

# **Petitioner's Exhibit 4**



# COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

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2023



# Acknowledgements

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2016 Winfield Downtown Master Plan
2016 Sanitary Master Plan
2019 Thoroughfare Plan
2021 Park Impact Fee
Town of Winfield Zoning Map 2022

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01.

# INTRODUCTION





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# Purpose



The primary purpose of a comprehensive plan is to articulate the broader vision of the community and establish guiding principles and policies for future growth and development. Indiana Code states that a comprehensive plan should promote the public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, and the general welfare for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of development. A comprehensive plan does not focus on the needs and desires of one property owner, business, or neighborhood. This Plan is intended to be broad in nature to provide community leaders with the flexibility to implement the community-wide vision, goals, and strategies while responding to changing community conditions that are likely to occur over the life of the Plan.

The State of Indiana has developed specific requirements and minimum content for a comprehensive plan (500 series of IC 33-7-4). The elements of a comprehensive plan, at a minimum, should include:

- A statement of objective for future development of the jurisdiction;
- A statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction;
- A statement of policy for the development of public ways, public spaces, public lands, public structure, and public utilities.

A comprehensive plan may also include a multitude of additional topics, community issues and strategies, such as surveys/studies of current conditions, maps/graphics, reports, and recommendations.



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# What is a Comprehensive Plan



The 2023 Town of Winfield Comprehensive Plan is a guide for decision making that identifies and encourages a common vision for Winfield. The plan is based on forward-thinking strategies that promote community strengths and avert local challenges.

Key elements to the comprehensive plan include:

## DATA & ANALYSIS

Assessment of existing community conditions regarding demographic and socioeconomic trends, market trends, barriers, and regional influence.

## COMMUNITY INPUT

Public feedback on perceptions of Winfield collected from residents via community meetings and an online community survey.

## VISION & FOCUS

Statements that strive to create a goal for Winfield in the future and provide direction toward that desired outcome

## LAND USE & STRATEGIES

Recommendations for strategies and land use guidance intended to serve as planning and development tools.

The comprehensive plan document will be used as a policy guide to direct the decision-making process regarding development and growth management. This includes land use, transportation, utilities, and public services. At a minimum, a comprehensive plan should be a tool for land use planning. However, the Winfield Comprehensive Plan also includes several strategies to support community initiatives regarding quality of place, connectivity, and economic development. These topics are important as they can influence and support the town's growth, development, and investment decisions.



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# Key Findings



Since 2000, Winfield is one of the fastest growing communities in the state of Indiana. It is encouraging that the Town has experienced tremendous growth as this suggests Winfield is a desirable community. However, rapid growth can create challenges for local government that must provide and maintain quality services to support and keep pace with growth.

Managing new development associated with growth to support highest and best land use may also be a challenge. The Comprehensive Planning effort will account for, and leverage key factors affecting the Town and development. This will include guidance and recommendations on land use, development, transportation, and utility improvements.

The plan's final strategies will include catalytic projects to help the Town achieve the vision laid out in the Comprehensive Plan.

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# Updating the Plan



It will be important for the town to update the current version of the comprehensive plan moving forward as vision and goals evolve. The main purpose of the plan is to outline the current vision and goals of the town which are likely to evolve in the next few years. The plan must be periodically updated to verify the vision and goals are still relevant and true to the town's residents and businesses. Continued population growth and new development could be a driver of plan updated in the future.

Development comes with both opportunities and challenges. Residents of Winfield expressed concern about unplanned rapid growth and the impact this type of development could have on their community. Over development could destroy the natural rural character that many residents value. The 2023 Town of Winfield Comprehensive Plan strives to promote smart strategic growth and balanced development while limiting overdevelopment. The goal of this approach is to promote community sustainability and provision of town services while preserving the community character that contributes to Winfield's identity.



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## COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

The Vision Statement is an articulation of the values and aspirations of the Winfield, Indiana community. The goals and policies of the Winfield Comprehensive Plan are designed to help the community achieve this broad vision.

The Vision for the Town of Winfield was developed by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and is based on the input provided by Winfield citizens and stakeholders.

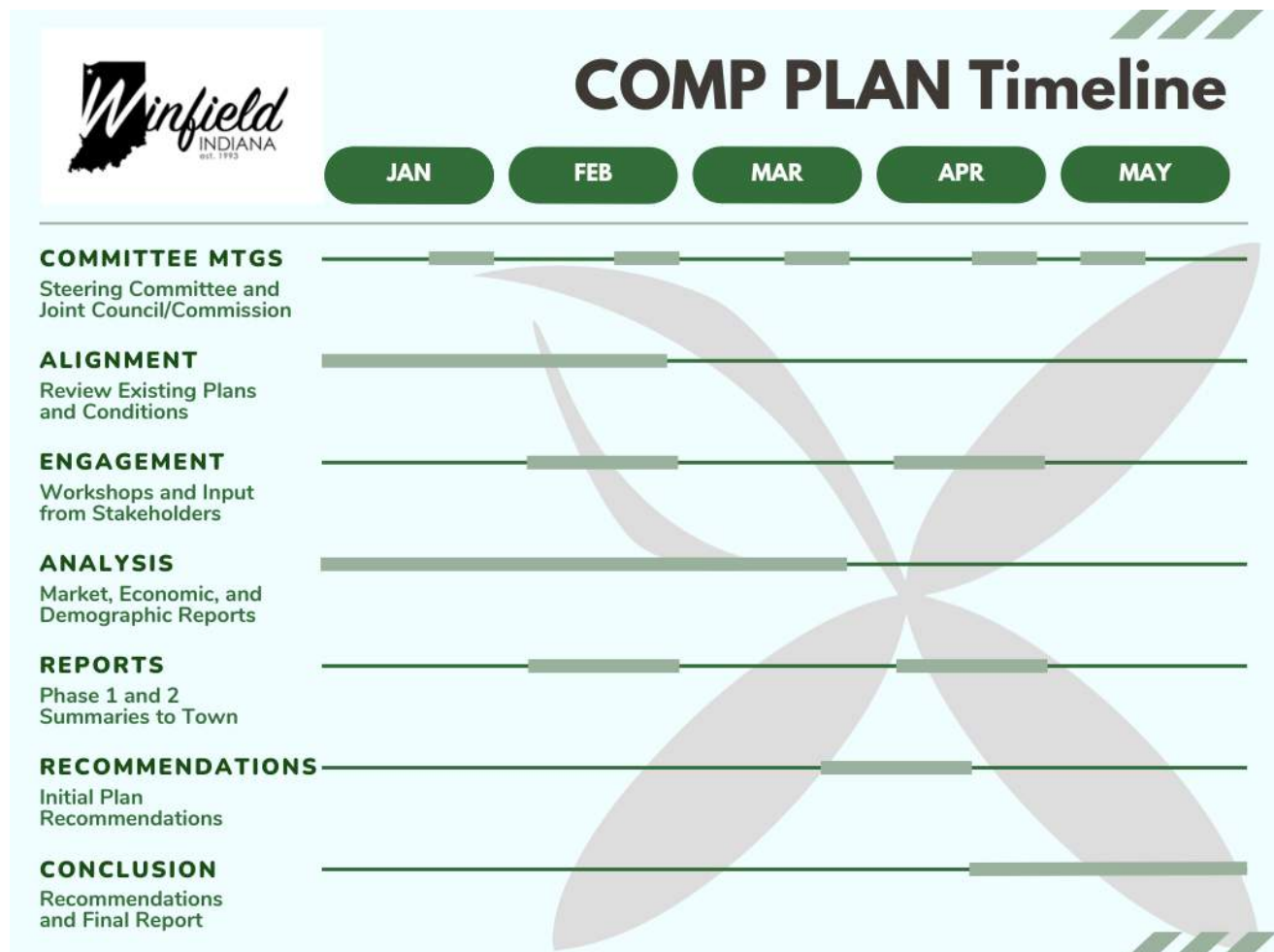


*Winfield is a vibrant and welcoming place committed to sustainable growth and development, while preserving our community character. We offer a high quality of life, with excellent schools, healthcare, modern amenities, and recreational opportunities. We are a community building upon strong foundations of the past for a bright future, and a lasting sense of Winfield pride through the enhancement of place.*



# Planning Process Timeline

The Town of Winfield partnered with the Veridus Group and Taylor Siefker Williams (TSW) to complete a new Comprehensive Plan, and the six-month planning process began on January 2, 2023. The methodology for this plan included data gathering and analysis on existing conditions, public engagement and consensus building, and development of recommendations and a final plan. The process aimed to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that are currently affecting or could impact the town in the next 10 to 20 years. The planning process also set out to establish a community vision and create strategies and tools that enable Winfield to maintain its quality of life.





An aerial photograph of a town, likely Winfield, showing a dense grid of streets and buildings. The image is in black and white, with a dark, moody tone. It occupies the left side of the page, partially overlapping the green header and footer.

# SCOPE OF WORK



***Existing Conditions and Analysis*** This phase kicked off the project with a steering committee of town leadership and elected officials. Once underway, the planning team reviewed existing planning documents, assessed demographic and market data affecting the town, identified existing land use conditions, and formed a public engagement strategy.

***Public Engagement and Consensus Building*** The second phase of the process included two public meetings and an online survey to receive feedback from Winfield residents. The first public meeting allowed residents to provide input and identify potential land uses for the town. A draft future land use map was shared during the second public meeting based on phase one findings and input from the first community meeting. Residents provided edits and feedback to the proposed land use scenarios as well as goals and recommendations to guide future policies on development, during the second meeting. The community survey was an accessible opportunity for a broad range of residents to participate in the planning process and share their priorities for the town's future.

***Draft Plan Development and Growth Scenarios*** The third and final phase of the planning process compiled findings and elements from the previous two phases into a planning document that identified future land use recommendations, recommendations and strategies for plan implementation, and a guiding vision for the Town of Winfield. Growth scenarios were included within the land use recommendations which illustrate how the town may change if the plan is implemented.

SECTIONAL AND ROAD MAP  
LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA.  
BY T. H. BALL.  
1891.

COPYRIGHT 1891 BY T. H. BALL.

COMMUNITY  
HISTORY



# HISTORY OF WINFIELD

The Town of Winfield is located in Winfield Township, Lake County, Indiana and was incorporated in 1993. Prior to incorporation, Winfield was part of Winfield Township as an unincorporated town. Regional growth pressures from neighboring communities and the potential for annexation were threats to the unincorporated town, which led local leaders to officially incorporate. Preserving the town's unique character remains a priority for community members.

The town has grown substantially since its founding. Much of this growth has been single-family residential development and has been driven by the town's proximity to Chicago. The town offers residents a semi-rural quality of life while being able to access the third largest metropolitan area in the United States. The appeal of Winfield has caused the town's population to increase by nearly 5,000 people between the 2000 and 2020 census.

The 2020 census recorded Winfield's population at 7,181 residents and the most current estimates suggest the town's population is 7,546 residents. The pace of growth places Winfield in the top 10 fastest growing communities in Indiana. Despite this growth, Winfield has maintained its quality of life and added amenities including commercial and retail developments. Low taxes, the availability of utilities, strong schools, and proximity to major roadways like I-65 and U.S. 231, have made Winfield a very desirable place to live and build.



# HISTORY OF WINFIELD

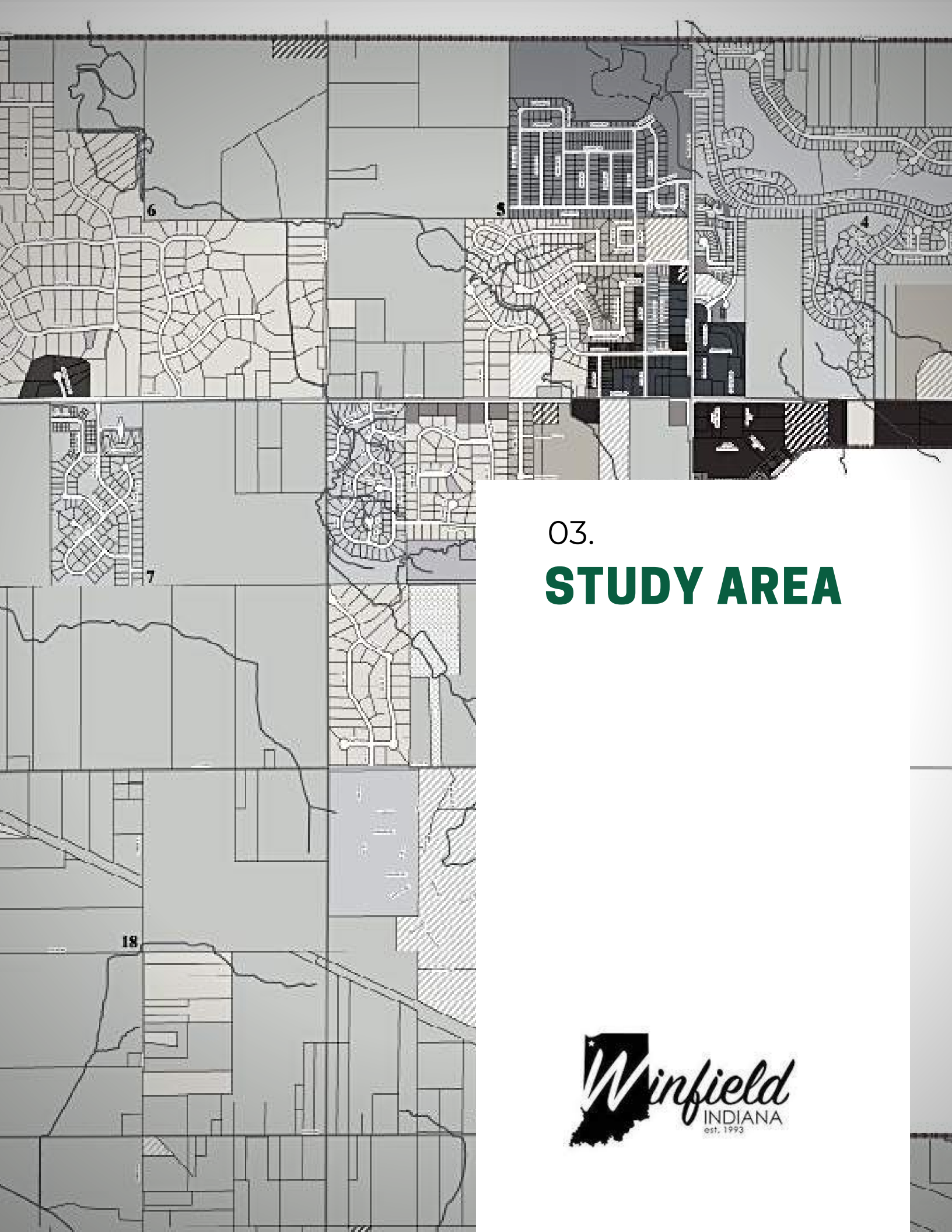
In 2011, a new interchange was opened at I-65 and 109th Avenue which greatly improved accessibility to Winfield and spurred additional residential and commercial development. Growth pressures from other communities including Crown Point and Merrillville also shaped Winfield's ability to grow as the town is landlocked by these two communities to the west and north respectively. Lake of the Four Seasons and an unincorporated community, also border Winfield to the east. For these reasons, future growth for the town will likely occur south toward U.S. 231.

The town's growth and pressures from surrounding areas has necessitated Winfield to adapt and change policies, services, and ordinances. These changes and evolving needs necessitated the town create this new Comprehensive plan as the previous document was completed in 2007. The new comprehensive plan seeks to equip the town with tool necessary to maintain a high quality of life and sustainably provide services to residents.





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## STUDY AREA



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.

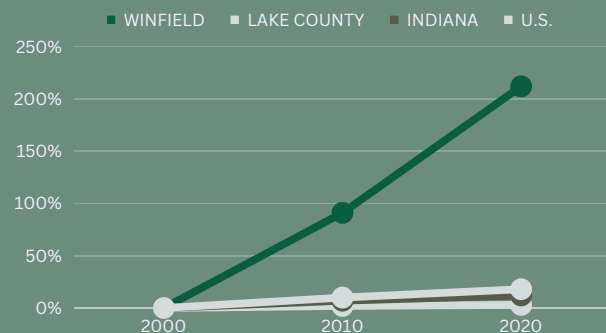
# DATA ANALYSIS

## 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

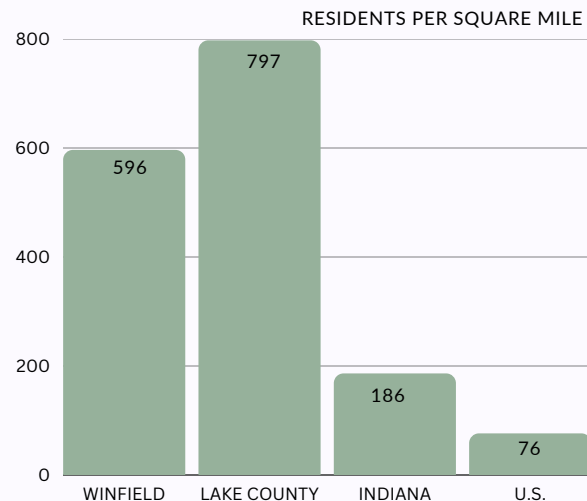
## DEMOGRAPHIC AND POPULATION TRENDS ANALYSIS

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.

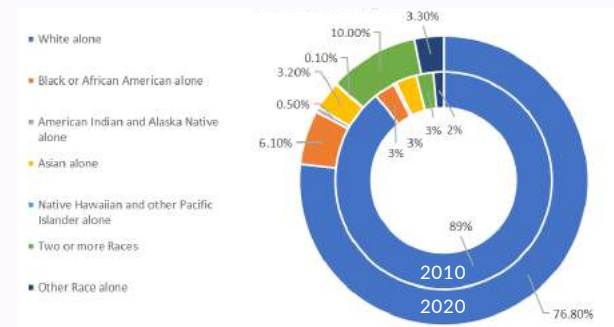
Winfield's population is fairly dense with an average of 596 residents per square mile. This is much greater than the population density of Indiana and the United States but lower than Lake County as a whole. Lake County's significant density is likely influenced by more urban development around the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

