

Appendix A

**COMMUNITY
PROFILE**

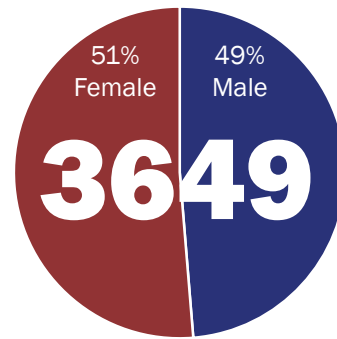


Appendix A Community Profile

Numbers and data of a community are an integral component of comprehensive plan; however, they are only a part of the plan.

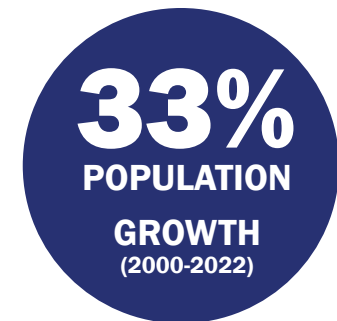
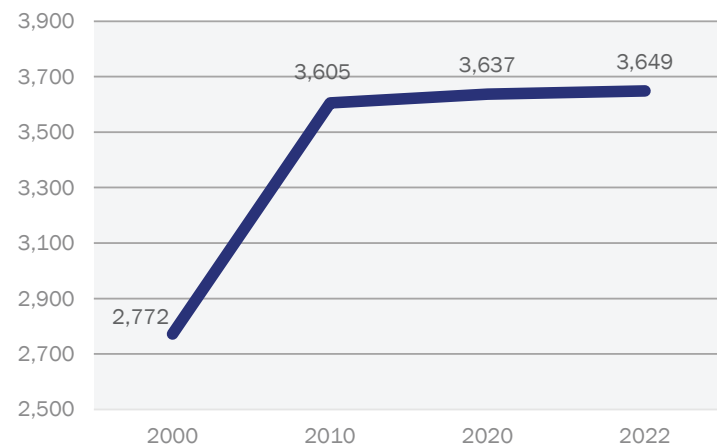
DEMOGRAPHICS Population

Leo-Cedarville makes up less than 1% of the population of Allen County. 96% of Leo-Cedarville's population is white race, with the other 4% being mixed or other races.



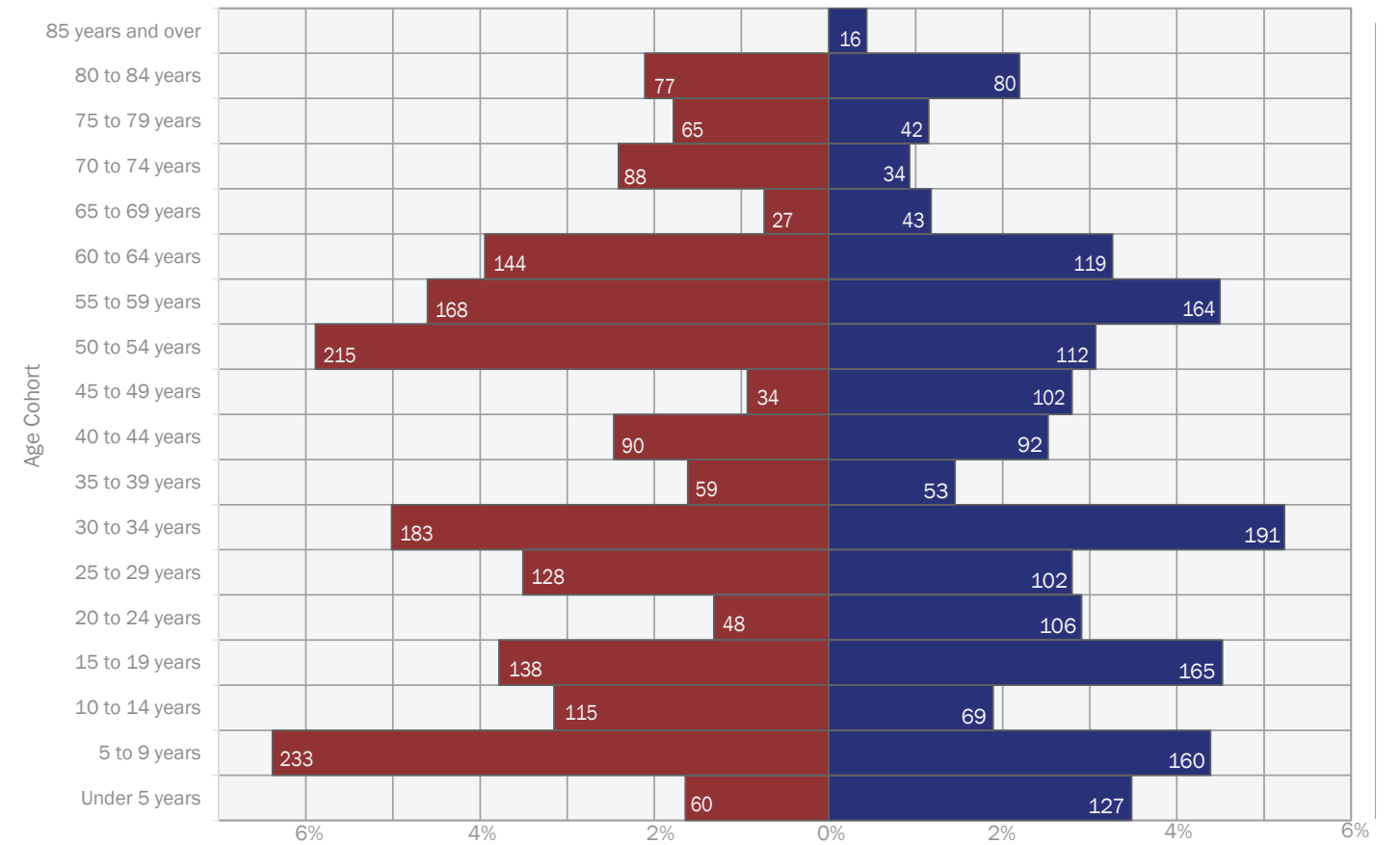
3649
TOTAL POPULATION
(2022)

Population Growth



Projected to grow to 3,727 if Leo-Cedarville stays consistent with population projections for Allen County. With EACS expansion, LC could expect to exceed the growth rate for Allen County.

Population by Age and Sex



Leo-Cedarville's population pyramid illustrates a generational pattern with the largest age cohorts being 5-9 year olds; 30-34 year olds; and 50-59 year olds.



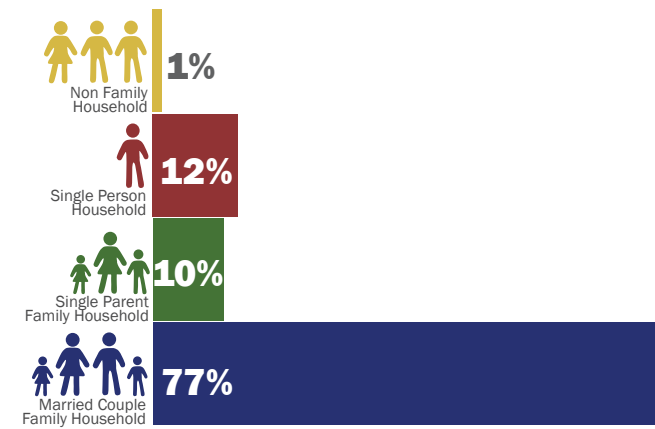
MEDIAN AGE

All data derived from American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates unless noted otherwise.

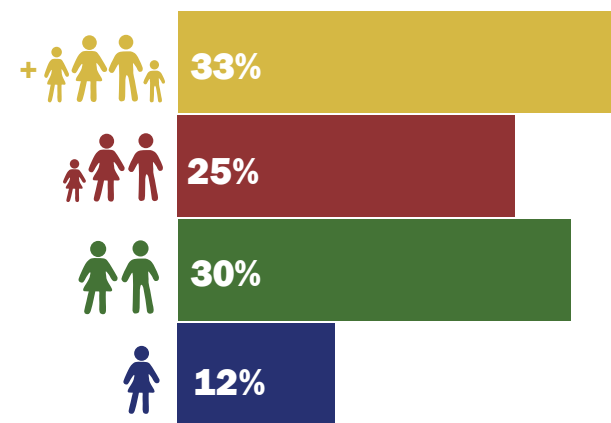
Housing + Families



Household Type

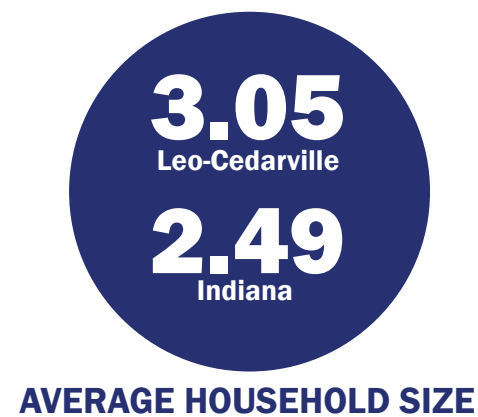
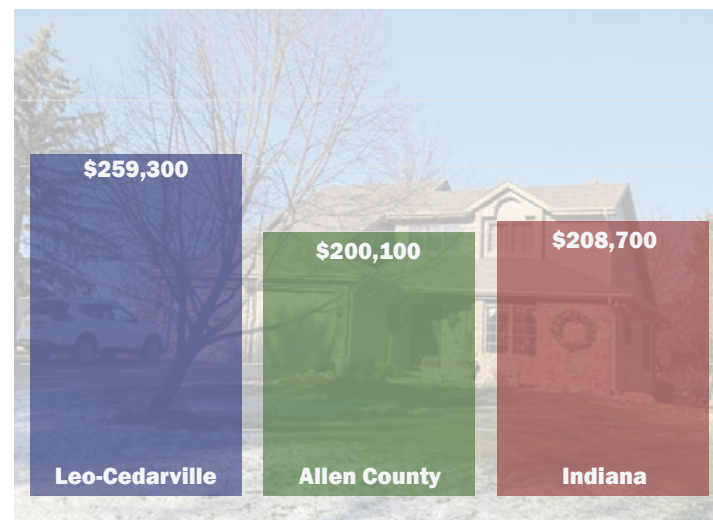


Household Size



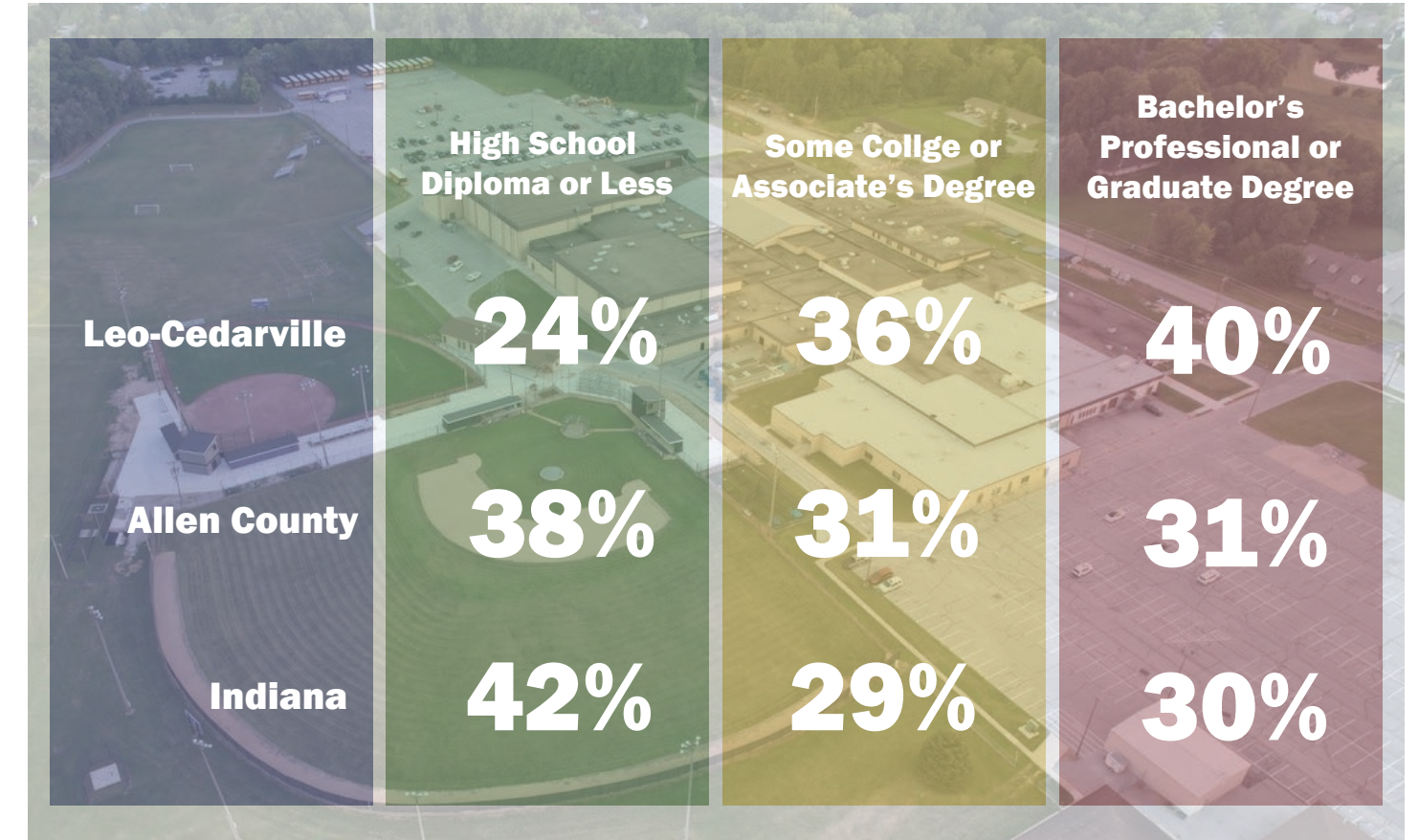
Households consist mostly of families. 58% of the households in Leo-Cedarville consist of 3 or more people. And nearly 77% of households are considered to be a married couple family (married with or without children).

Median House Value



Education

Educational Attainment



Nearly 98.5% of Leo-Cedarville residents have at least a high school education, and 51.6% went on to obtain a degree in higher education.

All data derived from American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates unless noted otherwise.

Income + Employment

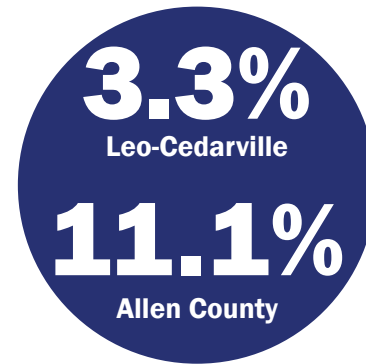
Median Household Income			
	2000	2010	2020
Leo-Cedarville	\$64,482	\$79,767	\$101,042
Allen County	\$47,054	\$57,104	\$65,732
Indiana	\$44,613	\$58,235	\$66,785

Employment by Industry	
Construction	5.6%
Manufacturing	22.8%
Wholesale trade	1.3%
Retail trade	4.3%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	7.2%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, leasing	13.6%
Professional, scientific, mgmt, admin, waste mgmt svcs	7.9%
Educational svcs, and health care, and social assistance	20.0%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food svcs	6.0%
Other svcs, except public admin	7.6%
Public admin	3.6%

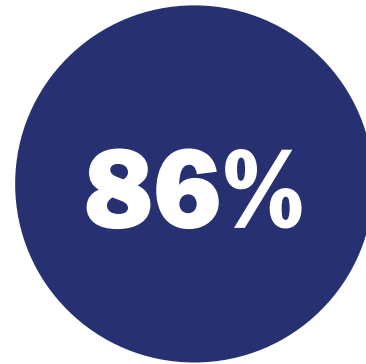
The top industries of employment are:

1. Manufacturing at 22.8%
2. Education, health care, social assistance at 20%
3. Finance, Real Estate, Insurance at 13.6%

No one works in the “information” or “agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining” industries.



POVERTY RATE



COMMUTE OUTSIDE LEO-CEDARVILLE FOR WORK



AVERAGE COMMUTE TO WORK

Leo-Cedarville is a bedroom community as evidence by the quantity of commuters and average commute time. Land use analysis supports this idea with over 80% of existing land use being designated for residential or agriculture.

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Appendix B

**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

Appendix B Community Engagement

Feedback from the community drives a comprehensive plan to being a document that truly represents the community's vision.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Inclusive and comprehensive engagement throughout the planning process is imperative in ensuring Envision 2035 is an authentic representation of the community's vision and implementation. This is achieved through ongoing community dialogue, collaboration, and targeted engagement opportunities.

The Project Team was proactive about engaging the community, which is apparent throughout this appendix. The following data is a summary of community engagement from the following engagement opportunities:

- Community Survey
- Planning Pop-Up
- Community Workshop
- Community Open House
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Steering Committee

Overall, the community was engaged and active throughout the process. The Community Engagement results strengthen and support the Goals + Strategies throughout the Envision 2035 Comprehensive Plan.



A graphic prepared for community engagement promotion.

What is a comprehensive plan?
It is a planning document that serves as a detailed guide for the future growth and development of a community. It includes tools to develop a vision for the community and gives local decision makers and organizations building blocks to create a better tomorrow for Leo-Cedarville.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

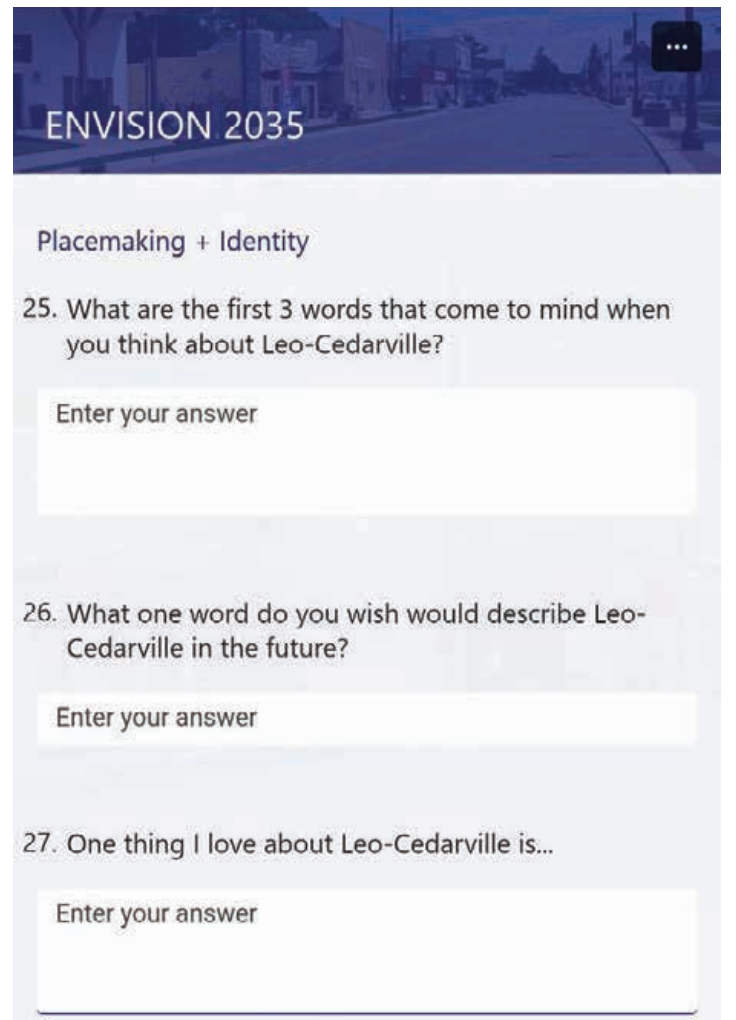
Having a rich history of active engagement, the Envision 2035 Community Survey was created to gather a broad span of feedback and to reach as many community members as possible. The survey was available online and as a hard-copy at Town Hall.

The survey consisted of 49 questions including the following topics:

- Participant Information
- Land Use, Development, + Infrastructure
- Parks, Recreation, + Natural Systems
- Transportation
- Placemaking + Identity
- Housing
- Downtown

Aside from being published on the project website and Town's website, promotion of the survey was also found on the Town's social media pages. There were a total of 10 posts scheduled to promote public involvement in the Envision 2035 Planning Initiative beginning August 1, 2024, and concluding September 23, 2024. The posts included information about a comprehensive plan, where to take the survey, and community events that residents could attend to provide additional feedback.

Additionally, the Town sent a postcard to all addresses within the project boundaries which promoted the Community Survey and Community Workshop. The postcards were sent at the beginning of August 2024.



A snapshot of the community survey.

THE COMMUNITY SURVEY RECEIVED 412 SURVEY RESPONSES, WHICH IS 11.3% OF THE POPULATION.



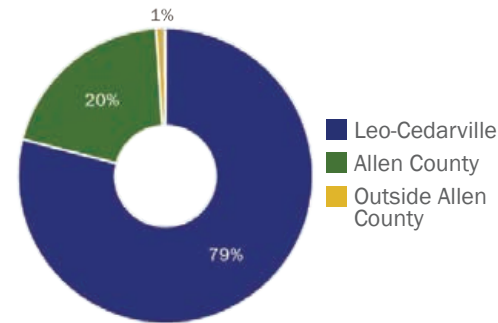
Postcards were sent to each address in the planning boundary.



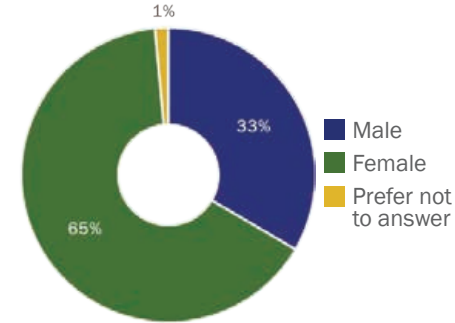
Participant Information

Participants provided general information to gather context of who was answering the questions and to compare the data with *U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Years Estimates (2022). The first seven questions on the survey focused on gathering this information.

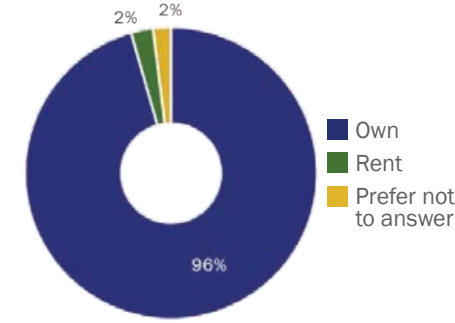
1) I live in...



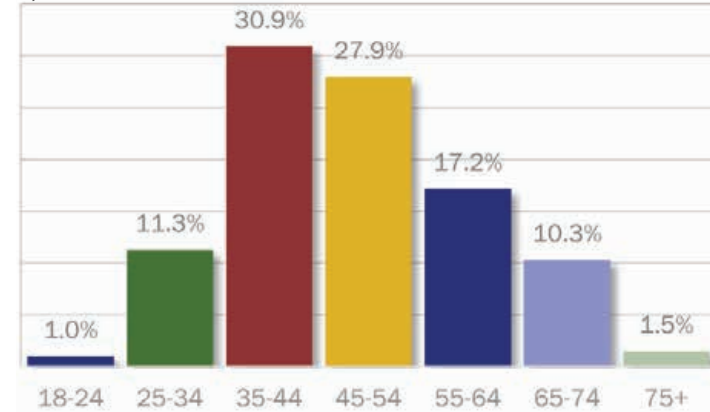
2) I identify as...



3) I ___ my house...

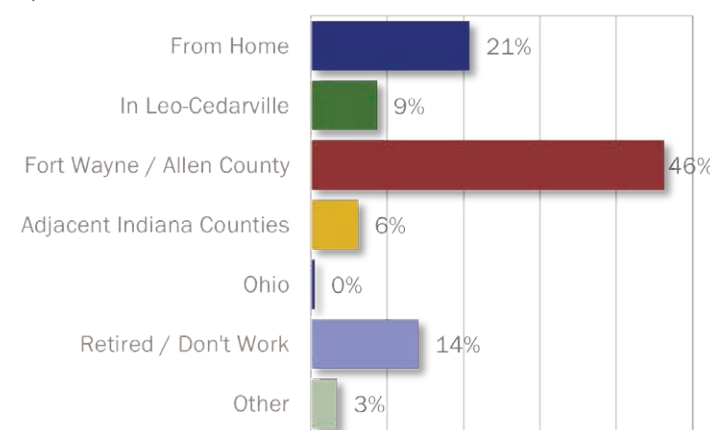


4) I am...

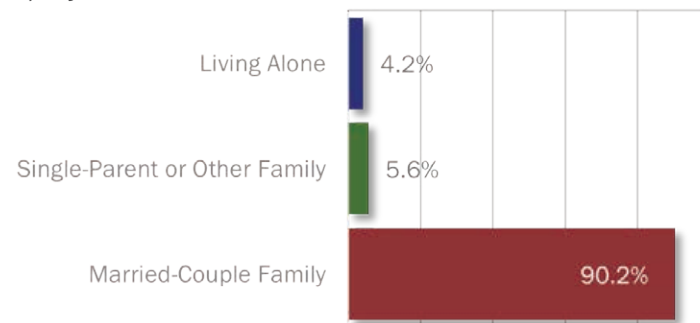


*The median age is 34

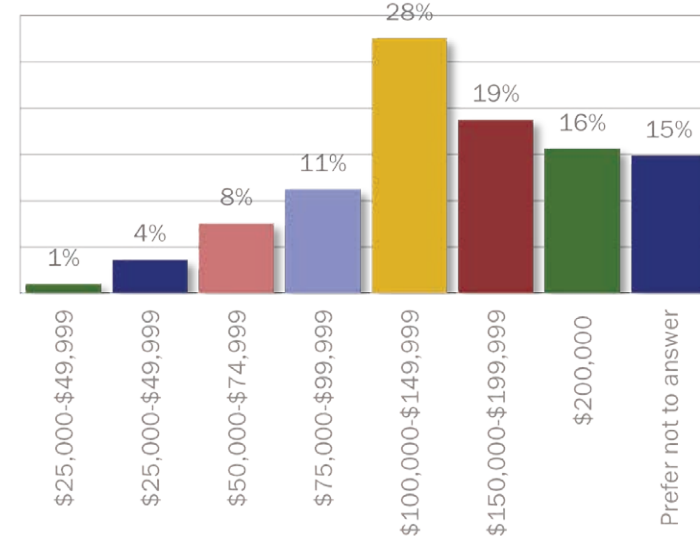
6) I work...



5) My household is best described as...



7) My household income is...



*The median household income is \$101,042

Land Use, Development, + Infrastructure

8) Select the top 3 development priorities...



Because respondents were asked to select three options each, the results will not add up 100%.

9) Rank the following services...



Below Average Average Above Average

Land Use, Development, + Infrastructure Cont'd

10) The image that best represents how participants envision **future non-residential development** in Leo-Cedarville...



11) The image that best represents how participants envision **future non-residential streetscapes** in Leo-Cedarville...



12) Additional comments regarding Land Use, Development, + Infrastructure...

The 135 responses were organized into the following categories. The larger the circle, the more responses that category received. Responses could be in the positive or negative.



Parks, Recreation, + Natural Systems

13) Does Leo-Cedarville have enough public park land?

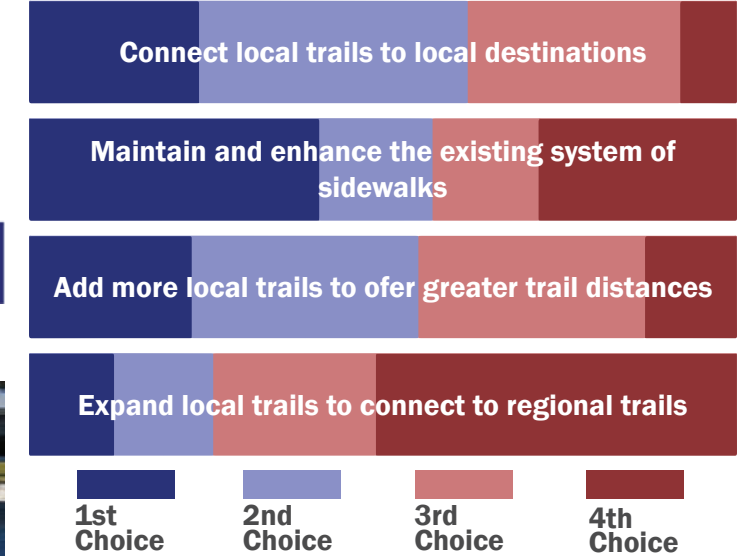


14) Select the top 3 park + recreation priorities...



Because respondents were asked to select three options each, the results will not add up 100%.

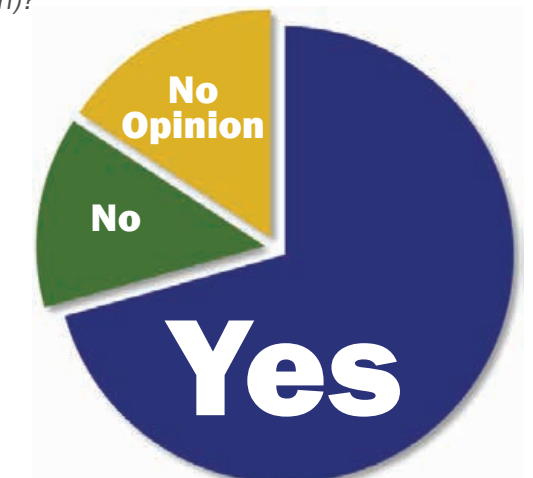
15) Prioritize the following in order of importance...



16) Should park user fees be investigated?

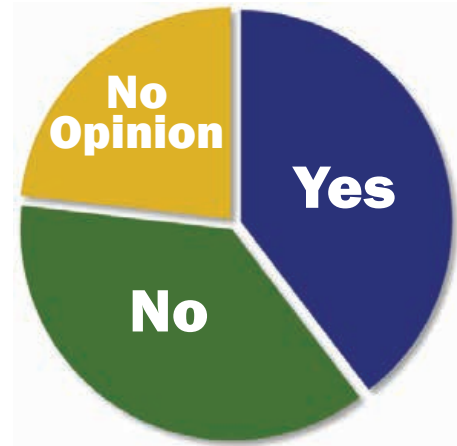


17) Should the Town use Town resources to fund a sidewalk connection to Cedarville Park (Imagination Station)?



Parks, Recreation, + Natural Systems Cont'd

18) Should the Town use Town resources to fund a community / recreation center?



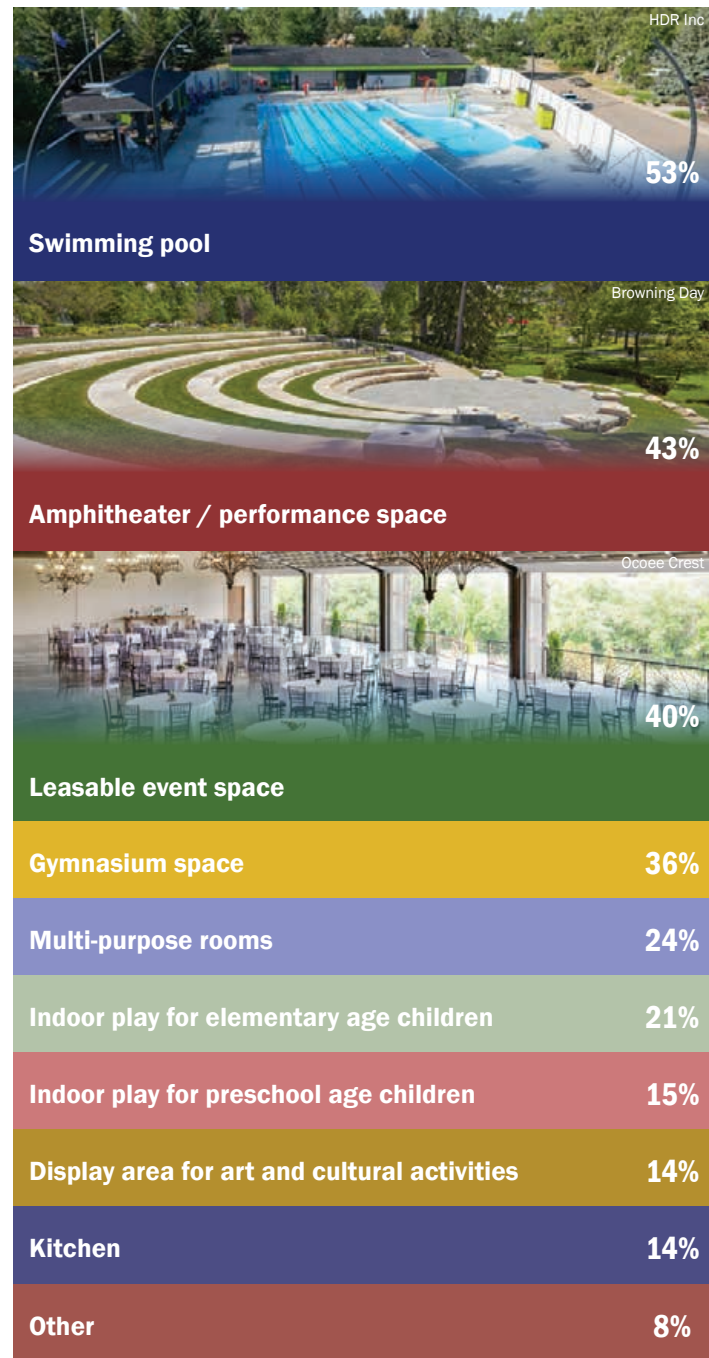
20) Additional comments regarding Parks, Recreation, + Natural Systems...

The 79 responses were organized into the following categories. The larger the circle, the more responses that category received. Responses could be in the positive or negative.



19) Choose the top 3 amenities that should be included in a community / recreation center...

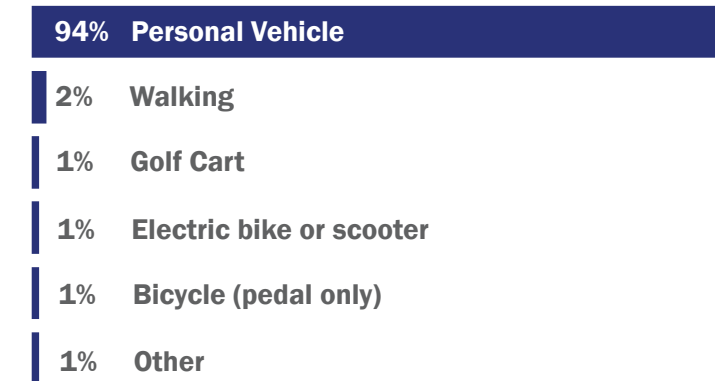
Participants were asked to select 3 options.



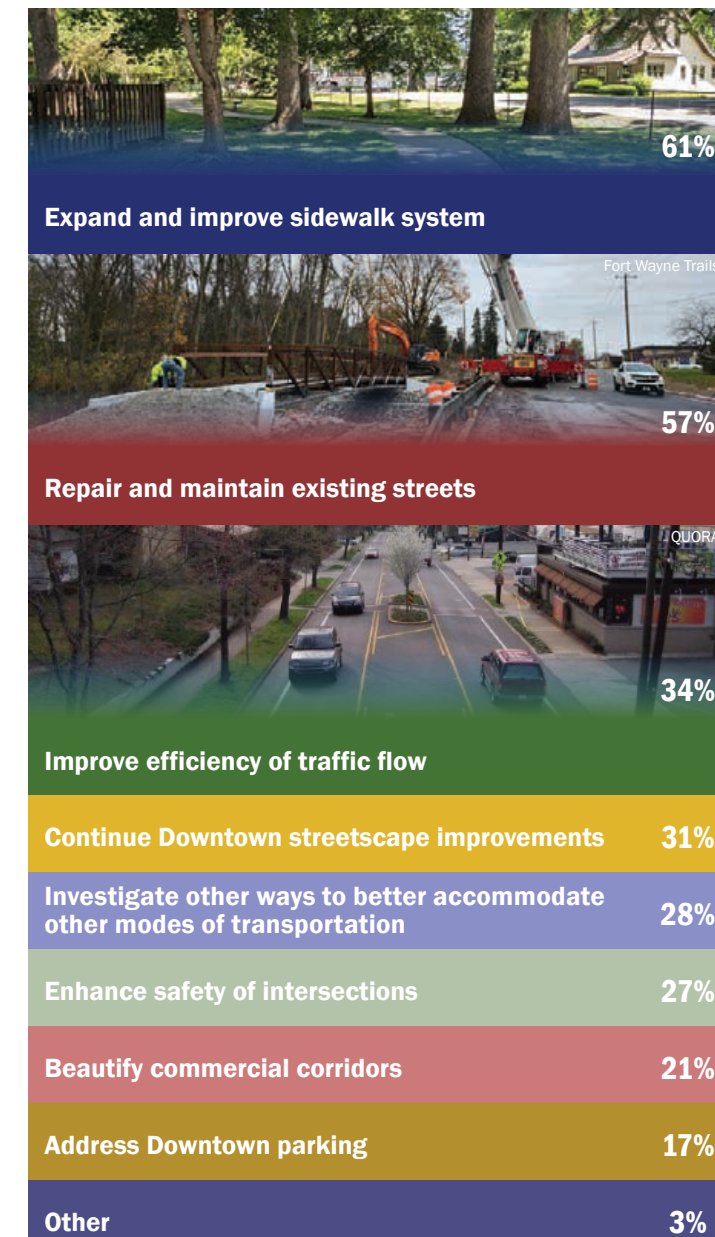
Because respondents were asked to select three options each, the results will not add up 100%.

Transportation

21) My primary mode of transportation is...



22) Choose the top 3 transportation priorities...



Because respondents were asked to select three options each, the results will not add up 100%.

23) Rank the importance of accessibility via walking or biking to the following destinations...



24) Additional comments regarding Transportation...

The 61 responses were organized into the following categories. The larger the circle, the more responses that category received. Responses could be in the positive or negative.



Placemaking + Identity

25) The first 3 words that come to mind when thinking about Leo-Cedarville...



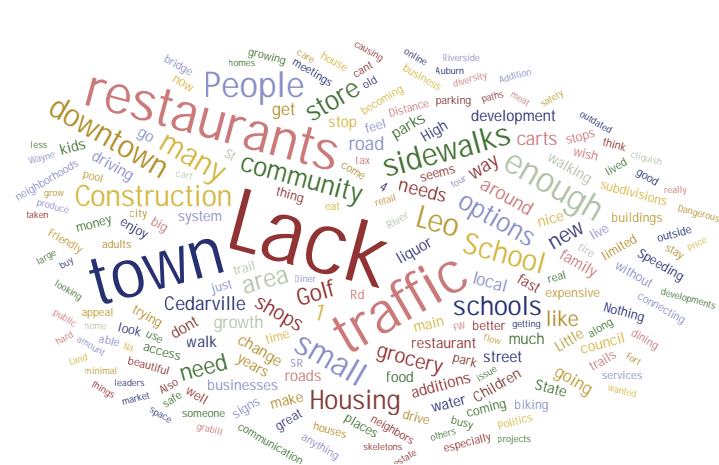
27) One thing I love about Leo-Cedarville...



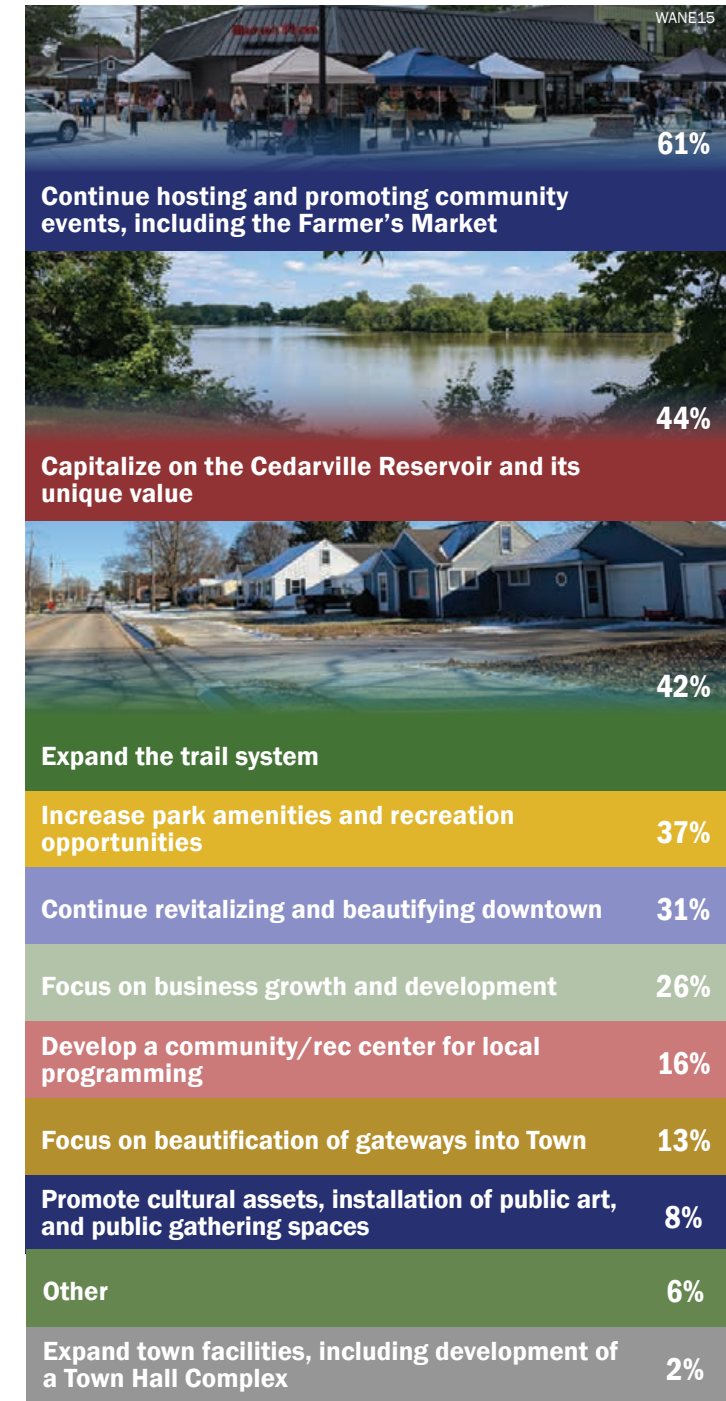
26) One word you wished described Leo-Cedarville's future...



28) My least favorite thing about Leo-Cedarville is...

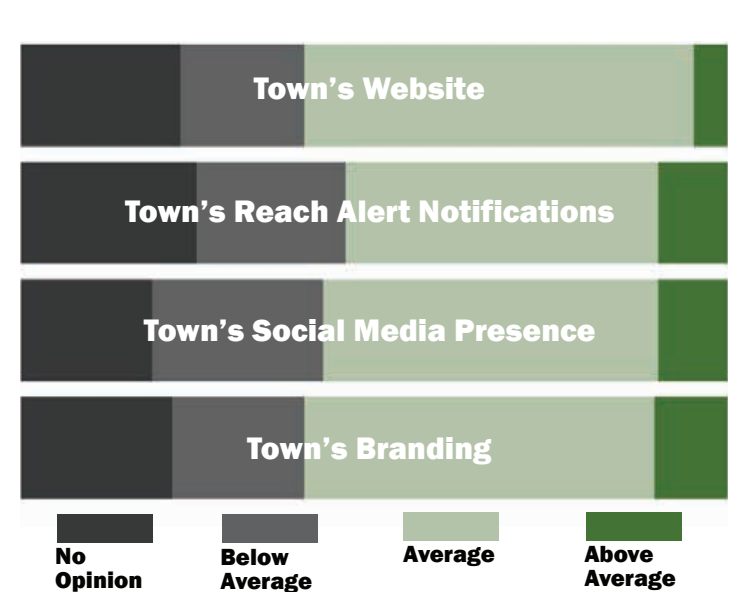


29) Choose the top 3 quality of life initiatives to focus on over the next 10 years...



Because respondents were asked to select three options each, the results will not add up 100%.

30) Rate the Town's public communication and identity...



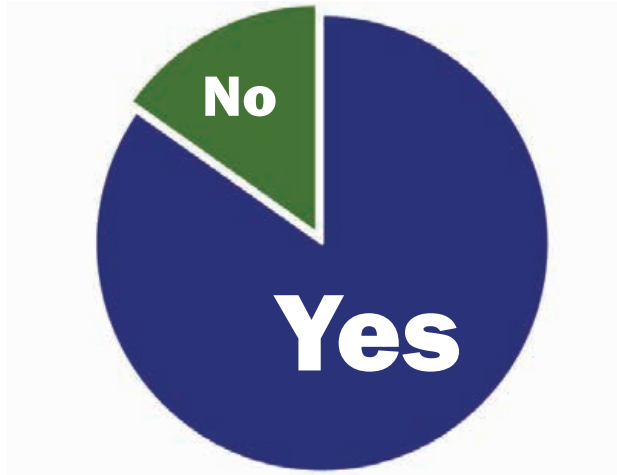
31) Additional comments regarding Placemaking + Identity...

The 52 responses were organized into the following categories. The larger the circle, the more responses that category received. Responses could be in the positive or negative.

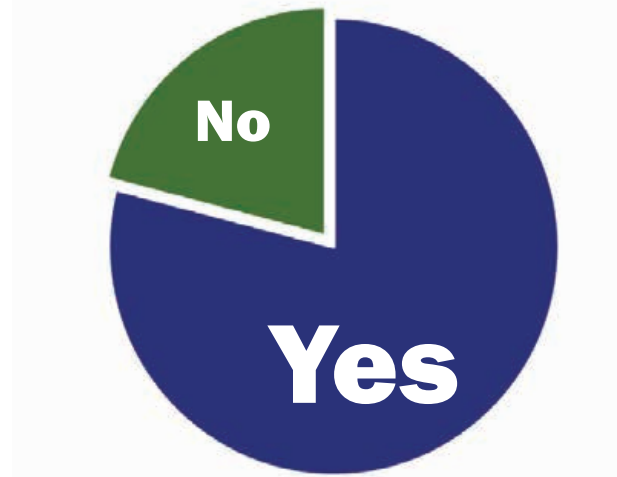


Housing

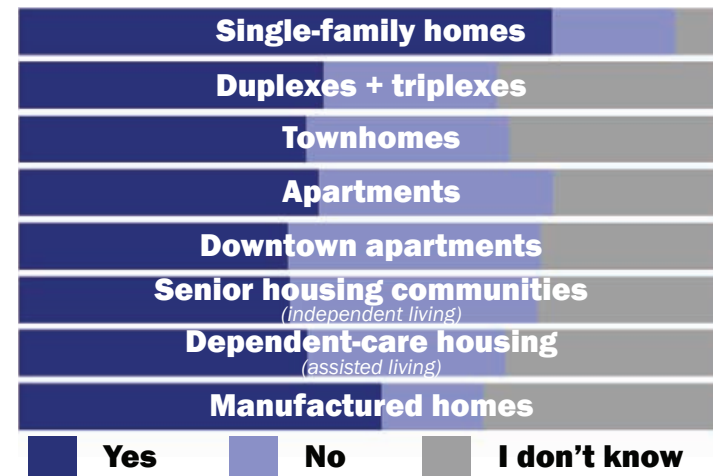
32) Does the existing housing stock meet your current needs?



33) Do you believe the housing stock will meet your future housing needs?

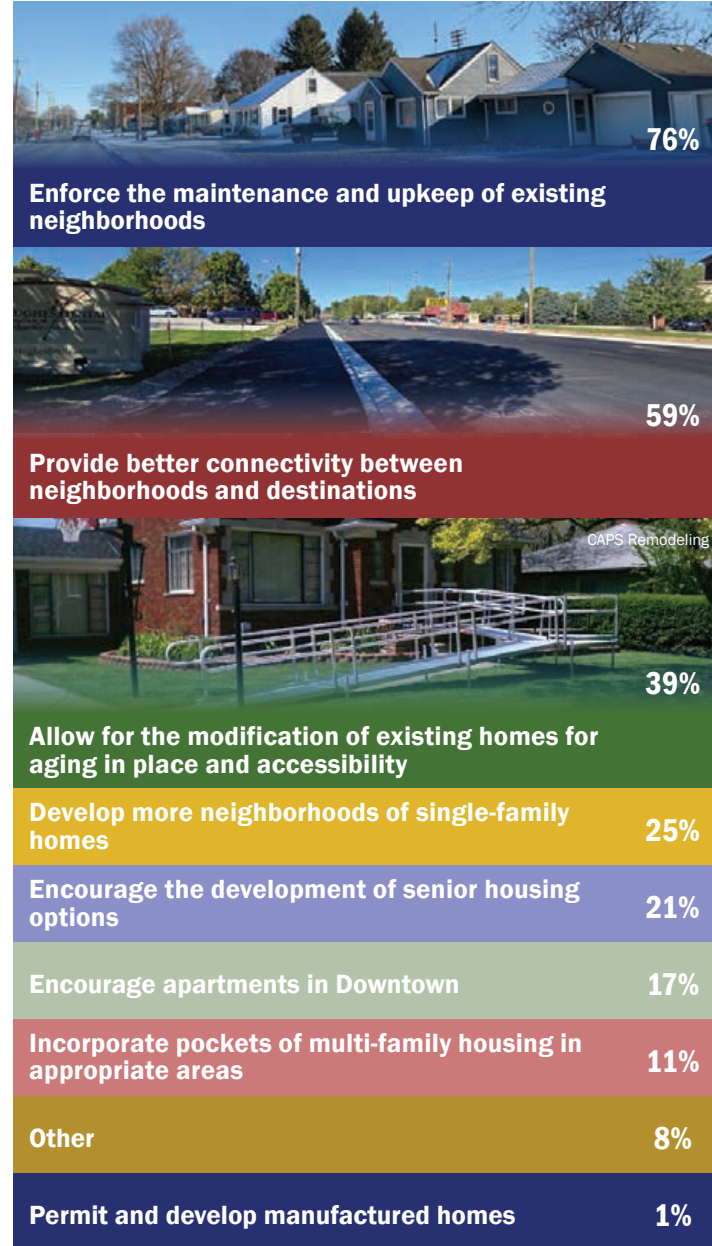


34) Do you believe the housing stock includes an adequate supply of...



35) Identify the top 3 housing priorities...

Participants were asked to select 3 options.



Because respondents were asked to select three options each, the results will not add up 100%.

36) Rate the following statements regarding residential neighborhoods...



37) Additional comments regarding Housing...

The 75 responses were organized into the following categories. The larger the circle, the more responses that category received. Responses could be in the positive or negative.



Downtown

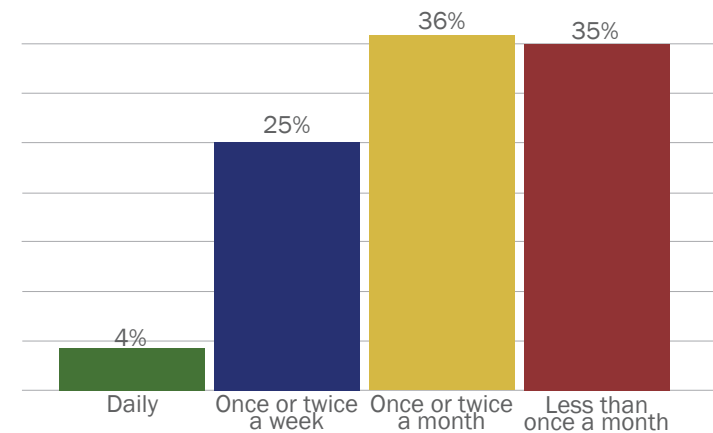
38) My favorite thing about Downtown Leo-Cedarville is...



39) My least favorite thing about Downtown Leo-Cedarville is...



40) How often is Downtown your final destination?



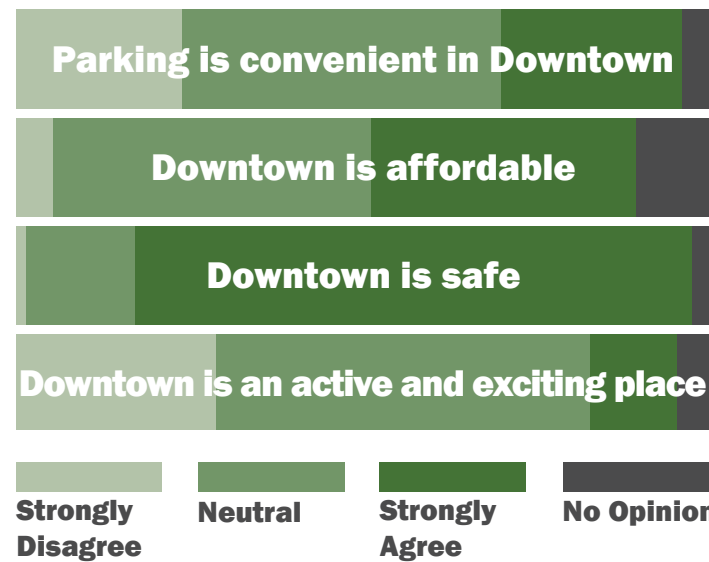
41) What usually brings you Downtown?

Participants could select all that applied.



Because respondents were asked to select four options each, the results will not add up 100%.

42) Rate the following statements regarding Downtown...

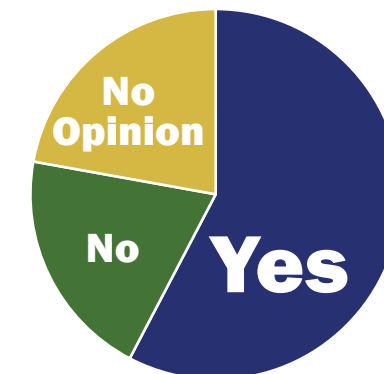


43) Identify the top 4 improvements that are vital to Downtown's success...



Because respondents were asked to select four options each, the results will not add up 100%.

45) Should the Town use Town resources to assist the redevelopment / development of Downtown retail space?

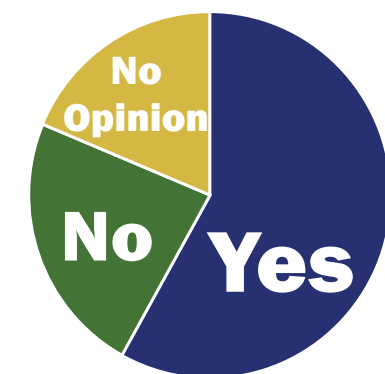


44) Types of businesses I would like to see more of in Downtown...



Because respondents were asked to select as many options as they preferred, the results will not add up 100%.

46) Should Downtown Leo-Cedarville expand its footprint?



Downtown Cont'd

47) Which of the following images best represents how you envision **Downtown Leo-Cedarville buildings, facades, and storefronts?**

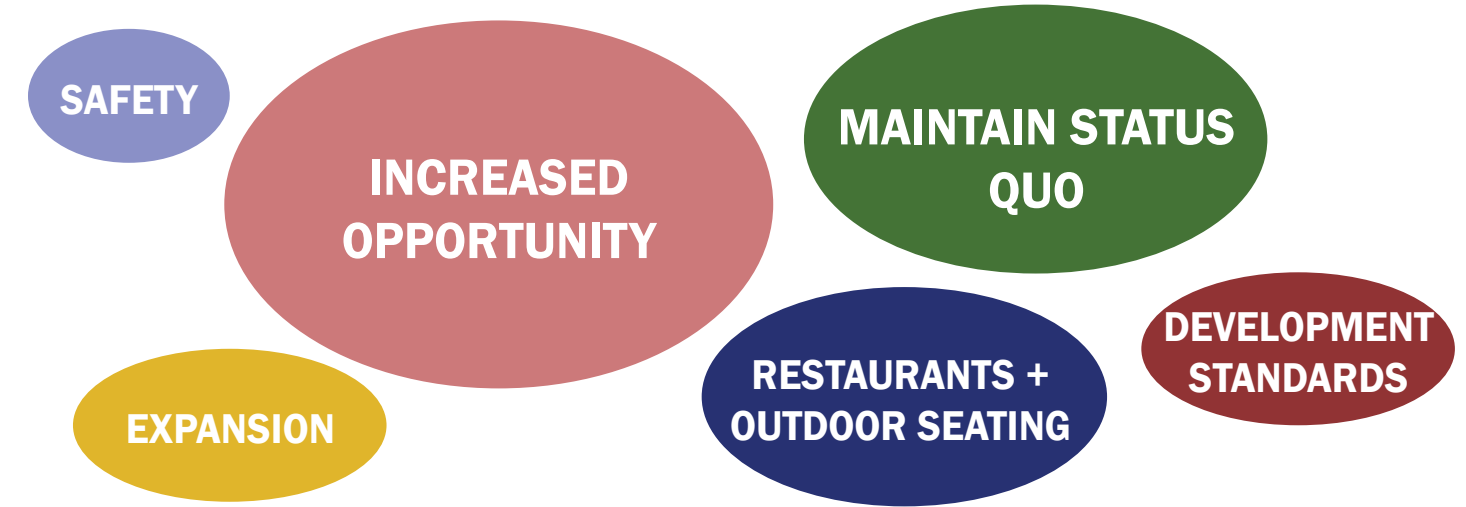
<p>Varied Style 50%</p> <p>two stories or less, zero setbacks, and mixed use</p>	 <p><i>Living Urbanism</i></p>
<p>Historic Style 32%</p> <p>two stories or less, traditional storefronts and details, zero setbacks, and mixed use</p>	 <p><i>Visit Henderson, NC</i></p>
<p>Modern Style 18%</p> <p>two stories or less, large panes of glass potentially on both stories, streamlined storefronts and details, zero setbacks, and mixed use</p>	 <p><i>Visit Hamilton County</i></p>

48) Which of the following **streetscape elements** are the most important in Downtown Leo-Cedarville's streetscapes?

<p>Beautification 34%</p> <p>emphasis on beautification with landscaping, integration of branding, consistent signage</p>	 <p><i>Mark Hand-Patch</i></p>
<p>Safety and Connectivity 34%</p> <p>emphasis on pedestrian safety and connectivity to included enhanced crosswalks, bike parking and safety signage</p>	 <p><i>CiviTech</i></p>
<p>Commercial Uses 32%</p> <p>emphasis on commercial uses with areas of outdoor seating and daily outdoor displays</p>	

49) Additional comments regarding Downtown...

The 53 responses were organized into the following categories. The larger the circle, the more responses that category received. Responses could be in the positive or negative with sample responses below.



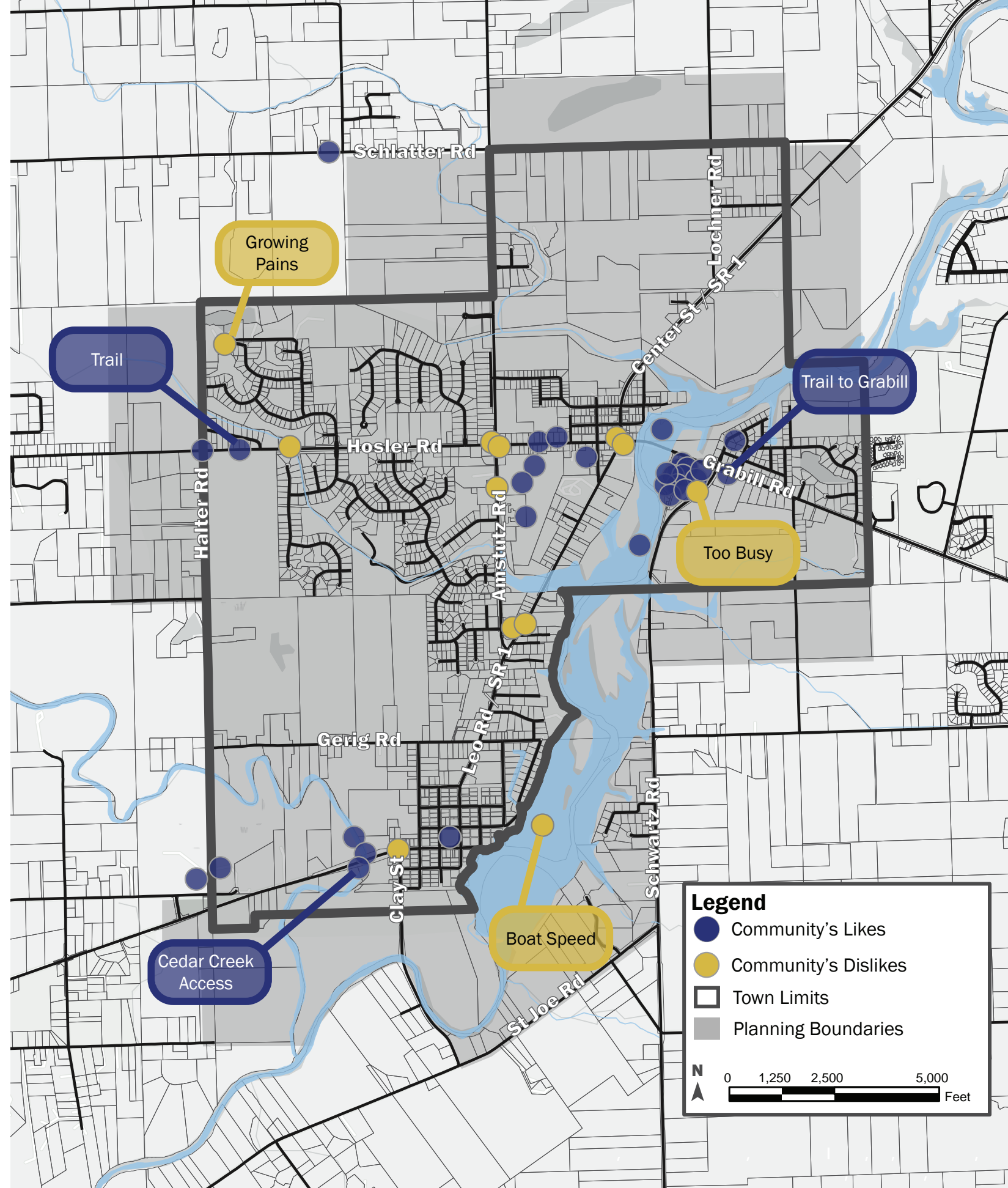
PLANNING POP-UP

Hometown Initiatives LLC members attended the National Night Out event held August 6 at Riverside Gardens. A booth was set up to raise awareness of the Envision 2035 Planning Initiative and promote the survey and community workshop. The event was well-attended with an estimated attendance of approximately 200 people. Interested attendees were asked to write their favorite thing about the event. They were then asked to place dots on a map showing a place they would take a visitor to showcase Leo-Cedarville, and a place they would avoid taking a visitor to Leo-Cedarville OR a place they disliked about Leo-Cedarville. Results are mapped to the right.



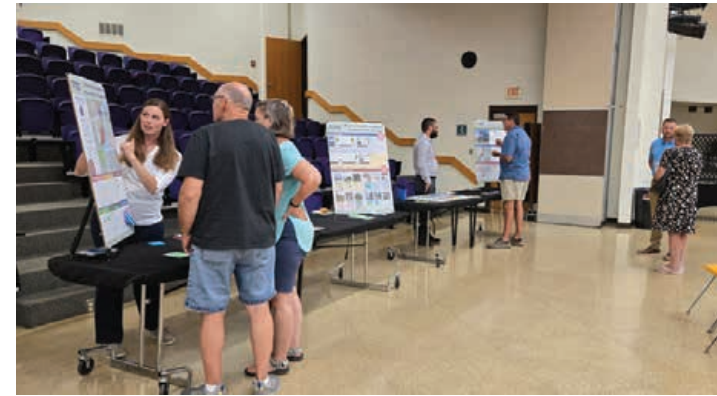
Key themes:

- Sense of pride in the parks, especially Riverside Gardens with some reference to the Cedarville Reservoir.
- Traffic flow issues occurring mainly at intersections, with some comments requesting a traffic study be conducted.
- Mixed comments on growth and development; some are very much in favor of annexation and increasing tax revenue. Others who want to continue to remain a small town and prohibit development.



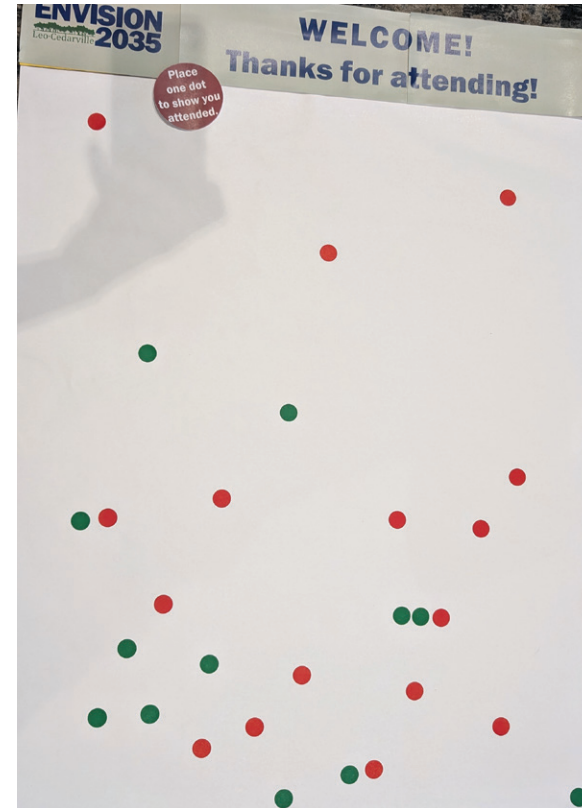
COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

The Community Workshop was held on Monday, September 16, 2024, from 5:00 – 8:00 pm at Leo Jr. / Sr. High School Cafetorium. The event was designed as an “open-house” style, allowing attendees to come when they were available and stay as long as they wanted. The room was set up in 7 different stations. Each station showed a synopsis of the community survey results before asking more questions. The results from each station are below.



Sign-In

Guests were asked to place a sticky dot on a board to show their attendance. In total, 28 dots were placed. However, all the voting boards consistently had over 30 votes, indicating that more people attended. Perhaps some put one dot per group.

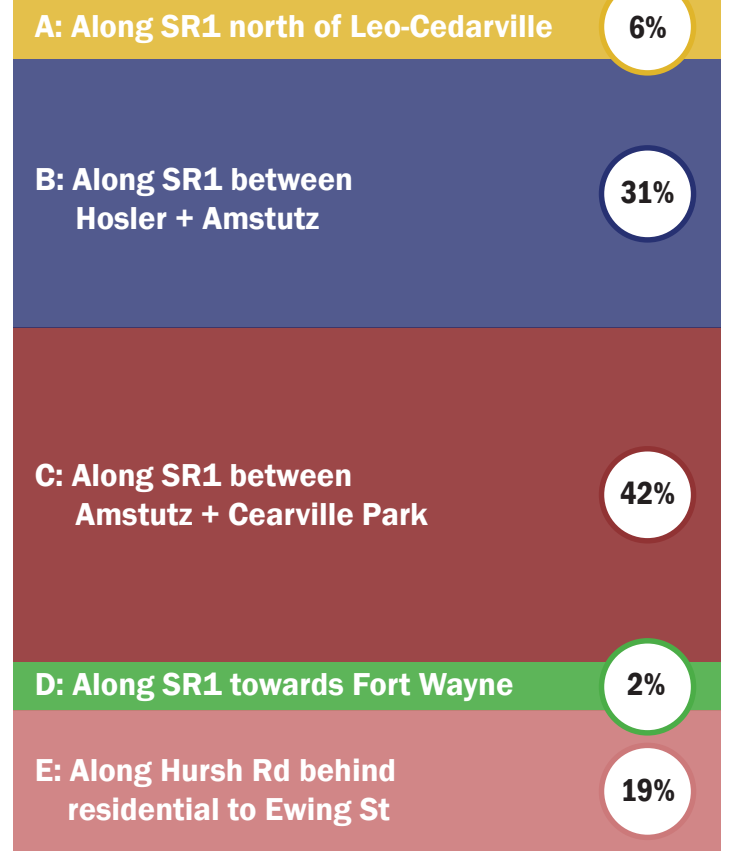
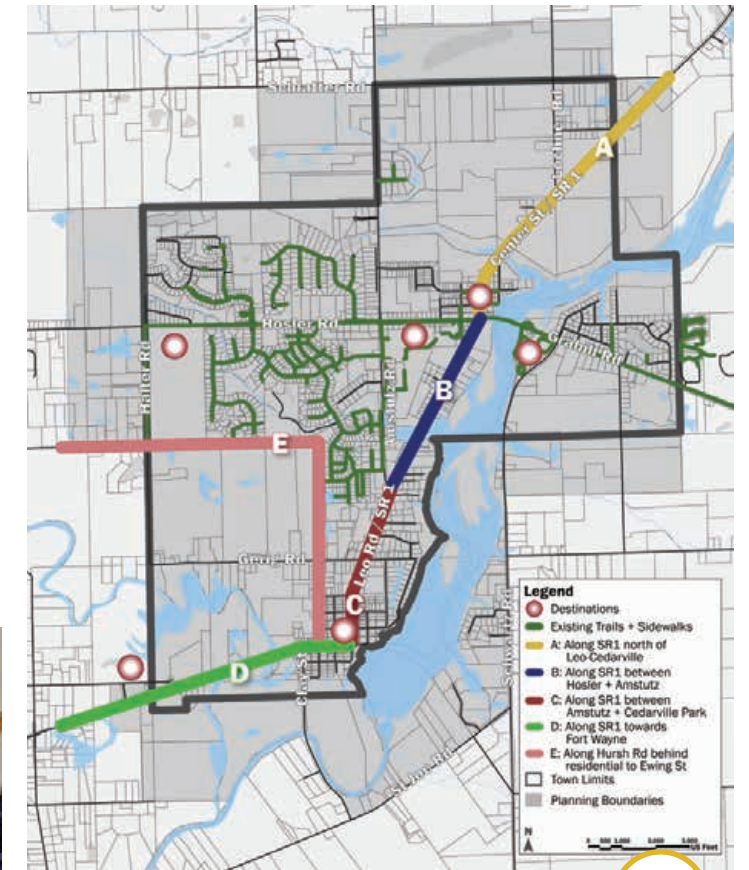


Trails + Sidewalks

Attendees were asked to prioritize potential pedestrian connections by placing two dots showing their preferred connections.

Notable discussion points:

- There is a desire to connect Leo and Cedarville along SR1. Some comments were even made regarding downtown expanding south, making Routes B + C popular.
- Route E will be beneficial once the school and trail are fully developed.
- Some believed that 4-foot sidewalks were sufficient as right-of-way was not always available and larger trails would push further into private property. Others said trails would be beneficial for regional connections.



Golf Carts

Attendees were asked to vote on the following options regarding how golf carts should be addressed.



Downtown / Town Center

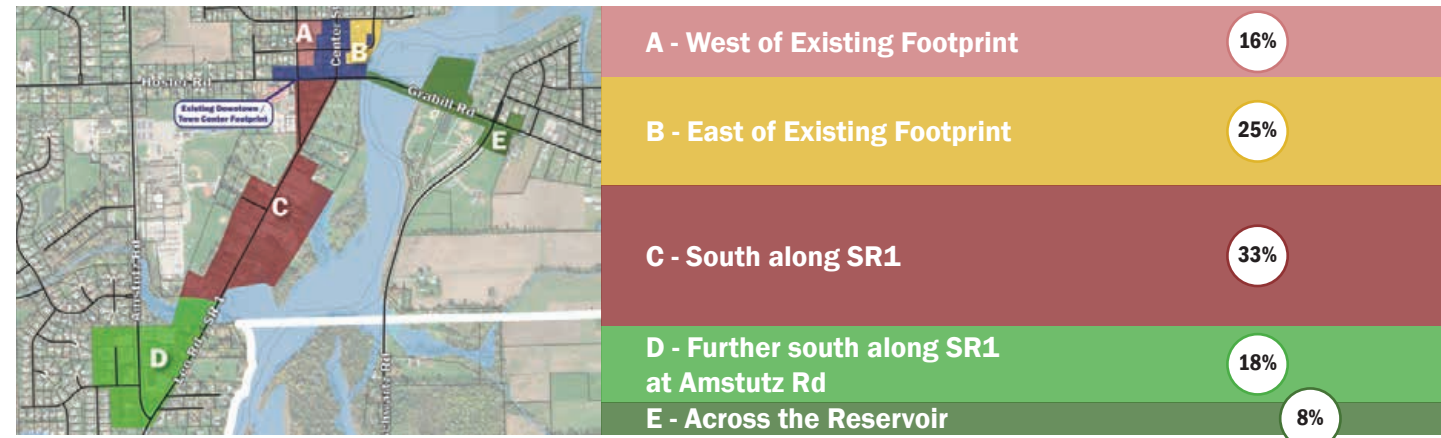
The Downtown / Town Center station was a multi-faceted station with differing perspectives and questions regarding the downtown area and other commercial areas including Downtown Expansion, Downtown / Town Center Style, and Commercial Streetscapes.

Downtown Expansion

Attendees were provided five options of downtown / town center expansion and asked to vote on every expansion area they would like to see.

Notable discussion points:

- Overall excitement about the idea of downtown expanding and seeing other commercial areas enhanced to a similar standard of the current downtown footprint.
- A few additional comments wondered about a northern expansion along SR1.
- Option E was not well-received by some and did not receive the same excitement as the others.
- Would like to see more tree canopy.

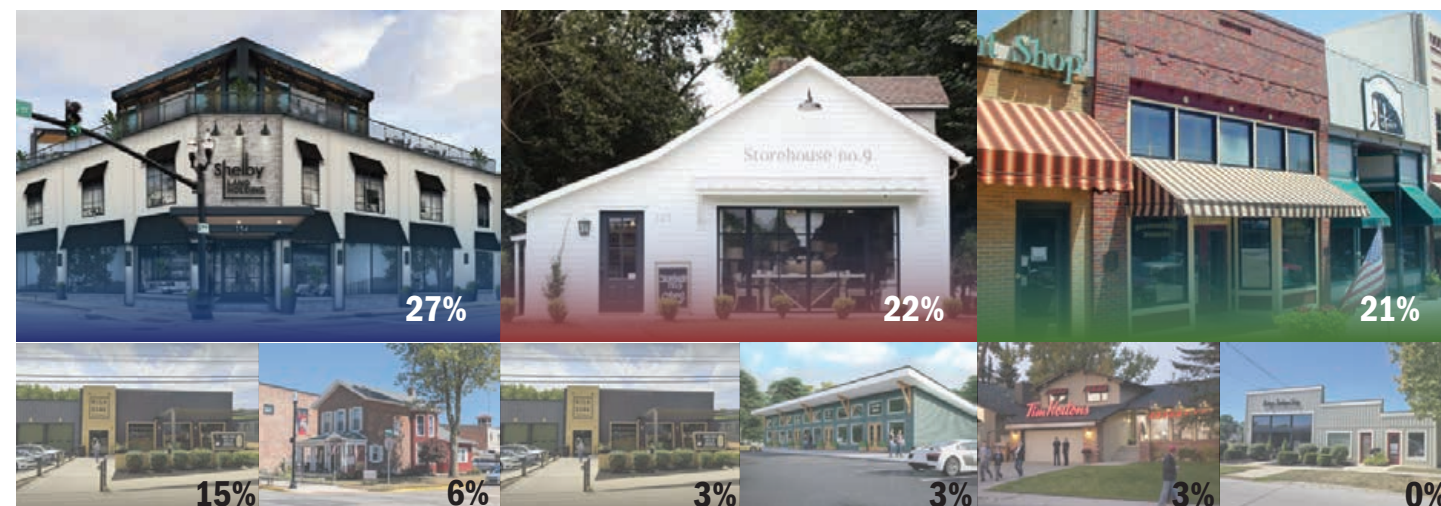


Downtown / Town Center Style

Attendees were asked to view nine styles of commercial properties and vote for two of their favorites.

Notable discussion points:

- Generally, the attendees preferred buildings to be set closer to the street with parking on-street or on the side / rear of the building.
- Traditional or semi-modern architecture is preferred.
- House conversion to commercial was well-received as long as it was completed tastefully.



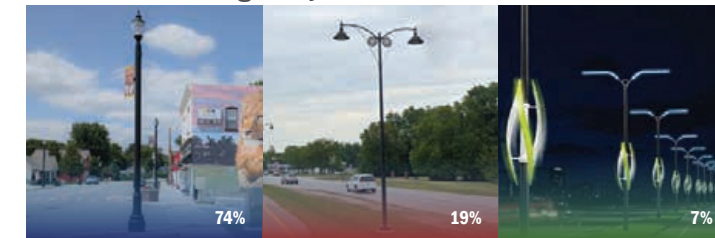
Commercial Streetscapes

Attendees were asked to provide feedback on different elements of a streetscape. The first option was to choose their favorite street layout. The next choice was between their favorite style out of four different streetscape elements categories:

Preferred Streetscape:



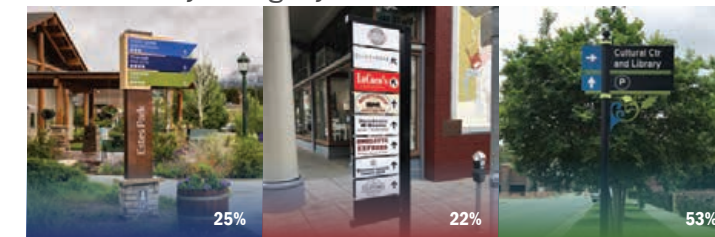
Preferred Streetlight Style:



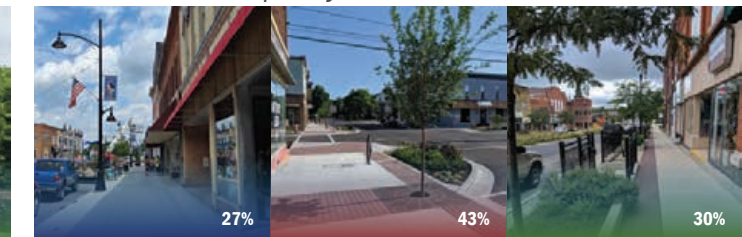
Preferred Bench Style:



Preferred Wayfinding Style:



Preferred Landscape Style:



Notable discussion points:

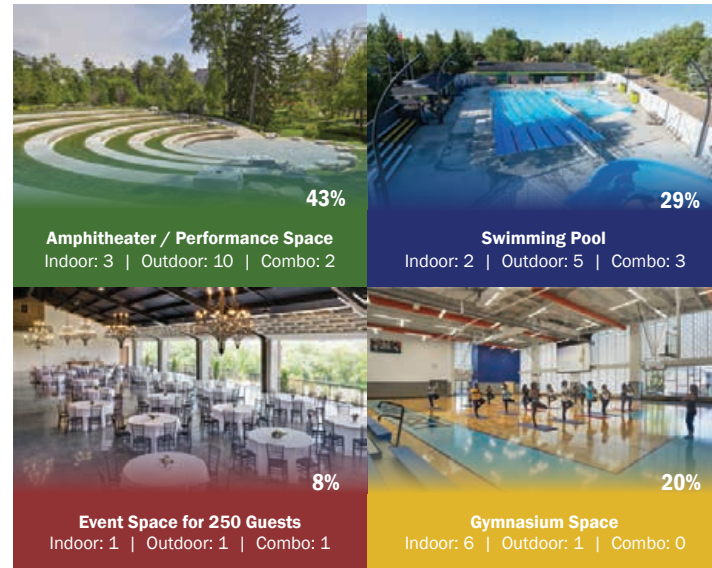
- Many expressed satisfaction with the current streetscape and design elements in Downtown.
- Would prefer parking on both sides if right-of-way was available.
- Some noted they prefer angled-parking over parallel, but wanted to retain sidewalk width and amenities.
- Traffic flow at Hosler/Grabill Rds + SR1 intersection was discussed. Some would like to see improvements such as a round-a-bout to increase traffic flow.

Community / Recreation Center

After reviewing survey results, attendees were asked to vote for their preferred activity choice for a community / recreation center. They were also asked to designate an indoor/outdoor/combo preference.

Notable discussion points:

- Overall, participants preferred indoor spaces to enjoy throughout the year. However, they noted economical reasons being the reason they voted outdoor.
- The exception was the amphitheater / performance space, which voters expressed excitement in an outdoor space. Comments were made about the Grand Pavilion at Riverside Gardens could be adjusted to include this whether than incorporate it into a new community / recreation center.
- Several noted a pool was not necessary because there is an existing splash pad, but that water is cold.
- Many people did not want to vote on this station or begrudgingly did because they don't see the need for it or feel the money could be invested elsewhere.

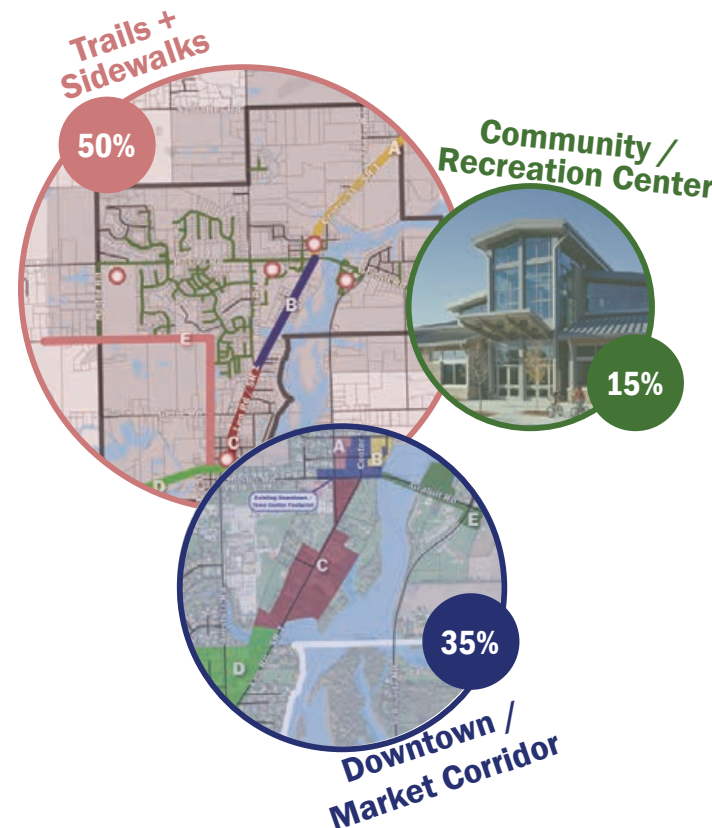


Priority

Out of the stations at the Community Workshop, attendees were asked to prioritize the initiatives by placing a vote for their preferred option for Leo-Cedarville to focus on over the next 10 years.

Notable discussion points:

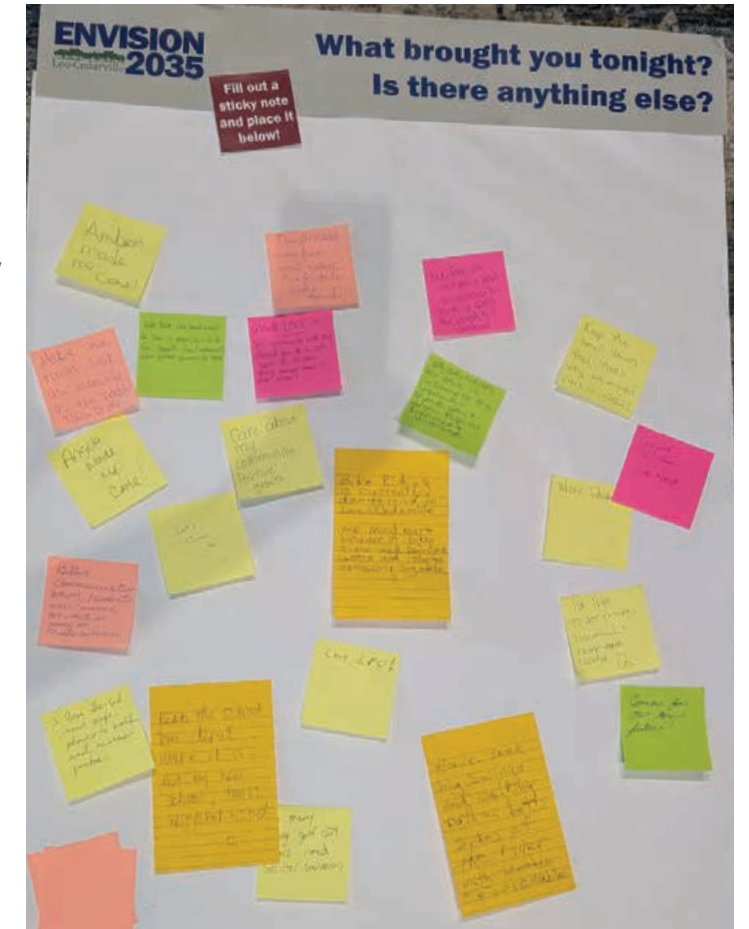
- Several chose their selection based on which item could generate revenue vs. which would be focused on an expenditure of revenue.
- Several chose investment in downtown because of the potential domino effect that this investment could have.
- Several noted that they would love to see their downtown transform into an atmosphere like Winona Lake.
- Some noted they see many people using the trails and would like to connect to the Pufferbelly Trail.
- One comment side the community / recreation center should be focused on the west side of the Reservoir as that is where the population is and traffic can be better handled.



What brought you?

Before leaving, community members were given a final opportunity to write any additional thoughts or comments they may have regarding Leo-Cedarville:

- “I love Leo-Cedarville. Need safe places to walk and access parks.”
- “Better communication between residents and council on what is going on; multi avenues.”
- “Keep the school bus depot where it is... not by new school, trails, neighborhood.”
- “Too many young golf cart drivers... need stricter regulations.”
- “Love LEO.”
- “Let’s Grow Leo!”
- “Angela made me come!”
- “Make the town look as beautiful as the people! Town pride.”
- “Care about my community. Positive growth.”
- “We love Leo and want to see it grow, but still feel small. Local restaurants, more unified community space.”
- “Would LOVE to see community center/pool; would provide a safe haven for children during summer break and after school!”
- “We are happy the town is listening to the residents – thank you and please keep us informed and involved.”
- “We love Leo. We have a great community and love building ways for people to connect.”
- “The process was fun and easy! The future looks bright!!”
- “Growth without overreach.”
- “Keep the small town feel – that’s why we moved here in 2023.”
- “More restaurants.”
- “I’d love to see more ‘community’ created in Leo.”
- “Concern for our town’s future.”
- “Have some big swings and walking path on both sides of the river with benches and picnic tables.”
- “New city park by dam!”
- “Bike riding is currently dangerous in Leo-Cedarville. We need more ‘beware of bikes’ signs and painted lanes and stop/go crossing signals.”



COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

The Community Open House was held on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, from 5:00 – 7:00 pm at Cedarville Park Pavilion to allow community members to review Envision 2035 and provide feedback. The open house was publicized on the Town’s website and Facebook page, as well as a press release in the local newspaper, the East Allen Courier.

Attendees were able to view the printed version of Envision 2035 in its entirety. There were also handouts with a QR code that led users to the Envision 2035 website in which they could download the plan and appendices. Additionally, four posters were displayed which highlighted major components and ideas of the plan: Future Thoroughfare Plan; Parks, Trails, + Sidewalks; Future Land Use; and Market Corridor. Attendees were encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback as they were reviewing.



In total, 6 community members attended the open house and were asked to mark their attendance by putting a sticky dot on the sign-in sheet. Many conversations were had and are summarized below:

- Every attendee responded favorably to the trails and sidewalk plan, further emphasizing the community’s desire to maintain and expand the pedestrian and bicyclist opportunities in Leo-Cedarville.
 - The State Road 1 priority trail was supported by every attendee.
 - Some noted the need to finish trail connections to a logical place of termination (Amstutz Rd Trail extending all the way south to State Road 1). Emphasizing local loops and connections is important. There is also an interest in connecting to and finishing regional trails to better support local bicycling.
- Discussion occurred regarding the Leo Intermediate School announcement in 2024. Acknowledging the impact this development will have on local traffic and the need to plan and prepare for this transition. There was also discussion about the future of the existing elementary school and what opportunities arise as the school district discusses abandoning that facility.
- One attendee pointed out there are many goals and strategies in this plan and wondered what the priorities are and how the Town accomplishes them. After being shown the Implementation Table in Chapter 8, there was significant discussion on beginning to plan for these projects and setting plans in motion while building relationships with local stakeholders and, especially, regional and state partners.



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

A series of stakeholder interviews were conducted on July 31 and August 1, 2024, to garner feedback from key groups of vested community members, public service partners, and town officials. The stakeholder groups included individuals to represent the following segments of the community: Downtown; Transportation and Public Services; Land Use, Growth, and Economic Development; Parks, Trails, and Natural Systems; Character, Identity, and Livability; and Town Officials.

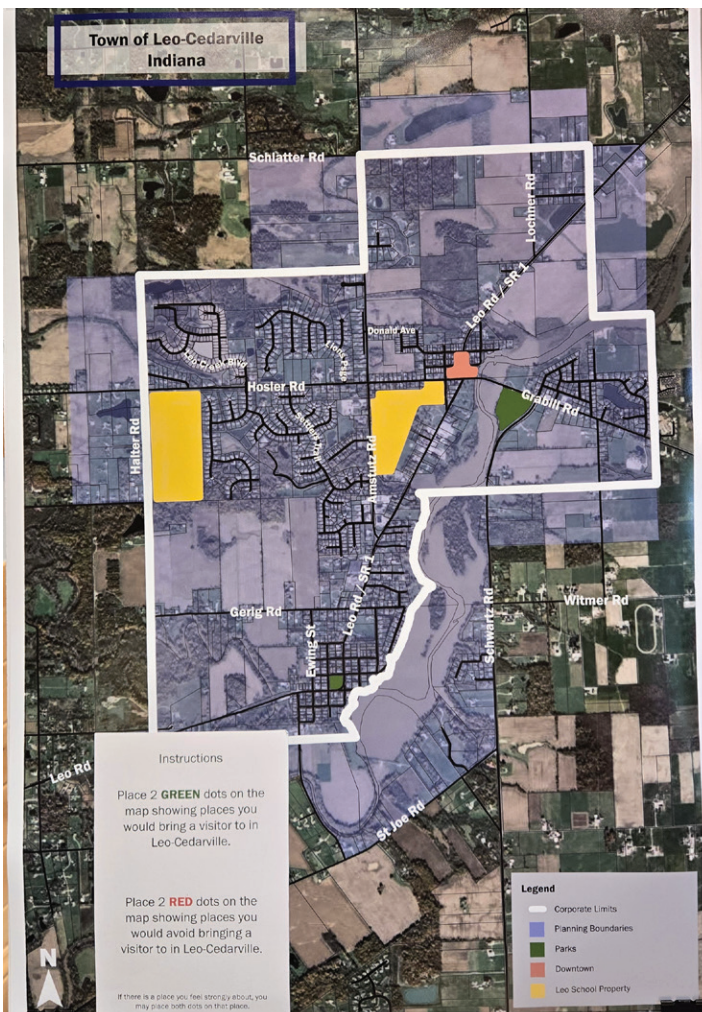
Each interview began with a brief presentation which included a general description of a comprehensive plan and community vision, highlight of recent planning initiatives, description of the project boundary and timeline, and notification of the public survey and community workshop. From there open discussion ensued typically starting with a SWOT Analysis.

A summary, highlighting key themes, are noted to the right. These are in no particular order.

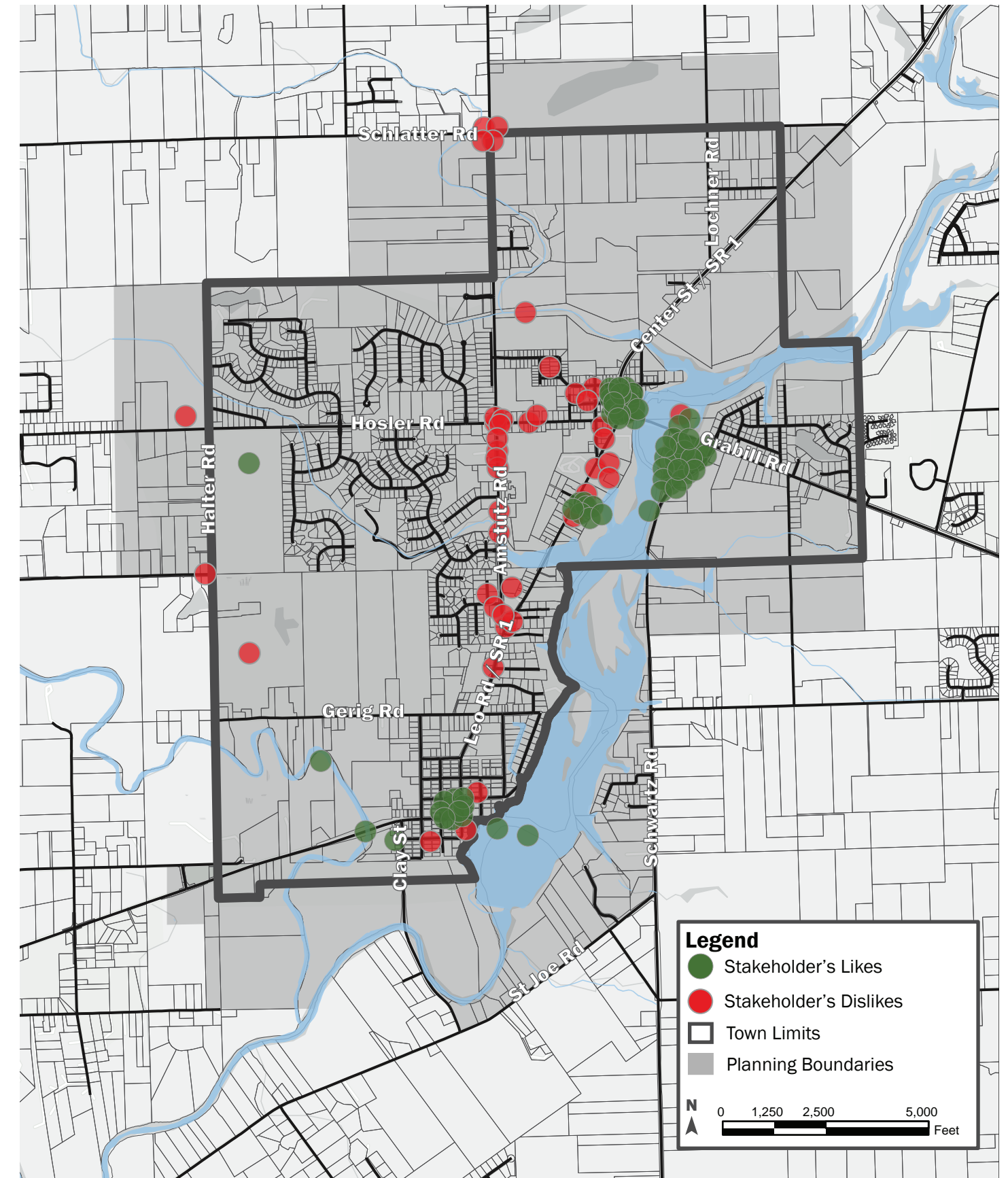


Key themes:

- Retain the small town character and atmosphere.
- The school system is a huge draw to the community.
- One of Leo-Cedarville's biggest assets is the kind and generous people in the community.
- Recent Downtown improvements have been well-received; there is significant interest in expanding those improvements to incorporate commercial properties on SR1 south of Hosler/Grabill Rd.
- Increase pedestrian connectivity, especially to destinations within the Town.
- The Town doesn't fully support and collaborate with other organizations in the facilitation, organization, and promotion of community events.
- The Reservoir and St. Joseph Riverfront are under-utilized.
- Leo-Cedarville's parks are also one of the community's biggest assets.



As guests arrived, they were asked to place dots on a map of Leo-Cedarville. Green dots represented places attendees would bring a visitor to showcase Leo-Cedarville. Red dots represented places where they would avoid taking a visitor OR a place they thought needed improvement.



Stakeholder SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Downtown
- Parks
- Schools
- Cedarville Reservoir (the River)
- Small-town, friendly, generous community
- State Road 1 traffic bringing in potential customers
- Steady Eddy's

Weaknesses

- Lack of design standards for Downtown. Property maintenance and upgrade is not typically completed by property owners, but rather business tenants.
- Poor pedestrian connection in some areas (older residential neighborhoods; connection between Leo and Cedarville; connections to community destinations such as parks, school, downtown).
- Communication from the Town regarding town happenings. Website and social media presence.
- Annexation incentives are not currently available as the Town does not own utilities.
- Lack of right-of-way for increased traffic enhancement and pedestrian circulation desires.
- Limited affordable housing options and limited senior housing facilities.

Opportunities

- Better identify and designate "Downtown", including expanding boundaries south on SR1. Incorporate wayfinding, streetscape designs, architectural and sign standards to create cohesive and walkable built environment.
- Collaboration and support from the Town for community events, businesses, communication
- Leo Elementary School will likely be abandoned after new school is built.
- Building on the Reservoir (River) and creating a riverfront district. Better engagement with and access to the Reservoir for all user types (pedestrians, bikers, boats, fishermen).
- Fostering relationships and connections with other community organizations: Downtown Business Group, Leo-Cedarville Foundation, New Allen Alliance, Greater Fort Wayne, Northeast Indiana Partnership, Acres Land Trust, Allen County Planning and Building Services, INDOT, NIRCC, Leo schools.
- Organize and facilitate more community events, especially hosted in Downtown, to draw in shoppers and support businesses.

Threats

- Limited tax base/revenue; being primarily residential with only small-scale commercial and virtually no industrial.
- State Road 1 traffic being unsafe and pass-through traffic.
- New intermediate school relocation and the traffic shift associated with that change.
- Town staff changes and lack of code enforcement.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Over the course of the planning process, the Steering Committee met four times to discuss the data, input, vision, and goals and strategies laid out in this plan. The Steering Committee also provided final feedback of the plan before the public review and adoption phase. The meeting minutes from those meetings are included in the following pages.

Meeting Dates + Topics:

May 30, 2024: Kick-Off + Introduction

July 15, 2024: Data Gathering/Analysis + Public Engagement

October 9, 2024: Report Reviews + Plan Development

November 20, 2024: Plan Development: Goals + Strategies

Steering Committee Members

Brandy Beckstedt
 Nathan Brune
 Chris Childers
 John Clendenen
 Sherrie Lairson
 Joy Martin
 Troy McDaniel
 Greg Peck
 Grace Potosky
 Amy Saleik
 Dirk Schmidt
 Bryan Sharp
 Ricky Smith
 Paul Steffens
 Paul Stange
 Tyler Witmer
 Heather Yoder



Steering Committee Meeting #1

Project: ENVISION 2035 Comprehensive Plan Update
Meeting: Steering Committee #1 – Kick-off
Date / Time: May 30, 2024 / 5:30pm
Location: Town Hall



Participants: Amy Saleik, Brandy Beckstedt, Bryan Sharp, Chris Childers, Dirk Schmidt, Heather Yoder, John Clendenen, Joy Martin, Nathan Brune, Paul Stange, Paul Steffens, Tena Woenker, Troy McDaniel, Tyler Witmer

Hosted by Hometown Initiatives, LLC: Amber Bassett + Amy Schweitzer

Tyler Witmer, Town Council President, welcomed all the participants and briefly explained why the Town was updating the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. Witmer then introduced Hometown Initiatives LLC (HI) as the project consultant and gave HI the floor.

After the introduction of the Project Team, Steering Committee members, and project consultants, HI introduced the project by providing an explanation of a comprehensive plan and the steering committee's responsibilities. The Project Logo, Website, Timeline, and Boundaries were displayed and opened for discussion. The Project Website is www.lc-envision.com, and the Town will have ownership of the website and domain once the project is complete.

Hometown Initiatives then proceeded to provide a brief history of major happenings since the 2013 Envision Plan, including planning initiatives, public investments, private investments, and formation of community organizations. Then HI highlighted a few demographic and socio-economic datasets. At that point, HI asked for input from the Steering Committee regarding Leo-Cedarville's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The results from the SWOT Analysis are attached.

Upon completion of the SWOT Analysis, HI asked the Steering Committee to review the 2013 Envision Plan in depth and complete a worksheet marking which goals and strategies were complete, were in progress, have not started but should be kept, and were no longer applicable. The digital worksheets will be sent via email to the Steering Committee. HI requests the completed worksheets be returned to Tena Woenker or Amber Bassett (amber@hometowninitiativesllc.com) by **Wednesday, June 12, 2024**.

Next Steps were then discussed. HI explained the stakeholder groups and the interview process. Interviews are tentatively anticipated for mid-to-late July. Please provide name, contact information, and associated stakeholder group to Amber Bassett by **Wednesday, June 12, 2024**. The planned groups are derived from the chapters in the 2013 Envision plan and are as follows:

- Character, Identity, + Livability
- Land Use, Growth, + Economic Development
- Downtown
- Transportation Systems + Public Services
- Parks, Trails, + Natural Systems

Finally, Steering Committee Meeting #2 was scheduled for Monday, **July 15, 2024, at 5:30pm at Town Hall**.

Steering Committee Meeting #2

Project: ENVISION 2035 Comprehensive Plan Update
Meeting: Steering Committee #2 – Data Gathering / Analysis
Date / Time: July 15, 2024 / 5:30pm
Location: Town Hall



Participants: Brandy Beckstedt, Bryan Sharp, Dirk Schmidt, Heather Yoder, Joy Martin, Nathan Brune, Paul Stange, Troy McDaniel, Grace Potosky, Ricky Smith, Greg Peck

Hosted by Hometown Initiatives, LLC: Amber Bassett + Amy Schweitzer

Amber Bassett of HI LLC started the meeting by:

- welcoming committee members
- giving a brief update of where we are in the planning process
- providing a project recap including finalized project boundaries
- updating the committee on the upcoming Stakeholder Interview schedule, as well as the schedule to interview elected and appointed officials

Hometown Initiatives proceeded through a series of topics from the *2013 Envision Plan*. For each topic HI reported any findings from demographic and socio-economic research; related information from the American Association of Retired Person's (AARP) Livability Index; applicable existing conditions maps or data; and a synopsis from the Steering Committee's completion of the *2013 Envision Plan* Implementation Worksheets before reviewing proposed questions for the *Envision 2035 Plan* survey. The AARP Livability Index was explained to the committee. While the index is a good indicator, it is not always accurate. Some data is collected on a county basis, so this could skew Leo-Cedarville's index either way.

In response to a question about mailing the survey out, HI LLC reported the project scope included a post card being mailed to each address within the project boundaries that would include a QR Code, as well as a list of places where a paper copy of the survey could be picked up.

Those topics, along with noteworthy discussion, is included below:

Participant and Community Information

Leo-Cedarville's statistics show it is a community of primarily married-couple families with higher median household incomes. The AARP Livability Index shows the overall livability is good, as is the opportunity index (which includes inclusion and possibilities). The general demographic questions for the *2035 Envision Plan* survey were discussed and some minor changes were made based on the Steering Committee's suggestions.

Land Use, Development, + Infrastructure

Leo-Cedarville residents mean travel time to work is about 20-minutes with most employed in some sort of manufacturing and educational/health care services. About 40% of land within Leo-Cedarville's Town Limit is agricultural uses; 58% is residential uses; and 2% is non-residential uses. The Town has accomplished much of what is set out in the *2018 New Allen Alliance Plan* for infrastructure. The Implementation Worksheet exercise completed by the Steering Committee illustrated that there is consensus that the community has made progress in the goals and objectives established for Land Use in the *2013 Envision Plan*, with less consensus around "redevelopment" and "scale of development." Regarding, Public Services and Infrastructure, the results

Steering Committee Meeting #2 Cont'd

indicate there is some ambiguity with regard to infrastructure systems that is not under the Town's jurisdiction, and thoughts around the implementation strategies involving a relocation study for the Town Hall to downtown and property for a new fire station were inconsistent. Regarding Economic Development, there is strong consensus that the Town can and has invested in infrastructure to improve the business climate and that the Town has successfully marketed the community's assets. The *2035 Envision Plan* survey questions regarding Land Use were discussed with some changes suggested to the pictures within the Visual Preference Survey components.

Parks, Recreation, and Natural Systems

AARP Livability Index categories of Environment and Health were discussed. Maps from the *2022-2027 Parks Plan* were displayed and discussed. The Implementation Worksheet exercise completed by the Steering Committee illustrated that there is clear consensus that much progress has been made with regard to the Parks and Recreation Implementation Strategies in the *2013 Envision Plan*. Leo-Cedarville should continue making progress on trails that connect community destinations, a trail around the Cedarville Reservoir, and consideration of a year-round community recreation center. Results from the Implementation Worksheet were not as consistent with regard to Natural Systems, with some members believing some objectives may not be applicable. The committee discussed the proposed questions for the *2035 Envision Plan* survey and made changes to simplify and clarify options. Community center and recreation center was discussed and changed in the survey questions to be "community/recreation center," with some clarifications about such center included later in the survey.

Transportation

Census data shows Leo-Cedarville residents mostly travel to work in a vehicle, alone. AARP Livability Index shows transportation – including safety and convenience – falling in the middle third of all communities. The Thoroughfare Map from the *2013 Envision Plan* shows three intersections along Hosler Road as opportunities for improvement; a network of minor collectors; and emphasizes connectivity to downtown, the "triangle," and schools. The committee discussed plans recently unveiled by East Allen County Schools that might change the land use on / around the school's property. There was discussion about the potential opportunities this might bring. Echoing some of the other results of the Implementation Worksheets, the takeaways include consensus that progress has been made on improving the appearance and functionality of major streets and gateways, including State Road 1 in downtown. Safety enhancements, a path around the reservoir, and the "triangle" redevelopment area were noted as needing continued progress. Upon reviewing the questions for the upcoming survey, it was noted that the answer options should be consistent with including "other" and other generalities.

Placemaking + Identity

Placemaking ideas and information from the *2013 Envision Plan* were presented and included a government center on the Town property east of Riverside Park, the "triangle" development, and interest in the Town's core. The Implementation Worksheet exercise indicates significant progress has been made in enhancing and promoting the small-town image and emphasizing Leo-Cedarville as a distinct and unique community. The Steering Committee added clarity to some of the language within the proposed survey questions.

Housing

Leo-Cedarville's median house value is higher than county and state figures; there is little vacancy; and nearly all housing units are single-family detached units. Median Household Size for owner-occupied units is 3.05 persons. Leo-Cedarville's Housing Livability Index ranks in the middle. After debating what qualifies as a "starter house," the committee removed that option from the proposed survey responses.

Downtown

Data from a 2023 Indiana Main Street report was shared with the committee before highlighting some local information including the success of the new Farmers' Market in downtown. The Implementation Worksheet results show there is strong consensus on the progress that has been made in downtown with the *2013 Envision* Implementation Strategies. Noteworthy, there is not strong consensus in the committee's thoughts regarding relocating town services to downtown, on creating a TIF and Redevelopment Commission, and on the Town's role in recruiting businesses. The committee discussed the proposed survey questions, and made no changes to the downtown-related questions.

Regarding next steps, Hometown Initiatives shared Phase 2 (Data Gathering + Analysis) of the planning process would continue and be wrapped up with a summary of the findings. Phase 3 (Community Engagement) was formalized with Elected and Appointed Official Interviews set for August 1 with each time slot ensuring no quorum of any board would exist and Stakeholder Interviews set for July 31. The final survey will need to be reviewed and approved by the Project Team with a go-live date around August 1. HI LLC explained it planned to attend a community event to try to bring planning to the community. After some discussion about the participants involved, the committee agreed National Night Out would include more local families as opposed to BloomFest. Hometown Initiatives will attend National Night Out on August 6 from 6 – 8 PM in Riverside Park. Greg Peck will set up a tent, table, and chairs for Hometown Initiatives. There was discussion about setting it up near where a food line might form to ensure visibility and participation. Finally, Hometown asked the committee to give thought to a date for the Community Workshop between September 16 and September 25 and provide date preferences to Hometown within the week.

Finally, the next Steering Committee Meeting #3 will be in mid to late October.

Steering Committee Meeting #3

Project: ENVISION 2035 Comprehensive Plan Update
Meeting: Steering Committee #3 – Report Reviews + Plan Development
Date / Time: October 9, 2024 / 5:30pm
Location: Town Hall



Participants: Amy Saleik, Bryan Sharp, Dirk Schmidt, Heather Yoder, Joy Martin, Nathan Brune, Paul Stange, Paul Steffens, Troy McDaniel, Ricky Smith, Tyler Witmer

Hosted by Hometown Initiatives, LLC: Amber Bassett + Amy Schweitzer

Amber Bassett of HI LLC started the meeting by:

- welcoming committee members
- giving a brief update of where we are in the planning process
- providing a recap of the Community Profile Summary Report, which was provided to the Committee via email.

Hometown Initiatives then proceeded through the Community Engagement Report, which was also sent via email to the Committee prior to the meeting. HI LLC highlighted key themes from the Stakeholder Interviews and Planning Pop-Up Events. In more detail, HI LLC transitioned to notable discussion points from each of the stations at the Community Workshop. Unexpected outcomes, such as the amphitheater/performance space being the first choice for a community/recreation center, were discussed by the Committee. Finally, HI LLC led the discussion through the Community Survey Results asking Committee members to interject if they had questions or found results surprising. Notable comments are below:

- Community Events – desire from the community to have more was unexpected; conversation regarding return on investment being low for some events, but other events don't cost much to host. Events in Leo-Cedarville have a history of starting small and gaining success and growing.
- Music Nights @ Cedarville Park – received community pushback after some community members thought the Town was spending more on these events than they were.
- Communication – Town feels that they are getting information out there, but there are still disgruntled comments about traffic alerts, events, and other Town happenings. How much communication is too much and what is not enough?
- Growth – fear of losing small town feel, increased traffic, and over-extending school resources. But concerns of not growing leading to a failing community that does not have the means to provide the amenities that residents want. The Town has no control of growth outside of Town Limits. Need to find a way to increase tax base and look at annexation incentives. At what population size does a town transition from small to large?? Is "small town" qualified by more than just population size?

As the discussion regarding Community Engagement concluded, HI LLC encouraged members to carefully review the Community Engagement Report as the *Envision 2035 Plan* continues to be developed.

Next, Steering Committee members were led through a visioning exercise to reflect on what has happened since 1996 and if any of that was unpredictable? Between 1996 and today, Committee members noted the sidewalks and trails along Grabill Rd were a major accomplishment. Cedarville Park, specifically Imagination

Station, was dreamed of in 1996, but the impacts it had were beyond what was imagined. However, no one predicted the concept or success of Riverside Gardens in 1996.

Committee members were then asked to dream big for Leo-Cedarville's future by reflecting on the Community Engagement input. If finances and other barriers were not a factor, the future of Leo-Cedarville would include:

- Comprehensive connectivity for all. New developments would be required to be connected as one big community, not small communities in subdivisions. Push for trails and sidewalks. Resort back to the grid street pattern.
- Activating the Reservoir through quality downtown developments favoring water-side activities. Winona Lake was mentioned as an example.
- Creating a downtown plaza east of the existing Downtown between Manning St and Walnut St. Creating a promenade/plaza to the Reservoir for community events, surrounded by well-designed commercial buildings.
- Leo Auto Sales becoming a brewery with an outdoor seating area on the river.
- Having something to do on a day off other than going to Downtown Fort Wayne.
- Creating visual separations for businesses on State Road 1 south of Grabill/Hosler Rds. Having designated drives and parking areas, which could create a domino effect of increased safety.
- Activating the cemetery with a trail along the river and historical markers throughout. Promoting events in the cemetery such as Haunted Walks or History in Action.
- Finding a purpose for the 17-acre Town property on Amstutz Rd. Visions of natural area with winding walking paths, butterfly gardens, and community gardens.
- More facilities for adult leagues. Opportunity to partner with the school and the future fieldhouse.
- Unify Leo and Cedarville through design standards, marketing, and pedestrian connectivity
- Convert old Community Church in Cedarville and potentially some residential in the area to create a node of activity around the south reservoir access.
- As Leo Elementary School looks at being abandoned, there's a possibility of converting that into a community center.
- Redevelop some of the downtown commercial buildings, and especially the triangle bordered by SR1, Hosler, + Wayne Streets. Discussion of purchasing the corners around the Hosler/Grabill Rd + SR1 intersection and install a round-about. Potentially shut down Wayne St to vehicular access and create a trailhead.
- Develop a look/vibe/standard for all new developments and redevelopments of commercial properties.
- Establish a community identity. FAMILY – RECREATION – SCHOOLS
- Redevelop commercial areas in Cedarville with the same vibe mentioned above, including the existing commercial node and the old laundromat building at Washington St + SR1.
- Create defined entrance at the gateways of the Town. Specifically discussed a welcoming arch sign over SR1 at the Cedar Creek bridge that existed at one point.

HI LLC then introduced Themes + Goals to the group for the discussion. Both Themes + Goals were built upon from the *Envision 2013* comprehensive plan. Notable changes and further discussion are below:

- Theme A: Character, Identity, + Livability

Steering Committee Meeting #3 Cont'd

- Incorporate the Reservoir as a commercial asset referencing activating the Reservoir through commercial areas.
- Theme B: Land Use + Economic Development
 - Originally separated as Land Use + Guided Growth and Economic Development. The goals were already cross-referencing the two sections, so they were combined.
- Theme C: Town Center
 - Originally Downtown. As the downtown area expands, it seems this should also transition. Town Center was not well-received, but other ideas were offered including Central Business District, Business Development Corridor, Downtown Corridor. The group will ponder and revisit at the next meeting.
 - Additional discussion focused on finding what that character is and if it's different for different nodes: Historic Downtown; Commercial area near Steady Eddy's; Cedarville.
- Theme D: Public Services + Infrastructure
 - This was re-ordered to allow Transportation and Parks + Trails to be situated together.
 - Emphasis on the utilities needing to be community-minded and having conversations about the future of the utilities and the community alike.
- Theme E: Transportation Systems
 - Wondered about qualifying "excessive congestion" in the first goal. There was then concern that overbuilding streets for only peak times would contribute to additional issues during non-peak times.
 - Emphasis on ensuring pedestrian safety around the school property and upgrading rural roads to accommodate the new traffic demand.
- Theme F: Parks, Trails, + Natural Systems
 - Originally separated as Parks, Trails, + Open Spaces and Natural Systems + Sustainability. Combined as many goals have potential to overlap.

The discussion naturally transitioned to the intersection at Halter and Hursh Roads, where the trail will cross and ensuring pedestrian safety at that crosswalk. Which led to further conversation about relationships between government agencies and other community organizations with the Town and making sure everyone is working for the betterment of the community. As the safety conversation ensued, questions about whether there was enough police/sheriff presence in the Town to enforce ordinances arose. In general, the consensus was that there is not enough presence.

Finally, HI LLC asked Steering Committee members to begin thinking about the final "vision" of the community as well as the Themes and Goals. If there are any other comments, please reach out to HI LLC or the Town to communicate those thoughts and ideas. Otherwise, that will be a major topic of discussion at the next Steering Committee meeting, which was scheduled for Wednesday, November 20, @ 5:30 pm.

Steering Committee Meeting #4

Project: ENVISION 2035 Comprehensive Plan Update

Meeting: Steering Committee #4 – Plan Development: Goals + Strategies

Date / Time: November 20, 2024 / 5:30pm

Location: Town Hall

Participants: Amy Saleik, Brandy Beckstedt, Dirk Schmidt, Heather Yoder, Joy Martin, Paul Stange, Paul Steffens, Tyler Witmer

Hosted by Hometown Initiatives, LLC: Amber Bassett + Amy Schweitzer

Amber Bassett of HI LLC started the meeting by:

- welcoming committee members
- giving a brief update of where we are in the planning process
- introducing the first draft of Envision 2035 by providing an explanation of the organization and layout of the plan.

Hometown Initiatives then proceeded through the Vision Statement and asked the Steering Committee for feedback. The Steering Committee thought the essence of the Vision captured Leo-Cedarville, but thought it was too wordy. After a few minutes of discussion, the HI LLC concluded that they'd try to shorten up the Vision but maintain its focus on Family – Parks – Schools.

The group then reviewed a table of draft goals and strategies noting which strategies were top priority strategies. During the discussion, the Steering Committee noted changes and refinement of various goals and strategies including changing "higher-density residential" to "mixed use."

Character, Identity, + Livability – highest priority strategies are

- Goal 1 Strategy B: continuing to implement streetscape elements
Strategy C: continuing to have community festivals and events
Strategy F: strengthen and modernize the brand of "Family | Parks | Schools"
- Goal 2 Strategy A: update the Town's Zoning ordinance
Strategy B: prioritize enforcement of nuisance and property maintenance codes
- Goal 3 Strategy C: showcase the Reservoir
Strategy D: encourage businesses that support activation of the Reservoir
- Goal 4 Strategy B: connect Historic Downtown with "Old" Cedarville

Land Use + Economic Development

- Goal 1 Strategy E: support redevelopment in the Market Corridor
- Goal 2 Strategy B: update zoning and subdivision standards to reflect Envision 2035
Strategy C: situate non-residential development to encourage reservoir activation, while still protecting the reservoir.
- Goal 3 Strategy D: explore a Riverfront Development District
- Goal 4 Strategy B: leverage parks system

Steering Committee Meeting #4 Cont'd

Strategy C: promote the reservoir

Strategy D: promote and host community events that draw from the region

- Goal 5 Strategy A: nurture working relationship with businesses
Strategy B: public private partnerships for existing businesses / facades

Market Corridor

- Goal 1 Strategy B: partner with INDOT to re-design SR 1
Strategy C: embrace cemeteries and integrate into corridor
- Goal 2 Strategy B: adopt zoning updates specific to areas within market corridor
Strategy C: activate the reservoir by accommodating appropriate adjacent development
- Goal 3 Strategy A: create a redevelopment commission
Strategy C: support a main street/business organization
- Goal 4 Strategy A: adopt and enforce zoning/subdivision standards that ensure quality development
Strategy B: prioritize pedestrian access and connectivity along the Market Corridor

Public Services + Infrastructure

- Goal 3 Strategy A: consider hiring additional staff

Transportation Systems

- Goal 1 Strategy B: reserve adequate ROW for future improvements
Strategy E: generate awareness and enforce existing golf cart ordinances
- Goal 2 Strategy C: integrate traffic calming techniques, especially in the Market Corridor
- Goal 3 Strategy B: Investigate a trail/sidewalk along SR1 connecting Historic Downtown to Old Cedarville
- Goal 4 Strategy A: identify roads that will be heavily impacted from future growth.
Strategy D: seek funding assistance for upgrades

Parks, Trails, + Natural Systems

- Goal 1 Strategy A: support 5-year park master plans
Strategy D: install fishing docks and launches around reservoir
Strategy E: promote water trail opportunities
- Goal 2 Strategy D: create community events promoting the reservoir
- Goal 3 Strategy A: work to connect parks, neighborhoods, market corridor, and schools
Strategy C: utilize cemeteries as open spaces of cultural and historical significance
Strategy D: partner with NIRCC to connect to the regional trail system
- Goal 4 Strategy A: work together to mitigate erosion around the reservoir and educate the community about water quality

HI LLC asked Steering Committee members to have any other feedback on the draft of the plan to them by November 27, 2024. In conclusion, HI LLC thanked Committee members for being part of the project and reported the complete draft would be available in January and would include a Public Open House prior to starting the adoption process which should wrap up in February.