are expensive and require significant resources for operation and maintenance. Due to Winfield's somewhat rolling terrain, it would be very difficult to eliminate all pump stations. The master plan identifies preferred locations of large future pump stations, with the understanding that some developments will require additional pump stations due to topography.

The master plan also recommends that the feasibility of a second wastewater treatment plant, located in the Niles Ditch watershed, be studied in the future. The study should review the costs and benefits of one treatment plant, serving the entire town, versus the addition of a second plant located in the Niles Ditch watershed. The future land use plan in this document generally proposes that development occurs in the Niles Ditch watershed, on the south side of existing Winfield Town limits.

The Sanitary Sewer Limited Scope Master Plan should be updated after adoption of this comprehensive plan.

Population Characteristics

It is important to review population characteristics of a community, so that we can have an accurate understanding of who we are planning for. As part of this review, it is helpful to analyze how Winfield compares to state and national averages. Unfortunately the most accurate demographic information, the 2000 Census of Population and Housing, is somewhat dated. With that caution, the following information should be considered as representative of the citizens of Winfield.

Income

According to the 2000 Census, Winfield's median household income (\$65,641 in 1999) was over 50% above the state average of \$41,567 and the national average of \$41,994. This is a significant difference, meaning Winfield's residents are much more affluent than average.

Housing

The median house value in Winfield (\$180,100 in 2000) was higher than Indiana's average (\$94,300). Homeownership at over 90% is almost 20% higher than the rest of the state. Houses in the town are larger (have more rooms) than the state average. The housing/population density is significantly lower than the state average for cities.

Employment

Unemployment was significantly below the state average in 2000.

The mean travel time to work was 30.1 minutes in 2000, somewhat higher than the state average.

Race & Origin

There are few minorities in Winfield, with 93% of the population white non-Hispanic. In fact the black and Hispanic population is significantly below that of the rest of Lake County. The foreign-born population in Winfield at 8.9% is significantly above the Indiana average. Most foreign-born residents are from Europe. Ancestry is primarily German, followed by Irish, Polish, English and Slovak.

Education

28.1% of the population of Winfield had a Bachelor's degree or higher in 2000, more than the 19.4% in Indiana and the 24.4% nationally. Winfield's residents are better educated than average.

Families & Household Size

84% of Winfield households were family households in 2000, but less than half of those households had children under the age of 18. The average household size in town was 3.08 in 2000, compared to 2.53 for Indiana.

Population Projections

Since this comprehensive plan update covers development of Winfield through 2025, an important step was to develop a population projection for that time period. The comprehensive planning consultant looked at several different population projections as a starting point.

County Population Projections

The Indiana Business Research Center (IBRC), part of the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, is considered the official source of population projections by most Indiana counties (projections are done at the county level). The IBRC predicts that Lake County will grow only about 1% annually until 2030. The 1-% county growth rate would not be practical to apply to the town because it does not represent the trend of Winfield Township's growth, which is the highest in the county, offsetting the population loss of the northern townships. Additionally, the IBRC's projections appear to be too conservative, even for the county. The Census Bureau's recently released 2005 Lake County population estimate was 493,297, which is 11,477 more people than was predicted by IBRC.

These traditional population projections (done only at the county level) are based on birth, death and migration. Because the town's population growth has been due largely to new residential development and the potential for expanding corporate boundaries, these issues need to be considered in the town's population projections.

Township Population Estimates

It is reasonable to assume that if Winfield continues to grow, it will be to the south, eventually annexing most of Winfield Township. According to the 2000 Decennial Census, Winfield Township's population in April of 2000 was officially 6,878, more than five times the number of people who lived in the area in 1970, well before the town was formed. The township's population was most recently estimated at 8,591. The total population of Winfield Township has grown by 1635 people over the past five years, an annual average growth rate of 4.3%.

Projections, Estimates and the Crystal Ball: First, a word of warning -- making population projections and estimates is not an exact science. The future will always be unknown. With that understanding, certain techniques and reputable sources can make some of these "guesses" more reliable than others.

A population projection is a prediction of future demographic conditions that will occur if the assumptions made as part of the projection technique prove true - these assumptions might include the continuation of a certain rate of growth, decline in number of births, etc.

Census Bureau population estimates are a prediction of current demographic conditions, created by starting with the most recent census population, and then adding or subtracting the demographic components of population change for the time period. The estimated number of births is added and the estimated number of deaths is subtracted. The result is adjusted for net migration, calculated using several components including net internal migration and net foreign-born international migration.

RECENT WINFIELD TOWNSHIP POPULATION ESTIMATES

	Winfield township, Lake County, Indiana Total Population	# change	% Change from previous
July 1, 2005	8,591	251	3.0%
July 1, 2004	8,340	462	5.9%
July 1, 2003	7,878	282	3.7%
July 1, 2002	7,596	327	4.5%
July 1, 2001	7,269	313	4.5%
July 1, 2000	6,956		

Source: US Bureau of the Census

RECENT TOWN OF WINFIELD POPULATION ESTIMATES

	Winfield, Indiana Total Population	# change	% Change from previous
July 1, 2005	3,523	198	6.0%
July 1, 2004	3,325	462	14.0%
July 1, 2003	2,917	241	9.0%
July 1, 2002	2,676	294	12.3%
July 1, 2001	2,382	283	13.5%
July 1, 2000	2,099		

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Town Special Census, Population Estimates and Projections

The Town of Winfield's population was most recently estimated at 3,523 in 2005, accounting for 41% of the township's total population, but a more accurate population count for the town will be available when the results of the Town's special census are released in September or October of 2006. The town's growth rate has out-paced the township's, with the town growing by 1424 people over the past five years, resulting in an annual average growth rate of almost 11.0%. Projecting this 11.0% average annual rate of growth out to 2025 results in a future population of 28,404, over eight times today's population, a very liberal projection.

The population estimates by the Census add an average of almost 300 people per year since 2000. If this trend of 300 additional people each year continues until 2025, the population of Winfield Township would be 9523, almost three times today's population, but still a conservative projection.

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In fact, according to town records, there are already approved residential subdivisions, which are not yet built-out, that would result in approximately 1890 additional lots, housing around 5800 additional people within the corporate limits of Winfield, matching almost exactly the above conservative estimate.

Current Developments	Total Units	# of Units Built	Buildable Units Remaining
Hidden Creek I	100	97	3
Hidden Creek II	49	0	49
Meadows	82	82	0
Trees	174	154	20
Green Tree Estates	14	0	14
Prairie Crossings	46	13	33
Deer Creek Estates	112	4	108
Country Meadows Estates	322	259	63
Doubletree Lake Estates East & West	1900	300	1600
		Total	1890

Add to that pending development town officials are aware of, representing almost 700 more lots, and an additional 2100 residents could be expected. This means at build-out, the total population within the corporate limits would be at least 11,000. With some annexations, the lowest possible population projection for 2025 would likely be 15,000. **Considering that it is better to "over plan" for a population, the population projection for Winfield for 2025 is 15,000, encompassing much of Winfield Township.**

Pending Developments	Total Units	# of Units Built	Buildable Units Remaining
Stonegate Commons	186	0	186
Stonegate	162	0	162
Wynbrook	60	0	60
Falcon Manor	41	0	41
Wyndance	213	0	213
		Total	662

