

## Summary Memo

### Final Results, Round 3 Public Engagement

July 16, 2024

This document summarizes the results of the third and final round of public engagement for *Thrive!*, a comprehensive plan for the Town of Plainfield, Indiana. The third round of public engagement was designed to gather feedback on the comprehensive plan's draft recommendations (actions) and Future Character and Land Use Map. Community members were invited to share their thoughts through a combination of in-person and online opportunities. The ideas collected and analysis conducted thus far will be used to prioritize the comprehensive plan's recommendations (policies, programs, and projects) for Plainfield.

Input has been gathered in the following ways:

- 1. In-person engagement.** An in-person open house was held on June 25 at Hendricks Live! Participants could review and comment on display boards featuring the draft recommendations (actions) and Future Character and Land Use Map. Participants were given five sticker dots to place on their five personal priorities among the draft recommendations. Participants were also given the opportunity to share any items they believed were missing.
- 2. Online Engagement.** To give people unable to attend the in-person open house an alternative way to participate, an online survey was available on the project website June 12 through July 10, 2024. The survey featured all the draft recommendations (actions) and allowed participants to provide their comments. The survey also featured the Future Character and Land Use Map for participants to review and comment on.

The memo includes the following components:

- A. Purpose
- B. Outreach and Publicity
- C. Findings
- D. Participation

## A. Purpose

The Town of Plainfield launched *Thrive!* A process to create a new comprehensive plan in April, 2023. The previous plan was completed in 2016. Since the last plan, Plainfield has experienced significant change and new development. The downtown has transformed, and the Town has experienced single family (single detached homes) and multi-family (townhouse and apartments) residential growth. Now is the time to update the plan to reflect the changes the Town is experiencing and set a positive course of action for the future. One of the key components of the planning process is community insight.

Overall, the purpose of the third round of engagement was to:

- **Inform** the public about the *Thrive!* comprehensive planning process.

- **Reveal** draft key content for the plan
- **Collect** final input
- **Build excitement** for implementation of the plan

During the first round of public engagement held in late-summer and early-fall 2023, multiple opportunities were provided to those interested in the future of Plainfield to answer big picture questions about the future. Through the second round of engagement completed in Spring 2024 participants were asked to review and comment on preliminary draft ideas that might be integrated into the comprehensive plan. This third round of engagement provided a chance for final input before the plan is drafted. This was also an opportunity to celebrate the work that has been completed thus far and to lay a foundation and build excitement for implementation.

## **B. Outreach and Publicity**

Outreach and publicity were conducted to spread the word about the opportunities to participate in the third round of engagement. The planning team built upon momentum from the first round and second rounds of engagement and, with assistance from staff and the Steering Committee, capitalized on existing networks through groups, organizations, religious and faith communities, homeowners' associations, local clubs, etc. Outreach and publicity included the following:

- Distribution of printed rack cards, flyers, posters, etc.
- Town's social media.
- Water bills.
- MailChimp (email blasts, including to participants from the first and second rounds).
- Emails from Steering Committee members to selected stakeholders and organizations.
- Steering Committee members and planning team members attended Public Safety Day on June 8 and the Plainfield Farmers Market to hand out rack cards and spread the word about the upcoming engagement opportunities.
- Other targeted outreach by staff and Steering Committee members.

## **C. Findings**

This section summarizes the input collected through the third round of engagement. As the same materials were shared for comment both at the workshop and online, results were aggregated.

### **Activity A: Future Character and Land Use Map**

Participants were asked to comment on a draft Future Character and Land Use Map. A summary of comments is provided below.

- Plainfield's past and present planning efforts have been commendable, with detailed and inclusive planning that seeks input from affected parties.
- Plainfield should maintain farmland, emphasizing the importance of not growing too quickly and preserving tradition.

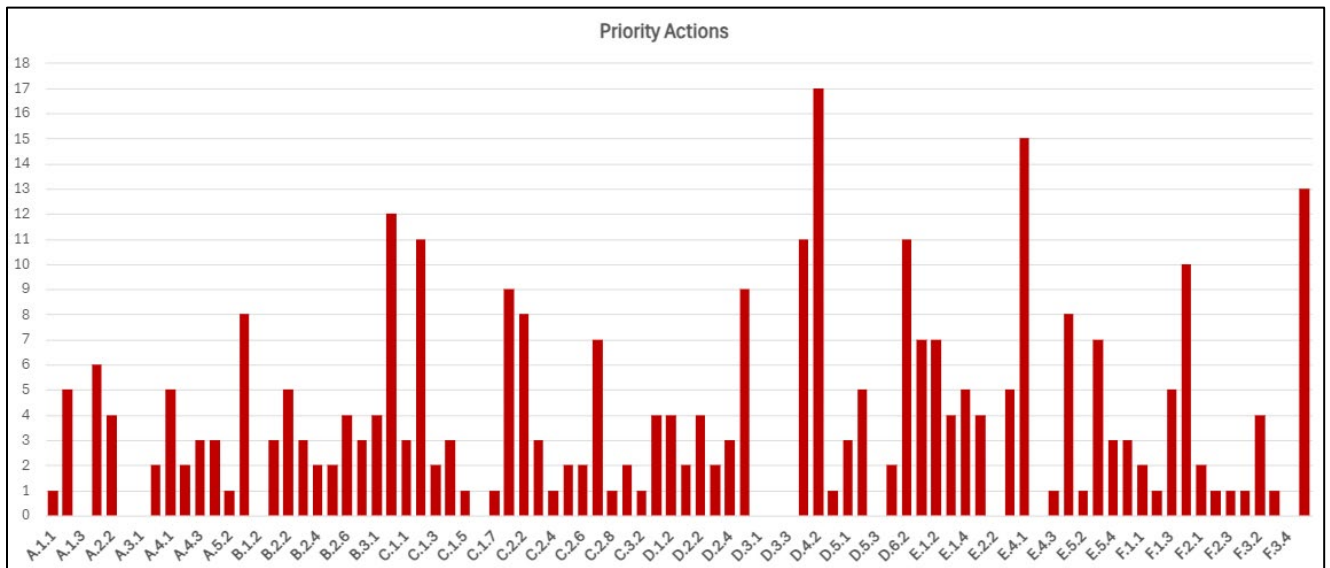
- The multi-nodal development approach is appreciated to enhance diversity, density, and walkability while preserving existing neighborhoods and low-density areas.
- New housing and mixed-use developments could lead to a loss of the small-town feel while increasing congestion.
- The Town Center as a Community Mixed Node while also being a distinct type should be clarified.

**Activity B: Actions**

In commenting on the plan’s actions overall participants expressed a strong desire for community input, cautious growth, and the preservation of the Town’s character, emphasizing safety and adequate services. They want future growth to balance development with maintaining the community’s semi-rural charm, advocating for a development approach that respects property owners’ rights, preserves green spaces, and sustains the Town’s small-town feel. At the same time, they recognize the need for necessary infrastructure improvements, mixed-use development, and affordable housing. Participants urged the Town to prioritize people over cars and to focus on protecting the environment.

**Open House Action Priority**

At the Open House participants were asked to place dots on actions they believed should be the top five biggest priorities for the Town. They were also given the opportunity to comment on draft key recommendations for the plan. A summary of comments is provided below.



**Top Priorities Identified**

The following actions emerged from the public open house input as top priorities in order starting from the action that received the highest number of “dots” for priority. Note that the final priorities in the plan document will also take into consideration Town Council, Planning Commission, Steering Committee, and Staff input, as well as qualitative comments from all rounds of public engagement.

1. Action D.4.2, *Undertake a study of transit service to and from Indianapolis.*

2. Action E.4.1, *Evaluate and continue to implement the 2018 Conceptual Downtown Revitalization Plan.*
3. Action F.3.5, *Identify potential sites and incentives that would support the expansion of large medial facilities as the town grows.*
4. Action B.3.2, *Promote the community as a leading center for workforce training.*
5. Action C.1.2, *Expand the Aquatic Center to allow for year-round and all age activities and events.*
6. Action D.1.4, *Continue to work with the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA) to improve service and explore a potential new circulator route.*
7. Action D.6.2, *Establish a safe routes to school program that encourages students to walk and bike.*
8. Action F.1.4, *Improve communications and awareness-raising about activities in the Town so more people know about and take advantage of them.*

### **Open House Action Comments**

- Key areas for development noted include Perry Crossing and airport surroundings. Participants recommend leveraging the airport's top-rated status to attract remote-working executives.
- Participants urged the Town to focus on establishing retail and business spaces, small incubators, and facilities for business travelers.
- Participants recommended building up existing areas and establishing and building new training centers for the trades.
- Participants noted that they wished Plainfield could be more connected with the airport and downtown Indy.
- Participants expressed that reducing car traffic by building out a transit network would reduce greenhouse emissions. There is strong support for connecting to the Blue Line to improve regional accessibility. The IndyGo Blue Line will provide rapid transit along Washington Street between Cumberland and the Indianapolis International Airport, using I-70 west of Holt Road.
- Participants recognized the importance of the Blue Line for staffing warehouses.
- Participants emphasize the need for bike-friendly trails and better street design with sidewalks, trees, and lighting.
- There are concerns about increased traffic, crime, and transit attracting low-paying jobs.
- Managing congestion and carefully considering the impact of high-density housing are also highlighted as important issues.
- There is strong support for planning for the needs of the aging population, diverse housing options, and enhancing downtown Plainfield for new businesses.
- Maintaining agricultural lands is a shared priority for participants.

## **D. Participation**

### **Who we heard from**

- About 91% of the participation collected was from the Big Reveal in person workshop with about 9% coming from online engagement.
- The third round of engagement has produced 144 unique pieces of input.

- A very limited number of respondents returned an exit questionnaire. Of those who responded, most participants identified as White/Caucasian, and those with a bachelor's and master's/Ph.D. degrees were overrepresented relative to the community's population. Most participants were 45 years or older, with the largest age bracket being 65+. However, these results may not reflect actual participation of various demographic groups for this round of engagement.
- Some respondents noted that they appreciated and enjoyed the engagement opportunity including comments such as, "Kudos to all those involved in the future planning for the detail and in-depth planning and also for soliciting input of those who will be affected by proposed changes! Thank you!" and, "Plainfield has done an excellent job of planning in the past and continues that through these meetings!".